AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT: LAND AT CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY, LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code: PCHN 07 NGR: SK 9920 5726

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Report prepared for Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd

by

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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a residential development on land at Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire.
- The watching brief formed one in a series of archaeological projects that have been carried out at Chapel Heath since 1994, where previous works have exposed a palimpsest of archaeology dating between the Neolithic and post-Roman periods.
- This phase of archaeological work revealed a small group of features. These included a Romano-British boundary ditch of uncertain extent; four pits, a possible construction cut, two post holes and possible evidence of post-medieval steam ploughing.
- A Mesolithic flint core was recovered, suggesting that there may have been human activity in the area from as early as 7,500-4,000 BC.

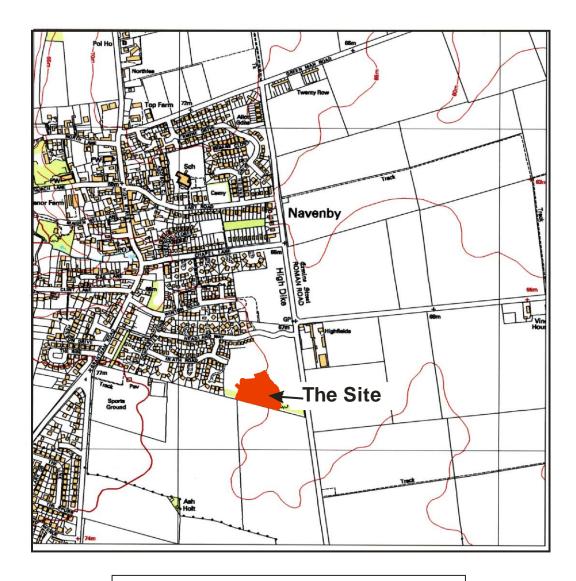


Figure 1: Site location map: the area of the development site is marked in red. Scale 1:10,000 (O.S. copyright licence no. AL 515 21 A001)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of 21 dwellings and a section of access road at Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire. These works were undertaken between April and November 2007 to fulfil the objectives of a project specification prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) and approved by the Heritage Officer of North Kesteven District Council. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IFA, 1999) and the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: a manual of archaeological practice* (LCC, 1998).

2.0 Site location and description

The village of Navenby lies within the administrative district of North Kesteven, approximately 10km south of Lincoln, and to the west of the Roman road, Ermine Street.

The Chapel Heath development, which commenced in the early 1990's, is situated to the southeast of the traditional village, and to the west of High Dyke (Ermine Street).

The 21 house plots that are of relevance to this scheme are situated towards the south east of the Chapel Heath development, south of Road 7, flanking both sides of the eastern arm of Road 9, which itself has formed part of the scheme (Fig 2).

The ground surface is predominantly level, and its elevation above mean sea level is approximately 68m OD.

The development is centred on NGR SK 9920 5726, and the underlying geology of the area consists of Lower Crossi Bed Limestone (British Geological Survey, 1973).

3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission (planning references; N/40/1101/03 (E 48-51 and E 66-70) and N/40/1340/03 (E 52-54 and E 71-79)) was granted by North Kesteven District Council, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during all stages of development involving ground disturbance; to record archaeological remains that would be disturbed or destroyed as a result of development.

4.0 Archaeological context

Archaeological investigations have kept apace with the Chapel Heath development since 1994. These investigations have been a mix of field walking, geophysical survey, trial excavations and watching briefs, and they have expanded our understanding of the pre-Roman social geography and of the more widely acknowledged Romano – British settlement that was first identified in the mid-1960's.

Bronze Age cremations were exposed during a watching brief immediately south of

Chapel Lane, and a feature of Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date was encountered, along with extensive Romano-British features, in a sewer trench directly to the east of the current development. A further watching brief, 350m west of Ermine Street, exposed pits containing burnt stones, charred seeds and post-Deverel-Rimbury pottery (Gardner, 2005).

Evidence for Late Iron Age occupation was discovered during the 1994 evaluation immediately south of Chapel Lane.

During the Roman period, Navenby was a small town/roadside settlement situated at equal distance between the fort at Ancaster and the legionary fortress at Lincoln. It has been suggested (Jones 1980) that a small timber fort may have existed at Navenby, although no structural remains have thus far been encountered to support this hypothesis.

Trial excavations along the west side of Ermine Street (High Dike) have identified stone or half – timbered strip buildings dating from the 3rd to the late 4th or early 5th centuries AD. These remains incorporated preserved floors, occupation deposits and wall plaster adhering to inner wall surfaces.

A number of Romano-British inhumations have been exposed on the west side of the settlement, and a minor road extending westwards of Ermine Street has been identified. At the junction of the two roads is a polygonal building, interpreted as a possible shrine.

Watching briefs carried out in 2006 and 2007 a short distance north of Road 9 uncovered further inhumation burials, and two cremations, along with three linear features and two pits.

The continued settlement of the area following the end of the Roman period is indicated by the presence of pagan Anglo-Saxon burials, and Navenby can be traced into the Scandinavian period by its place name (Gardner 2005). However, it is evident that the post-Roman settlement focus shifted away from Ermine Street towards what became the medieval village.

5.0 Methodology

The methodology for this enhanced watching brief involved the monitoring of all relevant ground works (construction trenches, drainage cuts, and the full road strip within the area defined on fig 2).

Following excavation, plan and section surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined to assess the presence/ absence of archaeological deposits and to record the general stratigraphic sequence of the site. Spoil upcast was scanned for artefactual remains.

Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20, and context information was recorded on standard pro-forma context record sheets. A colour photographic record was maintained throughout the scheme, examples of which are appended to this report.

6.0 Results

The results of this phase of archaeological works amounted to a small group of cut features. These comprised several ditches, pits, a possible construction cut, post holes and possible post-medieval ridge and furrow.

Although only one feature could be dated by artefactual remains (a late 1^{st} - early 2^{nd} century boundary ditch, [104]) it is suggested that three further ditches may have reflected several phases of re-cutting or re-defining this boundary

The natural (solid) geology was limestone brash (102). This was beneath a glacial deposit of clean light orange-brown clayey sand and gravel (103). The majority of the archaeology encountered was cut into layer (103).

Potentially, the most extensive feature was ditch [104]. This appeared to curve north-west to north-west-west, through house plots 74, 75, 77, 78 and 79 (it was not picked up in plot 76, so there remains a possibility that ditch [104], as presented on Fig 3 was in fact more than one feature: see Fig 3, sections, 16, 13, 19, 24, and 30). There was also no evidence of this ditch extending northwards beyond the southernmost section of the foundation trenches for plot 79 or southwards of plot 74 (it was not observed in the south foundation trench).

The width of ditch [104] varied between 1.0m-1.20m and it contained a homogenous fill of mid-reddish-brown silty clay (105). The ditch was approximately 50cm deep and two sherds of late 1st to the early 2nd century pottery were recovered from its fill (Appendix 3).

Cutting the ditch in plot 77 was a post hole [114] (Fig 4, section 19). The fill of this (115) was similar to (105), but contained a post packing of several medium sized limestones.

Following a similar alignment to ditch [104] were three further ditches [127], [134] and [141] (sections 25, 27, 28 and 35 and Figs 3 & 4).

Ditch [127] was located a short distance to the northeast of [104], and this contained a light orange brown sandy clay fill (128). It was 1.25m wide and 50cm deep and was re-cut at least once ([124], section 25, Fig 4).

Ditch [134] was observed within the west foundation trench of plot 76 (Fig 3&4, sections 27 and 28). Its fill (151) contained moderate amounts of small-medium limestones, set within a matrix of mid grey brown silty clay (Plate 8).

To the west of [134] was a more isolated ditch section, [141]. This was recorded in a section of drainage trench and was 63cm wide by 33cm deep, filled with homogonous mid-brown silty clay (140).

Extending east to west through plot 75 and cutting ditch [104] was ditch [120]. This was 58cm deep, with a single, naturally accumulated fill of mid-brown silty clay (121). Although no dating evidence was recovered from this ditch, a watching brief carried out on land to the north of the current development identified three ditches

with a similar alignment to [120] (perpendicular to Ermine Street). These were identified as 3rd century field boundaries that extended from the rear of the ribbon development centred on the Roman road (Allen & Palmer-Brown 2001).

Towards the south / southeast corner of the development were four undated pits [112], [137], [143] and [145] (Fig 3). All four pits were morphologically similar, with bowlshaped profiles, ranging in size from the smallest [112], 60cm wide x 45cm deep to the largest [137], which was 1.75m in diameter x 73cm deep.

The fills of three of the pits, [112], [143] and [145], contained small fragments of animal bone although this was too badly degraded to recover for analysis.

A slot-like feature of uncertain extent [139] was identified towards the north-east of the development. This had steep, almost vertical, sides and contained several undressed limestone chunks (149) (Fig 5 section 36). Plate 4 shows evidence of smaller limestones packed along the southern edge of the slot, suggesting that they perhaps consolidated a post-built structure.

Although the primary fill (150) (30cm of dark black-brown silty clay) contained flecks of fired clay and charcoal fragments, there was no evidence to suggest in-situ burning.

Sealing (150) was an upper fill (153), which comprised a 35cm thick deposit of midred-brown silty clay. No dating evidence was recovered.

At the north-east edge of the development area, three linear features were exposed within a drainage trench, [106], [108] and [110]. The close spacing of these features (3m or less apart, Fig 4) suggested to the author that they may have been associated with post-medieval steam ploughing (Adkins 1998), although it is also acknowledged that these features occurred in relative isolation, which would be unusual in this context. Features [116], [118] and [129] were similarly aligned to [106], [108] and [110] (Fig 3) suggesting perhaps that they also were associated with post-medieval ridge and furrow.

Sealing the putative ridge and furrow was a layer of light orange-brown clayey sand (101) which varied in depth across the site and in some areas contained occasional small limestones. Cutting this layer in plot 76 was a modern post hole [136]. The cut of the post hole was flat at the base and the fill (135) comprised of black-brown silty clay with fragments of wood.

A layer of dark brown silty clay plough soil (100), approximately 25cm thick, formed the modern ground surface over the majority of the site. However, in some areas this was sealed by a layer of modern made ground (146).

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

The results of this phase of archaeological works revealed a small group of features, confirming that the watching brief was at distance from the primary concentration of archaeological remains associated with the Ermine Street frontage.

It is possible that ditches [104], [127], [134] and [141] represent several phases of a boundary of Romano-British date, although the common association of these features is tentative.

Although no dating evidence was recovered, it is possible that a later phase of Romano-British occupation was represented by ditch [120]. Its position in the landscape (perpendicular to Ermine Street) suggests that it may have been a field /property boundary extending from the rear of frontage ribbon development. This idea concords with 3rd century ditches that were investigated to the north of the present development in 2001.

The location of the possible construction slot (at distance from the main focus of settlement) makes it too contentious to place it within the Roman period (ie in the absence of any primary dating evidence).

A single late Mesolithic unstratified flint core was recovered from plot 76. This isolated find may suggest that human activity occurred in the area from as early as 7500-4000 BC (Appendix 6).

Recovered from plots 76, 78 and 79 were fragments of medieval and post medieval tile (Appendix 5) and from plot 76 part of a 15th -16th century glazed jug (Appendix 4). Presumably, these artefacts had entered the archaeological record via some form of secondary context, for example during manuring.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology applied was commensurate to the scale of this development. It allowed an appraisal of the archaeology to be established, which was deemed to be of relatively high importance in this general area, but within a zone that was peripheral to the principal Romano-British settlement zone.

Given the unstable nature and depth of some of the foundation and other trenches, constraints were placed upon the photographic recording and the cleaning of some section faces.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd for this commission.

10.0 References

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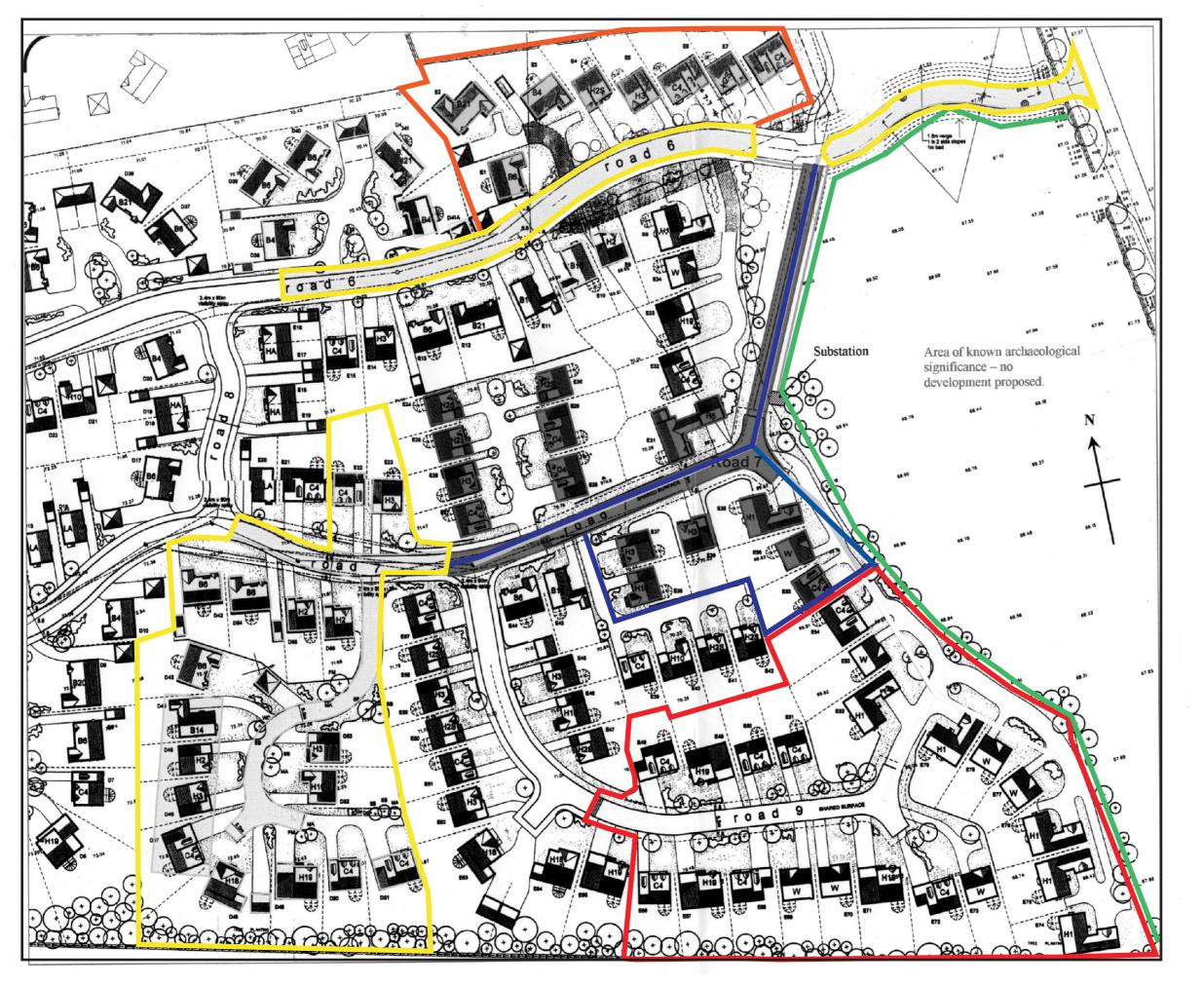
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11.0 Site Archive

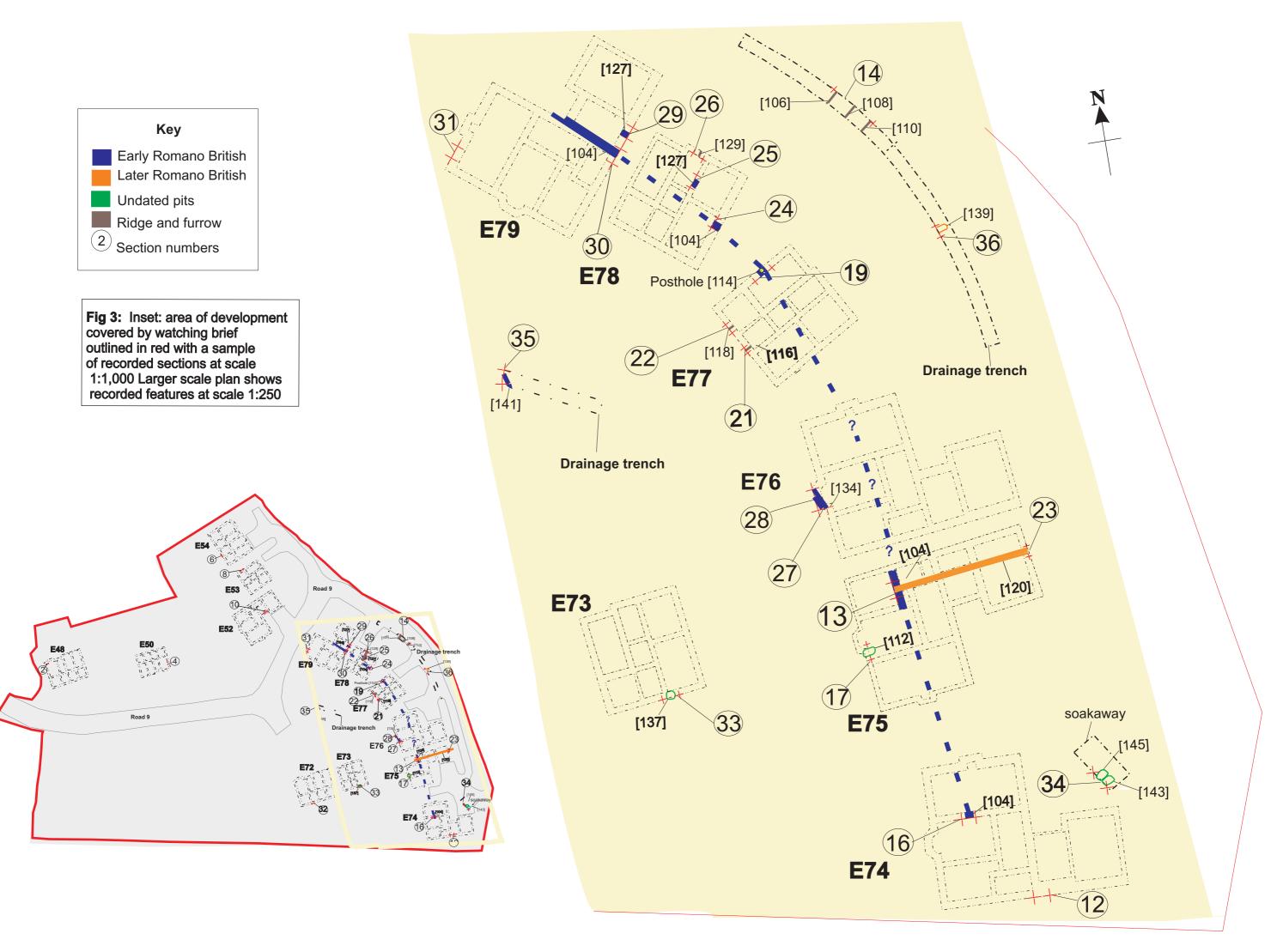
The documentary and physical archive for this scheme is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). This will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln within six months. The global accession number is LCNCC: 2008.59

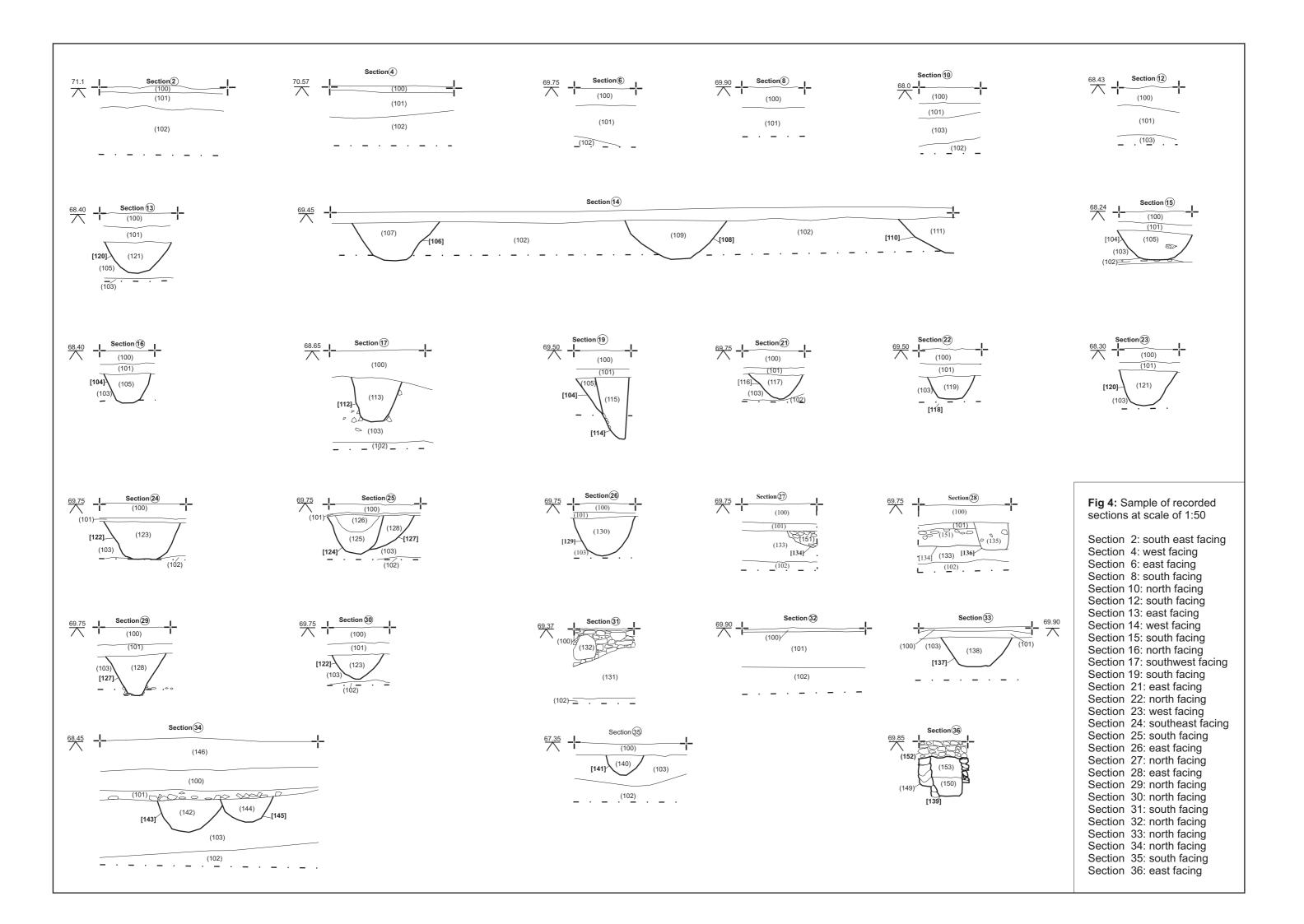


Area of present development Area of greatest archaeological significance Location of CHNA 05 watching brief Location of PCHN 05 watching brief Location of other watching briefs

Fig 2:

Present development location and areas of previous archaeological works at scale 1:1000





Appendix 1: Colour plates



Plate 1: General view of site looking south west



Plate 2: General view of site and house plot 51 looking north east



Plate 3: House plot 68 looking northwest



Plate 4: Possible construction slot [139] looking west



Plate 5: Post hole [114] and ditch [104] looking north



Plate 6: Ditch [104] looking southeast



Plate 7: Pits [143] and [145] in the west section of the soak away.

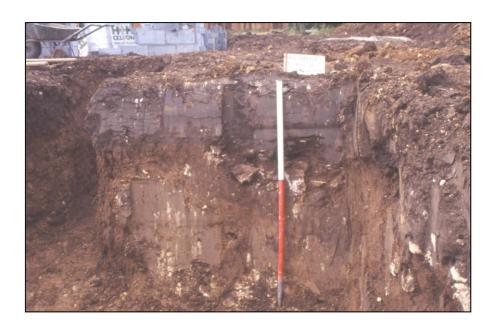


Plate 8: Ditch [134] cutting diagonally across plot 76 looking south



Plate 9: Possible post – medieval ridge and furrow [116] looking west

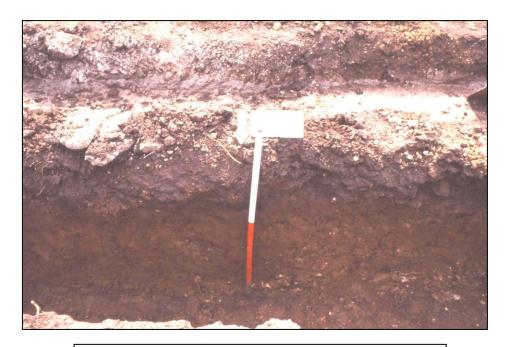


Plate 10: Ditch [141] in drainage trench located to the west of plot 77, looking south.

Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts

Context	Type	Description
100	Layer	Dark brown silty clay
101	Layer	Light orange brown sandy clay drift geology
102	Layer	Light white yellow limestone brash
103	Layer	Light orange brown sand and gravel natural =133
104	Cut	Ditch extending N/S through HP 74, 75,77, 78
105	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay ditch fill
106	Cut	Ridge and furrow, post med, extends E/W
107	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of ridge and furrow
108	Cut	Ridge and furrow, post med, extends E/W
109	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of ridge and furrow
110	Cut	Ridge and furrow, post med, extends E/W
111	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of ridge and furrow
112	Cut	Possible pit
113	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay fill of a poss pit
114	Cut	Cut of post hole within ditch [104]
115	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay fill of a post hole
116	Cut	Ditch extending E/W across HP 77
117	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of a ditch
118	Cut	Linear
119	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay fill of a ditch
120	Cut	Ditch
121	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of a ditch
122	Cut	Ditch
123	Fill	Mid red brown silty clay fill of a ditch
124	Cut	Re – cut of a ditch
125	Fill	Mid brown silty clay primary ditch fill
126	Fill	Mid red brown silty clay upper fill of ditch re- cut
127	Cut	Ditch
128	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay fill of a ditch
129	Cut	Ditch
130	Fill	Mid red brown sandy clay fill of a ditch
131	Layer	Light orange brown clay levelling layer
132	Layer	Layer of chalk rubble
133	Layer	Light orange brown sand and gravel natural = 103
134	Cut	Possible ditch
135	Fill	Mid black brown silty clay fill of a post hole
136	Cut	Modern post hole
137	Cut	Possible pit
138	Fill	Dark red brown sandy clay fill of a pit
139	Cut	Possible construction slot
140	Fill	Mid brown silty clay
141	Cut	Possible ditch
142	Fill	Mid brown silty clay fill of a pit
143	Cut	Cut of a pit
144	Fill	Dark brown silty clay fill of a pit

145	Cut	Cut of a pit
146	Layer	Light orange brown clay levelling layer with frequent chalk
		nodules =152
147	Layer	Mid brown silty clay levelling layer
148	Layer	Natural limestone
149	Structure	Possible remains of building
150	Fill	Dark black brown silty clay primary fill of [139] with burnt
		ceramic material and charcoal
151	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of [134]
152	Layer	Mid red brown silty clay levelling layer with frequent chalk
		nodules =146
153	Fill	Mid red brown silty clay upper fill of [139]
363	US	Unstratified

Appendix 3

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln): Site Code: PCHN07 Site Name: Persimmon Homes, Chapel Heath, Navenby (Watching Brief) Job No. 363

The Roman Pottery

Andrew Peachey

Watching brief excavations produced a total of two sherds (30g) of stratified pottery and a further sherd (6g) from unstratified deposits, all in a slightly abraded but relatively well-preserved condition. Both the stratified sherds were recovered from Ditch F104 L105 (Plots E78 & E79) and comprise sherds of black-surfaced (Romanizing) grey ware, an early Roman fabric with inclusions of common, poorly-sorted quartz (0.1-0.5mm) and sparse grog (0.2-0.8mm). This fabric type is generally a precursor to the more ubiquitous sandy grey wares of the Roman period (and a successor to late Iron Age grog and shell-tempered fabrics) but continued with a limited presence throughout the Roman period. These sherds were probably manufactured in the second half of the 1st century or the 2nd century AD. The sherd recorded from Ditch F104 L105 (Plot E78) comprises a plain everted rim from a jar or bowl that supports the suggested dating of the fabric, while the remaining stratified sherd (Plot E79) comprises an un-diagnostic body sherd. The single unstratified sherd (Plot E76) is an un-diagnostic body sherd in a locally produced, sandy grey ware fabric whose date could feasibly span the Roman period.

Appendix 4

Pottery Archive for Persimmon Homes, Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire (PCHN07)

Jane Young

Plot	context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
Plot E76	363	BOU	Bourne D ware	slightly sandy	jug/jar	1	1	BS	glazed	mid 15th to 16th

04 April 2008

Appendix 5

Tile Archive for Persimmon Homes, Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire (PCHN07)

Jane Young

Plot	context	cname	full name	fabric	frags	weight	description	date
Plot E76	363	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	part marbled oxid sandy	1	18	flat roofer ?	15th to 18th
Plot E78	363	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	marbled oxid & cream	1	28	pantile ?	late 18th to 20th
Plot E78	363	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	fine red fabric	1	34	pantile ?	late 18th to 20th
Plot E79	363	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	OX/R/OX;coarse sandy	1	28	flat roofer;fabric includes light firing	13th to 16th

04 April 2008

Persimmon Homes, Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire PCHN 07

Lithic Materials: Catalogue

Report by Jim Rylatt - February 2008

1.0 Introduction

This report concerns one piece of worked flint recovered during an archaeological watching brief during housing development at Chapel Heath, Navenby. This artefact is a small core that is late Mesolithic in date.

2.0 Method of study

The lithic artefact was physically examined in order to create an archive catalogue. Its attributes were noted in order to determine its place in the reduction sequence, describe observable characteristics of the lithic technology utilised and provide an assessment of its functional potential. The catalogue also records the presence of patination, cortex and whether the piece has been burnt. The piece has been weighed and metrical data is recorded if it is a complete flake, tool or core. It was examined with a x3 hand-lens to determine whether there is any evidence of localised modification that could be indicative of use.

3.0 Catalogue

Context	Туре	Dimensions	Description
Plot E76 u/s	core	21x24x17 7.5g	Single platform bladelet core (Clark type A2), with scars of 4 microlithic bladelet removals, c. 26mm long – negative scars suggest small/very small negative bulbs – careful preparation of platform edge with invasive flakes & very small chips removing overhangs; piece has scars of earlier removals = flakes detached from 3 platforms, possible this piece was irregular waste reutilised as core; thin abraded cortex, probably pebble flint; mottled brownish-grey translucent to semi-translucent flint L.Mes

NB: measurements are only given for complete flakes, tools and pieces - the first figure relates to the maximum length, measured perpendicular to the striking platform; the second to maximum breadth, measured at a right angle to the length; the third to maximum thickness

4.0 Comments

This core has attributes that are characteristic of later Mesolithic core reduction strategies; broadly c.7500-4000 BC, although the dimensions are suggestive of the later part of this date range. The principal traits are the structured removal of small, narrow, parallel-sided blanks using a soft hammer or indirect percussion, with careful curation of the platform edge during this reduction process.

The recovery of only one piece of worked lithic material suggests that there was only very brief and/or ephemeral prehistoric activity across this part of Chapel Heath. Small quantities of struck and modified flint of later Mesolithic, early Neolithic and late Neolithic to early Bronze Age date have been recovered from other areas of Chapel Heath (Rylatt 1999a, 1999b, 2004a, 2004b). This material forms a background scatter resulting from the unstructured

discard or deposition by the many generations of prehistoric people who have inhabited and utilised this landscape.

5.0 References

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