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98/10

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
'STONE NOOK', HIGH STREET, SKELLINGTHORPE
LINCOLN**

Site Code: HSS98
LCNCC Acc No. 122.98
NGR 492400 372210

Contents

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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Report prepared for Mr J Broderick
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June 1998

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Summary

- * *An archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for an extension to 'Stone Nook' High Street, Skellingthorpe, Lincolnshire*
- * *The site is located close to an area of known medieval earthworks*
- * *A series of modern features were exposed as a result of the works, as was the north-west edge of a large undated earth-cut feature; possibly a pond*



Fig. 1 1:10000 site location
(OS copyright ref. AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the groundworks for a rearward extension to a dwelling known as 'Stone Nook', High Street, Skellingthorpe. The works were commissioned by Mr J Broderick, and centred on NGR 492400 372210. This text documents the results of the fieldwork and post-fieldwork analysis. Copies of the report have been forwarded to the client, the District Planning Authority, the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven, the County Sites and Monuments Record, and the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

The project was carried out in accordance with an archaeological project brief issued by the Heritage Officer of North Kesteven. The methodology employed followed details set out in a written specification (prepared by PCA, dated March 1998).

Work on the site commenced April 7, 1998 and was completed on April 9. The groundworks for an associated garage were not monitored, and the brief was terminated (following the approval of the Heritage Officer of North Kesteven).

2.0 Location and description

The village of Skellingthorpe lies approximately 4km west of Lincoln. The proposed development, for which planning permission had been granted, is in the north of the village on the west side of the High Street, overlooking an area of pasture.

3.0 Planning background

Permission was granted by North Kesteven District Council for the erection of an extension to Stone Nook, and the construction of a garage measuring 6m x 3m in area (Planning Reference N/56/798/97). The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Skellingthorpe is a shrunken medieval settlement (SMV), about which relatively little is known. Only its large parish church, dedicated to St Lawrence, stands as a reminder to the unknowing visitor of the apparent prosperity of this village in former times.

Until recently, a large field south-east of the High Street (and opposite the site of development) contained a set of three sub-rectangular fishponds, orientated north-south. These ponds are depicted on the 1:10,000 map section shown as Fig. 1, and they were described in 1981 by A Peach (former Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven District Council) as being in excellent condition. It is a great shame that only six years later these medieval fishponds had been obliterated - today the field is bland.

There is an entry for Skellingthorpe in the Domesday Book of 1086, which was a jurisdiction of Doddington. Land was held by Baldwin (Morris 1986).

Given the proximity of the present site to known medieval earthworks, a low-level watching brief was attached to the planning permission.

Skellingthorpe parish has produced a significant quantity of artefactual evidence relating to occupation and exploitation of the area in prehistoric times: in particular, polished flint and stone axes, and an unlocated Palaeolithic (Early Stone Age) hand axe.

5.0 Requirement and objectives

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a project brief issued by the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven and a specification prepared by PCA.

The purpose of the recording brief, in essence, has been to identify and record archaeological remains exposed or disturbed as a result of the development; effectively, to preserve 'by record' the archaeology; to create a comprehensive site archive (of both the object and paper elements), and to produce a report, both for the purpose of the clients and the local planning authority.

Broadly, an archaeological watching brief may be defined as:-

“a programme of observation and investigation conducted during the destruction of archaeological deposits, resulting in the preparation of a report and ordered archive” (Institute of Field Archaeologists, *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, 1994).

6.0 Methodology

Foundation trenches for the extension were excavated both by JCB and by mini-excavator due to access problems. They extended north-west from the existing dwelling (which is dated on a building plate 1871) and enclosed an area measuring approximately 7.0m x 5.5m. Part of this area had been occupied by a shed/wash house and concrete yard surface.

Foundation trenches were generally excavated to a depth approximately 1.0m below modern ground surface.

All earth removal was carefully monitored, and section and plan surfaces were intermittently cleaned by trowel to look for archaeological intrusion.

Recording was undertaken using pro-forma Watching Brief Record Sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations and stratigraphic relationships), and a detailed photographic record was maintained throughout. On this occasion, no

detailed section drawings were made as the only feature of potential archaeological significance was too deep (2.5m+) to allow a safe inspection.

Following the completion of fieldwork, a detailed site archive was prepared. This may be accessed at Lincoln City and County Museum by quoting its Accession Number.

7.0 Results

The results of the brief are slightly disappointing. Much of the area was substantially disturbed by relatively modern intrusive features, including a brick-lined soakaway pit; presumably associated with the former wash house. In addition, there was a substantial amount of ground water present, making the operation messy, and also rather difficult.

For the most part, the general stratigraphy may be summarised as follows:-

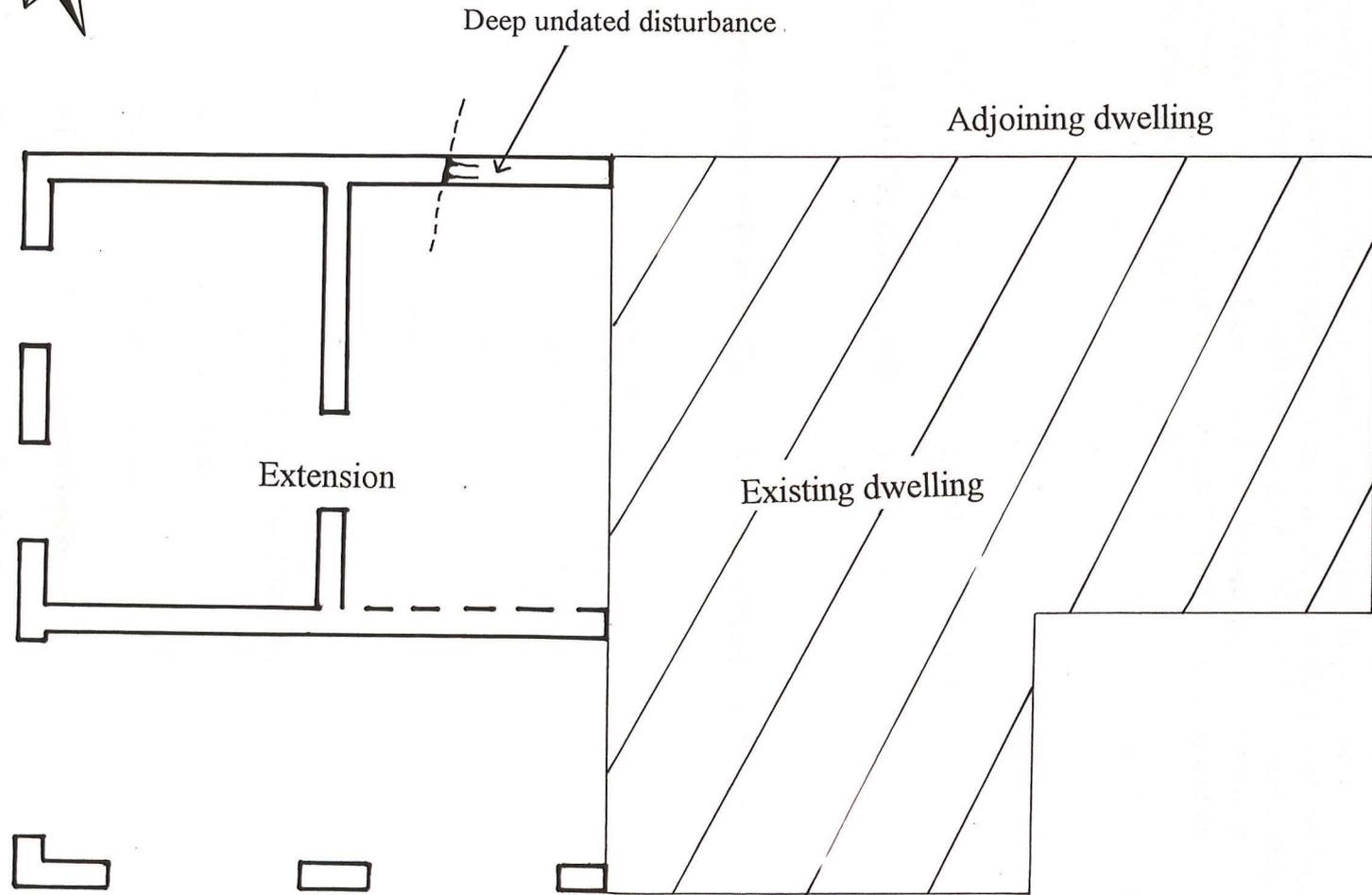
modern ground surface
/
30 - 40cm topsoil/rubble
/
c. 20cm light brown silty subsoil
/
natural yellow/grey clay mixed with gravel inclusion.

In the north-east corner of the plot, a substantial disturbance was exposed, and appeared to continue beneath the existing dwelling. Its form was difficult to determine, as the depth of the trench at this point exceeded 2.5m (rendering safe access impossible). However, its west edge appeared to be orientated broadly north-south.

The soil filling the above consisted of very dark grey/black silty sand, incorporating occasional pebbles and stones. Only the material removed by JCB could be looked at in detail, and a thorough inspection was made: a single fragment of animal bone was recovered, although small brick or tile fragments were also present within the matrix.

No other archaeological features were observed within any of the foundation trenches.

Fig.2 Ground plan of existing dwelling + extension
(incorporating location of large feature in north-east corner)



0

7m

8.0 Conclusions and discussion

It is possible that the disturbance noted in the north-east corner of the extension was the edge of a fish pond; filled in prior to the construction of the existing dwelling (ie slightly before 1871). The lower fill removed from the void (and inspected by the writer) was certainly consistent with that normally found within old ponds or slow ditches. However, the feature did not appear to extend to any great distance within the plot, and one assumes that (if it was a pond) the existing dwelling has been built within the main area of the depression - which could explain minor subsidence on the west side of the property). Unfortunately, the feature exposed could not be dated and its correct interpretation, therefore, has not been established.

9.0 References

Pevsner, N and Harris, J 1989 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*

Morris, J (general editor) 1986 *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire*

10.0 Relevant entries derived from the County Sites and Monuments Record

NGR	PRN	Description
SK92916849	B	Early Bronze Age flints
SK943682	L	Stone axe with pointed butt
SK920720	D	x2 stone axes
SK925721	E	Anglo-Saxon glass bead
Unlocated	H	Perforated bone disc (?brooch)
SK928715	J	Polished flint axe
SK92987381	L	Polished flint axe
Unlocated	M	Urns, one with handle
SK906735	N	Scatter of medieval pottery
SK910736	O	Roman brooch, terret, ring
Unlocated	P	blue/green glass bead

SK944717	R	Decoy earthworks
Unlocated	S	small Palaeolithic hand axe
SK92447210	T	Polished glass bead
SK943682	U	Stone axe
SK924722	?	Set of 3 parallel rectangular fishponds (RCHM overlay; ref. L1.632.1.1)

11.0 Colour photographs



P1. General view of footprint excavations, looking north



P2. Large disturbance extending beneath existing property, looking east