

EU 6979

SLI 5273 1690

97/8



23638 Ro

LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

1997

12 Friar Lane
LINCOLN LN
TEL: 01522 525252

Spalding, Horseshoe Road:

Archaeological Watching Brief

at

Plots 15-17 Horse Fayre Fields

NGR.: TF 2315 2200

Site Code SHF 97

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 131.97

Planning Application No. H16/0357/97

Report prepared for Stamford Homes

August 1997

25 WEST PARADE · LINCOLN · LN1 1NW

TELEPHONE 01522 544554 · FACSIMILE 01522 522211 · EMAIL las@lasarchaeology.demon.co.uk

PARTNERS: F.N.FIELD B.A.(Hons), MIFA · M.V.CLARK

SMR

**Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section**

10. SEPT

12 Friars Lane

LINCOLN LN2 5AL

Tel: 01522 575292 Fax: 01522 550727

Contents

Lists of Figures and Plates	2
Summary	3
Introduction	3
Archaeological Background	3
The Watching Brief	4
Conclusion	6
Acknowledgements	6
Archive List	7
Appendix 1: Report on The Fired Clay and Briquetage	

Figures

- Fig. 1** Location of Horsefayre Fields development, Spalding (based on plans supplied by Stamford Homes. Ordnance Survey maps Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).
- Fig. 2** Position of the monitored plots at the Horsefayre Fields development (based on the plan supplied by Stamford Homes).
- Fig. 3** Plan of archaeological features identified during the watching brief (McDaid and Tann, based on the plan supplied by Stamford Homes).
- Fig. 4** Section across pit 2 (McDaid after Tann).

Plates

- Pl. 1** Site of the monitored house foundations (looking NW).
- Pl. 2** Fills of pit 2 visible in the house trenches (looking north, scales 1m).
- Pl. 3** Red-brown and grey fills of ditch 3/4 visible in plan at base of machined trench (looking SW).
- Pl. 4** Ditch 5 visible in section in the trench face (looking west).
- Pl. 5** Section of ditch 5, as revealed in the trench face. Scales 1m, looking north.
- Pl. 6** The house plot after excavation of the foundations, showing undeveloped land to the west and SW (looking SW).

**Spalding, Horseshoe Road:
Archaeological Watching Brief at
Plots 15-17 Horse Fayre Fields**

NGR.: TF 2315 2200

Site Code **SHF 97**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 131.97

Planning Application No. H16/0357/97

Summary

Ditches and pits containing Romano-British briquetage and fired clay were found during monitoring of a four-block house foundation. The site has been interpreted as lying within or at the edge of a salt-making site. Subsequent marine transgression spread a layer of silt mixed with waste products of the salt-processing across the site, partially filling features which may have been in active use. A thin desiccated peat layer survived above the filled features, indicating the environmental sequence at this location.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Stamford Homes in June 1997 to conduct a watching brief during the mechanical excavation of footings for a four-house block (15, 15a, 16 and 17) at the western edge of the Horsefayre Fields development off Horseshoe Road, Spalding (Figs. 1 and 2; Pl. 1).

The watching brief was required to satisfy Condition 3 of South Holland District Council's full planning permission H16/0357/97, which stipulated a watching brief. LAS prepared a specification dated 3rd April 1997 which was approved. Previous development on the estate by Stamford Homes has taken place without archaeological conditions attached by South Holland District Council (SHDC).

The purpose of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological deposits disturbed during groundworks at the above site. Fieldwork was conducted by the author on 4th and 5th June 1997.

Archaeological Background

The development lies on or beside the projected course of a postulated Roman road alignment from Baston Outgang (SMR 22343) leading NE from the cropmark settlement complex at Rookery Farm (Hallam 2120E) past Raceground Farm (Hallam, in Phillips, C.W. (ed.) 1970 *The Fenland in Roman Times*, 287-9). Cropmarks of a small group of rectangular fields, probably Roman, are recorded 0.5km to the west of the development on the north side of Horseshoe Road.

The moated site of Monk's House (SMR 22356), 0.2km west of the area, marks a medieval grange.

The Watching Brief (Fig. 3)

Method

The foundation trenches were excavated by a machine fitted with a 0.5m wide toothed bucket to an average depth of about 0.8m except where deeper archaeological features were encountered. Here the redeposited fills were removed by machine in order that the foundations were constructed on undisturbed silt. The SHDC Building Inspector used a hand auger to check underlying deposits close to the SE corner, and located a change from light brown silt to yellower sandy silt 1.7m below the present ground level.

The base and sides of the house foundation trenches were inspected during excavation. At intervals the trench face was cleaned and the depths of the various deposits were recorded. Archaeological features were examined by hand using a trowel or hoe. Numbers were assigned for recording purposes to layers and features seen within the trench. These are referred to in the text and on the figures for ease of reference.

Layer 1

An extensive layer of brown silt containing flecks of fired clay, charcoal and several small sherds of poorly preserved briquetage was identified (App. 1). Briquetage is the term given to shallow troughs, pots, wedges and various supports fashioned from clay (sometimes on site) and either used direct or roughly fired before use in association with brine evaporation processes. The ceramic products had a very limited working life and in broken condition are found in quantity at Lincolnshire salt processing sites dating from the Bronze Age to the medieval period.

The surface of this deposit was 0.35m below present ground level in the SW corner, and 0.7m at the NE corner; its thickness was usually 0.1m, although slight variations may have indicated ephemeral features such as stake holes.

This layer covered the entire area of the house foundations and formed part of the fill of the other features recorded. It is interpreted as a mixed deposit of silt and occupation debris, perhaps mixed with industrial waste from salt evaporation processes on or beside this site. Levelling of this material is ascribed to the first floods of a marine inundation, probably responsible for the cessation of activity here.

Layer 1 was overlain by a thin layer of grey silt up to 0.07m thick but absent towards the south of the house plot. This probably represents waterlogging of the lower silt rather than a separate layer. Above the silt was another thin layer, up to 0.02m thick, of grey/black silty peat which had lost the peat structure through desiccation. This represents vegetation growth after the flood episode but while water tables remained high. A layer of grey silty clay 0.05m thick above this probably reflects the short-lived duration of that drier phase which seems to have been followed by another inundation. Small patches of buff sand on the western side of the plot may be the last identifiable remnants of that episode, but the thick black silt loam topsoil (up to 0.4m thick in the NE corner) is probably a version of freshwater silt

reworked by ploughing and market gardening activity. No archaeological finds were made in the black topsoil.

Pit 2

Part of a feature about 1m wide was seen in the trench faces on the western side of the block, close to the NW corner (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). The upper fill, a light brown silt, was 0.4m thick and sealed the primary fill of grey silt up to 0.15m thick. A cattle bone was recovered from the surface of the lower fill.

From the available evidence, it was interpreted as a small pit 1m diameter and centred on the exposed trench position. There is a slight chance that it was the SW terminal of a gully; on the northern house footing layer 1 dipped about 0.05m and might have been filling a linear feature.

Ditches 3 and 4

Part of a SW-NE aligned ditch was revealed in trench faces between the centre and the eastern side of the monitored block (Pl. 3). The base of the ditch was 1.3m below the present ground surface (apparently about 0.6m deep) and a width of 1.8m was recorded. The earliest fill was a grey silt, overlain by a red-brown silt fill with frequent fired clay and some briquetage inclusions (possibly the same material as 1) and then a light brown silt. The filled ditch was then sealed by the layer of desiccated peat seen over the site above layer 1.

It is likely that this ditch either turns towards the south at 3 (and continues as 5) although it could terminate there forming an entrance less than 1.5m wide between 5 and 3.

Ditch 5

Almost directly to the south of 3, a 1m wide ditch was visible in several trench faces, aligned north-south (Pls. 4 and 5). It extended beyond the southern wall of the monitored block, splaying to a width of 2m. The fills of this ditch seemed to be similar to those in ditch 3.

This ditch is almost certainly of similar date and function as the nearby ditch 3. It is likely to have been related to water management beside a saltern.

Pit/ditch 6

At the SE limit of the house plot, the western edge of a pit or ditch was exposed. The fill was a deposit of sandy lenses and silt flecked with fired clay and charcoal. It was mixed compared to fills in the other features recorded on the site and this suggested that it might have been reworked at a later date. The thin grey silty peat layer seen elsewhere on the site sealing the layer with occupation material was not evident here; as it had thinned towards the southern end of the site this may not indicate that 6 had removed it.

This feature produced a small piece of mortar, fired clay and several fragments of briquetage vessels.

Conclusion

The watching brief demonstrated that significant archaeological deposits had survived on this site. The nature of these deposits could not be established with certainty within the foundation trenches, but deliberately dug ditches, pits and smaller features (possibly post-holes) are known to have been present. Dating was dependent on fragments of briquetage which had decomposed within the moist silts, but a Romano-British date would not conflict with the position above thick marine flood sediments and below a thin peat band.

From the extensive layer of fired clay flecks and charcoal fragments within a silt layer, it is suggested that the site represents part of an early Roman salt-processing site close to the margins of tidal action. Waste heaps of ash and silt from the saltern's evaporation process have been levelled by an inundation which presumably brought activity on this site to an end. A short subsequent period of drier conditions enabled vegetation growth over the site which decayed in waterlogged conditions, producing the peat layer. Much of the overlying topsoil deposit may be reworked marine silt from a later transgression; it has effectively protected lower archaeological deposits.

This site cannot be understood from the limited information which could be gathered during excavation of the foundation trenches. Land to the east, north and south has already been developed, but open land to the west might provide an opportunity to investigate this before that too is developed (Pl. 6).

In a wider context, this industrial site fits within a landscape of plotted air photographic indications of Romano-British ditched fields, and was probably connected to a settlement site at Baston Outgang by a minor trackway which leads in this direction. This is further evidence of dense exploitation of the formerly coastal area around Spalding at that time.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful for the co-operation received from Stamford Homes, especially from Brendan Blythe, Philip Bevan (Buying Manager), the site foreman and the groundwork team.

LAS would also like to thank the Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section, especially Jim Bonnor (Archaeological Officer), Mark Bennet (SMR Officer) and Sarah Grundy (Assistant SMR Officer) for their help during preparation for this watching brief. Tom Lane gave advice on the briquetage material.

The illustrations and site archive were prepared by Mick McDaid. Briquetage was identified by Jane Cowgill, and the animal bone by James Rackham. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
27th August 1997

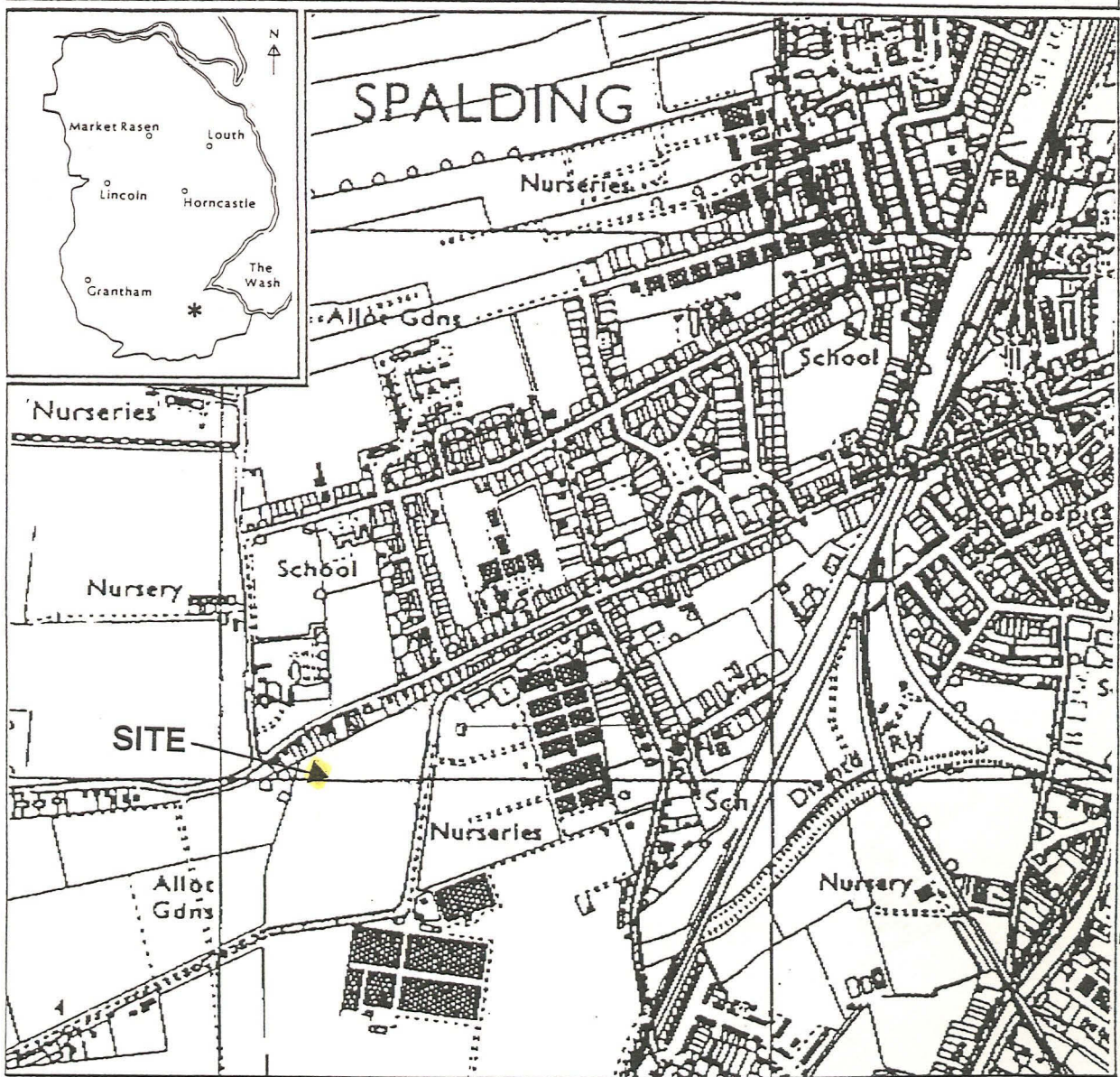
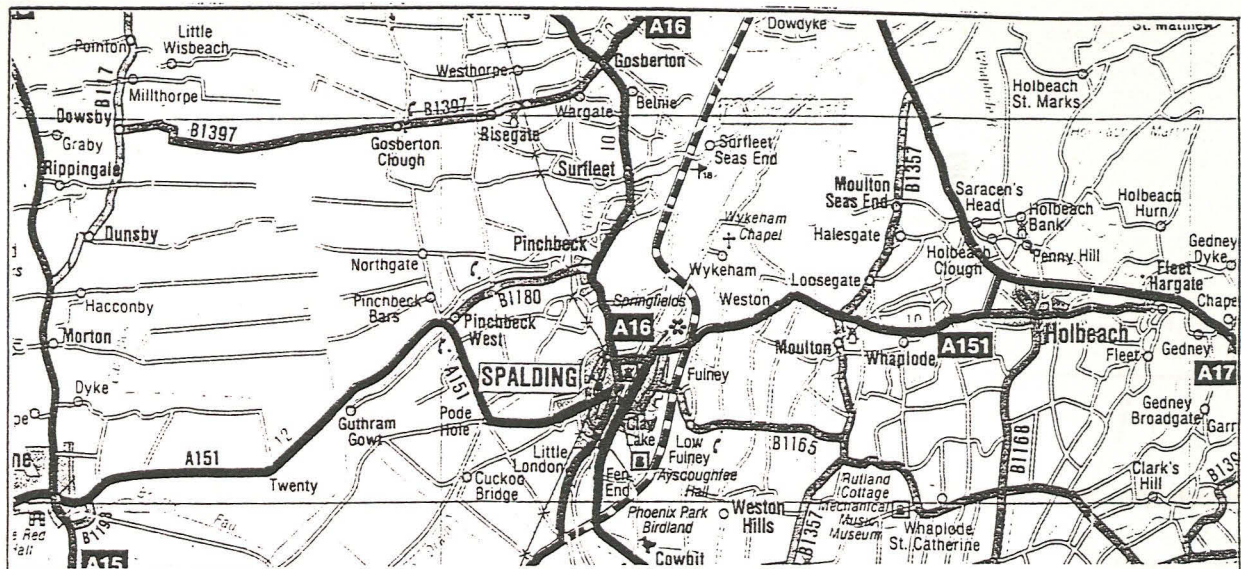


Fig. 1 Location of Horsefayre Fields development, Spalding (based on plans supplied by Stamford Homes. Ordnance Survey maps Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

Fig. 2 Position of Horsefayre Fields development in relation to Stamford Homes



Fig. 2 Position of the monitored plots at the Horsefayre Fields development (based on the plan supplied by Stamford Homes).

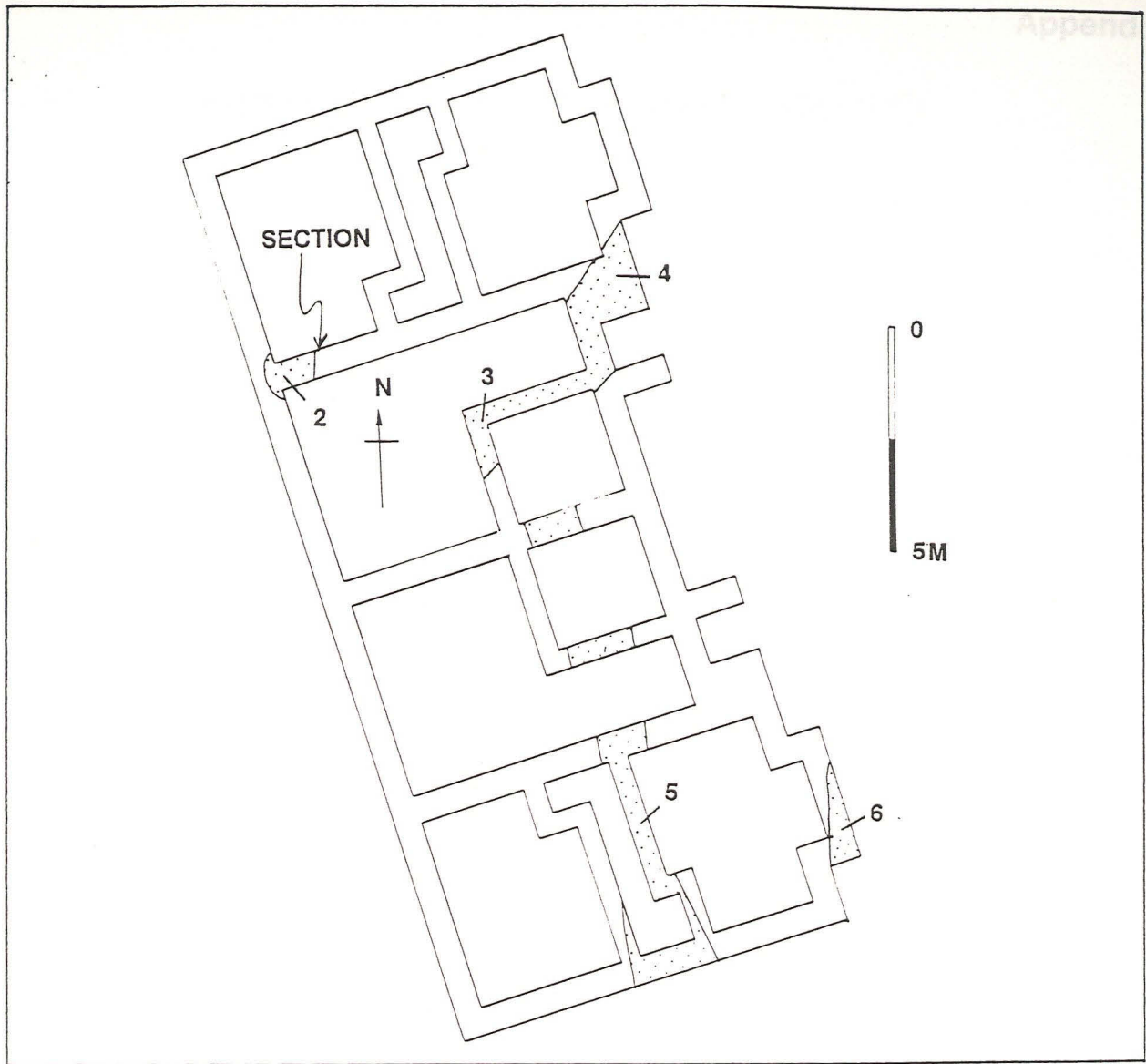
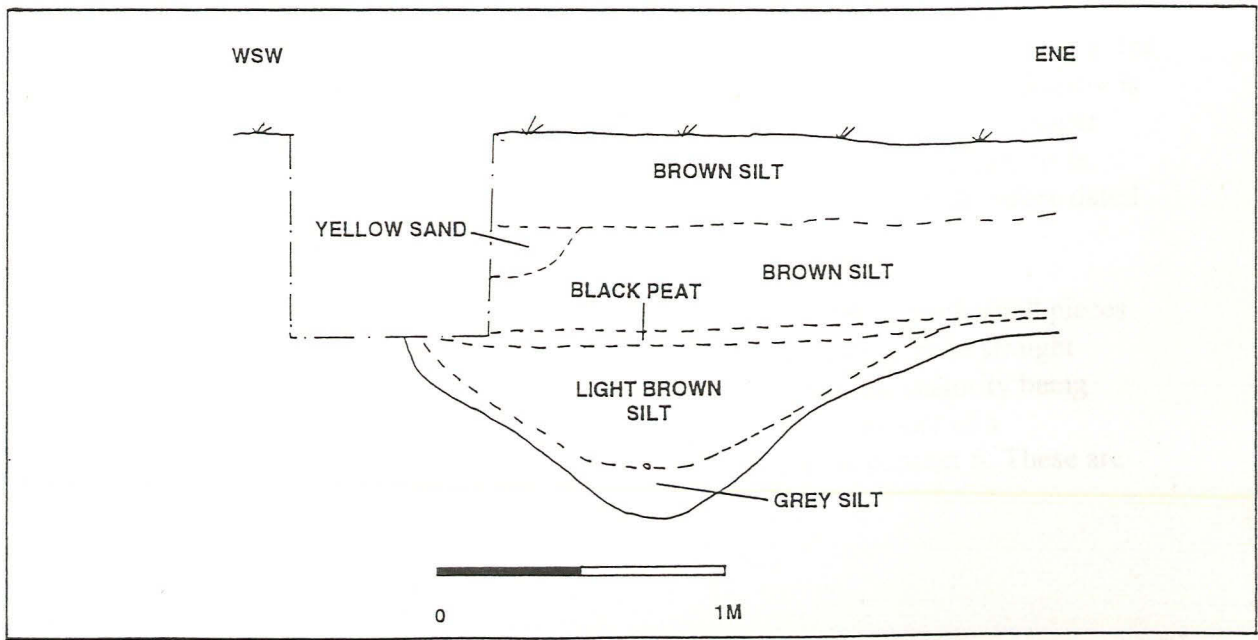


Fig. 3 Plan of archaeological features identified during the watching brief (McDaid and Tann, based on the plan supplied by Stamford Homes).

Fig. 4 Section across pit 2 (McDaid after Tann).



SPALDING HORSEFAYRE FIELDS (SHF97; LCCM 131.97)

THE FIRED CLAY AND BRIQUETAGE

by Jane Cowgill

August 1997

Catalogue

Con	Material	Form	Count	Weight	Comments
1	BRIQ		11	9	Red-white; 1xsurface; few ORGA - natural?
3	FCLAY		2	5	red; no organic inclusions
3	BRIQ	Vessel	6	11	Red-white; ORGA
4	BRIQ	Vessel	1	8	White-red; ORGA; 2xsurface
4	BRIQ	Vessel	1	14	White; ORGA; 2xsurface
4	BRIQ		2	1	White; ORGA; 1xsurface
4	BRIQ	Bar	1	14	End; ORGA; white surface -red core; 3xsurface
5	BRIQ	Vessel	3	1	Red-white; ORGA; 2xsurface
5	BRIQ	Vessel	1	2	Red-mauve; ORGA; 1xsurface
6	Mortar		1	2	
6	BRIQ	Vessel	1	4	Brown-red; 2xsurface; ORGA-natural?
6	BRIQ		3	3	White-grey-mauve; ORGA
6	FCLAY		1	2	oxidised; sandy fabric
6	BRIQ	Vessel	3	6	Red-white; ORGA; 1xsurface
6	BRIQ		1	44	L shape surfaces; bar/wedge? white-grey; ORGA

Codes used in the catalogue:

BRIQ Briquetage

FLAY Fired clay

ORGA An organic temper has been added to the clay

Discussion

The majority of this assemblage (33 pieces weighing 109g) is composed of small fragments, almost crumbs, of briquetage and is therefore evidence of salt making in the vicinity. This briquetage is generally white with red oxidised patches although there is a single red-brown sherd. It has a medium amount of added coarse organic temper, possibly straw or hay but no grain impressions were noted. The fabric seems to fit Lanes types T2A or T2B (Lane 1992, 219) which are in Group B and therefore dated to the Romano-British period (early?).

Most of the pieces are probably from the walls of vessels but being such small pieces the forms cannot be reconstructed although it is likely that they are from straight walled trays. The vessels range between 6 to 11mm thick, with the majority being 10mm thick. There are two other forms of briquetage present, the end of a ?rectangular bar from context 4 and a larger bar or wedge from context 6. These are

both in a similar fabric to the vessels although the larger bar/wedge has a greater amount of organic temper added.

Bibliography

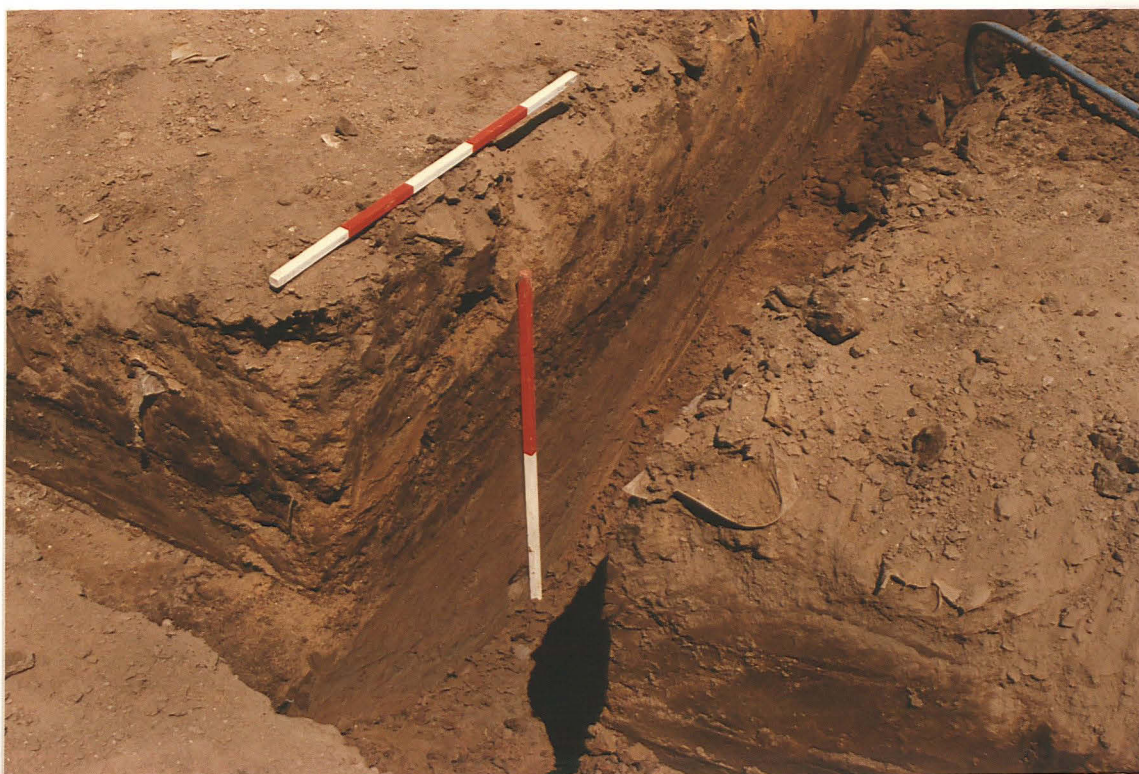
Hayes PP and Lane TW 1992, *The Fenland Project, Number 5: Lincolnshire Survey, The South-West Fens*, East Anglian Archaeol 55

Lane Tom 1992, Iron Age And Roman Salterns In The South-Western Fens in Hayes and Lane 1992



Pl. 1 Site of the monitored house foundations (looking NW).

Pl. 2 Fills of pit 2 visible in the house trenches (looking north, scales 1m).





PI. 3 Red-brown and grey fills of ditch 3/4 visible in plan at base of machined trench (looking SW).

PI. 4 Ditch 5 visible in section in the trench face (looking west).





Pl. 5 Section of ditch 5, as revealed in the trench face. Scales 1m, looking north.



Pl. 6 The house plot after excavation of the foundations, showing undeveloped land to the west and SW (looking SW).