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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT

THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS,  
LINCOLN ROAD, RUSKINGTON

LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code = ASR95  
CCM Accession No. = 47.95

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

# THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS, LINCOLN ROAD, RUSKINGTON

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT

FOR

N. J. ALLEN (BUILDERS) LTD.

BY

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## 1.0 Non-Technical Summary

NJ Allen (Builders Ltd.) propose to develop a plot of land on the north-west side of Ruskington village, immediately east of Lincoln Road (Fig. 1). The site is located within an area known to contain an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery and is adjacent to an important Roman road. It also lies within a broad zone where a significant density of prehistoric cropmark and other sites are known from aerial photography and other sources.

Prior to evaluation, a desk-top study determined that extensive quarrying has taken place within and around the proposed development site. However, the destructive extent of this could not be determined without the use of strategic archaeological trenches in advance of development.

Following the excavation of eight dispersed trenches, the conclusion reached is that, if once present, archaeological remains have been entirely removed in the late post-medieval/modern periods. The archaeological potential, therefore, is now considered to be negligible.

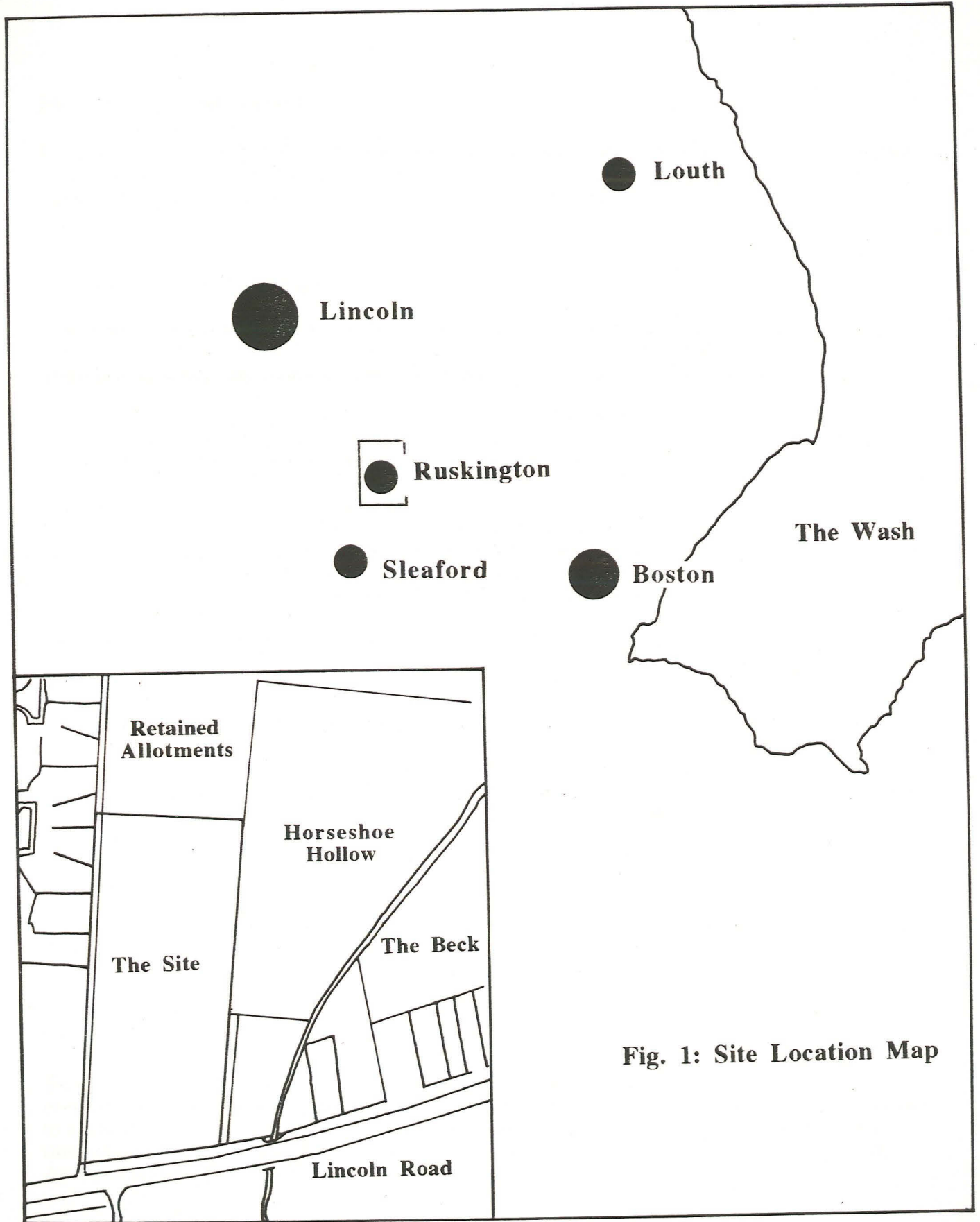
The site central National Grid Reference is TF 0775 5133

## 2.0 Introduction

An archaeological field evaluation took place between Monday, April 10th and Wednesday, April 12th, 1995, on the site of a proposed residential housing development (Fig. 2). The works were commissioned by the Client and followed a detailed desk top assessment, researched and written by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) (Palmer-Brown 1995).

The desk-based study indicated that the site lies within a complex historical landscape, possibly in the heart of an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery which has been documented (archaeologically) since the late C19th (Trollope, 1872). Furthermore, the occurrence (and recent discovery) of prehistoric settlement and ceremonial features over a broad area suggested further the possibility that remains could lie within the site boundaries and be vulnerable, therefore, to destruction during development. The site is located a short distance east of an important Roman road, Mareham Lane/King Street.

A short trenching programme has demonstrated that the archaeological resource on the allotment site (if once present) has been entirely removed. It is suggested, therefore, that there should be no further requirement for archaeological resource management in the context of this development.



**Fig. 1: Site Location Map**

### **3.0 Planning background**

An application for residential development was originally submitted by William H Brown (application no. N52/0977/1994). When planning consent was issued by the District Council (subject to a full scheme of archaeological works), the plot was sold-on to NJ Allen (Builders) Ltd.

### **4.0 Geology and topography**

The British Geological Survey 1: 50,000 survey sheet 127 records widespread drift deposits of fen sand and gravel, these being largely of Pleistocene origin. The older geological formation which underlies these deposits is Jurassic clay, which outcrops on the eastern side of the village.

Soils around Ruskington are usually light, comprising coarse sandy topsoils which overlie sand and gravel containing cornbrash and quartzite pebbles. On the site of proposed development, the topsoil measured approximately 30cm in depth, breaking sharply to natural, usually disturbed, friable sand and gravel.

The site is predominantly flat: the back of the plot lies in excess of 1.0m below land immediately to the east, as does the east side of the north boundary, though this shallows to a reduction of c. 30cm. On the south side of the site, ground reduction is less apparent: in adjacent pasture (Horseshoe Hollow) there are prominent topographical variations, possibly small quarry pits.

The land lies approximately 15m above modern sea level.

### **5.0 Archaeological and historical background**

As noted above, a potentially dense pattern of settlement evidence associated with the later prehistoric and Romano-British periods is evident from cropmark and other sites which have been recorded in the parish.

The discovery, during gravel extraction, of a rich inhumation and cremation cemetery in 1871 has been subsequently complimented by a steady stream of information on the nature and extent of the cemetery which, to date has produced more than 180 burials (Atkin & Healey, forthcoming). The site of proposed development is situated close to, or within the heart of the known cemetery, a short distance east of Mareham Lane/King Street.

### **6.0 Aims**

The purpose of the Field Evaluation at the allotment gardens site was to establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods and to assess their significance at local, regional and national level. A project Specification, based on these objectives, was jointly agreed between Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven and the Client.

### **7.0 Methodology**

Non-intrusive evaluation techniques were not considered appropriate on this occasion:

- a) the vegetation cover on most of the site was too dense for field walking
- b) the site was littered with ferrous waste and bonfire residue, rendering magnetometry (the preferred option) unworkable.

## 7.1 Evaluation Trenches

Eight evaluation trenches, each measuring 10.0 - 12.0m in length x 1.5m width, were sited within the proposed development area to provide a good general cover and sufficient information to clarify the presence/absence of archaeological remains and the extent to which the site has been quarried (Fig. 2).

A team of four experienced field archaeologists excavated and recorded features and deposits revealed within each evaluation trench. All deposits were recorded on standard pro-forma context sheets. Under normal circumstances, features would have been drawn to scale, both in plan and in section. However, as all of the archaeological remains exposed were ascribed to the late post-medieval/modern periods, the Community Archaeologist respected a request that recording should be restricted to context sheets, photography and sketch drawing only (the exception being a trench location plan which was produced at scale 1:500). This request was made on behalf of the Client when it became clear that no important archaeological remains lay within any of the trenches examined.

A mechanical excavator fitted with a straight ditching bucket was used to strip regular level spits, no deeper than 200mm, in each of the areas examined. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizons were exposed. All further excavation was by hand. All section and plan surfaces were meticulously cleaned and a representative sample of each archaeological feature was then excavated, with a view to establishing date, depth, function and significance.

Pottery and other finds from the evaluation were taken to the City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit for specialist assessment/appraisal (Appendix 3).

## 8.0 Results

The relative position of each area investigated is indicated in Fig. 2. Below is a summary account only and the diligent reader is referred, therefore, to the original records contained in the site archive.

### 8.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was positioned in the north-west corner of the proposed development area, orientated east-west.

The topsoil, [100], which measured approximately 30cm in depth, was removed by machine, where it broke sharply with an underlying matrix of loose limestone sandy gravel, [105]. From the top of the gravel, three regular, parallel, north-south linear features were visible. Two of these features, [102] and [104], were sectioned. Each measured approximately 70cm in width, 46cm in depth. The sides of both trenches were steep (vertical in places), and these broke to a flat, though undulating, base.

Initially, it was suggested the trenches were agricultural (possibly for growing asparagus). However, the regular occurrence of similar features in other areas suggested that they may have been produced as a result of quarrying - the drag-lines left by machinery perhaps.

A sherd of C19th pottery was found in one trench, and a residual Romano-British sherd was recovered from another.

## 8.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was sited in the south-west corner of the plot and was also orientated east-west.

The topsoil, [200], was again removed mechanically, which exposed an homogenous deposit of mixed soil and gravel, approximately 20cm in thickness. Sections of this material were removed on the east side of the trench and in the central area. In the central cutting, the top of a trench-like feature (of similar dimension to those exposed in Trench 1) was exposed, [204]/[205]. A section of its gravel-based fill was removed, exposing a trench, orientated north-south, identical to those examined in Trench 1. A similar function is assumed.

No pottery or other dating material was recovered from this trench.

## 8.3 Trench 3

A third trench was positioned approximately 19.0m east of Trench 1 and was orientated north-south.

Removal of the topsoil, [300], exposed eight parallel, linear trenches, orientated east-west: [304], [306], [308], [310], [312], [314], [316] and [317]. Two shallow pit-like features were exposed on the north side of the trench also; [320] and [322].

Each of the parallel trenches was filled with similar loose, reddish-brown, gravel-based silty soil; some contained C19th/C20th pottery. Their depths varied from 6cm to 25cm, their widths between 28cm and 75cm. Although some of the trenches may have been agricultural, it is again possible these features formed as a result of gravel extraction.

Two small sub-circular features on the north side of the trench, [320] and [322], were little more than shallow scoops in the underlying gravels; not exceeding 6cm in depth. The excavator suggested both features were the bases of modern garden pits.

## 8.4 Trench 4

Trench 4, which was orientated north-south, was placed in line with Trench 3, 25m south of it. Four, regular, parallel trench-like features, orientated broadly north-south, were exposed. Two of these, [405] and [406], were sampled by excavation. Both were remarkably similar: steep sided with flat bases - identical to features exposed in Trench 1.

No pottery was recovered during excavation.

## 8.5 Trench 5

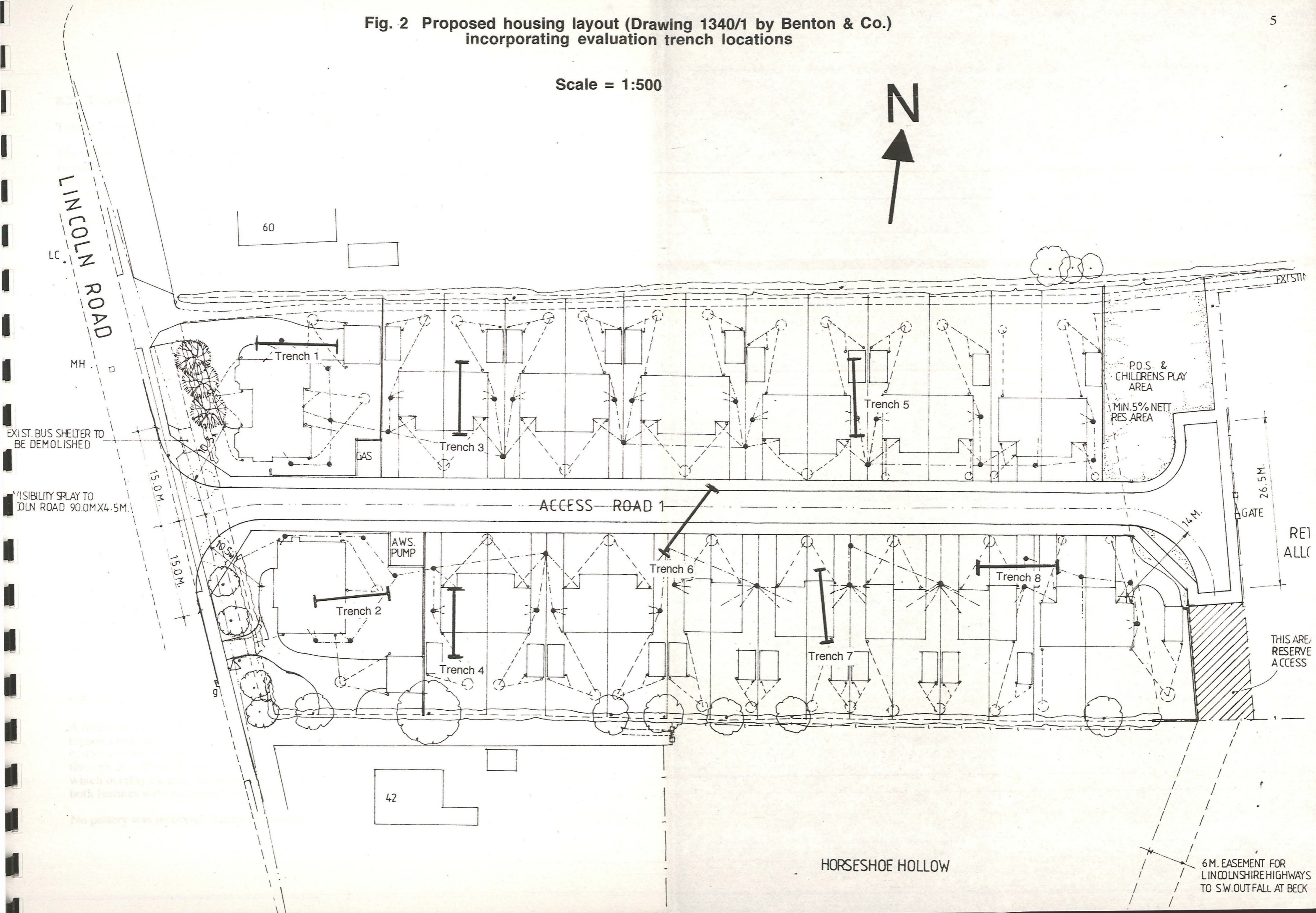
A fifth cutting was placed on the north-east side of the plot, orientated north-south. Removal of the topsoil exposed two parallel linear features, orientated north-south; [505] and [507]. Both measured c. 45cm in width, 36cm in depth and the cuts of each were steep, the bases flat. They had been dug through 20 - 50cm of dark brown silty sand/gravel, [502] (discoloration possibly due to leaching), which overlay cleaner, though very loose, sandy gravel, [503]. There were no reasons to believe that both features were not entirely modern.

No pottery was recovered during excavation.



Fig. 2 Proposed housing layout (Drawing 1340/1 by Benton & Co.)  
incorporating evaluation trench locations

Scale = 1:500



6M. EASEMENT FOR  
LINCOLNSHIRE HIGHWAYS  
TO SW. OUTFALL AT BECK

## 8.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was sited in the south-west corner of the plot and was also orientated east-west.

The topsoil, [200], was again removed mechanically, which exposed an homogenous deposit of mixed soil and gravel, approximately 20cm in thickness. Sections of this material were removed on the east side of the trench and in the central area. In the central cutting, the top of a trench-like feature (of similar dimension to those exposed in Trench 1) was exposed, [204]/[205]. A section of its gravel-based fill was removed, exposing a trench, orientated north-south, identical to those examined in Trench 1. A similar function is assumed.

No pottery or other dating material was recovered from this trench.

## 8.3 Trench 3

A third trench was positioned approximately 19.0m east of Trench 1 and was orientated north-south.

Removal of the topsoil, [300], exposed eight parallel, linear trenches, orientated east-west: [304], [306], [308], [310], [312], [314], [316] and [317]. Two shallow pit-like features were exposed on the north side of the trench also; [320] and [322].

Each of the parallel trenches was filled with similar loose, reddish-brown, gravel-based silty soil; some contained C19th/C20th pottery. Their depths varied from 6cm to 25cm, their widths between 28cm and 75cm. Although some of the trenches may have been agricultural, it is again possible these features formed as a result of gravel extraction.

Two small sub-circular features on the north side of the trench, [320] and [322], were little more than shallow scoops in the underlying gravels; not exceeding 6cm in depth. The excavator suggested both features were the bases of modern garden pits.

## 8.4 Trench 4

Trench 4, which was orientated north-south, was placed in line with Trench 3, 25m south of it. Four, regular, parallel trench-like features, orientated broadly north-south, were exposed. Two of these, [405] and [406], were sampled by excavation. Both were remarkably similar: steep sided with flat bases - identical to features exposed in Trench 1.

No pottery was recovered during excavation.

## 8.5 Trench 5

A fifth cutting was placed on the north-east side of the plot, orientated north-south. Removal of the topsoil exposed two parallel linear features, orientated north-south; [505] and [507]. Both measured c. 45cm in width, 36cm in depth and the cuts of each were steep, the bases flat. They had been dug through 20 - 50cm of dark brown silty sand/gravel, [502] (discoloration possibly due to leaching), which overlay cleaner, though very loose, sandy gravel, [503]. There were no reasons to believe that both features were not entirely modern.

No pottery was recovered during excavation.

## 8.6 Trench 6

A trench was placed roughly in the centre of the proposed development site, orientated north-east to south-west. Again, no features of archaeological significance were exposed.

The topsoil, [600], measured approximately 30cm in depth and, over most of the trench, shared a sharp interface with underlying clean gravels, [601]/[610]. On the north side of the trench, the clean gravels were cut through by a series of closely-spaced modern features.

Two parallel trenches, orientated north-west to south-east lay on the extreme north side of the area, [607] and [609]. Both contained similar fills, comprising friable dark brown sandy silt mixed with gravel. They measured between 60cm and 80cm in width, 10 - 20cm in depth. The excavator suggested they were agricultural trenches of modern origin.

Immediately south-east of the two trenches were two very shallow linear features, [603] and [605]; originating from the east section and extending c. 80 - 90cm into the trench at different angles (the more southerly of the two, [603], lay broadly parallel with the two trenches/gullies described above). Neither feature exceeded 8cm in depth and the excavator suggested they were deep modern tyre ruts.

Pottery was recovered from one context, [608]: two sherds dating to the C19th.

## 8.7 Trench 7

This trench lay close to the site south boundary, almost in line with Trench 5. Only two (presumed) modern features were exposed: closely-spaced, parallel linear trenches/gullies, [704] and [706], which measured approximately 65cm in width, 25cm depth. They were orientated north-south and were filled with loose, light brown, gravelly loam. They were cut through ?redeposited clean natural sandy gravel, [702].

No pottery was recovered during excavation.

## 8.8 Trench 8

The eight cutting was sited on the extreme east side of the plot and was orientated east-west. Again, archaeological features were exposed and excavated - and again, these have been dated to the late C19th or later.

Five, parallel, north-south trenches, of variable depths, were exposed and recorded. Four of these ([803], [806], [808] and [810]) contained virtually identical fills comprising dark grey/brown silty sand/gravel. One feature, however, [812], on the extreme west side of the cutting, was quite different. It measured approximately 75cm in width, 30cm depth. Its sides were almost vertical, its base flat; and it was filled with vast quantities of broken china, complete jars, bottles, rusty iron, tile and brick. As the base of the feature was holding water, it is possible its use was as a soakaway.

Pottery recovered from two contexts ([802] and [807]) has been dated to the late C19 or later.

## 9.0 Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation at the allotment gardens, Ruskington, has failed to demonstrate the presence of significant archaeological deposits within the proposed development site. A series of regular gullies or trenches have been dated within the late C19th/early C20th. Whether these be quarry scars or asparagus trenches, their archaeological worth is considered to be minimal. It is suggested, therefore, that no further archaeological monitoring is required prior to or during development.

## 10.0 Acknowledgements

Once again, sincere thanks are expressed to NJ Allen (Builders) Ltd for commissioning Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) to undertake desk-based and field -based assessments on the site of proposed development. Thanks also to Nicola Nuttall, the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven and to the site excavation team: Rob Schofield, Malcolm Otter, Paul Jarvis and Simon Johnson. Thanks are due to staff at the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit for finds assessment.

## **11.0 Appendices**

### **11.1 Colour photographs**

### **11.2 Trench matrices**

### **11.3 Context classification list**

### **11.4 Post-Roman pottery assessment report (B Davies, R Kemp and J Young)**

### **11.5 Site archive**

### **11.6 References**

Appendix 1: Colour photographs



P1. General view, Trench 1, looking west



P2. General view, Trench 2, looking west



P3. General view, Trench 3, looking north



P4. General view, Trench 4, looking south



P5. General view, Trench 5, looking north



P6. General view, Trench 6, looking north-east

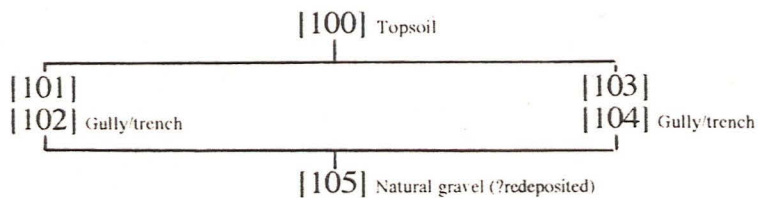


P7. General view, Trench 8, looking west



## Appendix 2: Trench matrices

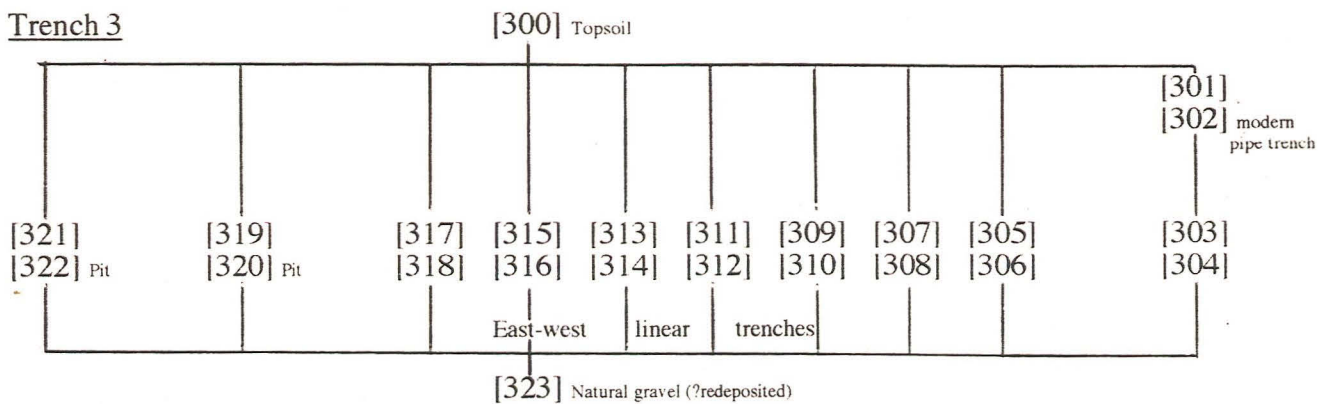
### Trench 1



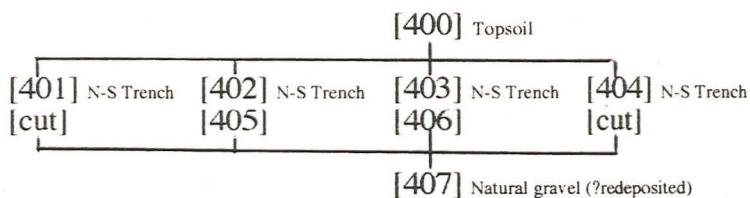
### Trench 2



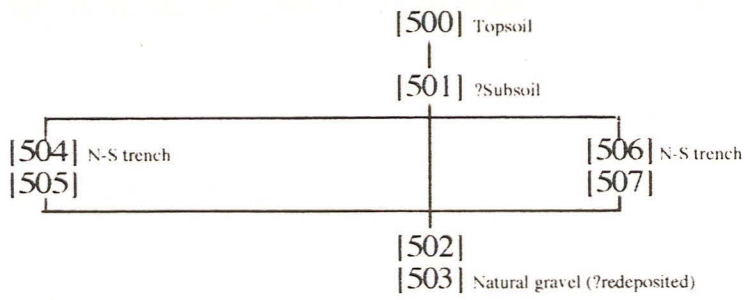
### Trench 3



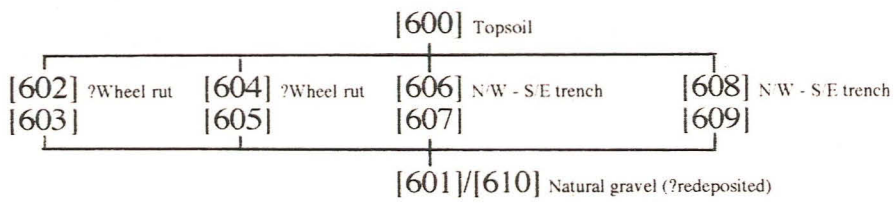
### Trench 4



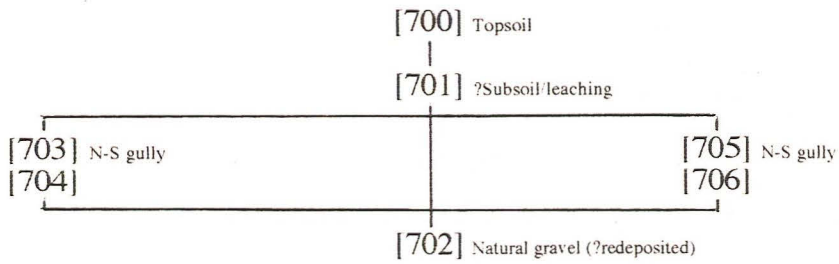
Trench 5



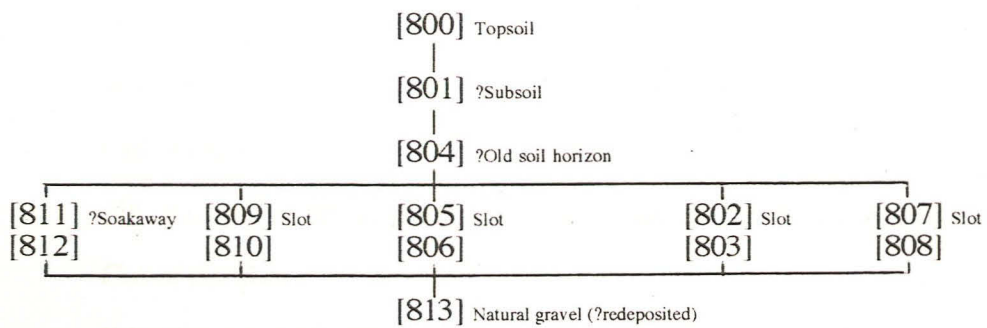
Trench 6



Trench 7



Trench 8



### 11.3 List of contexts (classification only)

#### Trench 1

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[100]	Modern plough soil horizon
[101]	Loose fill of linear trench [102]
[102]	East-west linear trench: ?quarry drag line
[103]	Loose fill of linear trench [104]
[104]	East-west linear trench: ?quarry drag line (adjacent to [102])
[105]	Clean, loose, natural sandy gravel; possibly redeposited

#### Trench 2

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[200]	Modern topsoil horizon
[201]	Levelling horizon below [200] (c. 20cm thickness)
[202]	Backfill of trenches [204] and [205]
[203]	Loose, clean, sandy gravel, common to entire trench - natural, possibly redeposited
[204]	Cut of north-south linear trench exposed in reduced cutting. ?Quarry drag mark.
[205]	Cut of north-south linear trench exposed in reduced cutting. ?Quarry drag mark.

#### Trench 3

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[300]	Modern topsoil horizon
[301]	Backfill of modern drainage trench, south-east corner of cutting
[302]	Cut of the above
[303]	Fill of east-west linear feature, extreme south side of trench. Agricultural/quarry mark
[304]	Cut of the above
[305]	Fill of east-west linear trench to south of above trench

- [306] Cut of the above
- [307] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of the above
- [308] Cut of the above
- [309] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of the above
- [310] Cut of the above
- [311] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of the above
- [312] Cut of the above
- [313] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of [312]
- [314] Cut of the above
- [315] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of [314]
- [316] Cut of the above
- [317] Loose fill of linear east-west gully immediately south of [316]
- [318] Cut of the above
- [319] Charcoal-based fill of shallow scoop, north side of trench. ?Bonfire residue
- [320] Cut of the above
- [321] Fill of shallow scoop, short distance north of the above
- [322] Cut of the above: ?modern garden pit (base of)
- [323] Extensive deposit of cream-coloured natural sandy gravel into which features cut. Possibly redeposited.

#### Trench 4

- | <b>Context</b> | <b>Classification</b>  |
|----------------|--|
| [400]          | Modern topsoil horizon   |
| [401]          | Fill of north-south trench-like feature, west side of trench                           |
| [402]          | Fill of north-south trench-like feature adjacent to [401] (fills [405])                |
| [403]          | Fill identical to [402]: fills adjacent trench [406]                                   |
| [404]          | Fill identical to [403]: fills adjacent trench (not excavated)                         |
| [405]          | Cut, linear north-south, regular trench - possibly modern quarry line                  |
| [406]          | Cut of adjacent north-south regular trench (east of [405])                             |
| [407]          | Extensive deposit of clean (?redeposited) natural sandy gravel into which features cut |

## Trench 5

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[500]	Modern topsoil horizon
[501]	Subsoil/leached horizon below topsoil
[502]	Subsoil/leached horizon below [501]
[503]	?Quarry backfill
[504]	Fill, north-south gully [505]
[505]	Flat-bottomed north-south gully - ?cultivation
[506]	Fill, north-south gully [507]
[507]	Flat-bottomed north-south gully - ?cultivation

## Trench 6

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[600]	Modern topsoil horizon
[601]	?Redeposited natural gravel in base of cutting (same as [610])
[602]	Fill, shallow linear feature: ?wheel rut
[603]	Shallow 'cut' for the above
[604]	Fill, shallow linear feature: ?wheel rut
[605]	Shallow 'cut' for the above
[606]	Fill, linear trench orientated N/W - S/E
[607]	Cut for the above
[608]	Fill, linear trench orientated N/W - S/E
[609]	Cut for the above
[610]	Same as [601]

## Trench 7

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[700]	Modern topsoil horizon
[701]	c. 25cm of gravel-based soil below topsoil: ?post-quarry levelling
[702]	?Redeposited clean natural sandy gravel in base of trench
[703]	Fill, north-south straight gully (?associated with modern quarrying)
[704]	Cut for the above
[705]	Fill, north-south straight gully (?associated with modern quarrying)
[706]	Cut for the above

## Trench 8

<b>Context</b>	<b>Classification</b>
[800]	Modern topsoil horizon
[801]	Subsoil/post-quarry levelling below topsoil
[802]	Silty/gravel-based, dark grey backfill of north-south linear trench/gully
[803]	Cut of the above
[804]	dark soil band below [801] - ?post-quarry levelling
[805]	Fill, north-south gully/trench, very similar to [802]
[806]	Cut for the above
[807]	Fill, north-south gully/trench, very similar to [802]
[808]	Cut for the above
[809]	Fill, north-south gully/trench, very similar to [802]
[810]	Cut for the above
[811]	Very loose fill containing high % glass, pottery, tile, brick etc., filling steep-sided linear trench, extreme west side of area
[812]	Cut for the above
[813]	Pale brown loose gravel in base of excavation cutting; truncated by archaeological features. ?Redeposited natural

## Appendix 4

### ASR95: Assessment Report on the Ceramic Material

*Barbara Davies, Richard Kemp and Jane Young*

CLAU 15.5.95

#### **1. Introduction**

The site produced 14 sherds of pottery and one fragment of tile. The material was examined and recorded at basic CLAU archive level (ware type by sherd count with note of diagnostic features) using CLAU classification.

#### **2. Condition**

With only a one exception the pottery recovered was unworn and most vessels were represented by a single sherds.

#### **3. Overall Chronology and Source**

A single worn Roman sherd was recovered from context 103. The sherd is of an oxidised ware (OX) and is of 2nd to 3rd century date. An undiagnostic fragment of Roman tile was found in context 302. The remaining material was of 19th century date.

#### **4. Further work**

No further work is needed on this material.

ASR95 ARCHIVE: WARE TYPES BY CONTEXT NUMBER

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
101	LPM	1	-	E19TH+
103	R	1	-	OX;2ND-3RD
302	RTIL	1	-	ROMAN
305	LPM	1	-	L18TH+;PEARLWARE
305	PORC	3	-	L18TH+;OR BONE CHINA
307	LPM	1	-	19TH+
309	LPM	1	-	L19TH+
309	LPM	1	-	M19TH+
317	LSTON	1	-	E19TH+
608	LPM	2	-	E19TH+
802	LPM	1	-	L19TH+
807	LPM	2	-	M19TH+



CLAU LIST OF WARE TYPE NAMES

Ware code    description

LPM	EARLY MODERN OR MODERN
LSTON	LATE STONEWARES
OX	OXIDISED WARE
R	ROMAN
RTIL	ROMAN TILE

## 11.5 Site Archives

The basic site archive comprises the following:

82 context record sheets (in green A4 ring binder)

x1 colour print film, x1 colour slide film

x1 scale drawing (site location)

x1 box of finds

x2 copies, desk top assessment

x2 copies, field evaluation report

letters of correspondence

miscellaneous notes

Primary records are currently with Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), though the paper and physical archive will be deposited with the City and County Museum within 1 year of completion of this report, together with a more detailed archive list. The site Accession Number is 47.95

## 11.6 References

British Geological Survey; 1:50,000 survey sheet 127

Palmer-Brown, C 1995 Land off Lincoln Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire: An Archaeological Desk Top Study by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) (unpublished)

Trollope, E A 1872 *Sleaford and the Wapentake of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn* (Sleaford)