

**LAND TO THE WEST OF BOSTON ROAD,
HORNCastle, EAST LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR: TF 2620 6830
ELDC Planning Ref.: Pre-application
PCAS job no. 1106
Site code: HBRE 13
Archive acc. code: 2013.164

Prepared for
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Summary

An archaeological evaluation consisting of two 10m x 2m trenches was undertaken on a site to the west of Boston Road, at the southern edge of the town of Horncastle.

The site lies approximately 450m from an area of known Roman occupation at Stafford Gardens, interpreted as part of the extra-mural settlement of Roman Bannovallum.

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered in either of the evaluation trenches. This result appears to corroborate the findings of a preceding geophysical survey, and the archaeological potential of the site thus appears to be low.

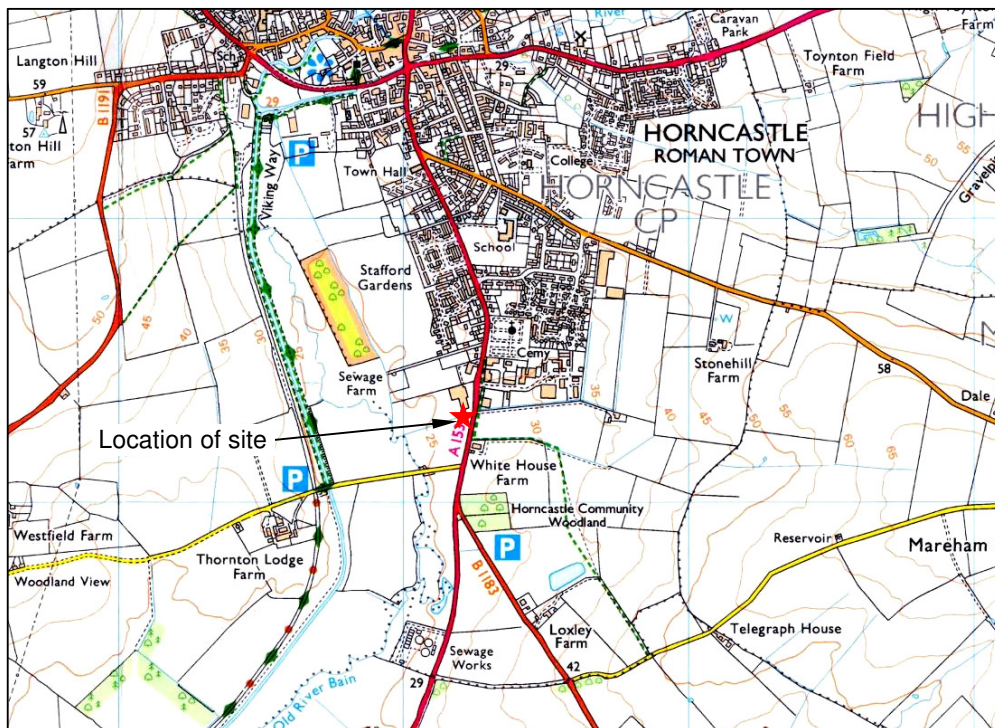


Figure 1: Location plan of the site at scale 1:25,000. The position of the proposed development site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Mr. C Massey to carry out an archaeological evaluation, involving the excavation of two 10m long trenches on land to the west of Boston Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire. The evaluation took place to inform a forthcoming planning application for the construction of a place of worship with an associated parking area.

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1 and 2)

Horncastle lies within the administrative district of East Lindsey, approximately 28km east of Lincoln. The town is centred on the crossroads of the A153 and A158, with the confluence of the Rivers Bain and Waring directly to the north-west.

The proposed development site is located to the west of the A153 Boston Road, approximately 1km to the south of Horncastle town centre. It encompasses the north-eastern corner of an arable field and is bordered to the north by a clothing factory. At the time that the evaluation took place, the field had been harvested and was under stubble (plate 1). The national grid reference for the site is centred at TF 2620 6830; its area is 0.5 hectares.

3.0 Topography and Geology

The site lies near the base of the west-facing slope of the valley of the River Bain; the modern, canalised river runs some 550m to the west, while its narrow, meandering former course passes the site at an approximate distance of 250m, forming the western boundary of the field in which the proposed development is situated. The site is level, with a mean elevation of c. 25m AOD; the surrounding landscape slopes gently towards the river.

The drift geology of the area consists of Lower River Terrace deposits of sand and gravel, following the course of the River Bain. The underlying solid geology is undifferentiated Jurassic Ancholme Group clays and calcareous mudstones (BGS, 1995).

4.0 Planning Background

A planning application is in preparation for the construction of a new place of worship, with adjoining car park and green areas. The Planning Archaeologist for LCC, acting as advisor to East Lindsey District Council, advised that the proposed development site has the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest, and recommended that an archaeological evaluation should be carried out, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, to provide further information on the archaeological potential of the site and the impact of the development proposals. The results of the evaluation will be used to support the forthcoming application and inform any planning recommendations required.



Figure 2: Plan of the proposed development at scale 1:500, showing the positions of the evaluation trenches.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

The place-name 'Horncastle' appears in the Domesday Book as *Hornecastre*, 'the Roman walled town or fort on the spur of land (between two rivers)' (Cameron, 1998). A fortified Roman town, speculatively identified with the documented settlement of *Banovallum*, was situated in the angle formed by the confluence of the River Waring and the River Bain at TF 2610 6906 and covering a known area of c. 855m by 674m; substantial stretches of the fortifications survive above ground (County SAM refs. 44/a to 44/h).

A programme of archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical survey and trial trenching on the site of a proposed residential development at Stafford Gardens, approximately 450m to the north-north-east of the present evaluation site, showed that the site contained extensive buried archaeological remains of Roman date, some of which had previously been identified by aerial photography and geophysical survey. The remains, which occupied the whole of the development area, appeared to derive from the Roman extra-mural settlement and to have been entirely concerned with land management. A landscape of small fields appeared to be represented, with repeatedly recut ditches acting both as boundaries and drainage channels. Although none of the features investigated could be attributed to housing or anything other than farming practice, both housing and industry appear to have been situated close by during the Romano-British period. Fragments of building material indicated the presence of at least one substantial and sophisticated dwelling in the neighbourhood, with an underfloor heating system; limited palaeoenvironmental evidence, also suggested domestic activity within the general area, while a fragment of vitrified furnace lining indicates that metal-working was likely to have occurred on or very close to the site (Francis *et al.*, 2013).

A geophysical survey was carried out by Pre-Construct Geophysics as a precursor to intrusive evaluation of the site. The survey did not identify any clearly defined geophysical anomalies that may have indicated the presence of sub-surface archaeological remains, and it was concluded that the archaeological potential of the proposed development area was low (Bunn, 2013).

The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) records the find of a Roman artefact scatter, comprising a group of thirteen, 3rd- and 4th-century coins with a fragment of a cast copper-alloy dish and pottery including samian ware, at the central NGR of the proposed development site. However, the high proportion of metal artefacts in the assemblage suggests that it was recovered by metal-detecting, and may therefore comprise a large number of discrete finds retrieved from a wide area around a centrally recorded grid reference (HER 42213).

6.0 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of two 10m x 2m trenches. As the geophysical survey had produced no clearly defined anomalies on which the trenches could be targeted, they were sited according to the proposed layout of the development, with Trench 1 within the car park approach road and Trench 2 within the footprint of the proposed building, at right-angles to Trench 1 (fig. 2).

The trenches were located on the site by triangulation, and machine excavated to the surface of the natural drift geology under archaeological supervision, using a 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand, and the trenches were recorded.

The evaluation trenches were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:50, and sample sections of the trench baulks were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS

record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept; a digital photographic record, supplemented by colour slide photography, was made, and extracts from this are reproduced in Appendix 1.

The fieldwork was carried out by Julian Sleep, and took place on 25th September, 2013; all site work was completed within one day. Weather conditions were foggy and overcast.

7.0 Results (fig. 3)

No archaeological deposits or features were exposed in either trench. Both trenches were excavated to natural sands and gravels, recorded as 102 in Trench 1 and 202 in Trench 2. The natural deposits in both trenches were overlain by a shallow layer of mid-orange sand, recorded as 101 in Trench 1 and 201 in Trench 2: this may have been a subsoil, or the weathered surface horizon of the underlying natural. Both trenches were sealed by dark brown silty sand topsoil, recorded as 100 in Trench 1 and 200 in Trench 2.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation results corroborate the negative results of the geophysical survey, indicating that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Archaeological evaluation was an effective follow-up to geophysical investigation in confirming the initial interpretation of the site as being of low archaeological potential. The body of data produced by both surveys will suffice to inform the planning and development process.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting of the site recording and the finds, will be deposited with printed copies of this report at The Collection, Lincoln, in or before April, 2014; following deposition, the archive will be available for consultation under the LCNCC accession number 2013.164. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Mr. Colin Massey for this commission; thanks are also due to Mr. Bob Massey for his co-operation during the evaluation.

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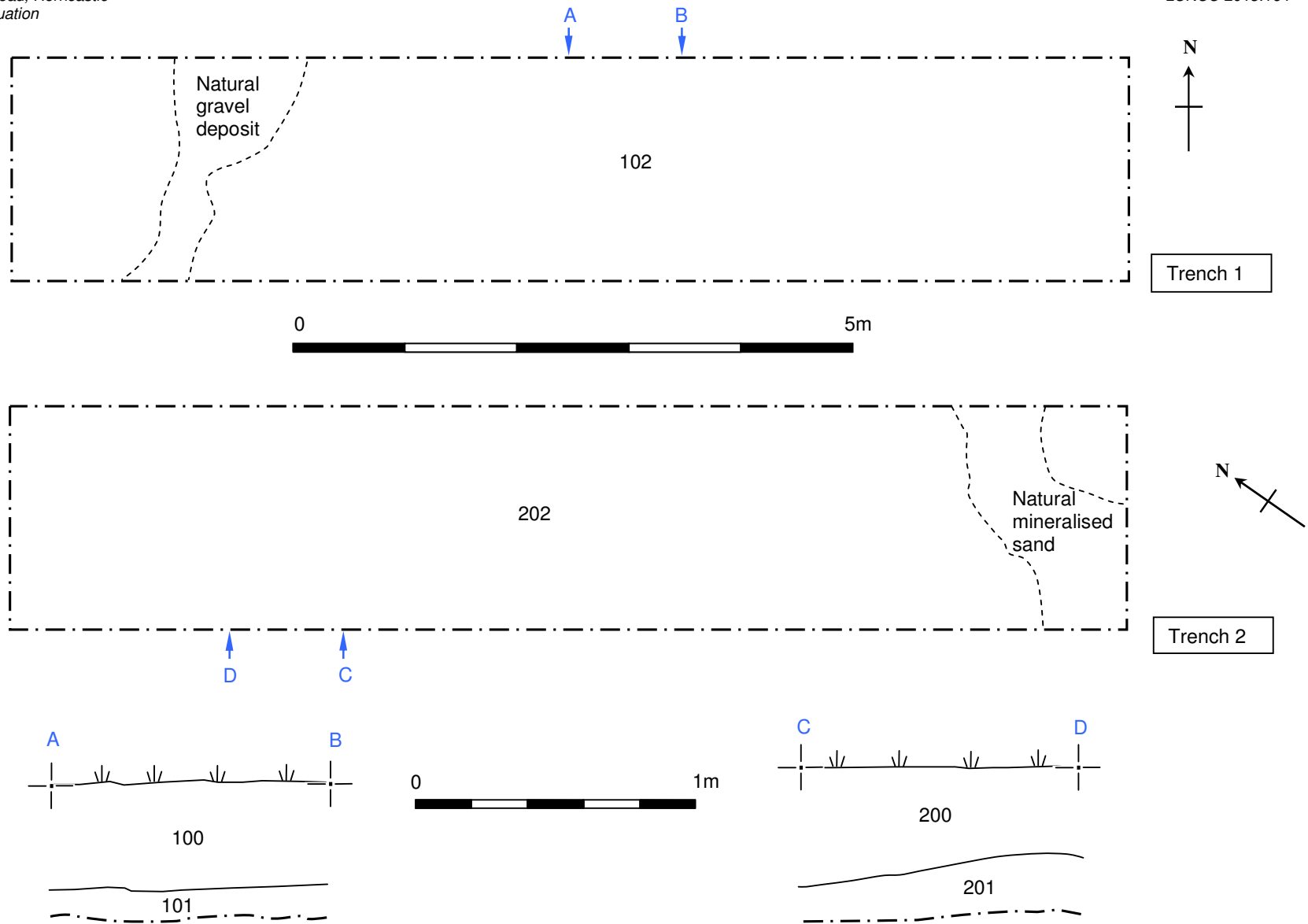


Figure 3: Plan drawings of the evaluation trenches at scale 1:50, with sample sections at scale 1:20.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of the site at the beginning of the fieldwork, looking N, showing prevailing ground and weather conditions.



Plate 2 (above left): Trench 1, looking W.

Plate 3 (above): Sample section in Trench 1.



Plate 4 (above left): Trench 2, looking SE.

Plate 5 (above): Sample section in Trench 2.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Finds/dating
Trench 1			
100	Layer	Friable, dark brown silty sand topsoil with occasional small stones, 0.37m deep	Modern
101	Layer	Thin layer of friable mid-orange sand between topsoil and natural, 0.12m deep: possible subsoil or weathered surface horizon of natural	
102	Layer	Natural light orange sand with moderate small stones and gravel	Drift geology
Trench 2			
200	Layer	Friable, dark brown silty sand topsoil with occasional small stones, 0.42m deep	Modern
201	Layer	Friable mid-orange sand between topsoil and natural, 0.20m deep: possible subsoil or weathered surface horizon of natural	
202	Layer	Natural mid-orange sand, mineralised in places, with flint fragments	Drift geology

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary