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Archaeological Fieldwalking Report on

Land at the Former RAF Swinderby, Thurlby, Lincolnshire

NGR SK 859 625

SK 897 623

produced by

John Samuels Archaeological Consultants

on behalf of

Strawson Estates Ltd
East Retford
Nottinghamshire

Site Code : RAF 98
Accession No. : LCN CC 87.98

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JSAC 236/98/03

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Swinderby Airfield, Swinderby, Lincolnshire

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Summary

Strawson Estates Limited propose to develop land adjacent to the A46(T) road on the site of the former RAF Swinderby.

John Samuels Archaeological Consultants were commissioned to undertake a desk-based assessment including geophysical and aerial photographic survey(JSAC 236/97/01). It concluded that although no site specific remains were identified, the site was considered to have some archaeological potential owing to its proximity to the route of the Fosse Way and other recorded remains within the vicinity.

In response to the desk-based assessment the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven issued a project brief requesting further site evaluation by fieldwalking.

The area outlined in the project brief was walked in March 1997 following the acceptance of a detailed project specification (JSAC 236/98/02). Few artefacts were recovered despite reasonable visibility. It is therefore concluded that the area does not contain any significant archaeological deposits.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Strawson Estates Limited propose to develop land adjacent to the A46(T) road to the south of Swinderby, near Lincoln, Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The proposed development site lies in the administrative district of North Kesteven approximately 15 km south-west of Lincoln on the south side of the A46(T). It is 2 km south-east of Swinderby centred on NGR SK 895 625 at an altitude of 145m OD. The site has most recently comprised the now disused RAF Swinderby but was historically open fields and woodland. The site topography is generally flat with underlying geology of river gravels giving rise to sandy and coarse loamy soils (SSEW 1983).
- 1.3 A desk-based assessment by *John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC 236/97/01)* concluded that the site was of limited archaeological potential. In response, the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven requested further evaluation by field walking.
- 1.4 This report details the results of field walking undertaken on approximately 22.8 ha of the proposed development area in March 1997. Its format has been designed to conform to the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (1990). It is in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national and regional standards and guidelines, including:

Code of Conduct (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994)

Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994);

Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

Standard Brief for Archaeological Projects in Lincolnshire (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1997)

2.0 Archaeological and historic background

- 2.1 A comprehensive survey of the recorded history and archaeology of the proposed development area formed the basis of a desk-based assessment (JSAC 326/97/01). In short, it notes that Swinderby lies within an area extensively settled since prehistoric times, with the route of the Fosse Way Roman road forming the northern boundary of the site.
- 2.2 Recent fieldwork in connection with proposed improvements to the A46(T) between Newark and Lincoln has not identified any sites of potential archaeological significance in the Swinderby area. Areas of ridge and furrow developed by medieval ploughing techniques is recorded east of Haddington and Thurlby but does not extend into the study area.
- 2.3 Most recently the area has formed part of the former RAF Swinderby. The station was built in 1940 and remained an operational flying base until 1963. From 1963 to 1993 it was used as a training school for RAF recruits.

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 All fieldwork was undertaken and referenced to a 1:2500 site plan.
- 3.2 Each land unit was systematically covered by being walked at 30m transects with recovery points at every 30m. The grid was established by reference to a base line and marked by ranging rods.
- 3.4 Post- medieval pottery and brick/tile were recorded by presence/absence in each field. Artefacts dating to the medieval period or earlier and any objects not identifiable on site were collected for analysis.
- 3.5 All artefacts recovered during the survey were collected and packaged to standard site archive level and labelled with the land unit number and grid coordinate.
- 3.6 Following completion of the survey the finds were processed in-house and submitted for appraisal. These will form part of the site archive and will be deposited with the City and County Museum, Lincoln (Accession Number LCNCC 87.98) for long-term storage.
- 3.7 Field walking is a rapid and cost-effective archaeological prospecting method that enables a rapid assessment of large tracts of land to be undertaken. The principal drawback of the method is that only artefacts disturbed by ploughing and/or exposed by soil erosion are likely to be observed. Positive results do not show state of preservation such as the site having been ploughed out. A scatter of pottery may also be the result of importation such as through manuring. Negative results do not necessarily signify a lack of archaeological features. They may be buried under colluvial deposits and not truncated by the plough, or they may not contain sizable quantities of artefacts. For these reasons fieldwalking is rarely used in isolation from other evaluation techniques.

4.0 Results

- 4.1 The survey area was systematically walked in March 1998. The area was bisected north-south by Green Lane: most of the survey area was to the west and for convenience was named field 2. The remainder, to the east of Green Lane, Field 1.
- 4.2 A total of 20.5 ha was covered by the survey, out of a total area of 22.8 ha. This represents a coverage of more than 89% of the application area. The area not suitable for walking, approximately 2.3 ha, was the eastern half of Field 1.
- 4.3 Weather conditions during the survey were generally good. Both fields were sown with wheat that stood to a height of c.50-150mm. There was marked differential crop growth within the area giving variable ground cover of 50-100%. Areas of total cover were, however, limited patches and are not considered to have biased the collection rate. Generally, visibility was good up to ± 5 m along each transect.
- 4.4 Both fields had a low-density scatter of late post-medieval to modern pottery and brick/tile fragments. Fragments of exploded ordnance were observed in Field 1 and several pieces of ?aircraft wreckage in Field 2.
- 4.5 Field 1 also revealed a single abraded tile fragment. This was of typical Roman fabric and form but its very abraded nature makes definitive distinction between a Roman and C18/C19th date difficult. Three sherds of C14-C16th late medieval pottery sherds were recovered from Field 2. They were collected from the north-west corner of the field but their varied degree of abrasion suggests that they form part of a background scatter rather than implying the presence of archaeological remains.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Field walking on land of the former RAF Swinderby systematically surveyed more than 89% of the study area.
- 5.3 Abraded sherds of medieval pottery recovered from Fields 2, and a single fragment of possible Roman tile from Field 1, are not viewed as being indicative of *in situ* archaeological deposits, and are probably isolated finds possibly imported to the field during past manuring.
- 5.4 The fieldwalking has not identified any scatters of artefacts which might indicate the presence of hereto unidentified archaeological remains. This, in conjunction with the aerial photographic survey (JSAC 236/97/01), suggests the potential of the area to hold significant remains is negligible, and no further evaluation techniques need be applied.

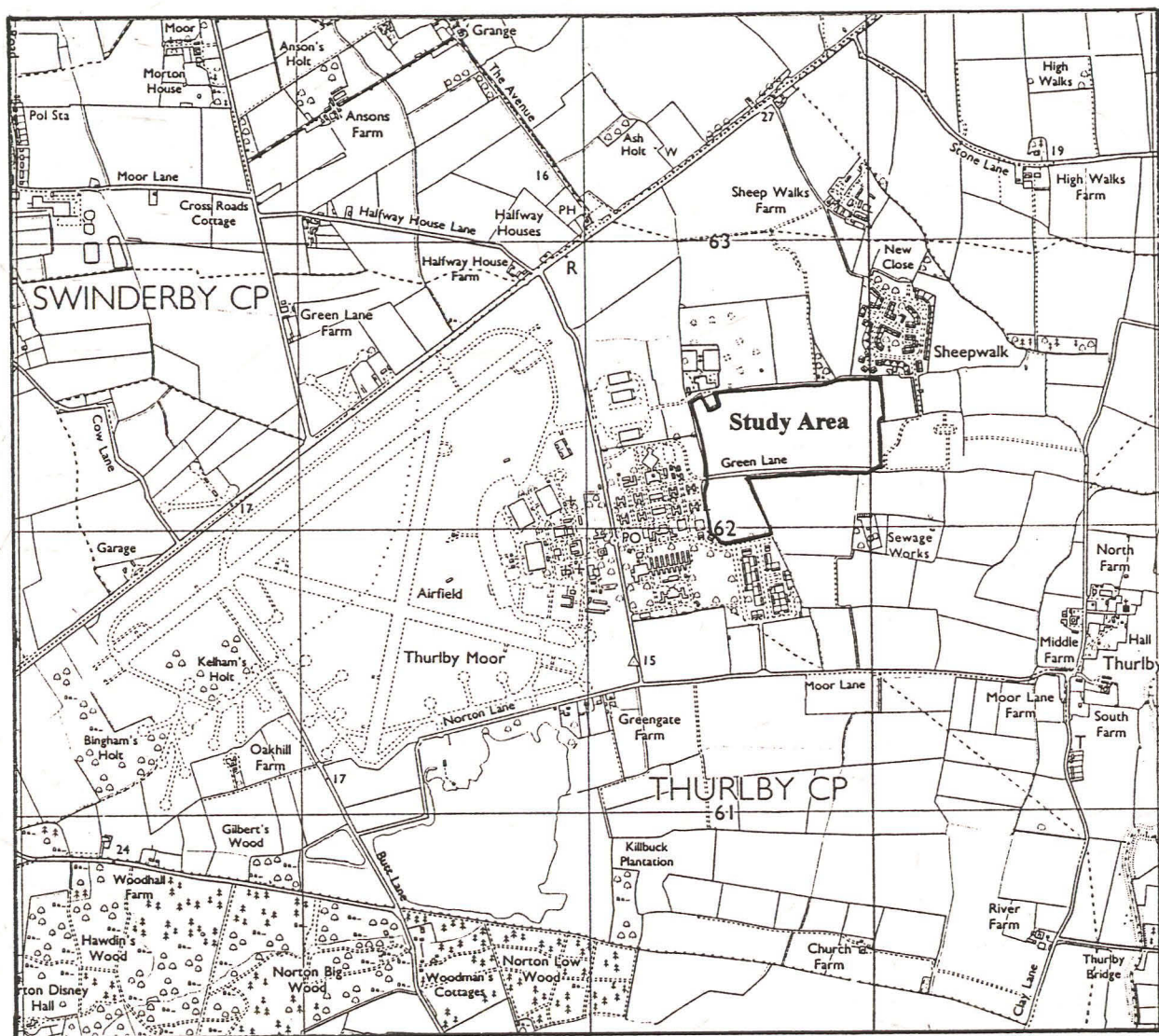
6.0 References

- Marsden JF 1997 'An Archaeological Assessment in connection with a proposed development at Swinderby Airfield, Swinderby, Lincolnshire' *JSAC 236/97/01* (unpublished)
- Orr K 1998 'Archaeological Evaluation Project Brief (Field Walking Survey) in *JSAC 236/98/02* 'A Specification for Archaeological Field Walking on Land at the Former RAF Swinderby, Thurlby Moor, Thurlby, Lincolnshire' (unpublished)
- Soil Survey of
England and Wales 1983 'Sheet 3, Midland and Western England' *Soils of England and Wales*

7.0 Figures

Figure 1 : Site Location, 1:25000

Figure 2 : Distribution of Retained Artefacts, 1:2500



Note : Map based upon Ordnance Survey with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved.
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Fig. 1: Site Location, 1:25000

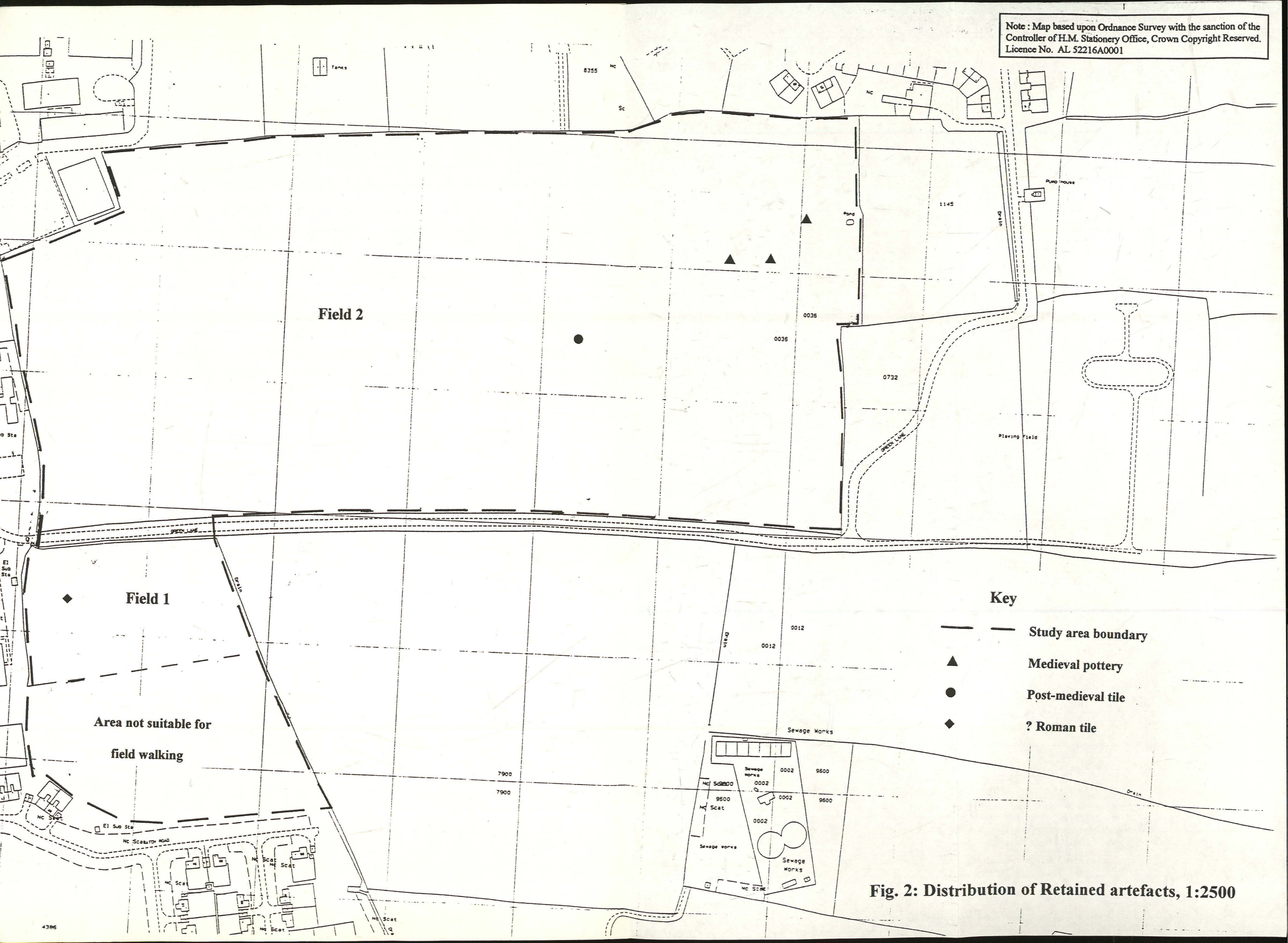


Fig. 2: Distribution of Retained artefacts, 1:2500

Appendix A : Pottery Archive

Presence/absence

Artefact Type	Field 1	Field 2
Blue and White Transfer printed earthenware	X	X
Black glazed earthenware	X	X
Brown salt glazed earthenware	X	X
Un-diagnostic brick/tile	X	X
Porcelain	X	
Aircraft wreckage		X
Exploded ordnance	X	

Retained Finds

Field	Grid	Date	Comments
1	C2	?Roman	Very abraded sand tempered fabric, probably Roman but may be C18/C19th field drain
2	P6	Post-med	Tile
2	T8	medieval	Body sherd, grey reduced fabric with green glaze. Quartz tempered, C14-C16th. Abraded but with one crisp edge from recent break.
2	U8	medieval	Body sherd, oxidised fabric with reduced core. Green glaze with quartz temper, C14-C16th. Abraded.
2	V4	medieval	Body sherd: outside oxidised inside reduced. Filler leached out. Very abraded, C14-C16th.