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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
LAND EAST OF CAISTOR ROAD, MARKET RASEN,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: CRM97
LCNCC Acc No. 116.98
NGR ~~TF 111 885~~
TF090 8965

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GRANTS L12174 L12175
SOURCES L16882 L16883
54577 L181854
LCNCC L11115

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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

22 MAY 98

Report prepared for Mr A Hancock on behalf of his clients
by Matt Wright
May 1998

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Lincoln
LN1 2JP
Tel. & Fax. 01777 228155

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Summary

- * *An archaeological field evaluation took place on a possible residential development on land East of Caistor road, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire. (NGR: TF 1090 8965).*
- * *Fieldwalking on the site resulted in the identification of concentrations of Romano-British artefactual remains, wholly contained within a deep spread of clay.*
- * *A programme of four evaluation trenches was agreed inside the proposed area of development following the detailed appraisal of the fieldwalking and Aerial Photography search data.*
- * *Trench 1 showed a network of modern land drains and deep plough marks and a natural gully type feature, sealed by a clay spread. Trench 2 also showed evidence of deep ploughing and land drains with the clay spread thinning out to the East. Trench 3 contained a modern on an East - West alignment with evidence of a hedge or fence to the South. Trench 4 contained only natural stratigraphy.*
- * *The results of this report suggest that the archaeological potential of this site is negligible.*

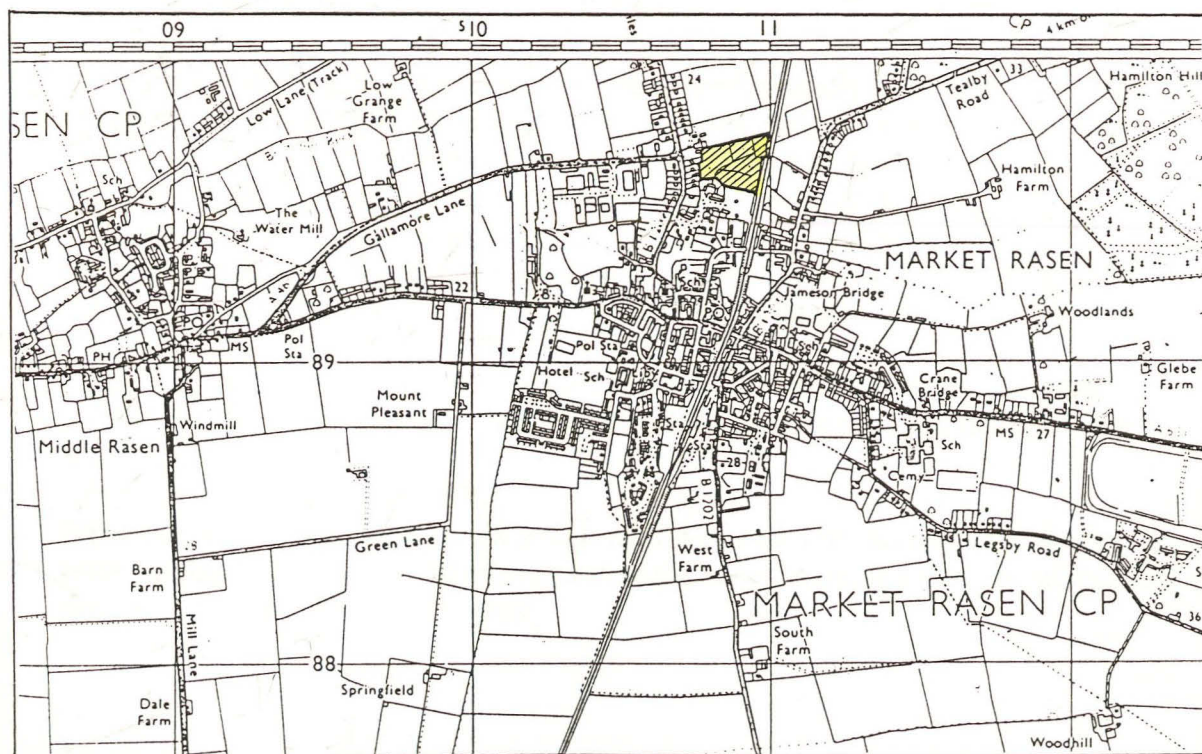


Fig. 1 1:25,000 site location map section.
(OS copyright reference AL 51521 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

A three day programme of archaeological trial trenching was carried out on land east of Caistor Road, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr A Hancock (Planning Consultant), acting on behalf of his clients (in response to a brief issued by the Assistant County Archaeological Officer).

The results of this report will assist the local planning authority to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed by a development, and the requirement or non-requirement for further archaeological intervention in advance of, or during, development.

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County SMR, and a short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, Lincolnshire History and Archaeology; effectively placing the information in the public domain. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and description

Market Rasen is in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 18km north-east of Lincoln. It is situated in the Clay Vale to the west of the Lincolnshire Wolds and lies within a zone of dense Cover Sands.

The proposed development site, which measures approximately 2.5 hectares in area, lies on the north side of the town. It is irregular in plan and is defined to the west by Caistor Road, and to the east by the railway: the north boundary is arbitrary and the south boundary is defined by modern housing. The west side of the site is as pasture and the topography is undulating and dipping to the east. The eastern margin of the meadow is defined by a small copse of birch trees with a drainage ditch running along the edge of the field. Most of the plot is covered with wild grasses and gorse.

To the east of the ditch (approximately two thirds of the site) is a freshly ploughed arable field sown with linseed. The area has a wide spread of modern building debris lying on the surface.

The mean height above modern sea level is approximately 25m. although the site is essentially an open, shallow valley with the central area occupying a distinct natural depression which is prone to flooding.

3.0 Geology and topography

The site is located within a zone of podzolised cover sands which lie in a north-south

plane, sandwiched between calcareous clays/glacial till on the west side (central Lincs.) and the chalk of the Wolds on the east side (Straw 1969). The cover sands at Market Rasen overly glacial clays.

4.0 Archaeological background

No previous records of this site appear on the Sites and Monuments Record although Market Rasen is known to have had an extensive Romano-British pottery industry, predominantly south of the town. Large areas of pottery production have been identified to the east and west of Linwood Road. Surface artefacts of this date have been found on the present site by the Assistant County Archaeologist.

During the Medieval period the site fell within the parish of Middle Rasen, following the enclosure act of 1780. This has suggested that the area was outside the zone of direct habitation due to the low lying nature of the land and therefore archaeological investigation was to focus on the areas indicated by the presence of Romano- British pottery sherds.

5.0 The objectives of field evaluation

The Assistant County Archaeologist issued a project brief in response to an outline planning application, requiring that four archaeological trenches should be excavated to determine the character, date, depth, state of preservation; extent and significance of any archaeological deposits within the site. The overall objective of the project, therefore, was to present the District Planning Authority with a set of data from which reasoned decisions may be taken regarding future management of the archaeological resource and the granting (or refusal) of planning permission on archaeological grounds (ie in line with the Deposit Plan for West Lindsey and 'Archaeology and Planning' *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990).

6.0 Methodology

As a precursor to intrusive evaluation the Assistant County Archaeologist recommended an Aerial Photographic Search and a Fieldwalking programme, the results of which would reaffirm or adjust the proposed trenching scheme outlined in the archaeological field evaluation specification.

6.1 Aerial Photographic Search - Results

The aerial photographic search was carried out by Mr J Smee of PCA over a period of one day. There were no relevant aerial photographs held by the Sites and Monuments Record although the Assistant County Archaeologist requested that those held by Lincoln City Council should be investigated. These photographs are archived at City Hall, Lincoln.

There were two photographs of significance to the search: from 1971 and 1993. The earlier photograph (Ref. HSL UK 71 140, 14th July 1971) showed hedge boundaries that no longer exist dividing the arable area of the site into three fields. In the eastern pasture field it is evident that at this time the meadow high ground was part of a larger field stretching south and utilised the curving break of slope as the field boundary.

The 1993 photograph (Ref. Geonex 1:25 000 10 94 010 #7, 8th June 1993) shows an apparent area of standing water in the central southern part of the site and a crop mark showing the pre-existence of a further possible field boundary or drainage ditch running NNW - SSE through this field. In the meadow the previously mentioned field boundary is now redundant and appears as a darkened, possibly circular, mark.

These results of this search to be used in conjunction with the fieldwalking strategy on the following day. Both of the photographs were viewed in two resolution magnitudes.

6.2 Fieldwalking - Results

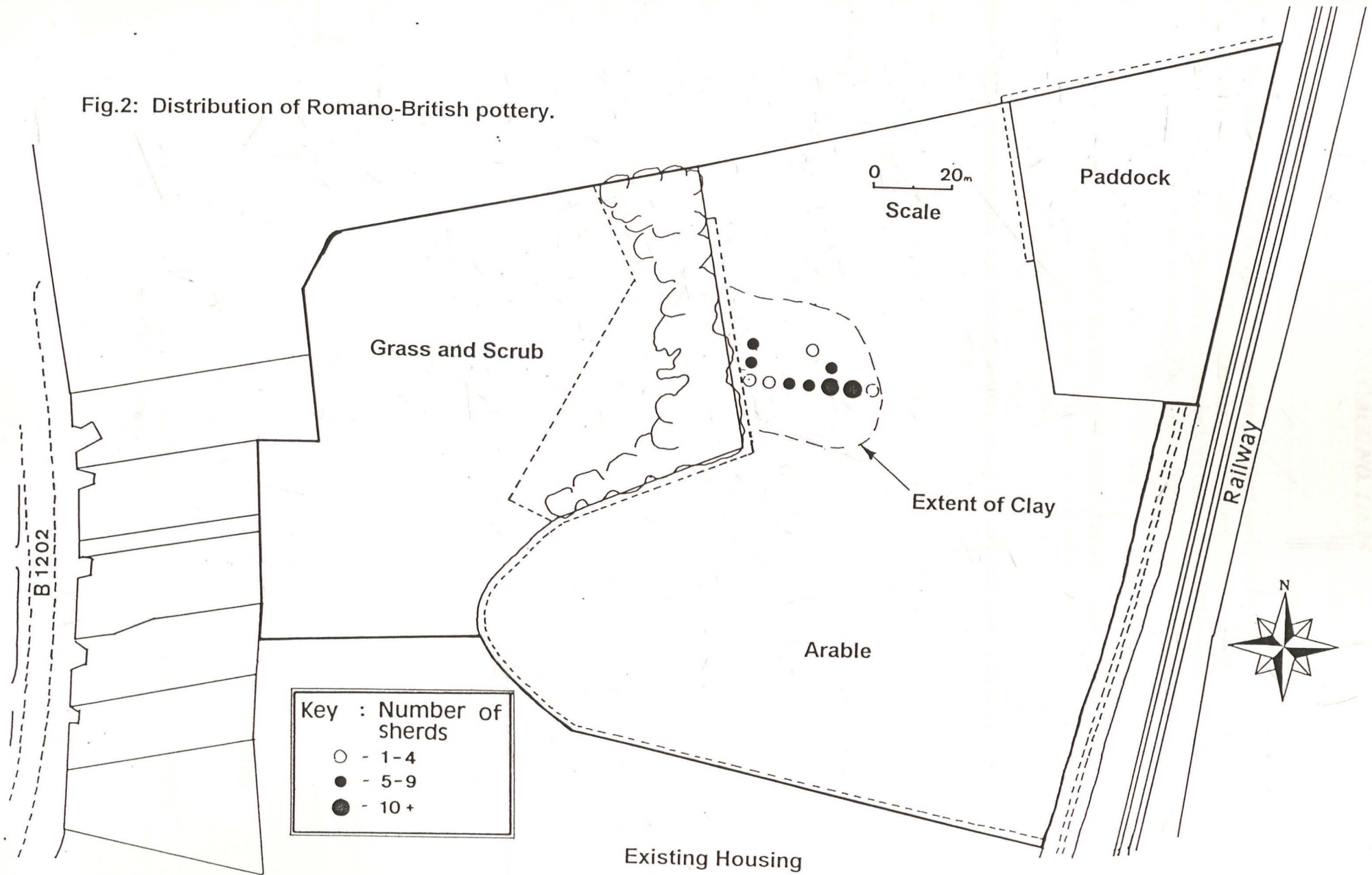
As part of this assessment, a programme of Archaeological Fieldwalking was undertaken over a period of one day by the writer, Mr M Wright, of PCA.

Conditions in the eastern area of the site were ideally suited to this type of survey as the arable land had been ploughed within the past month. The relatively dense vegetation in the pasture land to the west of the site resulted in a carefully considered contour survey that complemented the Aerial Photographic search.

Initially the author traversed the arable land noting a concentration of Romano British pottery wholly within a clay spread approximately 30m by 20m adjacent to the north - south drainage ditch running across the site. This area was divided into 20m grids and scanned at 5m intervals (ie 5m transects). Surface artefacts consisting only of Romano-British pottery were collected, removed, and plotted according to location.

The results of this survey are shown in Fig 2. and a summary is presented below.

Fig.2: Distribution of Romano-British pottery.



The eastern side of the site being recently ploughed made a very informative and structure approach possible for archaeological finds assessment. There had been a significant increase in the area that fieldwalking could cover since the evaluation specification had been produced. The western meadow was unsuitable for fieldwalking.

The arable land could be divided into a dark greyish brown, organic rich soil surrounding a light grey clay spread. The alluvial soil surface was littered with modern brick and tile rubble, glass, modern pottery, polythene and occasional clay pipe fragments. Within the clay spread it was possible to identify abraded RB pottery sherds in association with modern pottery, brick, tile and limestone fragments. A selection of RB pottery sherds were removed from the site for further analysis.

These results show an absolute concentration of Romano-British pottery within the clay spread but no other finds of archaeological significance across the eastern side of the site.

The most important factor of the fieldwalking investigation was the conversation, at the end of the work, with a farm worker in the process of raking the field by tractor. He informed the author that the clay area had been a landfill dump, under agreement with the present landowner, from topsoil stripping of a building construction site in nearby Tealby, at least 10 years ago. This could explain the concentration of Romano-British pottery but would need further investigation.

In light of this information and the fieldwalk survey results, it was necessary to inform the Assistant County Archaeologist in advance of the intrusive evaluation programme. The significance of the clay spread needed to be addressed (It was the presence of Romano-British pottery sherds that had formed the basis of the investigation).

Discussions with the Assistant County Archaeologist resulted in an adjusted and reduced trenching programme, concentrating on the definition of the clay spread. The scheme would now comprise four trenches of 15m.

7.0 Evaluation Methodology

The four trenches (located in Fig. 3) were sited as follows:

Trench 1: Located to cover the Romano-British pottery find concentrations within the clay spread. Orientation NE - SW.

Trench 2: Located across the boundary between the clay and topsoil to define the nature of the clay. Orientation E - W.

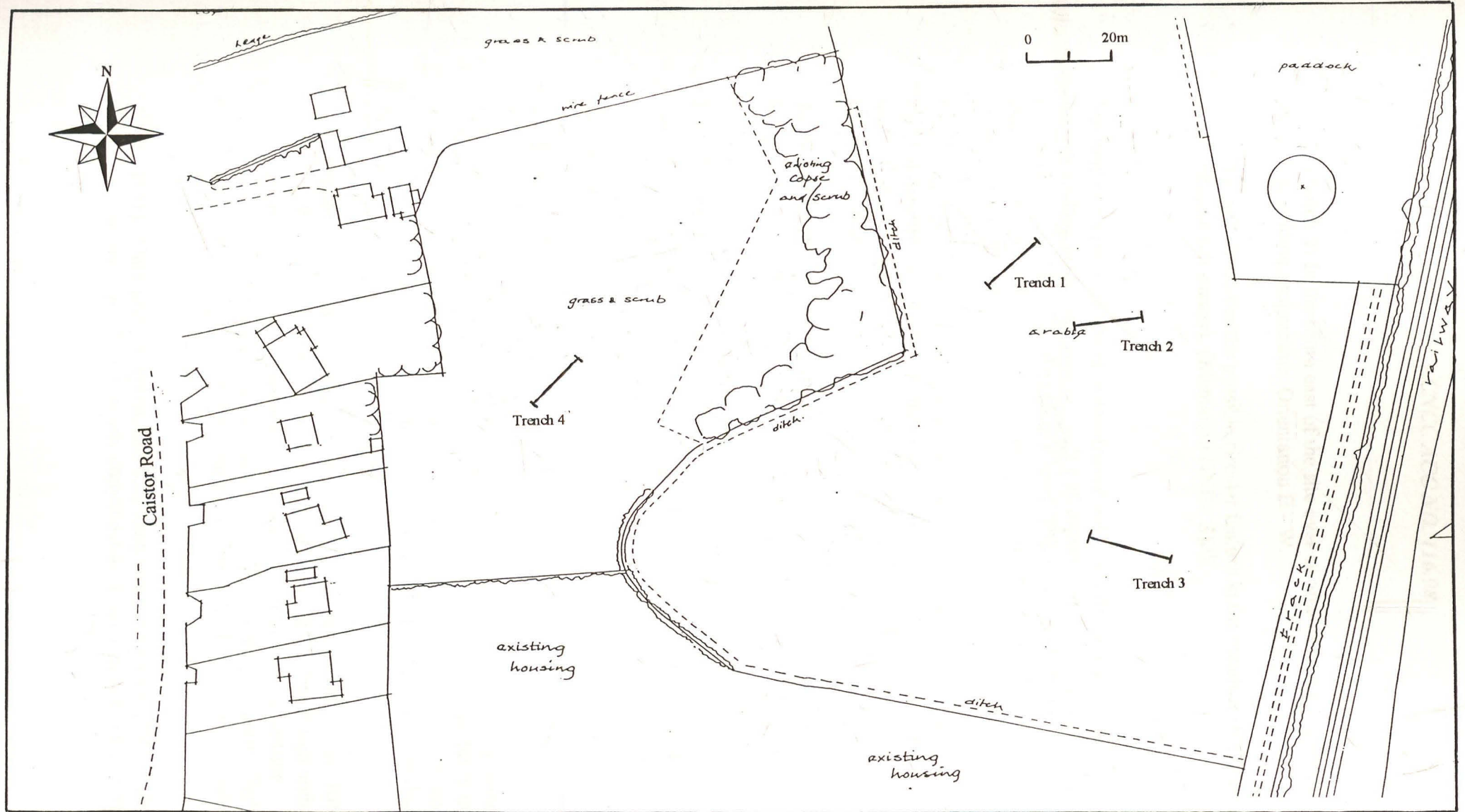


Fig 3 Site plan showing trench locations.

Trench 3: In the south east of the site over an area of maximum impact from the building programme. Orientation E - W.

Trench 4: Across the possible circular feature in the meadow (from the aerial photograph survey). Orientation NNE - SSW.

The trenches were marked-out in accordance with the brief and a JCB, fitted with a smooth ditching blade was used to remove all topsoil and overburden to the top of the first significant archaeological or natural level. This was a gradual process involving excavation in spits under constant archaeological supervision. All subsequent excavation was by hand.

Recording was undertaken using standard proforma context sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations and stratigraphic relationships). All deposits were drawn to scale (1:20 or 1:50) in both plan and section. Comprehensive photographic recording was undertaken and some prints are reproduced in this report.

Artefacts (Romano British pottery) were recorded according to their stratigraphic contexts and were subsequently removed from the site for processing.

The excavation was supervised by the author, with the assistance of Mr R Schofield, Mr D Brown and Mr J Smee.

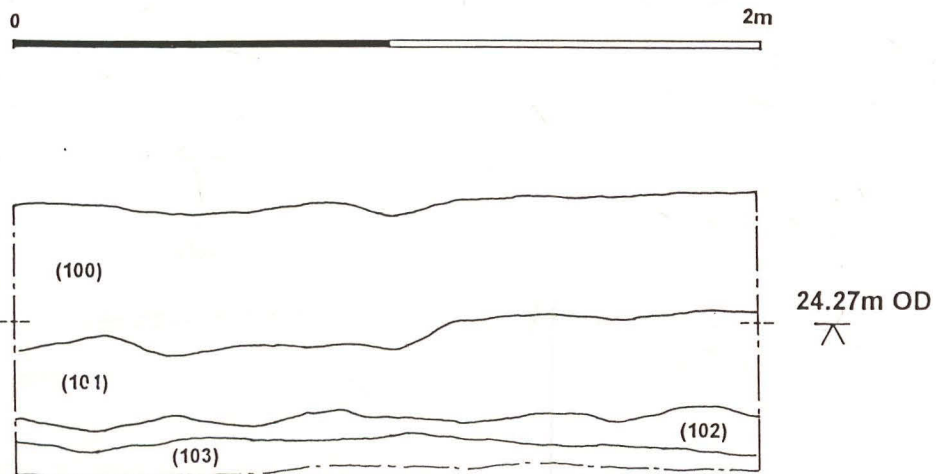
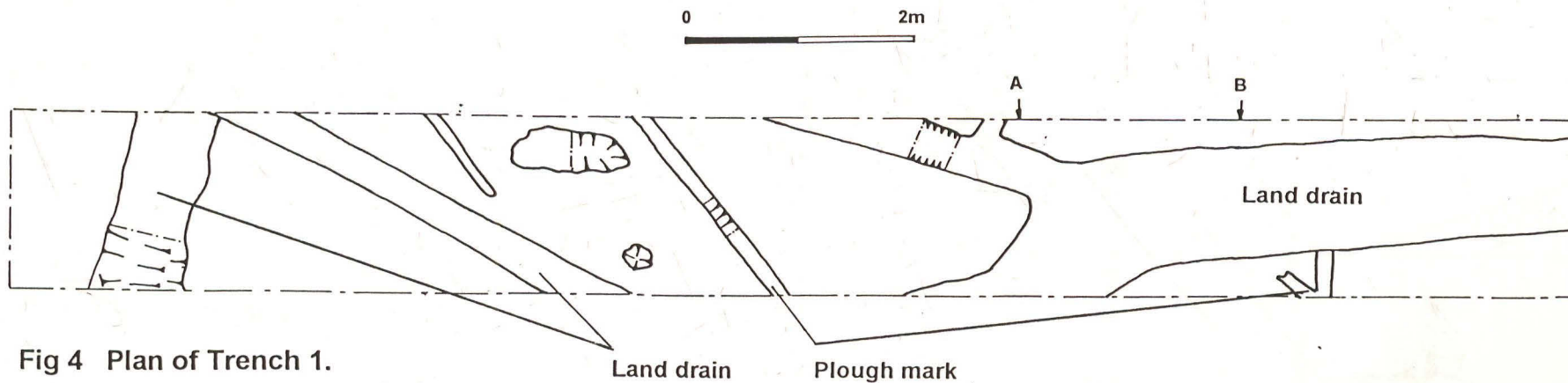
8.0 Results

8.1 Trench 1 (Figs.4 & 5)

Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 0.75 m.(max) beneath the modern ground surface onto the natural sand. The deposits were in a uniform sequence through the trench. No archaeological features were exposed, excluding modern land drains, a large service trench and a natural gully. The stratigraphy may be summarised as follows:-

(100) Mixed, ploughed clay 'topsoil' with sand and silt (85% clay, 10% sand). Very blocky nature with compacted clay broken into rough nodules by the plough. Coarse inclusions of abraded RB pottery; rare, limestone fragments; common, modern brick, tile, modern pottery; common. Faint black humic horizon at base of layer, suggested buried and rotted crop remains. 0 - 0.35m.

(101) Dark greyish brown, silty clay-sand (sand 20%, clay 10%). Fairly well sorted layer though poorly consolidated. Coarse inclusions of modern



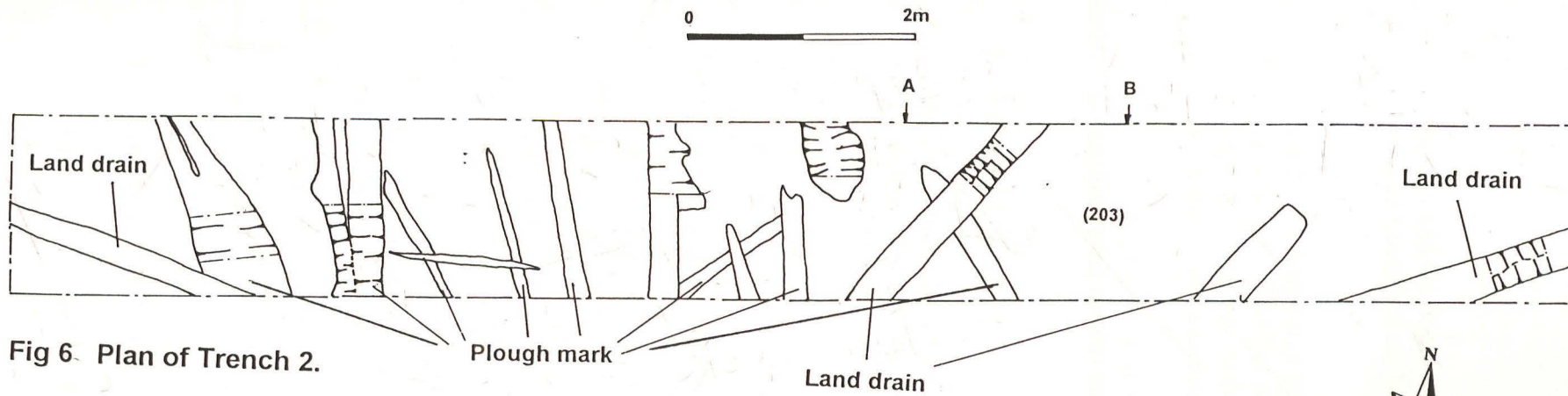


Fig 6. Plan of Trench 2.

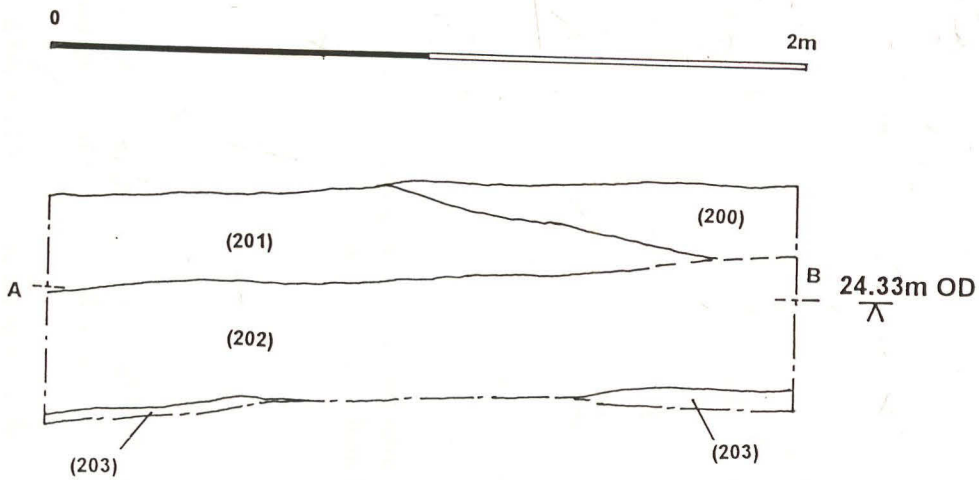


Fig 7 South facing section in Trench 2.

pottery and tile fragments; common. Iron mottling in isolated areas. Clay content possibly from leaching of (100). 0.35 - 0.60m.

(102) Mid grey silty sand (80% sand) with iron mottling. Well sorted, homogenous layer but poorly consolidated. This context is confined to Trench one. Seals natural sands and fills all undulations and plough marks in trench base. No coarse inclusions noted. 0.60 - 0.68m.

(103) Light yellow-orange to grey, very poorly consolidated natural aeolian (wind blown) sand. Very well sorted context with no inclusions.

8.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 5 & 6)

Trench 2 was excavated to a depth approximately 0.60m.(max). beneath the modern ground surface onto the natural sands. No archaeological features were noted only, land drains. The deposit sequence may be summarised as follows:-

(200) Very dark grey silty sand (90% sand), poorly consolidated homogenous layer with coarse inclusions of modern building debris, pottery; common. High, fresh organic content. Occurs in the eastern end of Trench 2 overlying (201). Topsoil, 0 - 0.24m.

(201) Mixed, ploughed clay with sand and some silt (95% clay, 5% sand & silt). Very blocky nature with compacted clay broken into rough nodules by the plough. Coarse inclusions of sub-angular limestone fragments;common, modern brick, tile, modern pottery; common. Layer thinning and wedging out to east. 0.24 - 0.54m. Same as (100).

(202) Very dark grey slightly, silty sand with iron mottling. Well sorted poorly consolidated layer. Sub-angular chert fragments; moderate, modern pottery, brick, tile debris; common. 0.30m

(203) Light yellowish orange to grey, very poorly consolidated natural aeolian (wind-blown) sand. Very well sorted context with no inclusions.

8.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 7 & 8)

Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 0.53m (max). A topsoil (300) seals the trench. The deposit sequence may be summarised as follows:-

(300) Level layer of dark greyish brown topsoil the same as (200)

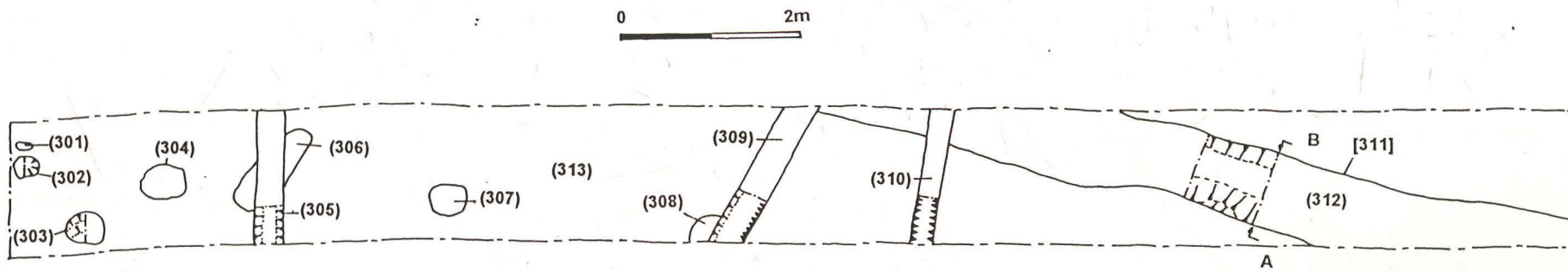


Fig 8 Plan of Trench 3.

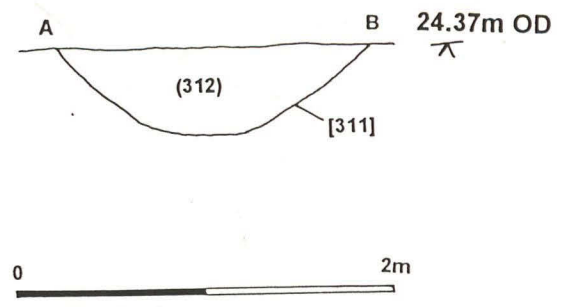


Fig 9 Profile of ditch [311] in Trench 3.

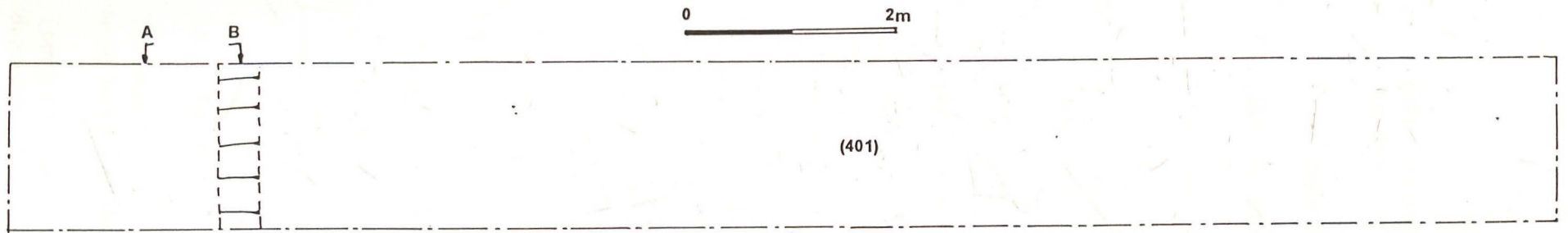


Fig 10 Plan of Trench 4.

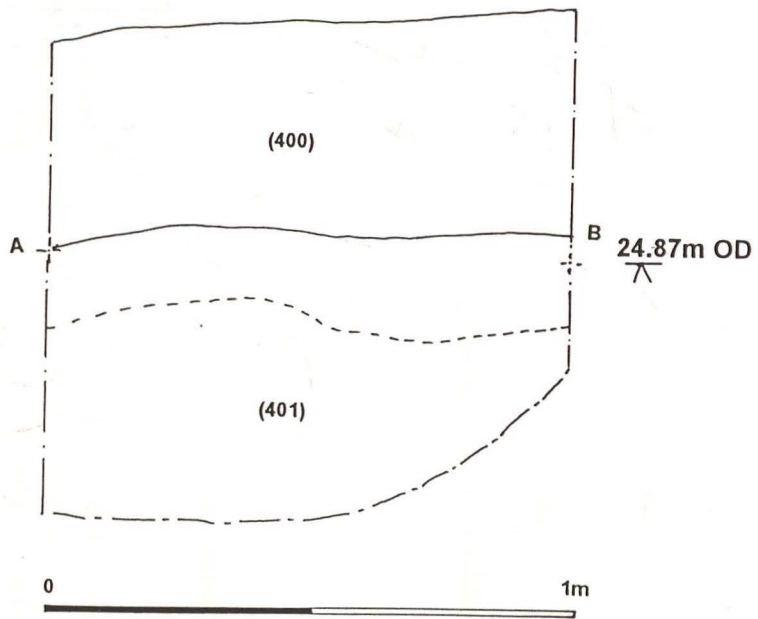


Fig 11 North West facing section in Trench 4.

- (301) Irregular shaped root bole in west of trench. Fresh root material abundant.
- (302) Same as (301).
- (303) Probable fence post hole south of the hedge line.
- (304) Same as (303).
- (305) Land drain slot.
- (306) Amorphous root created feature.
- (307) Modern post hole, same as (303) and (304).
- (308) Same as (307).
- (309) Vertical sided land drain slot.
- (310) Same as (309)
- (311) NW - SE linear ditch with root disturbance on southern edge. Hedge bank ditch.
- (312) Fill of (311).
- (313) Light yellowish orange to grey, very poorly consolidated natural aeolian sand. Very well sorted context with no inclusions.

8.4 Trench 4 (Figs. 9 & 10)

- (400) Topsoil, dark greyish brown silty sand. Thick turf covering.
- (401) Pale orange natural sand with iron panning/staining due to leaching of minerals and fertilisers through (400).

9.0 Summary and Conclusions

The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological remains that would be under threat from the proposed development scheme.

Trench 1 revealed a network of land drains, deep plough scores, a natural gully and depression. Trench 2 showed land drains, plough markings and two natural depressions. Trench 3 uncovered three land drains, a modern ditch and a series of

modern fence post holes. Trench 4 had no features and was subsequently sandbagged to examine the natural sand depth.

The Romano-British pottery that was found is of no significance to the overall picture of the archaeology on this site. It has been shown that these finds come from nearby Tealby which leaves no archaeological remains in the excavated trenches. The Romano-British pottery from this site has not been assessed by a pottery specialist as these finds are irrelevant and this would be an expensive and unnecessary task.

In the opinion of the writer, further archaeological intervention is unlikely to significantly enhance the archaeological record for Market Rasen.

10.0 Acknowledgements

PCA would like to thank Mr A Hancock (Planning Consultant) for commissioning this evaluation on behalf of his clients, and providing some of the relevant background information.

11.0 References

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12.0 Appendix : Site archive

Primary records and finds are currently with PCA; a detailed site archive of the paper and physical element is in preparation. This will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln within six months following project completion. A summary of material contained in the archive is presented thus:-

x 24 context record sheets

x 4 1:50 Trench plans, x 3 1:20 Section drawings, x 1 1:10 Section drawing

x 1 colour print film

x 1 bag of artefacts

interim/developers report

miscellaneous notes and correspondence.

Following submission, the site archived may be accessed at Lincoln City and County Museum by quoting the global accession number: LCNCC ACC NO. 116.98

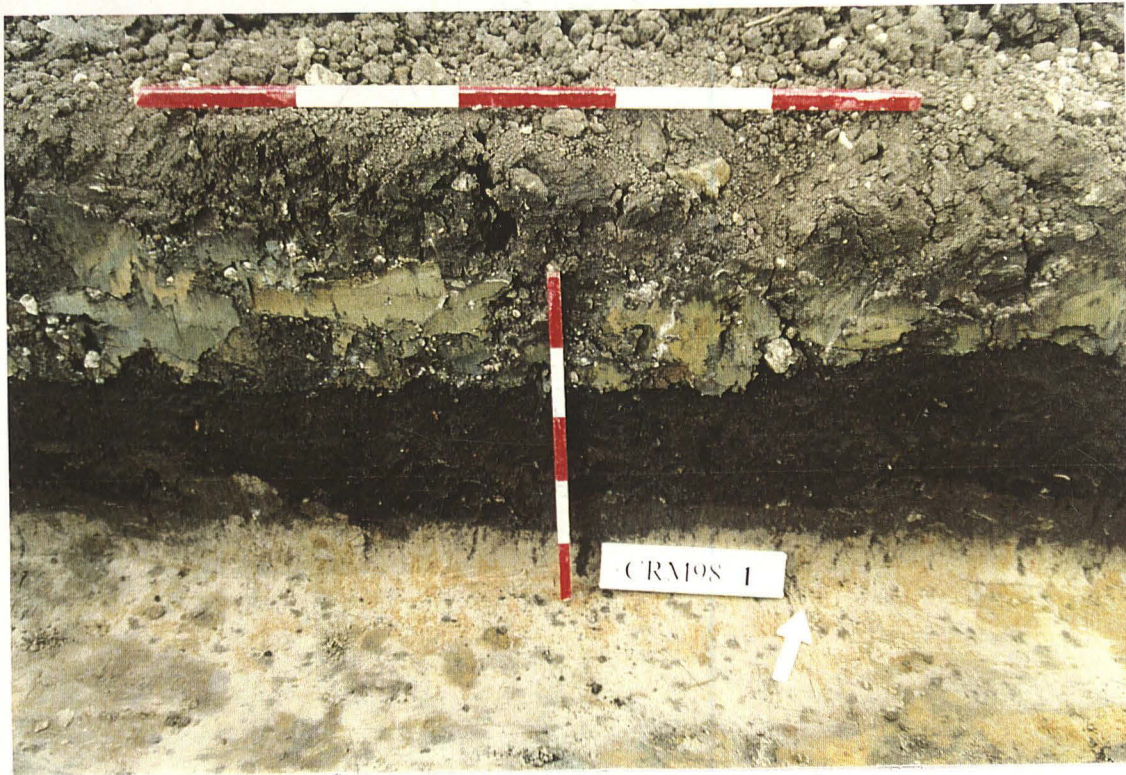
Appendix 2 Colour photographs



P1. General view, west side of site, looking west (Trench 4 in background)



P2. General view, east side of site, looking north-west, with clay zone indicated by dotted line (also, Trenches 2 and 3)



P3. North section, Trench 1, showing dumped clay deposit overlying modern topsoil



P4. General view, Trench 3, looking east (all of the dark areas, although dramatic, fill modern plough scores, land drains or root voids)