Summary

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) carried out an archaeological evaluation for A. F. Dowson and Son on land to the north of Composition Lane, Winteringham, North Lincolnshire (centred on NGR: SE 9420 2182).

A total of six evaluation trenches were excavated to investigate specific features identified by a geophysical survey previously carried out across most of the field in which the proposed site is located. A seventh trench was excavated to investigate that part of the site not covered by the geophysical survey. Archaeological features were positively identified within five of the seven trenches.

The archaeological features consisted of five ditches and a single furrow, and correspond with features identified by geophysical survey. Two of these ditches were substantial, being over 2m wide and over 1m deep. One appeared to have been re-cut several times and the section excavated through it recovered several sherds of Romano-British pottery. Fragments of Late Iron Age pottery were also recovered from one of the smaller ditches.

The evaluation has confirmed that the geophysical survey provided a good indication of the archaeology present, and the limited dating evidence recovered during the course of the evaluation indicates that most of these remains date from the Late Iron Age and Early Romano-British periods.

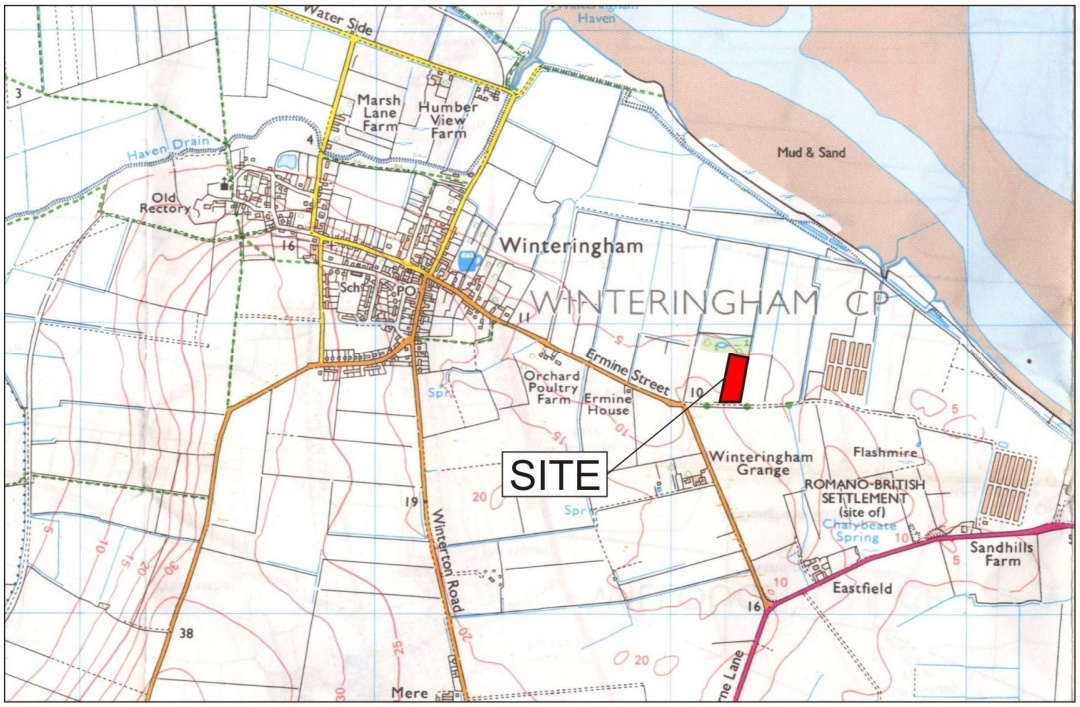

Fig. 1: Site location map. Scale 1:25 000
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1 Introduction

Between 2nd July – 7th July 2008 Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) (PCA Lincoln) carried out an archaeological evaluation for A. F. Dowson and Son on land to the north of Composition Lane, Winteringham, North Lincolnshire (centred on NGR: SE 9420 2182).

This work was undertaken on the recommendation Ms Alison Williams, Sites and Monuments Officer, Archaeological Advisor to North Lincolnshire Council, to determine the archaeological potential of the site in advance of submitting an application for planning permission for the extraction of minerals.

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an Archaeological Works Specification for a programme of archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching produced by PCA Lincoln (PCA Lincoln 2008) and approved by Ms Alison Williams on behalf of North Lincolnshire Council.

The scheme of investigation complies with the recommendations of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Dept. of Environment 1990) and also follows the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2001)), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper 14) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects II* (English Heritage 1991).

2 Site location and description (Figs. 1 and 2, see Photographs No.1 and No.2)

The site is within the parish of Winteringham, in the administrative district of North Lincolnshire, *c*.11km northeast of Scunthorpe and *c*.700m east of the village of Winteringham. It is immediately north of the metalled track, Composition Lane, *c*.150m east of its junction with Ermine Street (centred on NGR: SE 9420 2182).

The site lies at the mouth of the Ancholme Vale within a low lying and undulating agricultural landscape close to the foreshore of the Humber Estuary at the foot of the Limestone Escarpment to the west. It is *c*. 700m southwest of South Channel, which forms part of the Humber Estuary with Read's Island to the north, and *c*. 1.3km southeast of the outflow of Haven Drain, which forms a small inlet at Winteringham Haven.

The site, approximately 1.1 hectares in area, is currently under cultivation with a maturing crop of barley covering most of it and a narrow strip of maize growing along the western fringe. Immediately north of the site is a small wood surrounding a pond. The eastern side of the site is flanked by a narrow strip of scrub with a farm track beyond. The south side is bordered by a hedgerow that flanks Composition

Lane. There is no physical boundary to the west and the land beyond the site forms part of the same arable field as that occupied by the site itself.

The site slopes gently down from a maximum height of 9.48m AOD at its southern side to a low point of 4.99m AOD near to its northeast corner. It occupies a high point in the immediate landscape with the land beyond sloping down to the north, east, and less so to the southeast. To the southwest and west the land is mostly level adjacent to the site, but rises gently to the southwest further away from it. The site's location provides panoramic views over the Estuary to northeast.

The drift geology of the area is mapped as glacial sand and gravel described as fine to medium blown sands (Aram 1993). The underlying solid geology belongs to the Hibaldstow Formation of the Jurassic era (British Geological Survey 1983).

3 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 9)

The site is within an area that encompasses significant archaeological remains, specifically of the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. This has been attested by both surface finds and cropmarks identified by aerial photography. Cropmarks have been identified within the boundaries of the proposed mineral extraction area (Whitwell 1995).

The site lies within 300m of the northern limit of the Roman settlement of Old Winteringham, which was at the north end of Ermine Street where this divides in two, *c*. 500m to the southeast. The Roman settlement here has been subject to two phases of excavations, one centred on the road junction, carried out by Ian Stead in 1964-5, and latterly to the east of this by Humberside Archaeology Unit in 1981-2. An extensive multi-period settlement has been identified here (*ibid*.).

To the north of the settlement and *c*. 300m to the east of the site, coins and other 1st century AD material have been identified and an early military installation has been speculated at or near to this location, although no structural evidence has been identified to confirm this (PCA Lincoln 2006).

A geophysical survey carried out on the field in which the site is located produced evidence to support the postulated buried remains identified as cropmarks. These have been interpreted as trackside ditches, which connect with, but also bypass, a double ditched enclosure (located immediately to the west of the site) and other possible enclosure ditches (PCG 2007).

4 Aims and objectives

The principal aims of the evaluation were to identify and characterize the extent of any archaeological remains or potential for remains within the site, specifically targeting previously identified geophysical anomalies (PCG 2007). This information will assist North Lincolnshire Council in making an informed judgment on the impact upon the archaeological resource of any future mineral extraction and to provide suitable information with which to construct a strategy that may mitigate the effects of that mineral extraction on the archaeological resource.

5 Methodology

The evaluation methodology required the excavation of seven trenches, five of which were 30m long by 2m wide; two 20m long by 2m wide. The trenches were located to intersect geophysical anomalies as indicated within the Archaeological Works Specification (PCA Lincoln 2008).

Initial excavation was carried out using a tracked excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. All overburden was mechanically removed down to the natural substrate or to the top of the first significant, recognisable archaeological feature. Where archaeological deposits were identified, all further excavation was undertaken by hand.

Archaeological features were sample excavated to establish depths and profiles and, where possible, date and function. Features were recorded in plan and in section at appropriate scales (1:50 and 1:20), and written accounts were prepared on pro forma context record sheets. A photographic record (colour slides and monochrome 35mm film) was maintained throughout the project, and selected prints have been reproduced in this report.

6 Results (Fig. 2)

Initial mechanical excavation of the trenches revealed that the surface plough-soil was largely of a consistent depth across the site, varying between 0.3m and 0.42m deep. However, the subsoil (blown sand/hill-wash) varied in depth from being completely absent along the eastern side of the site to being up to 0.65m deep at the northern end of the site (see Photographs No.3 and No.4).

The archaeology recorded within the western trenches was cut through the lower level of this subsoil, although no visible difference could be observed between the lower subsoil level and that which subsequently accumulated, sealing the archaeology and even filling some of the archaeological features.

Conversely, on the eastern side of the site where there was no subsoil cover, the underlying natural substrate, which consisted of pure sand with sparse gravels, was heavily disturbed by modern plough scarring and root penetration.

Subsequently, the initial identification of archaeological features cut through the subsoil at the west of the site, or the disturbed natural to the east of the site, was rendered difficult and controlled over-machining was necessary in order to clearly identify the features.

Trench 1: no archaeological features were identified (not illustrated).

Trench 1 was located to investigate the northern part of the site which was mostly devoid of geophysical anomalies.

This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.98m below the current ground level where the underlying light yellow brown sand natural substrate (103) was encountered. This was sealed by up to 0.65m of orange/red-brown sandy subsoil (102). This, in turn was sealed by 0.3m of topsoil (101). No archaeological features were identified within this trench, although a single piece of worked flint, possibly an arrowhead, was recovered from layer (102) (see Appendix 3: Lithic materials).

Trench 2: *no archaeological features were identified* (see Photograph No.3).

Trench 2 was located to investigate the north-eastern part of the site which lay beyond the limit of the geophysical survey.

This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.4m below current ground level where the less disturbed/clean natural substrate (203) was encountered. This was sealed by the more heavily disturbed surface of the natural/'interface layer' (202) which was up to 0.1m deep. This, in turn was sealed by 0.3m of topsoil (201). No archaeological features were identified within this trench.

Trench 3: *identified two parallel ditches, aligned WNW-ESE* (Figs. 3 and 4. see Photographs No.4, No.5 and No.6).

Trench 3 was located to investigate two parallel west-northwest to east-southeast aligned linear anomalies.

Excavation was to a maximum depth of 0.9m below current ground level where the natural substrate (312) was encountered. This was cut by a broad, deep ditch [304], aligned west-northwest to east-southeast. The base profile of this seemed to indicate that it had been re-cut, probably more than once. The northernmost (re-)cut was allocated the separate context number [308], although the sequence of cutting and re-cutting could not be convincingly demonstrated because of the homogeneity of fills.

Subsequently the true sequence of infilling and re-cutting could not be recorded other than to note that two separate fills (305 & 306) were observed within the extent of cut [304] and a single fill (307) was recorded within the extent of cut [308]. All of these fills were sealed by layer (303) which appeared to fill the extent of the both recorded cuts.

The edges of all the fills were very diffuse and the extent of each could only be approximately defined. Subsequently, a sequence of deposition could only be established between some of the fills. The excavated section through the primary fill of cut [304], which consisted of red-brown sandy silt (306) produced a small group of pottery sherds dated to the early Romano-British period.

This was sealed by layer (305) which produced a single sherd of pottery dated to the late 1st to 2nd century AD. Three small sherds of similar pottery and small disc-like stone, which may possibly have been a gaming counter, were also retrieved from the processed sample taken from this layer. Otherwise the sample was recorded as being 'entirely barren of any carbonised plant remains' (see Appendix 3). No dating evidence was recovered from the fill (307) of cut [308] or the sealing deposit (303).

Approximately 6m to the north of ditch [304]-[308] a second, parallel ditch [310] was *c*. 2m wide and *c*. 1m deep. Its primary fill (311) consisted of what appeared to be re-deposited natural. This was sealed by a homogenous deposit (309) which filled the entire ditch cut. No dating evidence was recovered from either of the fills of this ditch, and a processed sample taken from (309) also proved devoid of any carbonised remains.

All three identified ditches [304, 308 and 310] appeared to have been cut through the lower level of subsoil (302), although there was no visible difference between the upper and lower levels of this deposit and the true level from which these ditches were cut could only be recorded approximately. The whole subsoil layer was up to 0.6m thick and was sealed by topsoil (301) which was up to 0.3m thick.

Trench 4: *identified two roughly parallel ditches, aligned* c. *E-W* (Fig. 5. see Photographs No.7 and No.8).

Trench 4 was located to investigate two parallel *c*. east-west aligned linear anomalies.

This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.98m below current ground level where the natural substrate (403) was encountered. This was cut by a broad, V-profile ditch [404], aligned *c*. east-west. This was *c*. 1.75m wide and *c*. 0.8m deep. Two discernable fills were recorded within the excavated section through this ditch. Several pottery sherds, dated to the Late Iron Age, were recovered from the primary fill (405). The secondary fill (406) did not produce any datable material.

Approximately 8m to the north of ditch [404] a second, parallel ditch [407] was recorded. Although less deep this feature had a very similar profile to ditch [404] and was of a similar width. A single sherd of Romano-British period Greyware was recovered from its homogenous fill (408).

As with the ditches recorded in Trench 3, ditch [404] appeared to have been cut through the very lowest level of the subsoil (402), although the cut of this smaller feature was less distinct at the subsoil level. Ditch [407] could not be seen to have been cut through the subsoil.

An area of gravel was observed between ditch [404] and ditch [407]; tentatively postulated as a surface. However, subsequent investigation of this demonstrated that the deposit formed part of the natural substrate.

The whole subsoil deposit (402) was up to 0.5m thick and was sealed by topsoil (401) which was up to 0.34m thick.

Trench 5: *identified a single ditch, aligned* c. *N-S* (Fig. 6).

Trench 5 was located to investigate three potential *c*. north-south aligned linear anomalies.

This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m below current ground level where the natural substrate (505) was encountered. This was cut by a broad shallow ditch [504] which was aligned *c*. north-south, up to 2.5m wide and up to 0.6m deep. Only a single undiagnostic fragment of bone was recovered from its homogenous, possibly re-deposited natural fill (503).

Although not entirely clear, it is possible that the ditch may have been cut through the shallow subsoil (502) which was up to 0.2m thick. This was sealed by the topsoil (501) which was up to 0.4m thick.

Trench 6: *identified a possible ditch, aligned* c. *E-W* (Fig. 7. see Photograph No.10).

Trench 6 was located to investigate a *c*. east-west aligned linear and a possible northeast-southwest linear anomaly.

This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m below current ground level where the natural substrate (604) was encountered. This was cut by a possible narrow V-profile ditch [605] which was only observed in the south-western section of the evaluation trench, cut through the lowest level of the subsoil (603) and cutting into the top of the natural. Because of the similarity of the fill, the subsoil and the natural substrate, which was notably darker at this location this feature was not visible in plan or in the opposite north-western section of the evaluation trench.

The exposed section revealed in the south-western section of the evaluation trench was only visible due to a thin lens of redeposited natural (light yellow sand) (606) defining the north-western side of the ditch. This lens was sealed by ditch fill (607) which was virtually indistinguishable from the subsoil (603). No dating evidence was recovered from either of the ditch fills.

Secondary ditch fill (607) and the lowest subsoil level (603) were sealed by upper subsoil level (602) which was up to 0.36m thick which in turn was sealed by topsoil (601) which was up to 0.34m thick.

Trench 7: *identified a narrow ditch, aligned* c. *E-W* (Fig. 8. see Photograph No.9).

Trench 7 was located to investigate a *c*. east-west aligned linear, three potential *c*. north-south aligned linear anomalies and the south-eastern part of the site which lay beyond the limits of the geophysical survey.

This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.53m below current ground level where the clean natural substrate (703) was encountered. This was cut by a narrow V-profile ditch [704] which was aligned *c*. east-west, was up to 0.66m wide and up to 0.26m deep. The single homogenous fill (705) did not produce any dating evidence.

A heavily disturbed 'interface layer' (702), up to 0.1m thick was removed in order to clearly identify this feature. It was not clear if the feature was cut through the interface layer due to the extent of the disturbance and the similarity between the fill and layer (702). This layer was sealed by topsoil (701) which was up to 0.42m thick.

7 Discussion and conclusion

The evaluation has demonstrated that the geophysical survey (PCG 2007) has provided a reliable indication relating to a number of archaeological features surviving within the proposed mineral extraction site. All of the identified geophysical anomalies, which were confirmed by the evaluation as being of archaeological origins, were demonstrated to be in-filled ditches.

A total of seven archaeological features were positively identified by the evaluation, located within the southern two thirds of the site. The excavated sections through these features provided dating evidence for three [304, 404 & 407], and by association probably a fourth, that being [310] which runs parallel with [304], both of which may be assumed to have been contemporary.

Although unproven, two of the undated excavated sections [605 & 704] were probably excavated through different parts of the same feature. They both had a similar profile and shared the same alignment and although one of the excavated sections was located in the area that lay beyond the area covered by the geophysical

survey, and as such a direct link between the two excavated sections could not be demonstrated, their relative alignments and location suggests that they are part of the same feature; that being a ditch running parallel with Composition Lane.

The remaining undated feature [504] was the least convincing feature encountered. Notably, the other two parallel geophysical anomalies targeted by Trench 5 were not observed cutting the natural substrate and thus they too could not have been very deep. A group of shallow, parallel linear features, such as these are perhaps characteristic of the remains of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture.

It may be noted that the remains of ridge and furrow have been identified, on the same alignment as these features, in nearby fields (see Fig. 7 in PCA Lincoln 2006). Thus the most plausible explanation of this feature may be the remains of a medieval plough furrow. Consequently, the seven archaeological features identified, provide evidence of a total of five ditches and a probable furrow.

The earliest of these ditches, dated from the material recovered from the excavated sections, was the southernmost of the two ditches identified within Trench 4, [404], and was dated to the Late Iron Age by a number of pottery sherds recovered from its primary fill (405). This ditch corresponds with a short linear feature identified by geophysical survey which appears to extend beyond the site to the west.

The other three contexts that produced datable material were all assigned to the (early) Romano-British period. This includes ditch [407] which appeared to be roughly parallel with ditch [404] and was located *c*. 8m to the north. A single sherd of Grey ware pottery dated to the Romano-British period was recovered from its single homogenous fill (408). This feature also appears to extend beyond the site to the west.

The other two contexts which produced dating evidence of the early Romano-British period were both from the lower fills of ditch [304], the southernmost of the two ditches identified within Trench 3. Both of these correspond with well defined linear anomalies identified by geophysical survey, which clearly extend beyond the proposed extraction site to the west and probably to the east as well.

However, it may be noted that although corroborative dating evidence from two contexts within ditch cut [304] is compelling evidence for dating this feature, it remains unclear as to whether cut [304] was a primary cut, and thus the pottery was deposited within an early fill of this feature, or [304] was a later re-cut and thus a re-establishment of a feature, which may have originally been excavated at an earlier date.

Nonetheless, although the dating evidence is limited, it does provide evidence of activity within the immediate area dating from the Late Iron Age and continuing into, or indeed beginning again in, the early Romano-British period. Furrow [504], if correctly identified, may be dated to the medieval period and records the present of

open fields at that time, for which there is some supporting evidence within the vicinity (PCA Lincoln 2006).

The function of the identified ditches has not been elucidated by the results of this evaluation. The site occupies a position on high ground sloping down to the north and the soils appear to be very well drained. As such these ditches may have originally been excavated for reasons other than basic drainage. The results of the geophysical survey suggest that the broad parallel ditches identified in Trench 3 may be defining a *c*. east-west trackway.

The ditches identified within Trench 4 appear to be detached from the other features identified by the geophysical survey and as such no obvious explanation is presented. It is possible that these features originally extended further to the east but have not survived within the eastern part of the site where there was less depth to the overlying soils and some erosion due to ploughing may have occurred.

The undated ditch recorded as [605] and [704] running parallel with Composition Lane does not appear to be contemporary with the enclosure to the west, and thus would appear to belong to an entire different era. It is possible that it may be a post-enclosure field boundary and a precursor to Composition Lane, which may have shifted south, to meet Ermine Street prior to being surfaced and fixed in its current position.

Previous archaeological work and casual finds (see Fig. 9) have demonstrated that the Roman settlement focuses on Ermine Street at the point it divides. This evaluation suggests that the settlement may extend further to the east than previously recognised. Field walking, immediately to the south of Composition Lane, has identified a high concentration of Roman pottery alongside Ermine Street, supporting this suggestion.

The circular features identified on aerial photograph (see Fig.9) were not identified by the geophysical survey, although the linear features were. This suggests that the circular features on the aerial photographs may not be archaeological.

The possibly east-west trackway identified by the geophysical survey and Trench 3 appears, on the geophysical survey, to have a branch to the south. To the east of this north-south branch two rectangular enclosures were identified by geophysical survey. The early Roman pottery recovered from the ditches in Trench 3 and the late Iron Age pottery recovered from ditch [404] suggests that this activity may, along with the possible fort site to the east, represent some of the earliest Roman activity in the vicinity.

The archaeological features identified by this evaluation are of interest, particularly with regard to the apparent ditched enclosure identified by the geophysical survey immediately to the west (PCG 2007). Although, nothing has been identified during the course of the evaluation which could be considered to be of greater than only

local interest and as such nothing to preclude the extraction of mineral from this site, assuming a suitable mitigation strategy is adopted to record the extent of the identified archaeology (see *Mitigation* below). In fact as the dating evidence remains somewhat ambiguous, some further investigation of the site may provide more precise and secure dating evidence for these features and thus provide a more reliable indication of the date and nature of the neighbouring enclosure which is of greater interest.

Mitigation

It is suggested that a strip, map and record methodology could be used to record the precise layout of the remaining features and sample excavate them. A proposed specification for such a scheme of works has been forwarded to the Sites and Monuments Record Officer for consideration with this report.

8 References

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