**BACKGATE (PHASE 2)**
**COWBIT**
**LINCOLNSHIRE**
**INTERIM STATEMENT**

## Introduction

This document is an interim statement on the findings of a trial trench evaluation on land at Backgate, Cowbit, Lincolnshire. Fieldwork was undertaken at the site between the 11th and 24th October 2018 and involved the excavation of eight trenches (each 35m by 1.6m) as shown on Figure 1.

The interim statement has been prepared as external specialists have yet to submit their final reports.

The following is a trench by trench summary of the main findings. This may be subject to change once final analysis has been completed.

### *Trench 1*

Three archaeological features were identified in this trench. The first was an undated ditch (1003) which was aligned north-south and was 2.7m wide and 0.3m deep. No dateable artefacts were retrieved from the fills of this ditch.

To the east of this ditch was ditch (1007), also aligned broadly north-south and measuring 3.2m wide and 0.8m deep. Pottery of 15th – 16th century date was retrieved from this layer.

Further east was a modern pit (1005).

### *Trench 2*

Four ditches and a pit were revealed within this trench. The largest ditch (2012) was 8m wide and >0.85m deep with pottery of 19th century date recovered from its fills.

To the south was ditch (2009) which contained a brick/tile fragment of undiagnostic date. Parallel to this ditch was ditch (2007), measuring 1.3m wide and 0.3m deep with no dateable material recovered from its fill. This had been cut by ditch (2005) which produced 15th to 16th century pottery.

Ditch (2005) also cut an undated pit (2003).

### *Trench 3*

Three parallel ditches were encountered in this trench which were aligned east-west. The ditches were generally 3m wide, though the northernmost only had a visible width of 1.5m. The pottery recovered from the fills of these was all of post-medieval origin. Moreover, the location of the ditches accord well with field boundaries shown on early Ordnance Survey maps (Fig. 1).

### *Trench 4*

No archaeological features were encountered in this trench.

***Trench 5***
Two trenches were identified in this trench which align with the two northern ditches encountered in Trench 3 and correspond with a field boundary on early mapping. Pottery from these ditches was broadly late post-medieval in date.

***Trench 6***
A total of five ditches were revealed in this trench along with a modern geotechnical pit. Two ditches (6007) and (6025) correspond to the ditches revealed in trenches 3 and 5.

At the north end of the trench were two east-west parallel ditches (6003) and (6012), 4.5m apart, which were both dated to the Roman period, although one ditch contained residual probable Late Iron Age Pottery.

Located in the centre of the trench was a narrower ditch (6017) which also contained Roman pottery along with Late Iron Age residual pottery.

The final ditch (6021) was located at the southern end of the trench and had been cut by the post-medieval ditch (6025). Roman pottery of 2nd to 3rd century date was recovered from its fills.

***Trench 7***
At the southern end of this trench was an east-west aligned ditch (7020), which though undated aligns well with the Roman ditch (6003) to the west. This was cut by a northwest-southeast aligned ditch (7009) which contained later Roman pottery of 3rd to 4th century date.

Parallel to this ditch at the northern end of the trench was ditch (7000) which remains undated due to a lack of artefactual material. Adjacent to this ditch was a post-medieval ditch (7016) which was located over a former field boundary as shown on historic maps.

***Trench 8***
The three ditches encountered within this trench matched the alignment of post-medieval ditches encountered in the trenches to the west and produced pottery spanning the 17th to 19th centuries. No earlier features were encountered.

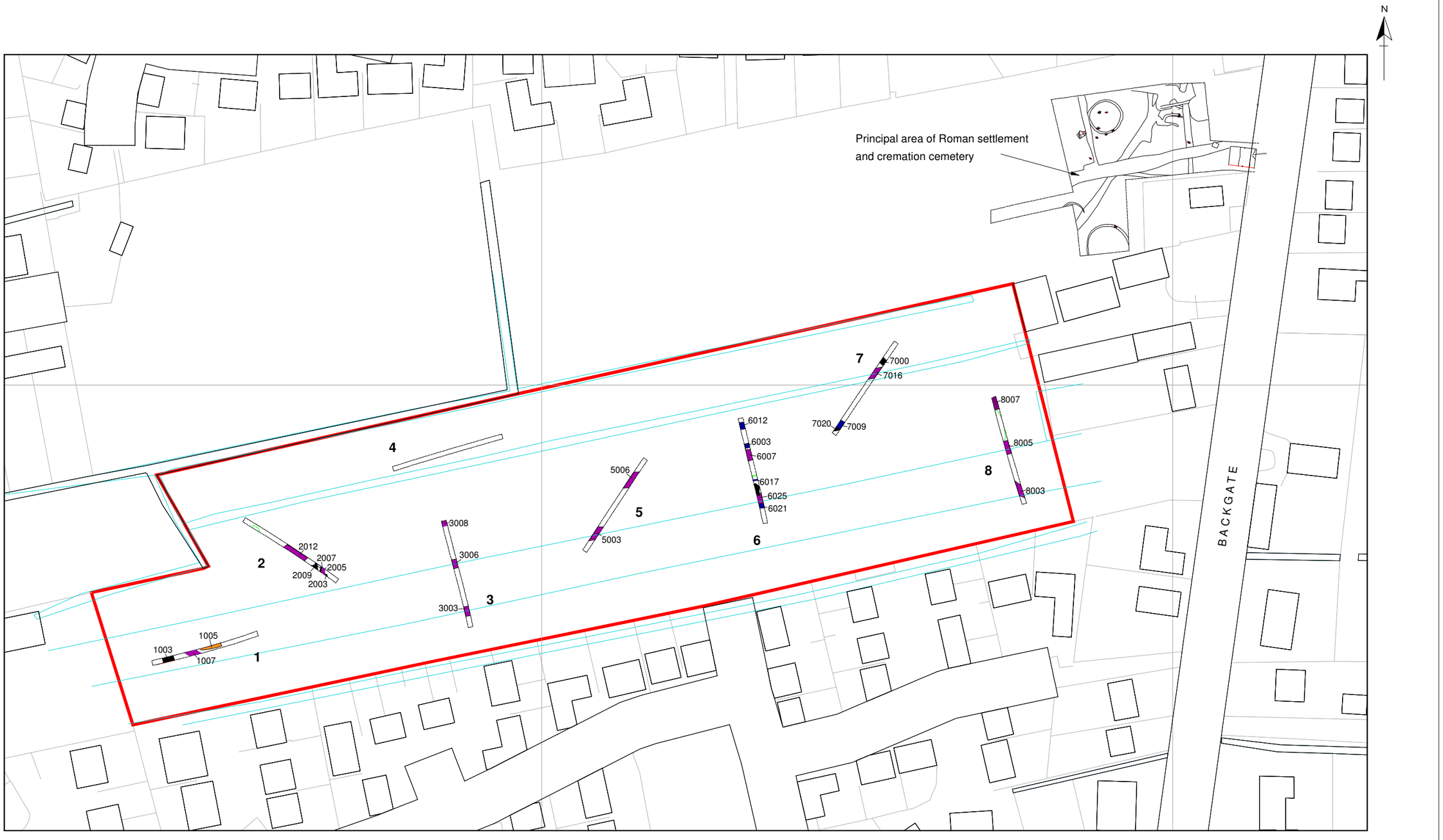
**Discussion**
Features dating to the Roman period were only encountered in trenches 6 and 7. These comprised a number of ditches which are likely to represent former field boundaries associated with the recorded settlement and cremation cemetery to the northeast. No other features were revealed that indicate settlement was actually occurring within this area and it is possible that the ditches represent smaller enclosures attached to the settlement.

The Roman pottery assemblage includes wares that are generally 2nd to 3rd century or 3rd -4th century in date and indicating at least two phases. Moreover, the presence of Late Iron Age pottery indicates an earlier phase which is likely to be associated with salt-making as identified to the west in Cowbit Wash. The pottery includes some fairly finewares indicating that domestic activities were occurring nearby.

Previous fieldwalking at the site had raised the possibility of a discrete area of Roman activity in the southwest corner of the field. There is no evidence to support this, although one undated ditch was encountered.

No features were dated to the medieval period and features of post-medieval date were generally parallel arrangements of drainage ditches defining long linear plots. The ditches are considered to be too far apart for them to be identified as dylings.

Analysis has yet to be completed for the environmental samples taken from various dated features and on the finds recovered from those samples. Once this has been received, analysis and report preparation can be completed. If further information is required, please direct any enquiries to Paul Cope-Faulkner (paul.cope-faulkner@apsarchaeology.co.uk).




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- Undated feature
- Roman feature
- Post-medieval feature
- Modern feature
- Field boundaries on 1888 Ordnance Survey mapping

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project Name: Backgate, Cowbit (Phase 2) | | |
| Scale: 1:1250 | Drawn by: PCF | Report No: |

Figure 1 - Summary plan showing the preliminary results of the evaluation

# Appendix 1

## CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

*Trench 1*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 1001 | Firm dark brown silty clay | Topsoil |
| 1002 | Firm light orange yellow silt | Natural deposit |
| 1003 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 2.7m wide by 0.3m deep, steep sides ad uneven base | Ditch |
| 1004 | Firm mid orange grey silt | Fill of (1003) |
| 1005 | Feature, ## wide by 0.4m deep, steep sides and rounded base | Pit |
| 1006 | Firm dark grey clayey silt | Fill of (1005) |
| 1007 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 3.2m wide by 0.8m deep, gradual sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 1008 | Firm light orange grey silt | Fill of (1007) |
| 1009 | Stiff mid bluish grey clay | Natural deposit |

*Trench 2*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 2001 | Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.35m thick | Topsoil |
| 2002 | Soft dark brown silt | Fill of (2003) |
| 2003 | Sub-circular feature, 1.3m wide by 0.36m deep, steepish sides and flattish base | Pit |
| 2004 | Friable mid yellowish brown clayey silt | Fill of (2005) |
| 2005 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 1.3m wide by 0.2m deep, steep sides and flattish base | Ditch |
| 2006 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (2007) |
| 2007 | Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, 1.35m wide by 0.3m deep, uneven sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 2008 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (2009) |
| 2009 | Curvilinear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, steep sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 2010 | Soft light grey silt | Natural deposit |
| 2011 | Firm dark brownish grey clayey silt | Fill of (2012) |
| 2012 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 8m wide by >0.85m deep, steep sides, not fully excavated | Ditch |
| 2013 | Stiff mid bluish grey clay | Natural deposit |

*Trench 3*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 3001 | Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.34m thick | Topsoil |
| 3002 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (3003) |
| 3003 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 3m wide by 0.9m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 3004 | Firm mid orange clayey silt | Natural deposit |
| 3005 | Firm dark brownish grey clayey silt | Fill of (3006) |
| 3006 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 3.3m wide by 0.85m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 3007 | Friable mid brownish grey clayey silt | Fill of (3008) |

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 3008 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 1.55m wide by 0.87m deep, steep sides and flattish base | Ditch |

*Trench 4*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 4001 | Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.32m thick | Topsoil |
| 4002 | Firm mixed mid orange and grey silty clay | Natural deposit |
| 4003 | Soft mixed mid orange and light grey silt | Natural deposit |

*Trench 5*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 5001 | Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt, ##m thick | Topsoil |
| 5002 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (5003) |
| 5003 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 5m wide by 0.84m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 5004 | Firm light grey silt | Natural deposit |
| 5005 | Firm dark brownish grey clayey silt | Fill of (5006) |
| 5006 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 5m wide by 1.28m deep, moderate sides and flat base | Ditch |

*Trench 6*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 6001 | Firm mid brownish grey silty clay | Topsoil |
| 6002 | Firm light orange grey silt | Natural deposit |
| 6003 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 1.4m wide by 0.5m deep, steep sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 6004 | Firm to soft light pink silt | Fill of (6003) |
| 6005 | Firm dark grey silty clay | Fill of (6003) |
| 6006 | Firm to friable dark brown silt | Fill of (6003) |
| 6007 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 3.3m wide by 0.85m deep, steep sides and uneven base | Ditch |
| 6008 | Firm mid greyish brown silt | Fill of (6007) |
| 6009 | Firm mid greyish brown silty clay | Fill of (6007) |
| 6010 | Firm light greyish yellow silty sand | Fill of (6007) |
| 6011 | Hard mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (6007) |
| 6012 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 2.74m wide by 0.82m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 6013 | Soft light orange yellow silty sand | Fill of (6012) |
| 6014 | Stiff blue grey clayey silt | Fill of (6012) |
| 6015 | Soft black silty clay | Fill of (6012) |
| 6016 | Firm mid brown clay | Fill of (6012) |
| 6017 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 0.68m wide by 0.25m deep, steep sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 6018 | Firm dark grey silt | Fill of (6017) |
| 6019 | Soft light yellow sandy silt | Fill of (6017) |
| 6020 | Soft light yellow silty sand | Fill of (6017) |
| 6021 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 1.2m wide by 0.6m deep, steep sides and rounded base | Ditch |

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 6022 | Soft dark grey silt | Fill of (6021) |
| 6023 | Firm mid greyish brown silty sand | Fill of (6021) |
| 6024 | Firm light yellowish grey silty sand | Fill of (6021) |
| 6025 | Linear features, aligned east-west, >1.8m wide by 0.55m deep, steep sides and rounded base | Ditch |
| 6026 | Firm mid brown clay | Fill of (6025) |
| 6027 | Stiff mid bluish grey clay | Fill of (6028) |
| 6028 | Sub-rectangular feature, 1.1m wide by 1m deep, steep sides and flat base | Modern geotechnical pit |

*Trench 7*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 7000 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 2m wide by 0.6m deep, steep sides and V-shaped base | Ditch |
| 7001 | Friable mid reddish brown silt, 0.15m thick | Topsoil |
| 7002 | Firm mid yellowish grey sandy silt, 0.2m thick | Subsoil |
| 7003 | Firm light orange brown silty sand | Fill of (7000) |
| 7004 | Firm mid orange grey silty sand | Fill of (7000) |
| 7005 | Firm mid orange yellow sandy silt | Fill of (7000) |
| 7006 | Firm mid greyish blue silty clay | Fill of (7000) |
| 7007 | Soft black peat | Fill of (7000) |
| 7008 | Firm mid grey silt | Fill of (7000) |
| 7009 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 3m wide by 1.3m deep, moderate sides and V-shaped base | Ditch |
| 7010 | Firm mid grey clayey silt | Fill of (7009) |
| 7011 | Firm mid orange yellow sandy silt | Fill of (7009) |
| 7012 | Firm black peat | Fill of (7009) |
| 7013 | Firm mid bluish grey silty clay | Fill of (7009) |
| 7014 | Loose mid yellowish orange sandy silt | Natural deposit |
| 7015 | Firm mid bluish grey silty clay | Fill of (7009) |
| 7016 | Linear feature, aligned north-south, 4m wide by 1.14m deep step sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 7017 | Firm mid orange brown silt | Fill of (7016 |
| 7018 | Stiff mid bluish grey clay | Natural deposit |
| 7019 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (7020) |
| 7020 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, >2m wide by >0.48m deep, steep sides, not fully excavated | Ditch |

*Trench 8*

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 8001 | Friable mid brown clayey silt, ##m thick | Topsoil |
| 8002 | Firm light yellowish orange silt | Natural deposit |
| 8003 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 5.4m wide by 0.7m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 8004 | Firm mid brown clayey silt | Fill of (8004) |
| 8005 | Linear feature, aligned east-west, 2.5m wide by 1m deep, gradual becoming steeper sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 8006 | Firm mid greyish brown silty clay | Fill of (8005) |

| No. | Description | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 8007 | Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 3.5m wide by 0.95m deep, steep sides and flat base | Ditch |
| 8008 | Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt | Fill of (8007) |