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CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (LINCOLN)

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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section
12 Friars Lane
LINCOLN LN2 5AL
TEL: 0522 575292 FAX: 0522 530724

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CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

PLOUGHSOUND LTD

by

C. Palmer-Brown

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)
DRAYTON HOUSE COTTAGE
59 HIGH STREET
EAGLE
LINCOLN
LN6 9DG

PHONE & FAX 01522 868953

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1.0 Non-Technical Summary

An intermittent archaeological watching brief was undertaken on three areas within a large, and phased, development on land south of Chapel Lane, Navenby (Fig. 1). Of the areas monitored, two contained archaeological/artefactual remains of the late prehistoric/Romano-British periods, though no artefactual remains were recovered from any features in situ. This report constitutes an assessment of the watching brief, and a consideration of the archaeology in its wider context.

2.0 Introduction

The watching brief took place over a drawn-out period between September 1994 and July 1995. (Fig.'s 1 and 2). A project specification was prepared to meet the requirements of a brief set by the (then) Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven, though the brief in question related to only one of the sites (Site 1): the other two, at the request of the Community Archaeologist, were attached as an extension to the original brief.

The watching brief, therefore, was associated with three separate planning applications:

Site 1: Application 40/981/1993. associated with the construction of a site office, storage shed and compound adjacent to proposed plot No. 76 (original planned Phase III site): SK 9922 5742

Site 2: the monitoring of Plot A19, north-east corner of Phase II development (Application 40/1044/94): SK 9918 5756

Site 3: single garage/showroom foundation trench: north-east corner of Phase III development (Application 40/0455/95): SK 9893 5743

3.0 Planning background

Ploughsound Ltd. applied for planning permission (Application 40/981/1993) to construct a site office, storage shed and compound immediately east of the Phase II development site, which is currently nearing completion. The compound was to serve as a base from which to launch a Phase III development; on land set in the angle of Chapel Lane and Ermine Street. A project brief for this development (requiring a programme of observation and recording) was issued on 24th March, 1994, and a specification was submitted (by PCA) on April 12th of the same year. The site was monitored by Mr R Schofield on September 26th, 1994.

As already noted, the scope of the brief was enlarged by the (then) Community Archaeologist; to incorporate a single house plot on the north-east side of the Phase II development (Fig. 2), as well as a single garage foundation at SK 9893 5743 - currently used as a sales office, but ultimately destined to be a domestic garage (Phase III development).

An archaeological condition was attached to the single house plot in the north-east corner of the Phase II development (Plot A19) following an application to redesign the layout of the dwelling (the condition of watching brief followed investigations further east (Palmer-Brown, 1994)).

Site 3 was also related to a separate planning condition, and was associated with the current Phase III development east of Grantham Road (which is being monitored by PCA as part of a wider watching brief).

Prior to development, the entire site had been utilised for arable cultivation.

Fig. 1 1:10,000 site location

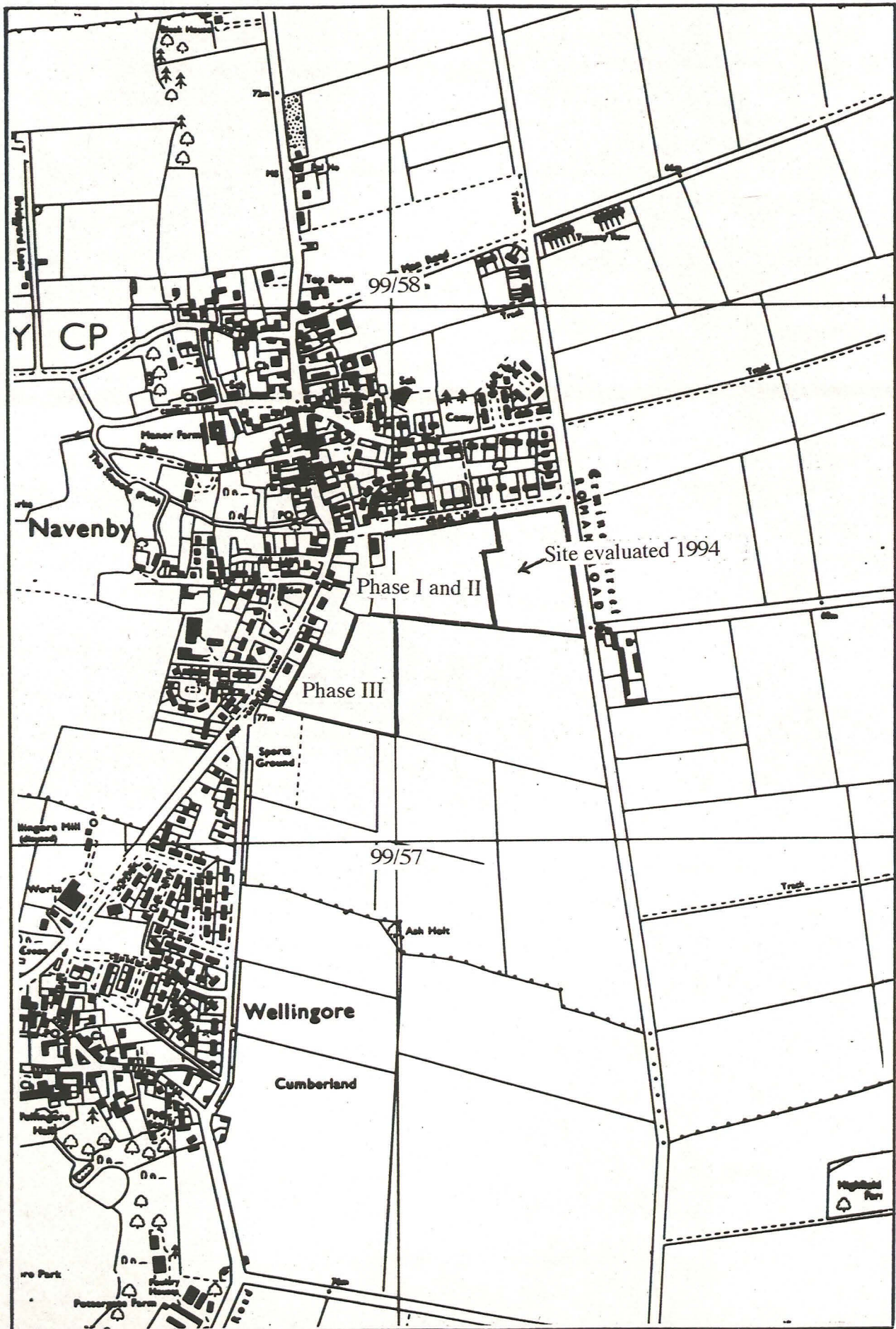
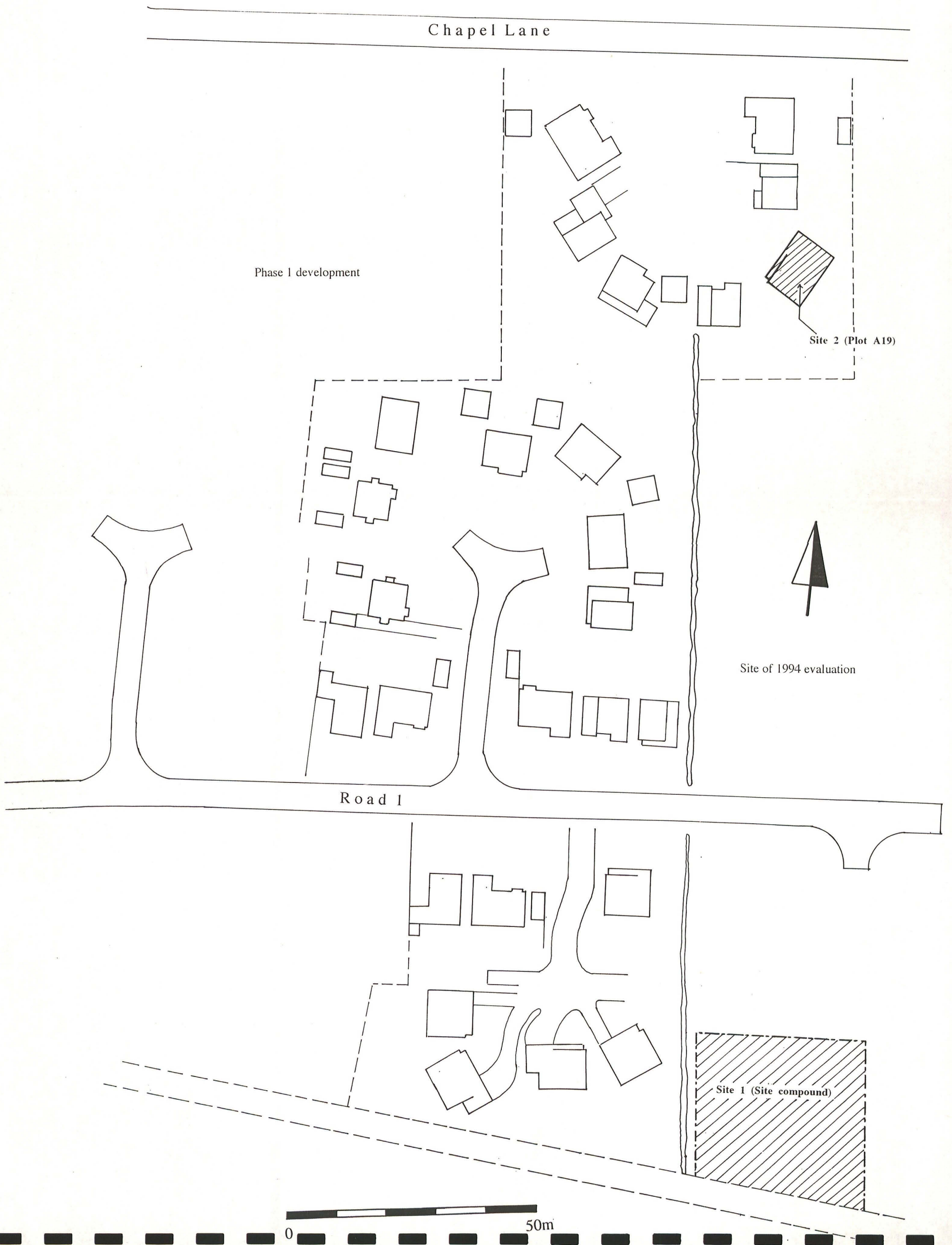


Fig. 2 Outline plan of Phase II development, incorporating watching brief sites 1 and 2



4.0 Geology and topography

The sites lie within a relatively flat environment at a height approximately 75.0m OD. To the east, between Navenby and Scopwick, heathlands predominate and the lie of the land gently fluctuates between the 70m and 30m contour lines. Immediately west of Navenby is the steep drop of the Lincoln Edge where the land falls to 20m OD as it nears the base of the Witham valley. The closest natural water source is the River Brant, a tributary of the River Witham, approximately 4.5km west of Navenby.

The parent geology is Oolitic Limestone (British Geological Survey; Sheet 114, 1:50 000). Archaeological excavations in the angle of Chapel Lane and Ermine Street showed that drift deposits of limestone brash and silty clay can exceed 1.0m in depth.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Our knowledge of Navenby in the pre-Roman periods was, until recently, based, almost entirely, on a catalogue of artefacts which had been discovered largely by chance, although a large flint scatter was plotted by Allison Peach (former Community Archaeologist) in 1991 on the recently-evaluated site, set in the angle of Chapel Lane and Ermine Street.

In 1994, evaluation at the Chapel Lane site exposed a series of native-style enclosures and circular houses. In the base of an enclosure ditch were sherds of Middle to late Iron Age pottery (c. C3rd BC - early C1st AD). The occurrence of very late, wheel-thrown pottery on the same (general) site could imply that the main thrust of Iron Age occupation occurred during the more developed phases; perhaps synonymous with a pattern of population and settlement expansion which is common to late Iron Age Britain and contemporary Continental Europe (May 1984, 20).

The importance of Navenby in the Roman period was first realised in 1965 when extensive surface collection was undertaken by pupils at the local primary school, under the supervision of their head teacher. In fields to the north, south and west of Chapel Lane, large quantities of Roman finds were picked-up, including pottery, coins and other metallic objects.

A Roman (?military) settlement was established in the years following the Conquest, with the occupation of lands formerly belonging to the local tribe, the *Corieltauvi* (eg Whitwell 1992). Navenby lies exactly ten Roman miles from the important military installations at Lincoln (*Lindum*) and Ancaster, and it is likely that a timber fort was stationed here which, possibly, lay on the boundary of the *territorium* of Lincoln (*ibid*). However, the siting of military installations at both Navenby and Ancaster may have been influenced by a substantial native presence.

Whatever its initial status, there can be little doubt that a Roman military presence at Navenby presented attractive commercial possibilities; initially, perhaps, to cater for troops, whose needs may not always have been provided by the military. Military withdrawal need not (and clearly did not) signal the demise of the settlement, which appears to have remained occupied until the latter half of the C4th.

Trial trenching in 1994 established the presence of an extensive ribbon development on the west side of Ermine Street, south of Chapel Lane. The limit of this development was not determined within the remit of the evaluation, though surface remains suggest that the settlement extended at least 60.0m south of the area investigated. Well-preserved stone foundations were exposed in association with mortar floors and painted, plastered walls.

The settlement appears to have been abandoned at the end of the Roman period and the site based around Ermine Street was not reoccupied until recent times. The succeeding Saxon occupation at Navenby was located close to the heart of the present village, and a recent watching brief on land north of Church Lane exposed a cluster of settlement features dating to the late Saxon period (late C9th/early C10th). Middle and early Saxon finds were also present in small numbers (Palmer-Brown 1995, unpublished). This site aside, there have been few reported Saxon finds, though two

buckles (of zoomorphic character) could be taken as evidence of a Germanic presence; possibly mercenaries or *foederati* (Leahy 1993, 42).

6.0 Aims

The principal aim of the watching brief(s) was 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/Heritage Officer for North Kesteven.

7.0 Methodology

During all earth removal, the bases and sides of all construction trenches were intermittently cleaned and inspected for intrusive archaeological features. Where exposed, the tops and/or sides of features were cleaned by trowel and, where possible, artefacts were collected. These were subsequently processed and submitted for specialist appraisal. Colour photographs were taken and features were planned and/or drawn in section at scale 1:20.

Recording and excavation was undertaken by R Schofield, M. Otter and S Johnson (Sites 1 and 2) and C. Palmer-Brown (Site 3).

8.0 Results

8.1 Site 1: Compound for original Phase III development (Fig. 3)

The site was inspected on September 26th, 1994, when the area was stripped of its upper topsoil; prior to the deposition of limestone hardcore. The area measured approximately 30 - 35m north-south by 33m east-west. Between 10 and 15cm of topsoil had been removed across the whole site and this was deposited in a heap slightly to the east. The base of the truncation lay above the underlying subsoil/archaeological features.

The truncated topsoil had been exposed to rainfall prior to site inspection, and a resultant silty wash had a masking effect on the soil surface. Therefore, north-south and east-west transects were marked-out and shovel-scraped (Trenches 1 - 3; approx. 1.0m in width). The exercise confirmed that the base of the spit removed by machine was still within the topsoil horizon. Flint and pottery artefacts which came from within the topsoil were recovered and provenanced to each trench.

On the north side of the north-south trenches, two small sondages were excavated to determine the depth of the remaining topsoil (and therefore, the potential threat to the archaeology).

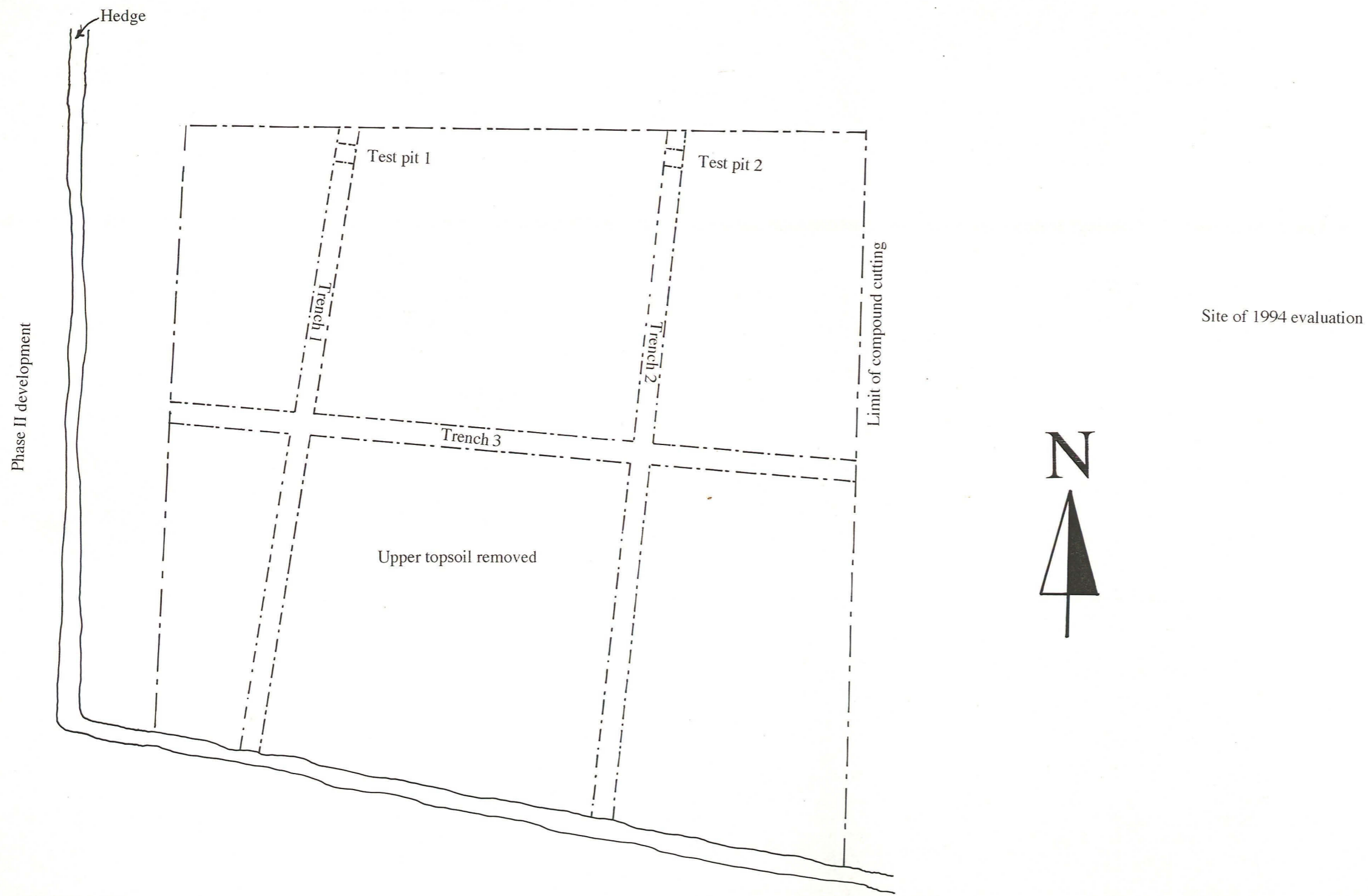
The topsoil in Test pit 1 was approximately 20cm in thickness. It had a clearly-defined interface with an underlying matrix of orange/brown silty clay. It was not clear whether or not this was an archaeological horizon (see below).

In Test pit 2, up to 25cm of topsoil remained, which was removed by mattock. It overlay a matrix consisting, predominantly, of orange/yellow silty clay mixed with limestone fragments, which merged with a deposit similar to that seen in the base of Test pit 1.

Excavation of the two pits demonstrated that widespread truncation for the site compound had not incurred damage to underlying archaeological deposits.

Following the completion of this first watching brief, a magnetometer survey (Lyll 1994) revealed that the south side of a ditched native-style enclosure lay within the northern limits of the compound area. The enclosure was sampled during evaluation trenching and in the base of one of its ditches were sherds of Iron Age pottery (Palmer-Brown 1994).

Fig. 3 Site 1: 1:200 plan of area reduced for site compound



Test pit 1 may have been sited over the top of the enclosure perimeter ditch.

8.2 Site 2: Plot A19, Phase II development

Set within the north-east boundary of the Phase II development, Plot A19 was selected for archaeological monitoring after Ploughsound Ltd applied for a separate planning permission to alter a house design (Application 40/1044/94). The planning application followed magnetometry and trial trenching on land immediately to the east (CHN94), and the magnetometer survey suggested that east-west linear ditches would pass close to, or through, Plot A19. Foundation trenching associated with the development was monitored, therefore, following consultations with the Community Archaeologist. Archaeological recording was undertaken by Mr M Otter over a period of one day on September 29th, 1994.

Undated archaeological features were exposed in several construction trenches associated with the new dwelling, though the east-west ditch identified during magnetometry was not exposed and was assumed, therefore, to lie slightly further to the south of Plot A19.

A pit-like feature was exposed in one section face of the north wall construction trench, [1]. It lay sealed beneath c. 40cm of topsoil, and was cut 40cm in depth. Its sides were steep, and these broke to an undulating concave base (Fig. 5). It was filled with clean brown sandy silt mixed with small stones, with an intermittent basal lining of pea gravel (?deposited as a result of worm-sorting).

The butt-end of a wide, flat-bottomed trench, orientated north-south, was exposed c. 4.5m west of the above, [2]. It was seen both in plan and in section in the north wall construction trench, though it did not appear to reach the north face of the trench; suggesting that its termination was abrupt. It contained material which resembled the soils in feature [1]. The trench was up to 2.5m wide, and 50cm deep.

A feature of similar width and orientation, [4], was exposed approximately 5.0m south of the above; in both sides of an east-west internal construction trench. It was c. 2.2m wide, 30cm deep, and was filled with soil identical to that in feature [2] (one assumes some of this uniformity to be the result of post-deposition soil leaching). The trench continued further and was picked-up in an internal east-west construction trench (though was truncated by a modern intrusion), and a disturbance in the south-west corner of the plot, [5], may have been the same trench; though here, much narrower.

In the centre of the east wall construction trench, a large, ?sub-oval, pit was exposed, [3]. In plan, it measured approximately 2.0m east-west x 1.8m north-south. Its depth exceeded 50cm (the base of the foundation trench), and its bulk fill consisted of medium-brown sandy silt mixed with small limestone fragments.

No dating evidence (eg pottery) was recovered from any of the features recorded in Plot A19.

Fig. 4 Plan of features located in Plot A19

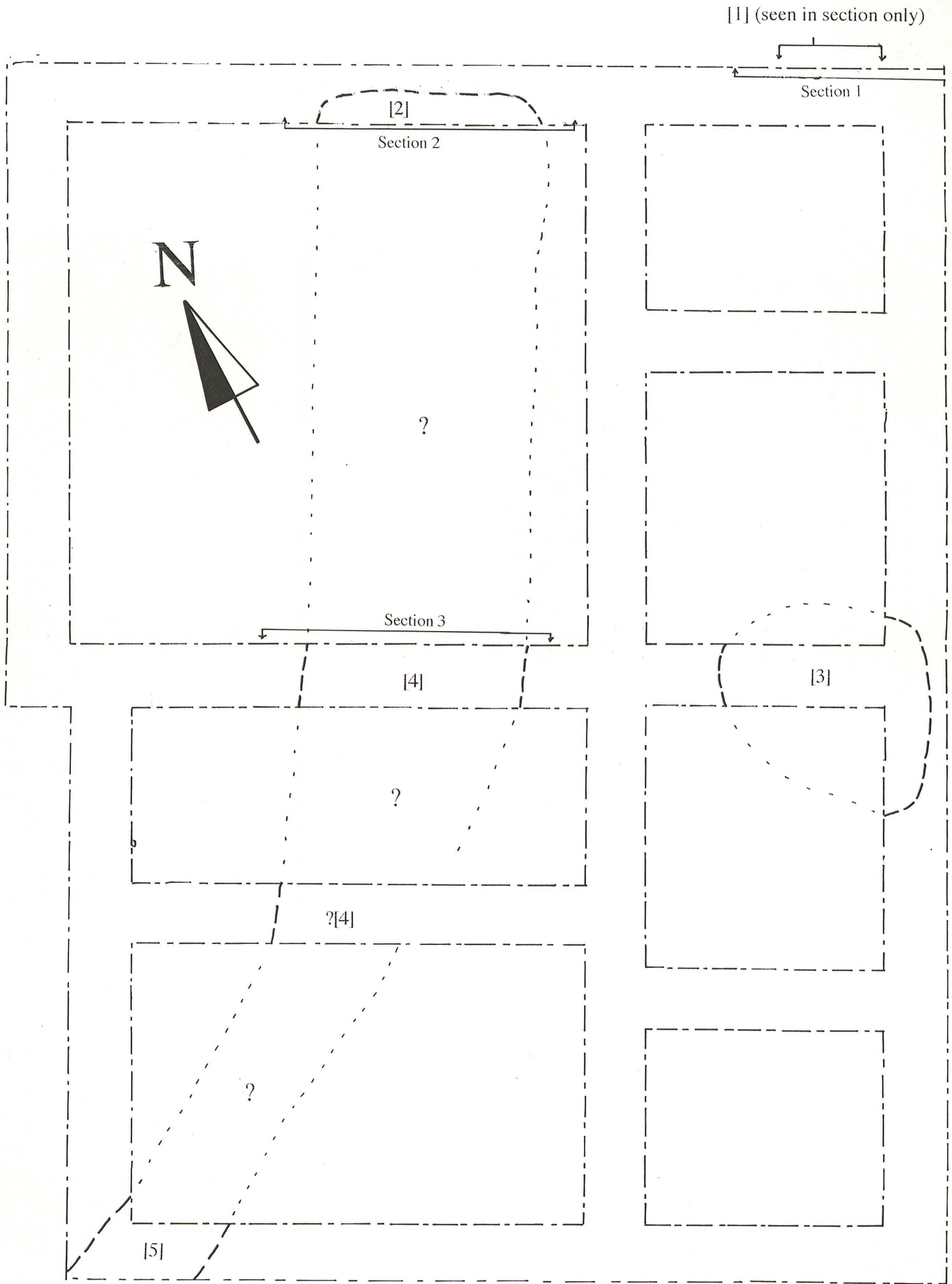
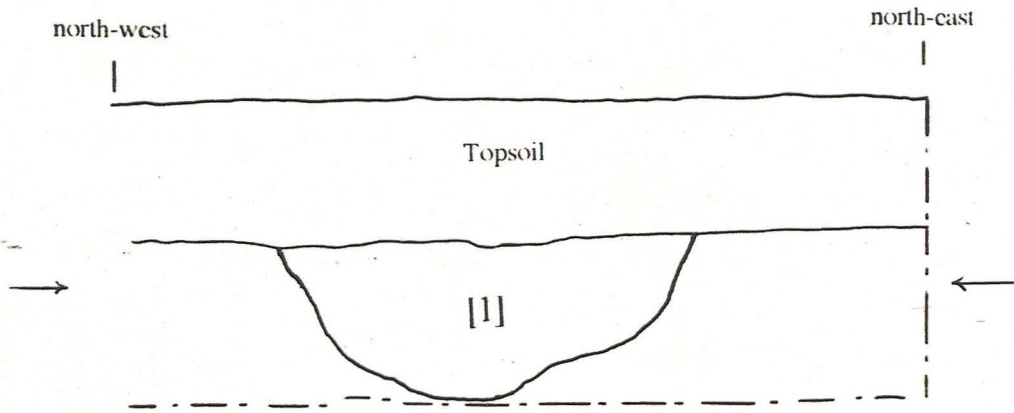
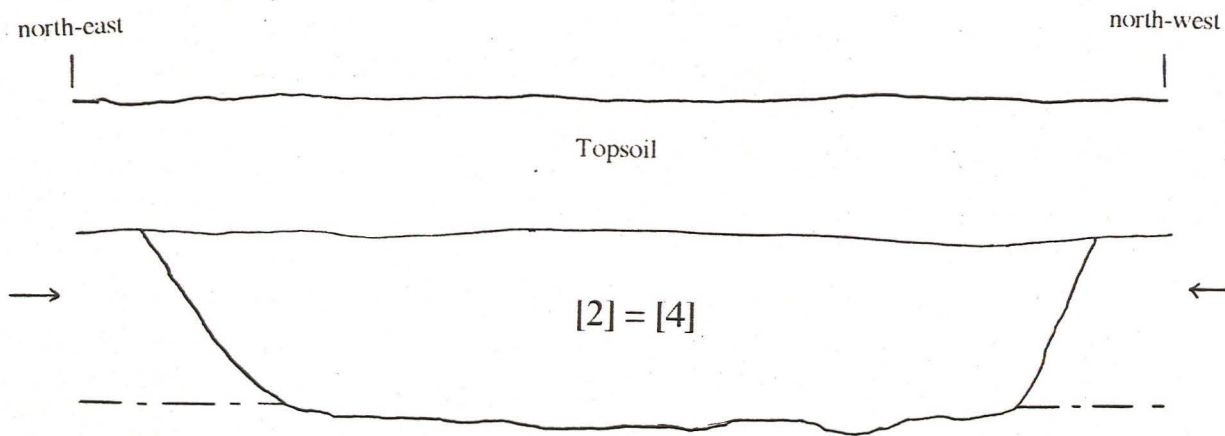


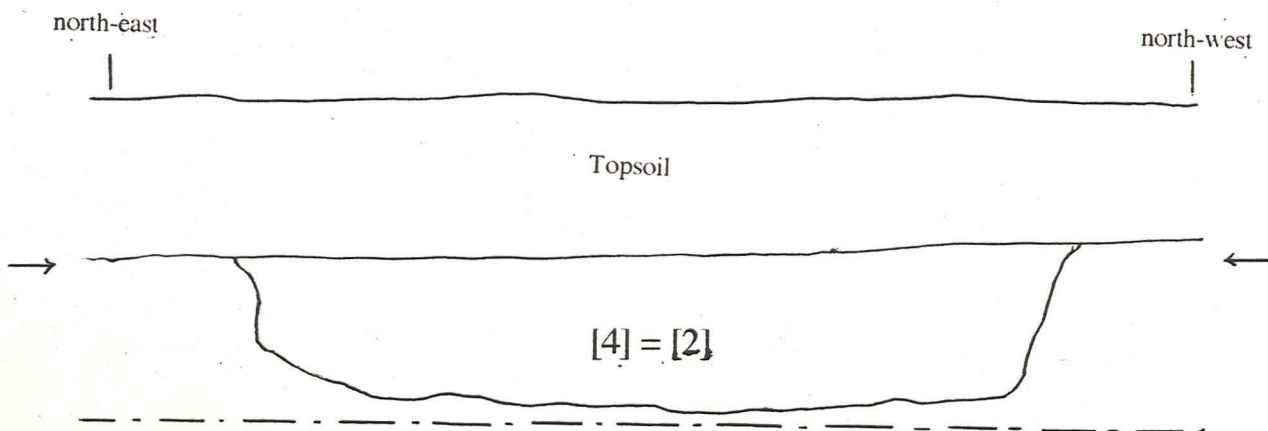
Fig. 5 Feature sections, Plot A19 (location on Fig. 4)



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



8.3 Site 3: Single garage/showroom foundation trench: north-east corner of Phase III development

On July 10th, 1995, construction for a new showroom commenced immediately outside the south-west section of the Phase II development. This will be used as a base from which to launch house sales within the Phase III development south of Winton Road, which is currently under preliminary construction.

A request was made by Ploughsound Ltd for the plot, which will eventually become a domestic garage, to be archaeologically monitored during construction trenching. The Community Archaeologist was informed of this development, but did not issue a project brief: instead, it was suggested the project should again be integrated as part of the on-going watching brief.

Trenching was monitored by C Palmer-Brown.

In area, the plot measured 8.0m east-west, 6.4m north-south. Construction trenches measured 70cm in width, and approximately 50cm in depth. No archaeological features of any period were exposed during the brief. The horizontal stratigraphy may be summarised thus:-

Grass vegetation layer
/
Topsoil: c. 30cm mid-brown clay-sand containing frequent small limestone inclusion
/
Subsoil: c. 20cm reddish-brown sandy clay; frequent limestone brash inclusion
/
Compact limestone brash surface

9.0 Conclusions

When considered together, the watching briefs carried-out between September 1994 and July 1995 add relatively little to the information derived during controlled trenching in 1994. Unstratified Romano-British and Iron Age pottery recovered from Site 1 merely verifies that occupation during these periods was taking place on or near to the compound site; and a complete absence of dating evidence from Site 2 does little to further a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of late prehistoric and Romano-British occupation. Site 3 contained no archaeology at all, although a continuing programme of work in this area has so far centred on the salvage excavation and recording of a number of middle/late Iron Age features. That such features are being found more than 400m west of Iron Age remains close to Ermine Street, would seem to suggest there was a very large centre of population in the Navenby area prior to Roman intervention.

10.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning clients, Ploughsound Ltd.: in particular, Mr D Herkes, Mr R Overton and Mr D Woodward. Thanks are expressed also to Margaret Darling (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit) for specialist finds archiving and dating.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Colour photographs

11.2 Report on the Roman pottery by MJ Darling

11.3 Site Archive

11.4 References

Appendix 11.1 Colour photographs



Photo. 1 general view of compound site (Site 1) following partial topsoil removal and archaeological cleaning; looking west



Photo. 2 Test Pit 1, showing depth of remaining topsoil over archaeological deposits; looking north

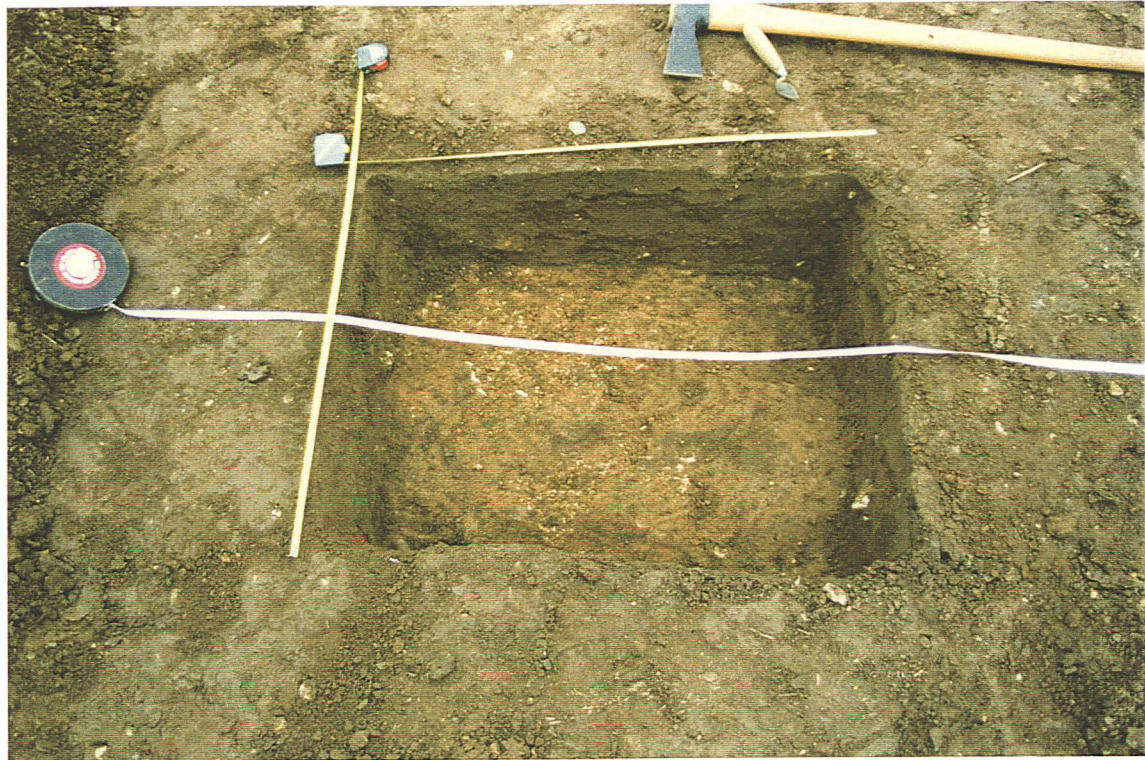


Photo. 3 Test Pit 2, looking north



Photo. 4 General view of garage/showroom foundation trenches, looking north-east

Appendix 11.2 Report on the roman pottery by MJ Darling (CLAU)

REPORT ON THE ROMAN POTTERY FROM CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY CHN94 WATCHING BRIEF
to PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (LINCOLN)

Margaret J Darling

8 February 1996

These 18 sherds have been added to the existing archive data file in the
CLAU computer database. Details of the archive entries are as follows:

ARCHIVE (appended to chn94.dat file)

WB1/1, 2 and 3 = Watching Brief Site 1, trenches 1, 2 and 3.

Database fields:

site code, Fabric, Form, Dec/Manuf, Vessels, Draw?, DNo, Comments, joins, shs, grams.

WB1/1, NVCC, BKFO, PA, -, -, -, BS RED FAB; PT ON INDENT, -, 1, 3
WB1/1, NVCC, BKROU, ROUZ, 1, -, -, BSS GRY CORE FAB; SAME IN, WB1/3, 2, 20
WB1/1, OX, CLSD, -, -, -, BS GRY INT; ?SPOX, -, 1, 3
WB1/1, OX, -, -, -, BS X BASE; GRY CORE SANDY, -, 1, 3
WB1/1, SHEL, -, HMAD, -, -, -, BS; OX EXT; CPOT?; 9MM, -, 1, 7
WB1/1, SHEL, -, HMAD, -, -, -, BS DKGRY; TRACE BURNISH; ?IA, -, 1, 6
WB1/1, GYMS?, -, HMAD?, -, -, -, BS DKGRY; TRACE BURNISH; OCCAS SHELL, -, 1, 5
WB1/1, ZDATE, -, -, -, L3-4 PROB 4, -, -, -
WB1/1, ZZZ, -, -, -, 3 SEP SHEL CLD BE IA, -, -, -
WB1/2, OX, -, -, -, CHIP ONLY; SANDY BRIGHT RB, -, 1, 1
WB1/2, PART, CLSD, -, -, -, BS; V SMOOTH FRAC; ?USE, -, 1, 4
WB1/2, CR, CLSD, -, -, -, BS ABRADED, -, 1, 3
WB1/2, GREY, B333V, -, -, -, RIM/PTWALL; NOT BIFURC; NO INT WALLGROOVE, -, 1, 17
WB1/2, GREY, -, -, -, BS V ABRADED, -, 1, 5
WB1/2, SHEL, -, HMAD, -, -, -, RIM FR; POSS X JCUR?; SPARSE SHEL, -, 1, 3
WB1/2, ZDATE, -, -, -, ML2, -, -, -
WB1/2, ZZZ, -, -, -, SHEL RIMFR CLD BE IA, -, -, -
WB1/3, NVCC, BK, ROUZ, -, -, -, BASAL SH X BKROU IN, WB1/1, 1, 24
WB1/3, GREY, -, -, -, BSS ABRADED, -, 3, 17
WB1/3, ZDATE, -, -, -, ML3, -, -, -

COMMENTS

These few sherds add little information to what has already been recovered from the evaluation work, although they include four shell-gritted sherds, probably all hand-made, which may be of Iron Age date. Trench 1 of the evaluation was the only trench to produce similar sherds, seven sherds from a single vessel. The four new sherds represent four separate vessels, but all are too small to give information on the vessel form. The single rim fragment has no curvature, and could be from a jar with a curved over rim, but is too small for certainty. One of the sherds (WB1/1) fits into the GYMS fabric group, grey with minimal shell, and is the only one possibly not hand-made. The other dark grey bodysherd has burnished surfaces but this is not necessarily diagnostic for date.

It is worth stressing that in the absence of definitive work on IA shelly fabrics in the area, there is no certainty of identification. The site produced late 4th century pottery at which period shell-gritted bowls and dishes occur, also with burnishing as seen on one of these sherds.

The only other notable sherd is a bodysherd of PART (Parisian type) fabric, which has one of its fractured edges very finely smoothed. This suggests strongly that the sherd has had a secondary use, possibly as an implement for smoothing.

DATING

As with the pottery from the evaluation, these span the period from the Iron Age, probably the latter part, certainly into the 4th century.

11.3 Site Archive

The basic site archive comprises the following:

x6 watching brief record sheets

x2 colour print films

x6 site drawings

x1 bag of finds

Misc. notes and correspondence.

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.

11.4 References

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