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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

SALT BOX FARM, MAREHAM LANE
LINCOLNSHIRE



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

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SALT BOX FARM, MAREHAM LANE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

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1.0 Non-Technical Summary

A planning application was submitted to North Kesteven District Council to construct four new poultry houses on the east side of an existing development on land off Mareham Lane, Burton Pedwardine, near Sleaford. Permission was granted, subject to a condition requiring archaeological observation and recording during preliminary construction works (an archaeological watching brief).

An intermittent recording brief, conducted during ground clearance and trenching, identified significant (though ambiguous) archaeological remains which indicate that the immediate site environment was occupied during the Iron Age/Romano-British periods. No structural remains were exposed during field work, though a ditch containing sherds of Romano-British/Iron Age pottery was recorded on the south-east side of the development.

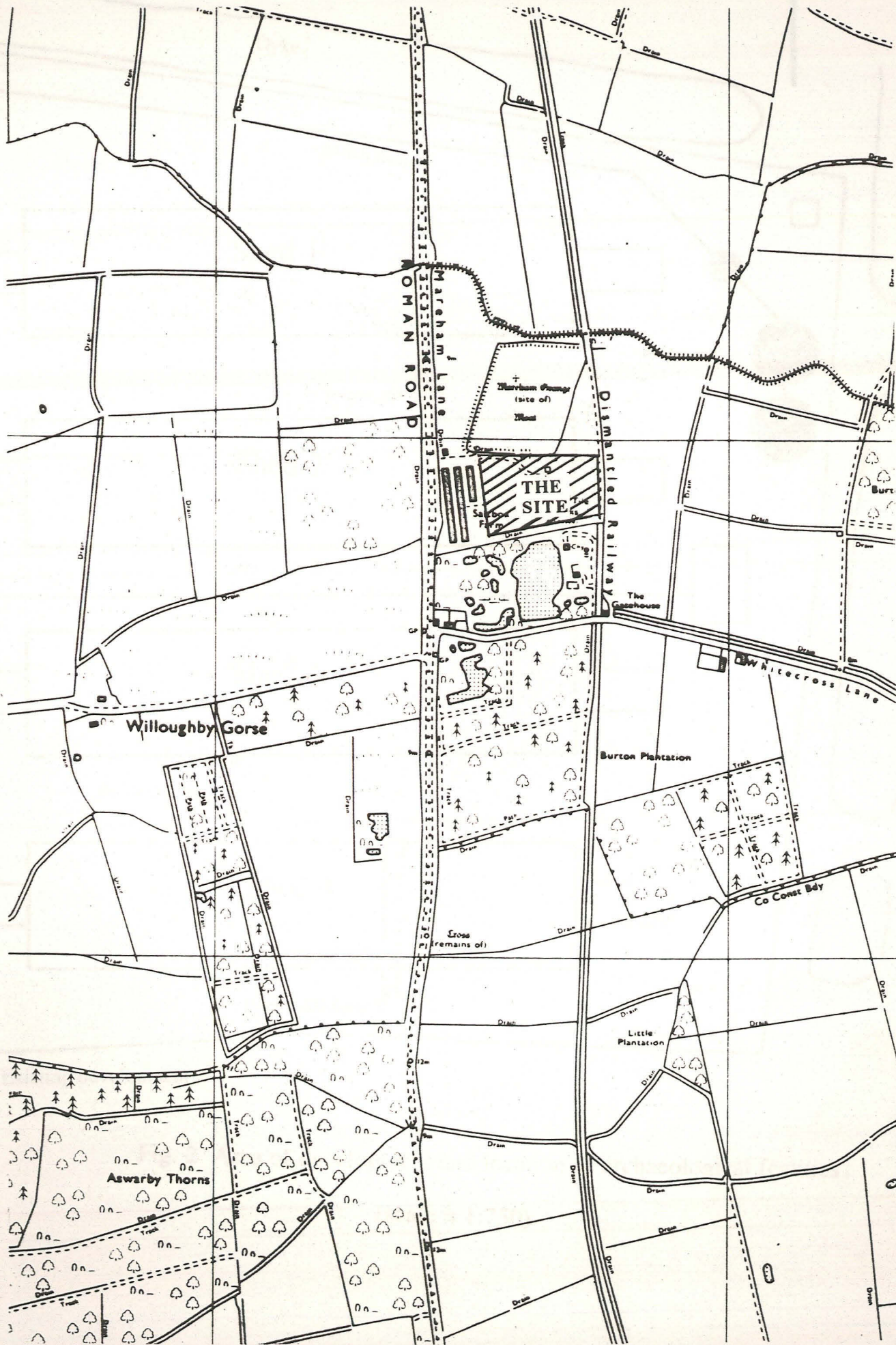
2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place during April and May, 1995 on the site of a development to the rear of poultry houses at Saltbox Farm, Mareham Lane (Fig. 1 and 2). The works were commissioned by Mr S Padley of GW Padley Poultry Ltd and were centred on a project specification submitted to the Client and the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven.

Information derived from the County Sites and Monuments Record suggested the archaeological potential of the site was moderately high; influenced largely by its proximity to the site of Mareham Grange, immediately to the north.

Data collected and interpreted during the present investigation will now be incorporated as part of the County Sites and Monuments Record and may influence future resource management decisions (as defined within the planning process).

Fig. 1 Site location (scale = 1:10,000)



TF 086 429

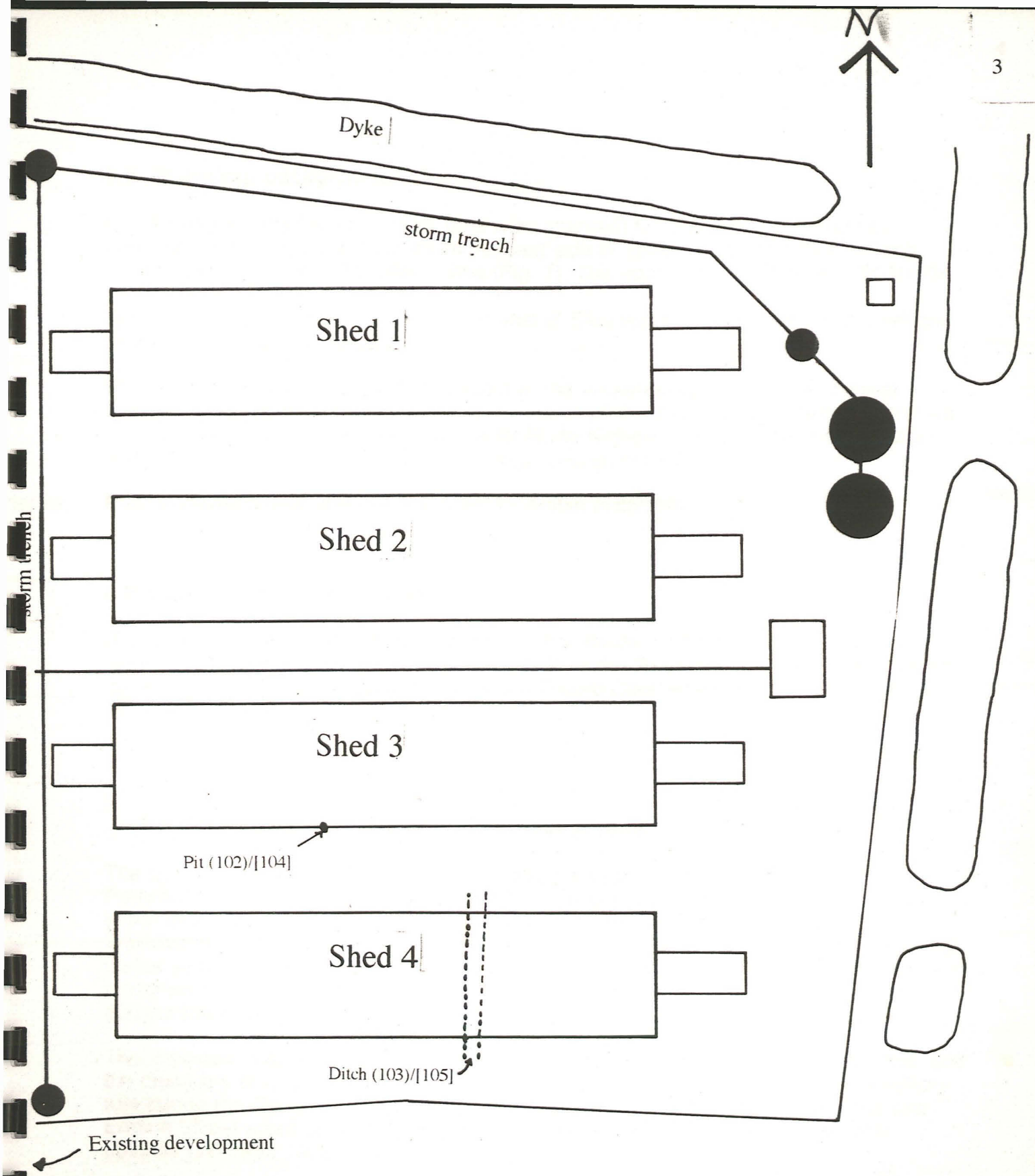


Fig. 2 Area of development and location of archaeological features

(scale = 1:750)

Following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the fifteenth century, the site was acquired by Sir Thomas Moreman and was returned with the lands to the Bishop of Exeter.

3.0 Planning background

GW Padley Poultry Ltd applied for (and were granted) full planning permission to construct four new poultry houses on the east side of seven existing houses on land fronting the east side of Mareham Lane (Fig. 1). The application number is 16/903/1994.

The site lies approximately 2.5km south-east of Sleaford and is centred on national grid reference ~~TF 396750 354270~~ !

TF 086 429

Planning permission was granted, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief. A project brief, outlining the scope of the archaeological requirement, was issued by the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven, and a project specification was prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) in February 1995

Prior to development, the site was used for arable cultivation.

4.0 Geology and topography

The site is located on land approximately 10.0m above modern sea level, c. 400m south of Cliff Beck, which extends eastwards from the River Sleas, joining the North Beck at Burton Cliff. The solid geology comprises Oxford Clay, which lies approximately 30cm beneath the modern ground surface.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

The site of development is located in the extreme west of the parish of Burton Pedwardine, almost immediately east of the Roman road King Street/Mareham Lane which extended from Bourne, through Sleaford, northwards towards Lincoln. Traditionally, this route has been viewed as a Roman work, though the close proximity of dense settlement and ceremonial features in places such as Ruskington (enclosures and ploughed-out round barrows) could imply that the road was a formalisation of a more ancient trackway.

The important role played by Mareham Lane during the Roman period is undoubted; and the discovery of a fort at Longthorpe in the Nene valley suggests that it played a military role during the Conquest period. It has been suggested that both Mareham Lane and Ermine Street acted as effective policing channels on either side of the limestone uplands (Whitwell 1992, 47).

The development site lies immediately south of Mareham Grange (from which Mareham Lane took its name). Today, the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 310) though in the 1970's less significance appears to have been attached to the monument: three of its ditches (which measured 15m - 20m from rim to rim) were filled-in (Healey and Roffe, unpublished). Originally, it was the property of Sempringham Priory. Following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the mid-C16th, the site was acquired by Sir Thomas Horsman and was reunited with the main estate in Burton Pedwardine.

Field walking prior to the filling of the moats produced pottery sherds, ranging in date between the C14th and C16th.

In fields east and north of Mareham Grange, there is evidence of extensive ridge and furrow cultivation.

It is known that a settlement existed in the vicinity of the site prior to the Domesday Survey of 1086, for soakland in Aswarby was said to belong to Mareham (*ibid*). However, the position has not been documented archaeologically and it should be the aim of field work on or near to the site of Mareham Grange to attempt to define and date the character of any Saxon settlement.

6.0 Aims

The principal aims of the watching brief were to ensure that any archaeological features or artefactual remains exposed or retrieved during groundworks were recorded and interpreted to standards accepted by the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven: in particular, to try and identify/define remains which pre-date the site of Mareham Grange. A project Specification, based on these objectives, was jointly agreed between Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), the Community Archaeologist and the Client.

7.0 Methodology

An intermittent watching brief was maintained during ground clearance and trenching. Mechanical excavation was undertaken using a trenching machine and a JCB. Prior to deep trenching, the whole site was stripped of its topsoil; whereafter, any hollows in the parent material were levelled by in-filling. When a level building base was achieved, a programme of trenching for the four new sheds was initiated.

The site was visited on fifteen separate occasions. During site visits, a written account was prepared on standard watching brief report forms. Archaeological features, where exposed, were excavated to varying levels; depending on the amount of time available. All features were drawn in section and (where possible) in plan at scale 1:20 and artefacts recovered from discreet stratigraphic horizons were coded according to their contexts. A photographic archive was maintained throughout.

Following completion of the field project, artefacts from the site were processed and submitted for specialist appraisal (Appendix 6).

All recording and excavation was undertaken by Mr Simon Johnson of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

8.0 Results

The site was first inspected during stripping of the topsoil, [100]; the removal of which exposed an homogenous horizon of stiff light brown/yellow clay, [101] - Oxford Clay. The entire development area was extremely churned and it was not generally possible to identify archaeological features in plan; the exception being dark fills of modern rubbish pits, visible in the area of shed 2. At this stage, a field-walking strategy was employed, involving the collection of surface artefacts; most commonly late post-medieval/modern pottery sherds which were widely scattered.

The cutting of foundation trenches associated with the new sheds was undertaken in two phases: long trenches, orientated east-west, were excavated using trenching machines; the shorter trenches, orientated north-south, were dug using a standard JCB equipped with back actor. With the former method, excavation was monitored retrospectively as it was not possible to maintain control during the actual digging.

Storm trenches were dug on the west and north periphery of the new complex, as were drain trenches between the four sheds. These cuttings were monitored on an intermittent basis.

The shed foundation trenches measured approximately 50cm in width and were excavated to depths approximately 80cm beneath the top of the exposed clay surface. The sides of each trench were inspected for archaeological deposits and sections were selectively cleaned where areas of disturbance were detected.

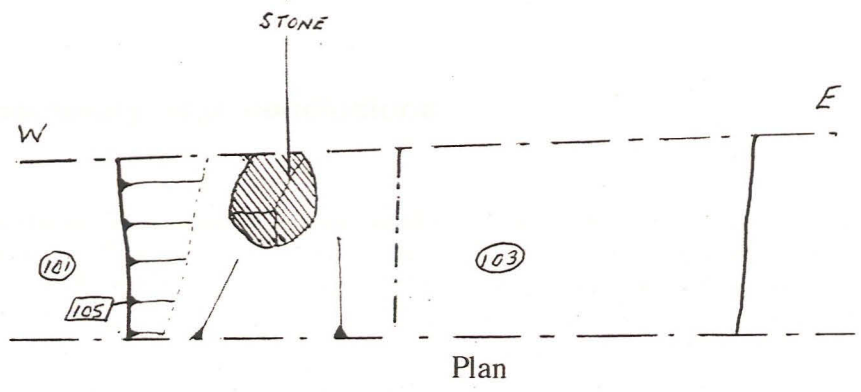
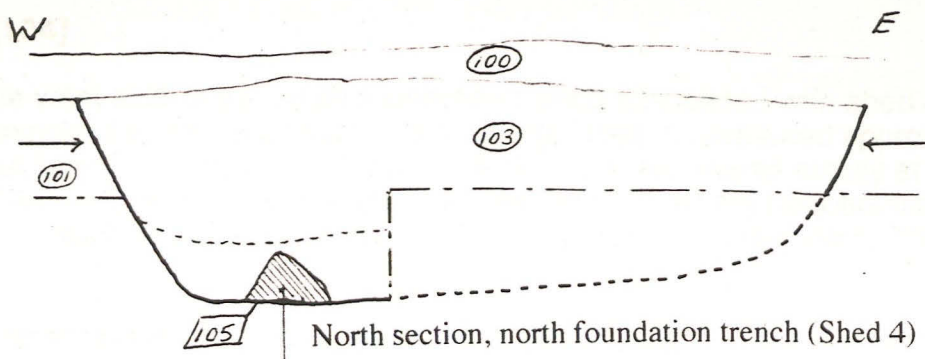
Few archaeological features of significance were identified during the brief, though a trench/ditch which contained late Romano-British and ?native (ie Iron Age type) sherds was sectioned on the south-east side of the development, within the area of shed 4.

Ditch (103)/[105]

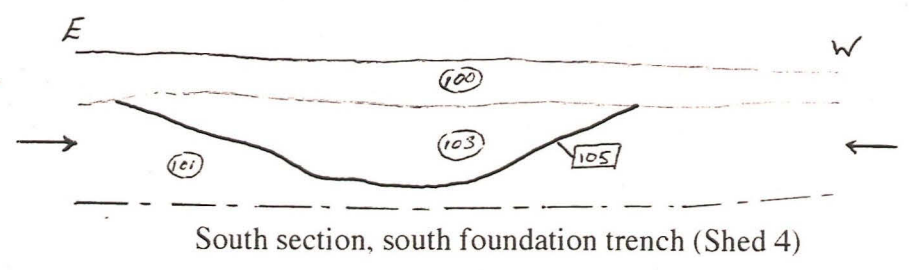
On the east side of shed 4, sections of a wide, flat-bottomed ditch/gully were exposed within the north and south foundation trenches. In the south trench, the exposed segment measured approximately 2.0m in width. It lay directly beneath the truncated remains of the topsoil [100] and was cut through the natural sub-stratum [101]. In the time available, it was possible only to examine one side of the feature in any detail: a steep-sided, shallow, and flat-bottomed trench measuring approximately 50cm in depth. Its fill, (103) comprised dark grey/brown sticky clay containing relatively few coarse inclusions. In its base was a single, conspicuously large, stone which lay close to its west edge.

The northerly continuation of the above was recorded in the north foundation trench. Here, it measured only 22cm in depth and its profile was much less pronounced, suggesting the exposure lay close to a terminal (no trace of the feature was detected north of shed 4).

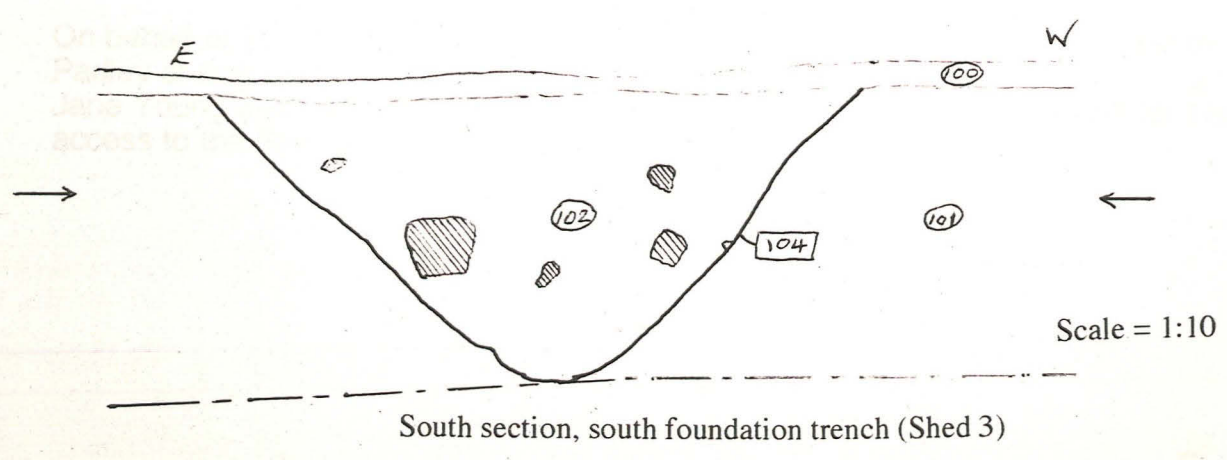
A functional diagnosis was not possible, based on the small areas examined, though it has been possible to suggest a broad date range for the feature: a small group of pottery sherds were recovered from the exposure in the south foundation cutting, as was a quantity of animal bone fragments. These sherds date widely between the late Iron Age, possibly, and the C4th AD. It is possible that the shell-tempered, 'native-type', sherds represent the continuity of an Iron Age tradition, well into the Roman period, though the assemblage is simply too small to allow a more definitive assessment to be made.



Scale = 1:20



A Ditch (103)/[105] (location on Fig. 2)



Scale = 1:10

B Pit (102)/[104] (location on Fig. 2)

Pit [104]

On the west side of the south foundation trench associated with shed 3, a well-defined pit was exposed in the south side of the cutting, [104]. It measured approximately 1.6m on its east-west axis and was c. 80cm in depth. Its sides sloped evenly at an angle c. 45°. It was filled with dirty, very mixed clay-based soil containing frequent limestone fragments, sandy lenses and charcoal flecks; clearly of purposeful deposition. There were no associated finds.

No further features of archaeological significance were exposed in any of the other construction trenches inspected.

9.0 Summary and conclusions

It had been hoped the recording brief would identify deposits dating within the late Saxon period to assess the potential of the site for furthering (or initiating) an understanding of pre-Conquest (Norman) settlement. This was not achieved; all post-Roman pottery has been dated to the post-medieval and later post-medieval periods.

Little may be said regarding the nature of the north-south ditch, recorded on the east side of shed 4, except that it broadly respected the alignment of Mareham Lane. It is possible the feature was a field/property boundary and was therefore part of a much larger, managed, agrarian landscape.

No ephemeral features relating to Mareham Grange were exposed/identified during the course of the brief.

10.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to Mr S Padley of GW Padley Poultry Ltd for commissioning the watching brief. Thanks go also to Jane Young and Barbara Davies for finds assessment and to Mark Bennett for allowing access to the Sites and Monuments Record.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 List of contexts

11.2 Colour photographs

11.3 Site Archive

11.4 References

11.5 Relevant entries extracted from the Sites and Monuments Record

11.6 Pottery archive record (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit)

11.1 List of contexts (classification only)

Context	Classification
[100]	Topsoil; mid-brown clay-loam
[101]	Natural yellow/brown stiff clay (Oxford Clay)
[102]	Dark grey/black heavy clay-based soil containing frequent limestone fragments, flint, pea-gravel; fills pit in west side of south foundation trench, shed 3
[103]	Smooth-textured dark grey/brown/black dirty clay; few inclusions though occasional angular flint + pea gravel and one large stone in base of exposed section
[104]	Cut of pit (fill = [102]); sides slope regularly, c. 45°. ?Rubbish pit
[105]	Cut of ditch/gully orientated north-south (fill = [103]): steep sides progressively shallowing to north; sides break sharply to flat base; possible terminal approach on north side. Function uncertain.



Photo. 1 General view of site during topsoil stripping



Photo. 2 Ditch (103)/[105], prior to excavation, looking east



Photo. 3 General view, north-south storm trench, looking north

11.2 Colour photographs



Photo. 4 Ditch (103)/[105], sectioned, looking north

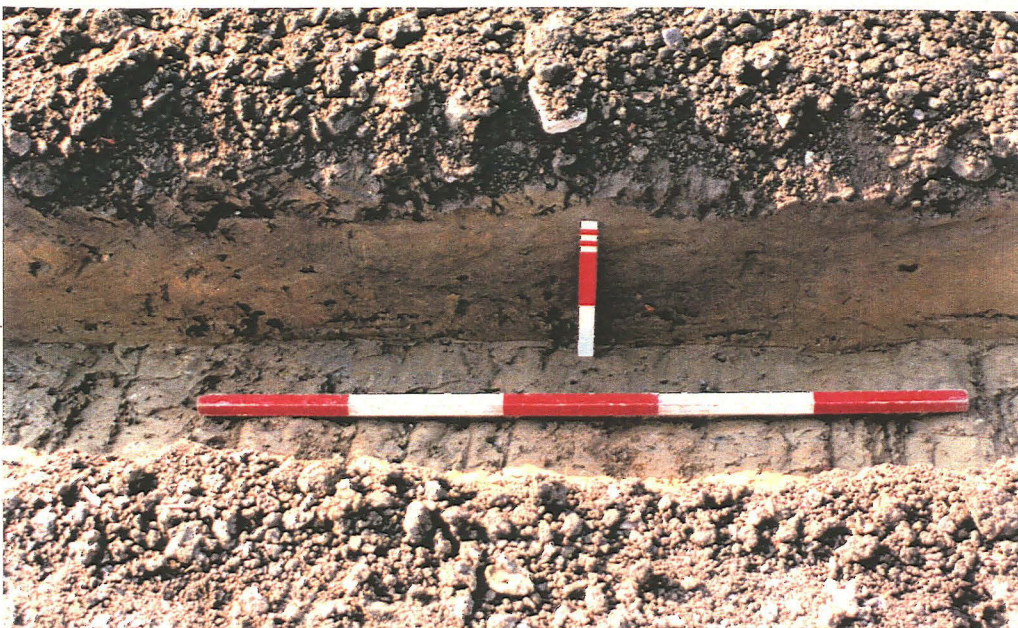


Photo. 5 Ditch (103)/[105], in section of north foundation trench of shed 4, looking north

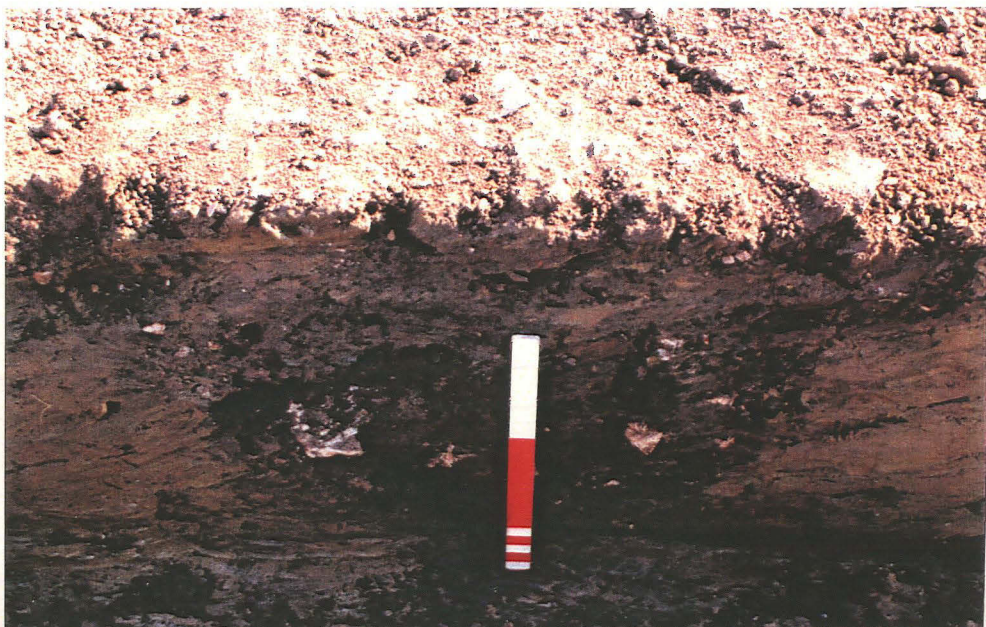


Photo. 6 Pit (102)/[104] in shed 3 foundation trench, looking south

11.3 Site Archives

The basic site archive comprises the following:

x5 context sheets

x4 colour print films (sections of)

x1 1: 750 architect drawing/site location plan

x2 composite 1:20 plans + feature section drawings

x2 bags of finds (pottery)

Misc. notes and correspondence

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

11.4 References

Healey, RH and Roffe, D 1985 *Some Medieval and Later Earthworks in South Lincolnshire* (unpublished manuscript)

Pevsner N & Harris J, 1989 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 284

Whitwell, JB 1992 *Roman Lincolnshire Hist. of Lincs. Vol. 2* (Revised Edition)

11.5 Information derived from the Sites and Monuments Record held at the City and County Museum, Lincoln

CCM ref. (map)	NGR	Description
(T)	TF0858 4312	Mareham Grange (SAM 310); originally, property of Sempringham Priory. Only parts of moat surviving
(E)	TF085 432	Site of DMV at Mareham or Cold Mareham (hence name of Roman road from Bourne to Sleaford)
(AB)	TF085 431	Medieval tile, quern, slate; from site of Grange, found before the site was levelled
(V)	TF0843 4221 0842 4335	Mareham Lane (Roman road): extends N - S, forms west boundary to parish

11.6 Archive of pottery types (CLAU system)

(post-Roman) by J Young

SBF95 ARCHIVE: WARE TYPES BY CONTEXT NUMBER

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
100	LPM	1	-	BL/W
100	LSTON	1	-	18/19TH
100	TB	1	BOWL	RIM

Roman/Iron Age by B Davies

100,GREY,JEV,-,-,-,-,RIM ABR,-,1,-
100,ZDATE,-,-,-,-,-,2-4/POSTRO,-,-,-,-
103,GREY,B?,HM?,-,-,-,-,BS ABR RO?,-,1,-
103,GREY,JB,WM,1,-,-,-,BSS COARSE Q RO,-,2,-
103,GREY,JEV?,WM,-,-,-,-,RIM FRAG BN SURFS RO?,-,1,-
103,SHEL,-,-,-,-,-,BS SCRAP RED BN IA/RO?,-,1,-
103,SHEL,JBPR,HM?,-,-,-,-,RIM FRAG V SMALL MINIATURE? RED BN BRYOZOA IA?,-,1,-
103,GREY,JEV?,WM,-,-,-,-,RIM COARSE Q RED BN MARGINS RO,-,1,-
103,ZDATE,-,-,-,-,-,SOME DEF ROMAN SOME IA?,-,-,-,-
103,ZZZ,-,-,-,-,-,ROMAN COULD BE 2-4,-,-,-,-