



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Welbourn Castle, Lincs.
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
And Earthwork Survey**

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Pl. 1 Aerial view of Welbourn looking south, with Castle Hill near the centre and the church below. Note the remains of medieval ridge and furrow. The straight line of the railway lies to the west (right) of the village. Cambridge University collection of Air Photographs ©. (ref. No ARC 60, taken in 1967).

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Welbourn Castle, Lincs.
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

NGR: SK 9680 5432

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. : 10.99

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Summary

A desk top study and measured survey, comprising hachure and contour surveys of the earthworks, at Castle Hill Welbourn was undertaken in order to summarise the available historical evidence and to assess the quality and extent of archaeological remains on the site. The purpose of the investigations is to improve the presentation and interpretation of the monument for the general public by providing information boards and benches.

The site is a medieval ringwork which lies south of the parish church and is enclosed by the remains of a moat. Its precise period of use is unknown but it was under construction or alteration in 1158 which is consistent with the late 11th-12th century date generally assigned to the this type of monument. It was abandoned before 1374.

The monument has been partly damaged this century by encroaching development, mainly along the western boundary, and internal land clearance. Comparison of the survey evidence with the results of the geophysical survey (see separate report) indicates that the earthworks in the northern half of the site probably relate to ground clearance and cleaning out of the moat and do not necessarily reflect the presence of below ground features. It is provisionally suggested in the report that the southern arm of the moat is the innermost of the three parallel ditches which cross the south end of the monument. Stone foundations cross the site immediately north of this ditch and may be part of a curtain wall described in a survey of 1288. However, it is not possible to relate specific buildings to earthwork remains or geophysical survey anomalies.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in December 1998 by Welbourn Parish Council to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment of the site known as Welbourn Castle (Figs. 1 and 2).

Welbourn Parish Council has made a successful application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for a grant from Lottery Funding for an investigation of the site of Welbourn Castle. The project includes an archaeological desk-based assessment and earthwork survey. Further work may include the excavation of trial trenches designed to assess archaeological constraints before siting interpretation boards and visitor benches.

Scope of Work

An Archaeological Brief was prepared for the project in July 1998 by Kate Orr, Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council. The Brief states the objectives of the investigation:

- to find out more about the structure of the 'castle'
- to quantify the number of documented buildings which were situated inside the moated area
- to determine the date of the site
- to determine the type of habitation and other activity
- to identify the nature of its defences
- to investigate the abandonment and subsequent decay of the 'castle'

Methods and Sources

A desk-based assessment of the site of Welbourn Castle was undertaken in order to identify, collate and assess all available information which would inform understanding and future management of the archaeological and historical site. Research for the assessment was conducted by G. Tann between December 23rd 1998 and January 4th 1999; the site was inspected on 31st December 1998 and again on January 6th¹⁹⁹⁹ during the earthwork survey. The following sources were consulted and available information researched:

- Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section Sites and Monuments Record, (SMR)
- North Kesteven Heritage Officer's records and Welbourn parish file
- Lincolnshire County Council Archives Office (Enclosure map, Ordnance Survey maps, manuscript maps and other documentary and published sources)
- National collections of aerial photographs at Cambridge University and the National Air Photographic Library, Swindon (English Heritage)
- Lincoln Central Library Reference Library, Local Studies Collection

The County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is in the process of computerising all its records. North Kesteven is the last district to be processed and work is not yet complete. Computerised records of reported sites and finds in the Welbourn area have been assigned a six-figure primary record number (PRN). In addition, earlier card index and parish file entries have a letter code related to 1: 10,560 OS map sheets, not all of which have been assigned a PRN. Further complication is caused by records held by the North Kesteven Heritage Officer, some of which duplicate SMR entries but others are unique. The North Kesteven records have a parish code system. Where available, the PRN has been used in this report and in Appendix 1; in its absence the parish code or, as a last resort, the letter code has been used.

Site Location

Welbourn is a small village situated on the A607 Grantham - Lincoln road, 19km NE of Grantham and 17km south of the city (Fig. 1). Modern spellings of the village name are often inconsistent; 'Welbourn' has been used throughout this report except where documentary references are cited. The settlement lies on flat ground below the Lincoln Ridge. The village lies west of the Cliff Road (A607), but a footpath leading from Nookin Lane (beside the church) northwards to Wellingore may indicate an early route .

The High Dike runs along the top of the ridge 2.5km east of the village (on the course of the Roman Ermine Street). Minor roads link this route to the village and Wellingore and Leadenham. Within the village itself, two north-south streets are separated by a long block of land. Ribbon development has occurred along each of these streets. High Street passes the west side of Castle Hill without noticeable deflection, although Beck Street curves to avoid the earthworks. The streets converge around the northern boundary of Castle Hill to meet Nookin Lane which runs northwards past the church.

Castle Hill is located towards the northern end of the village, with St. Chad's Church 100m to the north. The earthwork site occupies 1.4ha and is bounded by High Street to the west and Beck Street to the east. The southern end of the site is delineated by a small stream which flows westwards beneath High Street and along Hall Orchard Lane.

The 'castle' site comprises a D-shaped plot of land, currently mown rough grass. A broad flat moat surrounds its NW and eastern sides. A survey of the visible earthworks was undertaken by LAS as part of this project (Figs. 7-10).

Topography and Geology

The parish of Welbourn extends westwards from the top of the Jurassic Lias ridge down the scarp slope and across low-lying fields to the River Brant. The village is sited mid-way down the scarp on a natural break in slope at about 35m OD. Two streams form tributaries of the Brant; each rises to the east of the settlement and passes through it. These streams were probably important factors in the establishment of a settlement site here. At Castle Hill, the Ordnance Survey marked the position of springs ('issues') in the SE corner of the site, close to the position of a marked 'pump' which probably uses another spring (OS 1905 and c. 1970).

Scheduled Ancient Monument Status

The site of Welbourn Castle has been scheduled by the Secretary of State under Section 1 of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* (as amended) (SAM Lincs. 116) and receives statutory protection.

The site has been scheduled for many years and owes its present condition to that status. There have been successive phases of residential development on land outside the scheduled area which have affected its setting and reduced the opportunities to interpret the medieval site. In 1948 a

letter from the Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings recorded that the North Kesteven Rural District Council had a housing site at Welbourn which was crossed by a linear earthwork identified as part of the castle. This development lay beside Hall Orchard Lane, west of Castle Hill but in the area of earthworks labelled Roman encampment on the OS 1:2500 map of 1905 (surveyed in 1886) (Fig. 3).

A planning application in July 1961 proposed development of the entire scheduled area as a residential estate (Planning Application NK4346, SMR parish file). The application was rejected in August 1961.

A further application in 1962 for two dwellings, to replace a dwelling and an outbuilding already built on the SW corner of the earthwork site but outside the scheduled area, was successful.

In August 1964 Mr R. Fleetwood, the then owner of the earthwork site, was accused of bulldozing part of the mounded area of the earthwork despite being previously informed about its protected status (Lincolnshire Echo, October 1964, Fig. 6). A description in a letter of December 1964 notes a cut made into the NW of the site for bungalows, and partial filling of adjacent linear ditches with the spoil.

Further concerns were raised in July 1995 when the English Heritage Inspector was advised of damage apparently being caused by use of a 'cultivator'. This may have been the episode of rotovating which cleared the previously thick rough vegetation obscuring the interior of the monument. Evidence of damage is visible. There are also heaps of stone in the south-west corner of the site which may have been created at this time. Continuing damage to the monument, caused by moles and rabbits, is evident.

Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric

Two Neolithic worked flints represent the only reported prehistoric artefacts from Welbourn. A polished flint axe with flattened edges (SMR 95SE T) was found in the SE part of the parish, and an edge scraper was found at an unprovenanced site, together with much Romano-British pottery (SMR 95SE R). These finds denote a background level of prehistoric activity along the limestone ridge. No suggestion has been made in print that the Castle Hill earthwork has a prehistoric origin.

Roman

The Roman road Ermine Street passes 2.5km east of the village and is known as High Dike. Romano-British finds of pottery scatters and coins have been reported from Welbourn parish but none are known from Castle Hill or its immediate environs. Pottery has been recorded from low-lying ground close to the River Brant and from Welbourn Moor near Pottergate Road.

The Rev. Mayhew described a ten acre rectangular block of land with linear earthworks NW of Castle Hill, crossed by the now removed Lincolnshire and Honington Branch Railway, as a Roman cavalry camp associated with Ermine Street (Mayhew 1879, 279). The pasture field was surrounded by a 5-6ft high continuous agger, with a *vallum* to the west in a marshy area and a ditch to the north. The central area was subdivided equally by a second agger and *vallum*. He reported that coins of Gallienus, Valens and Tetricus had been found 'from the same locality' and that flint arrowheads, celts and horsebones had been found outside the site. Early Ordnance Survey maps mark it as a 'Roman Encampment' (OS 1887 and later editions, see Fig. 4). Part of the complex has been removed by housing development, and only two linear ridges survive on its north side; further complication was the result of a railway embankment borrow pit and spreading of embankment material when the railway was abandoned. The Roman attribution has been dismissed for some time, and the site was seen as being associated with the Castle Hill earthwork site. However, examination of aerial photographs taken in 1967 (CUCAP ARC 60 and 61), where part of the earthworks survive north of the allotments, indicate that this set of earthwork remains are more likely to be medieval cultivation features, of a block of ridge and furrow within a well-defined field bank (Pl. 1).

A watching brief during building work on ground to the rear of 28, High Street in 1994 produced the only positive Roman discoveries, that of three sherds of shell- and quartz-tempered Roman pottery in imported soil but which also contained thirteenth-century pottery (Palmer-Brown 1994).

Saxon and Medieval

The earliest recorded form of the place-name is *Wellebrune* [1086 Domesday Survey]. The name appears to derive from the Old English *wella* and *burna*, 'the stream fed by a spring'. A stream rises from a spring north of the village and flows into the R. Brant (Cameron 1998, 135).

Anglo-Saxon finds have been reported from land to the NW of Castle Hill, SW of the church (SMR 95SE G). Further finds of burials and metalwork have been made between the village and Ermine Street.

The village of Welbourn is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 confirming its Saxon origins. The parish church lies to the north of Castle Hill. Its dedication to St. Chad is indicative of an early origin, which is confirmed by its mention in the Domesday Survey. However, the earliest surviving fabric is Early English in style (thirteenth century).

Thirteenth-century architectural fragments have also been identified at the Manor House in the south of the village. These are thought to derive from an earlier manorial building on, or beside, its present site.

Medieval pottery was found west of Castle Hill in the 1960s when land beside Hall Orchard Lane was ploughed (MPP description, SK 95SE 1). This is likely

to represent material disturbed from rubbish pits of domestic crofts and tofts adjoining the village streets. At the rear of 28, High Street, a thirteenth century make-up deposit was recorded during building works (Palmer-Brown 1994). Archaeological monitoring to the rear of 33, High Street, revealed large backfilled features interpreted as ponds or pits (Palmer-Brown 1995).

A market and fair are both documented for Welbourn during the medieval period; a charter bestowing on Elias de Rabayn (the lord of the manor) rights of a market and fair is dated 1272. The market was held on a Tuesday, and the eight-day fair between March 1st and 8th (Platts 1985, 304). It is possible that the block of land lying between Little Lane and the Manor House may have been the site of the Market Place.

Descent of the Manor (Estate) of Welbourn

Before the Norman Conquest, twelve carucates of land held by Godwin had been assessed for tax. After 1066 the estate passed to Robert Malet, who was assessed for tax on three plough teams in demesne (his home farm). 35 *sokemen* (peasants who held land from the Lord in return for certain services and attendance at the Lord's court) were on a further seven carucates of the lan with twelve *villeins* (peasants who held land in the open fields in return for free labour services on the Lord's land) and eight *bordars* (landless peasants) having twelve plough teams and two oxen. Domesday notes the existence of a priest, and a church with five bovates of land. There were 200 acres of meadow assessed in addition to the arable area, and a mill rendering two shillings. The value of this landholding had remained constant at £16 in both 1066 and 1086, with tallage producing 40 shillings (Foster and Longley 1976, 185).

The demesne part of the manor was separated from the sokeland (land which was rented out) in the 12th century. Its nucleus became known as *le Southalle* and is first mentioned in the fourteenth century. The southern manor is thought to have been 400m south of Castle Hill on, or close to, the site of The Manor House. The existing house contains early fourteenth century features, possibly re-used, and some re-used thirteenth century architectural fragments. (The configuration of land at this end of the village is remarkably similar to that around the north end.)

The sokeland was granted in the first part of the 12th century to the lord of the honour of Bayeux (Healey and Roffe, 54). In 1158, his capital messuage is described as comprising sokeland along with the 'manor of *le Northalle*'. His *castellum* was being walled in stone, but authorities are undecided on whether this reference indicates the castle was being built anew or whether an earlier site was being improved (Healey and Roffe, 54). The reference is to the requirement of a Robert Rabaz to construct one perch (about 5.5m) of the wall of the castle of Welbourn, in return for a grant of land by Hugh of Bayeux (BL Add. Charter 6038, quoted in Stenton 1932, App. 31).

In 1086 the lord of the honour of Bayeux had been Alfred of Lincoln, who was succeeded by his son Alan (Hill 1990, 50) and his grandson Hugh. Roffe has noted the rarity of a tenant-in-chief having a castle within a manor held by another tenant-in-chief, and assumes it is due to the ties of kinship between Robert Malet and Alfred of Lincoln or their successors (Roffe 1997). Alan's niece Lucy was indeed also Robert's niece, confirming the connection (Hill 1990, 91-3). The picture is complicated by the assertion that Malet's lands were confiscated by the Crown in 1102 after Henry I's great-chamberlain had deserted the king and been banished (Puckridge 1937, 2).

A detailed description of the descent of the two manors is beyond the scope of this report and the following is a simplified account. Alan of Lincoln's great-grandson was Stephen de Baiocis; one of Stephen's daughters Matilda married Elias de Rabayn (Hill 1927, 177). Elias de Rabayn was a baron based in Thoresway but with national preoccupations. He had landholdings in Dorset and a lifestyle of military campaigns and crusading. He appears to have sent Matilda's sister, joint heiress to the Bayeux baronial estates, abroad to render her ineligible to inherit. During the baronial insurrections after the late 1250s, he was active against the Crown. He died in 1285, and his widow remarried. Peter Baudrat, husband of the other sister, claimed part of the estate and in 1290 was awarded half of the estate but then returned it to the Crown (Hill 1927, 177-8).

Edward III granted lands, including both the manors at Welbourn, to Isabella de Vescy, sister of Henry de Beaumont, as a life tenant. She died in 1334 and in June 1335 the manors were recovered by Henry de Beaumont (*CIPM* VII, 1909, 422). The status of *le Northalle* appears to have declined rapidly under the tenures of Isabella and Henry, perhaps as a result of 'rationalisation' and by 1374 the site was said to be waste and entirely without buildings (see below). Further references to the castle are incidental- a William 'del chastel' of Welbourn is listed in 1340, and a John 'de Castello' in 1348 (Puckridge 1937, 250).

Descriptions of Castle Hill

In 1288 a detailed description of the manor (presumably produced after Elias de Rabayn's death in 1285) the premises were described as including
...fruit and herbage of the garden, a croft called Hestcroft, two watermills, a wall around the court, surmounted by a small tower, and with a ditch 'in the court'; a hall with two chambers; kitchen; brewhouse; oxhouse; cowshed; sheepfold; and garden (Massingberd 1904, 59-60).

In 1374 the site of the northern manor was 'waste and entirely without buildings. The extent includes two carucates of land which are of no value because they have lain untilld for many years on les haythes in a sandy and stony place... and a watermill of no net value because no river abounds there except in winter' (*CIPM* 1954, 220-221). It may be that when Isabel de Vescy gained possession of the two manors she favoured the *Southalle* and had the

Manor House built on its present site. Abandonment of the ringwork at the *Northalle* may have been a precondition of her grant from Edward III.

The 'castle of Welbourn' is mentioned again in 1604, and in 1740 Stukeley visited the site and fancifully described it as a castle 'made on the frontier here by the Mercian kings to oppose that of the Northumbrian monarch at Somerton' (Puckridge 1937, citing Stukeley's *Diaries and Letters* II, [Surtees Society 1883, 344]).

Little cartographic information for the condition of Castle Hill before the late nineteenth century was identified during this assessment. The Welbourn with Sapperton Inclosure Award and Map of 1781 (LAO Kesteven Award 84) excludes this part of the parish presumably because it had already been enclosed. A map of lands beside the village centre, surveyed in 1795 by W. Taylor and revised in 1871 by R. Booth, indicates an L-shaped building and outhouse in the SW corner (plot 29) but with no other structures marked on the site (plot 22) (Fig. 3; LAO Tallents 2/7).

White's Directory for 1842 claimed that 'the moat and mounds ... still remain and are called Castle Garth and contains nearly three acres, near which is a remarkably fine spring'.

The next located reference to Castle Hill is a late-nineteenth century description of the site when the freehold of the site was for sale (Mayhew 1879, 279). Mayhew described it as 'the site of a fortified mansion, said to have belonged to Sir John Popham'. Its 'hillocky outline' he interpreted as evidence of buried vaultings. He noted distinct traces of a wide, deep moat which had once surrounded it, and the 'mound of the ruin' which rose 20ft in places. Within the enclosed area and 'southwards' were two parallel trenches [still visible today]. A fifteenth century key and an illegible inscription had been found on the site.

The site was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in 1886 in preparation for the First Edition 25 inch map. No copy of this map was available when this report was prepared but the 2nd edition is reproduced here (Fig. 4).

In August 1911 the site, was visited by E.A. Downman as part of his project recording monuments in many parts of England (Downman 1912). By then it was pasture and accessible with permission. He produced a plan (apparently a sketch plan) with measured profiles across the ditches at two marked points (Fig. 5). The accompanying hand-written description, dated June 1912, notes the lack of any natural defence for the site and describes the earthwork as

..maybe a Norman castle but if so it is one of unusual formation: it is defended with a rampart and ditch of considerable power on three sides but on the SSW side there are three ditches and two ramparts, and perhaps once a third and inside rampart: the

object of this extra defence is uncertain, as the nature of the ground here needs no more protection than do other points.

Roads surround this [?] S.E. work W, N and E, hence perhaps there were once similar earthworks on these sides to those on the SSW. There are no visible traces of masonry. Subsoil: clay on stone? ... Entrances: uncertain.

Downman's survey shows a maximum variation of 10ft (3m) between base of ditch and top of bank at the north-east corner of the site (Fig. 5, section E-F). Height variation recorded in 1999 was much the same as in 1912 (Fig. 9, Section A-A). The same section on Fig. 9 shows that the height variation is actually greatest in the north-west corner at 4.5m (c.14' 7").

Of particular interest is Downman's recording of the parallel banks and filled in ditches at the south end of the site which are still evident today but look remarkably like ridge and furrow cultivation (Pl. 5). His drawing identifies the internal ditch as the moat, with two external banks and ditches to the south. His cross section G-H records a variation in height of 6 ft between the base of the moat ditch and the first external bank. The height difference today is barely 0.5m (1' 7½"). The two outer ditches are recorded as having depths of 4ft and less than 3ft. Both are now about 0.5m deep.

An undated early description of the scheduled monument states:

Castle Hill: A more or less round enclosure, protected by a wide ditch and massive bank on all sides except the south and SW where there is a lighter, double bank and stream. Probably medieval. The bank is highest at the NW.

The rectangular enclosure to the west (called Roman on the OS map), now largely destroyed by building, is probably an outer bailey or a substantial moated area belonging to the same 'castle'. The site [sketched on an accompanying map as 'allotments'] produces no Roman pottery.
(SAM 116, SMR parish file).

A more recent description of the scheduled site, probably written in the early 1980s, prepared by the Ordnance survey is reproduced below (Appendix 2).

Aerial photographs of the site taken in 1967 (Pl. 1) show trees surrounding the moat and the area inside clear of vegetation. The raised area on the east (left) side is visible as are slight undulations to the west. The double banks at the south end are also clear. Encroachment of bungalows and gardens across the western boundary of the site. The rectangular earthwork recorded by Downman has been ploughed out and houses with allotments to the rear encroach its southern boundary.

In summary all the previous descriptions and depictions of the site show no additional features than are apparent today. However, there appears to have been some degradation of the monument as a result of land clearance. Downman is the only source to identify the southern arm of the moat and given the present state of the monument the only way to confirm this would be to carry out intrusive excavations.

The Earthwork Survey and Site Description (Pls 1-8 and Figs 7-10)

A site visit was made in December 1998 followed by the earthwork survey in January 1999. The purpose of the survey was to make a record of the existing site topography. It was hoped to establish whether the undulations were directly related to underlying buildings and other medieval features or if they were the result of later disturbance to the site such as the earthmoving known to have taken place in 1964, and rotoavation of the site in the last 2-3 years.

A gate, opposite the village hall entrance, provides the only official access, with a water trough fed by an underground service immediately inside the monument. A water pipe feeds into the trough and runs to the next field gate, where there is a meter. Telegraph poles carry overhead wires across the eastern edge of the site. The interior of the monument had been cleared of undergrowth for the survey and the earthworks were clearly visible.

The moat which surrounds the site to the north-west-north and north-east has mature willow trees both internally and externally and there is a generally overgrown appearance, although access to the moats was unimpeded (Pls. 2 and 3). The eastern side of the moat was dry but to the west it was wet. The original outer edge of the moat has been removed by the modern road. To the south-west, the moat has been filled in and landscaped to form part of the back gardens for bungalows fronting onto High Street (Pls 4 and 5). Three parallel banks are visible crossing the south end of the site from east to west (Pls 4 and 5). There appears to have been some alteration to the southern boundary of the site as a result of encroachment by adjoining properties and the third, southernmost ditch is partially obscured by the hedge along this boundary. In the south-east corner of the site the moat has been lined with concrete beside Beck Street, and small mounds along the boundary may be relatively recent dumps of cleared rubble. The external eastern boundary beside the footpath to Beck Street is partly railed and partly a hawthorn hedge.

In the north-west corner of the monument a high bank runs along the internal edge of the moat (Pl. 6). The ground drops near the north-east at a point where a temporary shelter for horses has been erected (Pl. 7) and rises again forming a distinct flat-topped mound against the moat edge (Pl. 8). Molehills on these mounds revealed blue clay, in addition to the yellow and brown clay seen elsewhere on the site, indicating that the material may contain upcast from the moat or elsewhere on the site. The central part of the monument is dished and one of the aims of the survey was to establish

whether this area had been excavated (Pl. 9). A few pieces of medieval pottery were picked up in this area (plotted on Fig. 7).

Three narrow lines of limestone rubble were seen crossing the central part of the site from east to west, in roughly the same alignment as the banks to the south of them. These are marked as solid lines on Fig. 7. They were thought to be wall foundations and examination of the geophysical survey results reinforces this interpretation (Fig. 10).

Results of the survey show that the ground level around Castle Hill is roughly level with a slight tilt from north to south. The boundary levels around the site are virtually same at 34.50m OD. Even the tops of the banks/ ridges at the south end of the site are at the same level with the dips between them some 0.50m lower. So the raised areas flanking the moat have been artificially constructed above this level to 36.70m and 36.3m respectively. The low area in the centre of the site drops to 34.20m OD, only 0.30m below street levels, so the dished effect is probably exaggerated by the build-up of surrounding material.

The geophysical survey results are more extensively discussed in a separate report (GSB 1999). One of the figures has been superimposed on the earthwork survey (Fig. 10) to correlate the results. This shows very well two wall lines (a) and (b) running parallel to the innermost ditch. This is recorded as a whiter band crossing the drawing enclosed by the yellow hachures to either side (c). Downman in his survey (Fig. 5) identifies this dip in the ground as the southern side of the moat.

The survey of 1288 refers to a curtain wall flanking the moat. It is suggested that walls (a) and (c) may be the remains of a range of buildings which flanked the southern arm of the moat. Other building remains have been suggested by the geophysical survey running beneath the north-western mound and further areas of stone rubble were recorded in this part of the site.

Discussion

Although colloquially referred to as a castle the site at Castle Hill Welbourn was, in its original form, a ringwork. (Present evidence suggests there never was a motte). The periods of construction of ringworks are thought to be broadly similar to those of motte and bailey castles with two main periods being identified i.e. the first immediately post-Conquest with the new land settlement and secondly during the Anarchy of the civil wars between Stephen and Matilda c.1138-1153. Few date to the period after the 12th century. Duration of use varied widely, with some being abandoned soon after completion and others having a life of perhaps 150 years or more.

The first reference to Welbourn castle in 1158 fits well into this scheme of dating but absence of earlier references does not necessarily mean absence of site.

The first reference to Welbourn castle in 1158 fits well into this scheme of dating but absence of earlier references does not necessarily mean absence of site.

The plan of Welbourn village exhibits a curious symmetry. The layout of Welbourn's streets suggests that there was a green or market area, within the centre of the settlement. The village had a medieval market and fair which ended by the late eighteenth century and much of this area appears to have remained undeveloped until this century. The *Southalle* has been assumed to refer to the present Manor House site at the southern end of this central land block, which incorporates re-used thirteenth century architectural fragments in its fabric. The parallel streets deflect outwards to the south of the village in the same way as to the north. In the absence of any obvious topographic reason it is conceivable that another sub-circular block of land, similar to the Castle Hill ringwork site, existed at the southern end, perhaps containing a predecessor to the 13th century manor house. A stream flows across the centre of the postulated site, replicating the Castle Hill natural resources.

The proximity of Castle Hill to the parish church hints that the ringwork may have been built on the site of pre-Conquest dwelling of status. Against this argument is the fact that when the manor was split the *Northalle* was part of the sokeland while the *Southalle* was the part of the demesne property.

The alignment of Nookin Lane (the road past the church) projected southwards across the site lines up with Beck St to the south of Castle Hill. Perhaps it was only diverted as a result of the construction of the ringwork. Establishment of a defended site across the course of a village street would have provided a very obvious indication of a change of local control and power.

Archaeological Potential of the Site

The combined earthwork and geophysical surveys have established that the earthworks in the northern half of the site probably represent activity associated with the destruction of the site rather than its use. If the records of previous surveys are accurate then there is evidence of some degradation of the mounds at the north end of the site and the ditches to the south.

While it is impossible to identify the individual buildings described in the survey of 1288, if Downman's identification of the south arm of the moat is correct then the results of the geophysical survey suggest the possibility of a south range of buildings immediately adjacent to the moat.

Structural remains are also visible near the north-west part of the site and the geophysical survey results indicate that building foundations run beneath the mounds adjacent to the northern half of the moat. The potential for preservation beneath the mounds must be high.

The central area of the site showed poor definition in the geophysical survey, which may indicate that some ground disturbance has taken place even though the general level is not much below that of the surrounding streets.

The moat to the north has probably been cleaned out on numerous occasions but the parallel linear ditches to the south may contain refuse deposits contemporary with the use of the site. The proximity of at least one spring means that these deposits may have remained waterlogged and therefore would be of particular environmental interest. Leather and wood artefacts could also be present.

Conclusion

The documentary research has established that the form of monument at Welbourn is that of a ringwork and not a motte and bailey. While early cartographic information does not identify any features which cannot be seen on the ground today the combined geophysical and earthwork surveys reinforce Downman's identification of the southern line of the moat. The recent surveys have also identified well-defined building foundations and the potential for good preservation over much of the site is high.

More precise identification of the parts of the site would only be possible by means of intrusive investigations.

Acknowledgements

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Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
January 1999
Revised August/September 1999

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APPENDIX 1

Archaeological Sites and Artefacts in the Vicinity of Welbourn Castle (Sources: Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record and North Kesteven Heritage Officer's Parish Records)

Abbreviations

NGR: National Grid Reference

LSMR: Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record

NK: North Kesteven Heritage Officer's Parish Records

SAM: Scheduled Ancient Monument

NGR	SMR/NK codes	Description
	SK 95 SW	
9335 5470	Q	Romano-British pottery scatter
	SK 95 SE	
96 54	NK 72.6	Romano-British pottery and Neolithic edge scraper
96 54	S	Foundations at Welbourn Place
96 54	AF	Hamlet of Sapperton
963 527	NK 72.5	Romano-British pottery
9635 5355	60336	Shrunken medieval village earthworks
966 541	NK 72.10,11	Medieval fishponds
966 544	B	medieval potter scatter
9669 5448	NK 72.3	medieval bank and ditch earthwork; 13-14th C pottery
9675 5433	NK 72.1	Castle
9675 5435	W	late 16 th C jeton
9680 5432	SAM 116	Remains of medieval motte: 15th C key from site
968 543	60741	medieval motte
968 545	G	Anglo-Saxon remains
968 545	H	Roman earthworks (OS)
9687 5451	AG	St. Chad's Church
969 545	NK 72.13	Two Roman coins (4th C)
973 533	60460	Romano-British pottery (4th C) and burnt stone
9765 5304	L	burial, brooch
9828 5290	NK 72.9	polished flint axe
9925 5325	U	Roman coin
993 536	60370	Anglo-Saxon remains: fibula and clasps
993 536	60369	4 inhumation burials
993 538	Y	Anglo-Saxon coin: Aethelred II

APPENDIX 2

SK 95 SE 2 Lincolnshire North Kesteven District Welbourn Parish

SK 9680 5432 Castle Hill

Castle Hill (SK 9680 5432) lies at 35m above OD on the north to south Jurassic lias edge (British Geological Survey 1979, Geological Map of the UK), between Lincoln and Leadenham with the valley of the River Brant to the west. It is situated at the northern end of the cliff-edge village of Welbourne, at the southern end of Nookin Lane before the lane splits to wrap itself around the monument.

Castle Hill is an irregular D-shaped enclosure covering 130m x 130m to the outer edges of its ditches. The banks and ditches of the monument are tree-covered accompanied by a dense undergrowth: the interior has been ploughed within recent years although it has subsequently been returned to pasture and used for horse grazing. No trace of the original outer lip of the ditch was visible as this now lies beneath the encircling road. The northern part of the enclosure is defined by a curving earthen bank, between 3m and 5m in height with an internal counter-scarp for most of its length. The easterly side is defined as a gently curving feature whereas the western side has a faceted appearance. It was unclear whether this was an original feature of the monument or has resulted from later modifications. Along the eastern side there is an internal bank 45m in length: in this section the top of the bank is about 3m above the base of the ditch and 2m to 3m above the interior. At the north-eastern corner there is a gap in the internal bank. The surface in the gap lies at a similar level to the surrounding road surface. Westwards from this gap the bank gradually increases in height to a maximum of 3m internally and 5m externally. At the southern end of this side two cottages and their gardens are set against the bank, the successors to two buildings shown in the nineteenth century by the Ordnance Survey (1887 Lincolnshire XCVI.2). The southern side of the monument is closed by two shallow linear ditches, the inner ditch about 12m in width and the outer 6m.

The interior of the monument at the time of investigation was heavily overgrown by weeds, therefore no assessment of the survival or otherwise of surface remains was possible. A previous investigator (auth.5) noted no internal features. The enclosed area covers an area of about 78m x 60m: the interior is level and lies at approximately the same height as the surrounding road surfaces and gardens.

The substantial nature of earthen bank coupled with the name Castle Hill are entirely consistent with the interpretation of this monument as a ringwork castle dating from the end of the 11th or 12th centuries.

There is no change to the mapped depiction of the monument (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan SK 9654).



Fig. 1 Welbourn, location. Based on the 1954 OS 1:25,000 map; © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS licence no. AL 50424A.

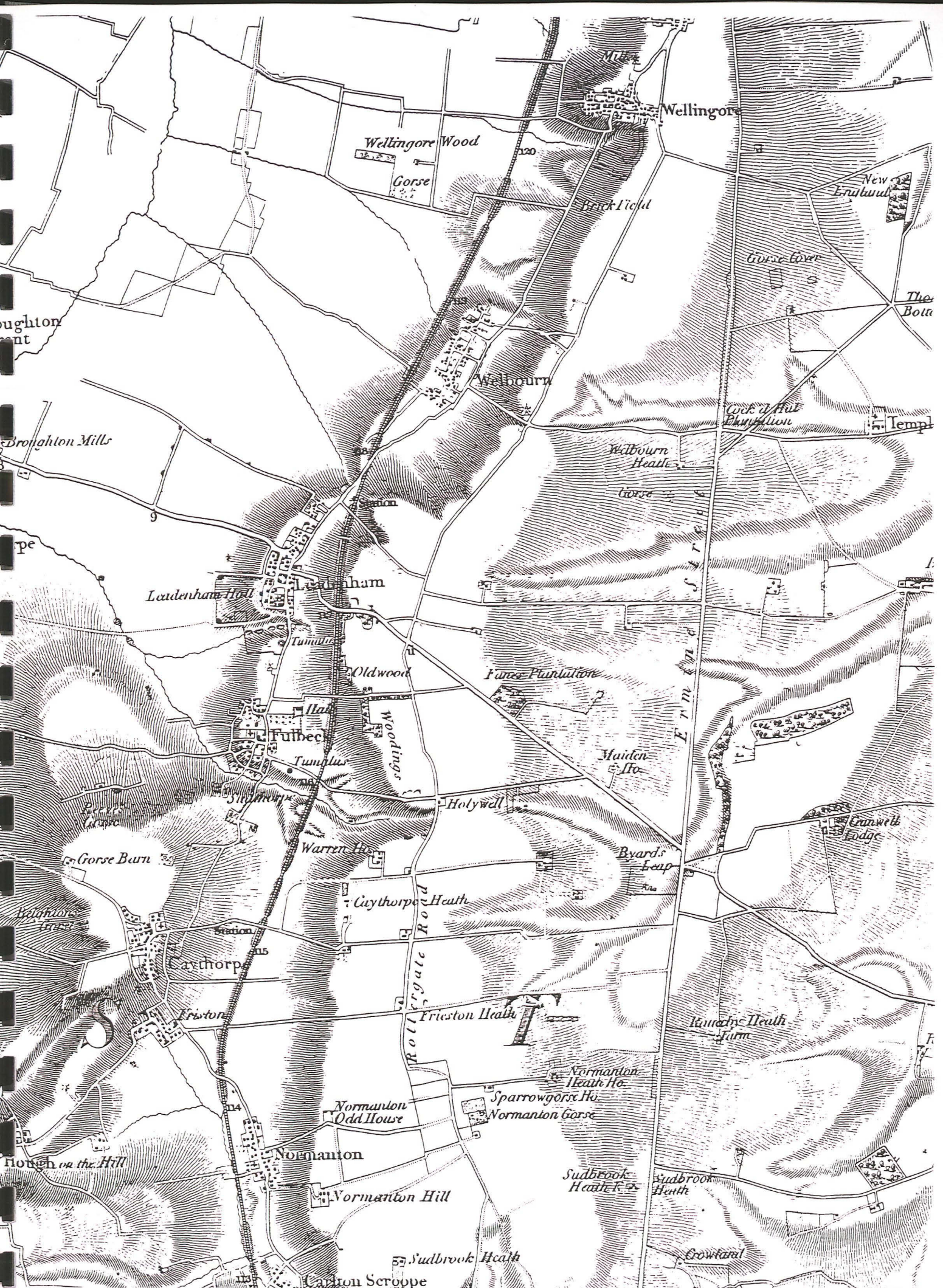


Fig. 2 Welbourn as depicted on the OS 1" map, 1824 first edition, reprinted in 1887 (enlarged scale).

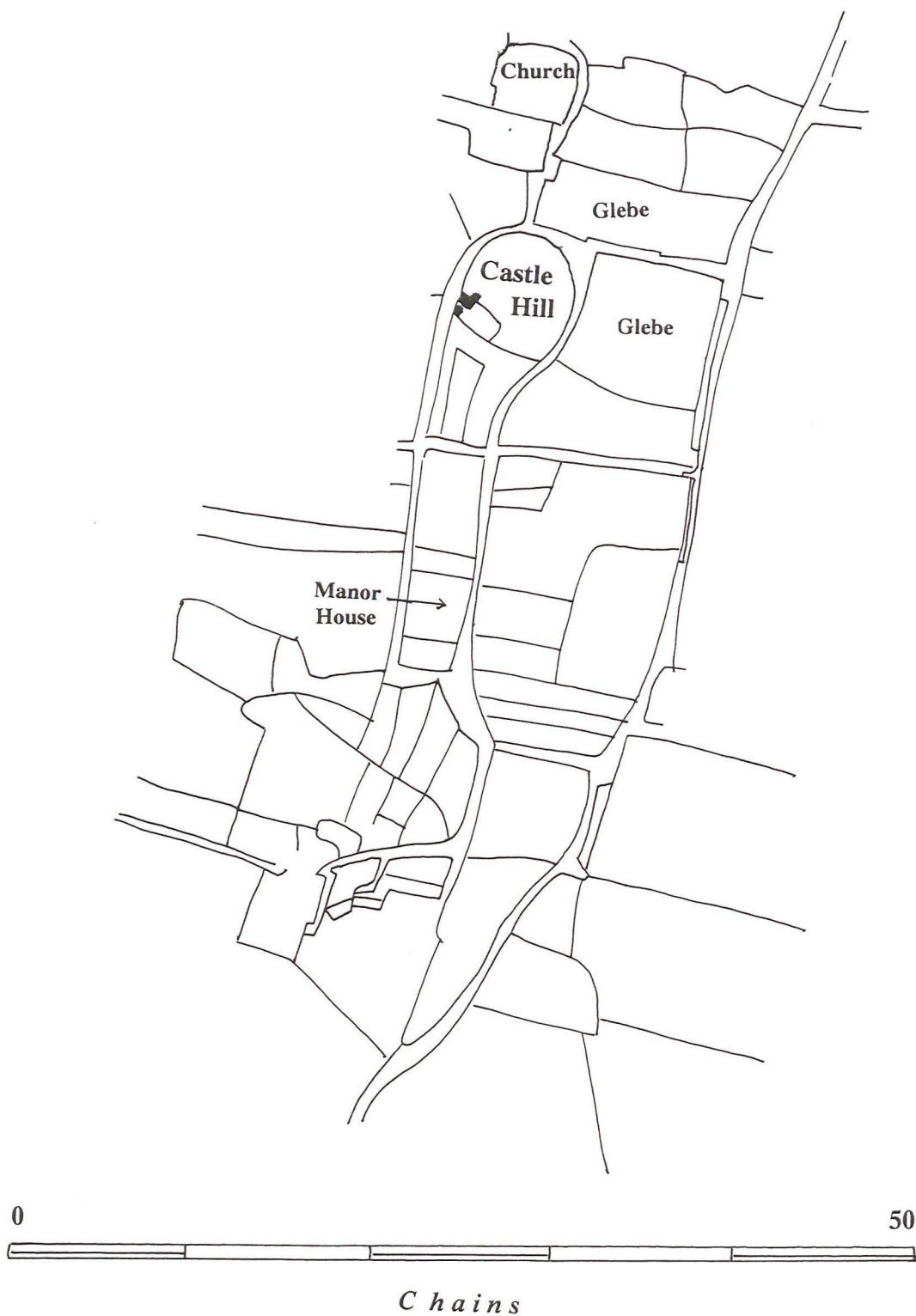


Fig. 3 Tracing of part of the survey of Welbourn by W. Taylor in 1795, and revised by R. Booth in 1871.

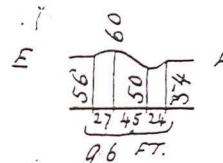
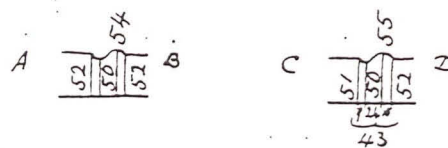


Fig. 4 Part of the OS second edition 1: 2500 map of Welbourn, surveyed in 1886, revised in 1904.

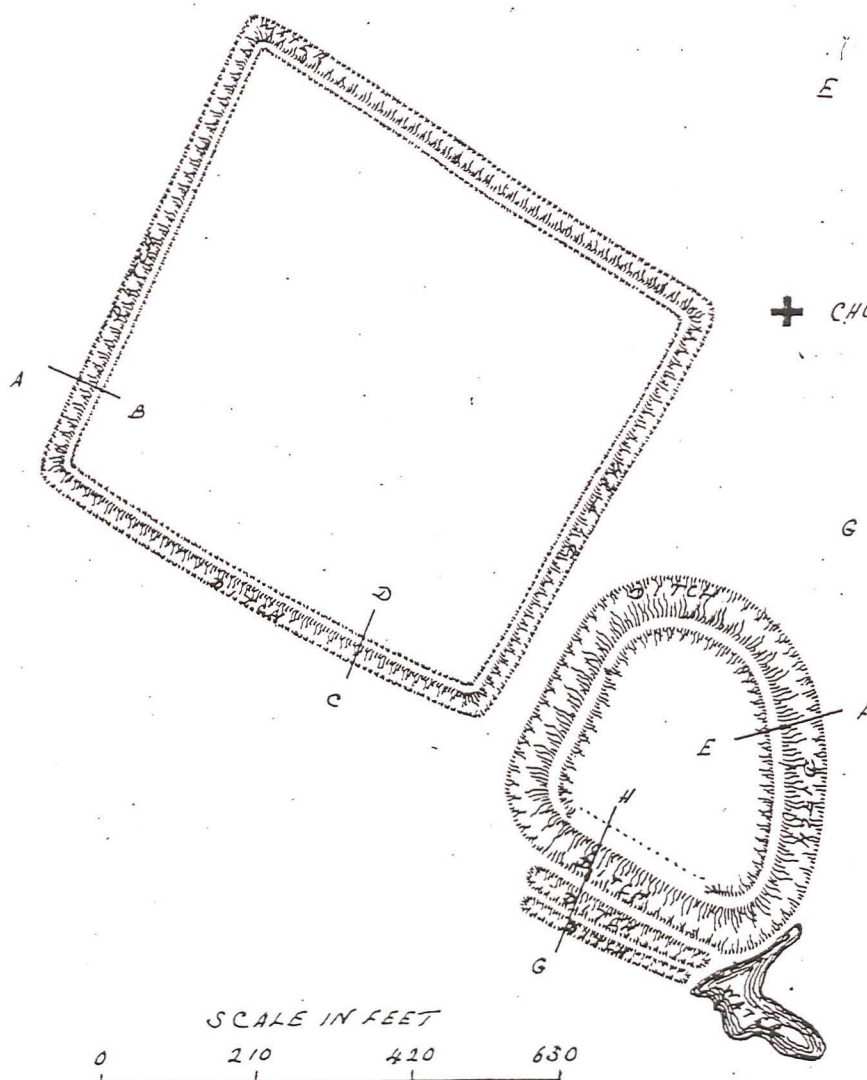
WELBOURN CASTLE
10½ MILES S. OF LINCOLN
LINCOLNSHIRE



SCALE, 25 INCHES TO THE MILE
VISITED AND EXAMINED BY
E. A. DOWNMAN, AUGUST 1911



+ CHURCH

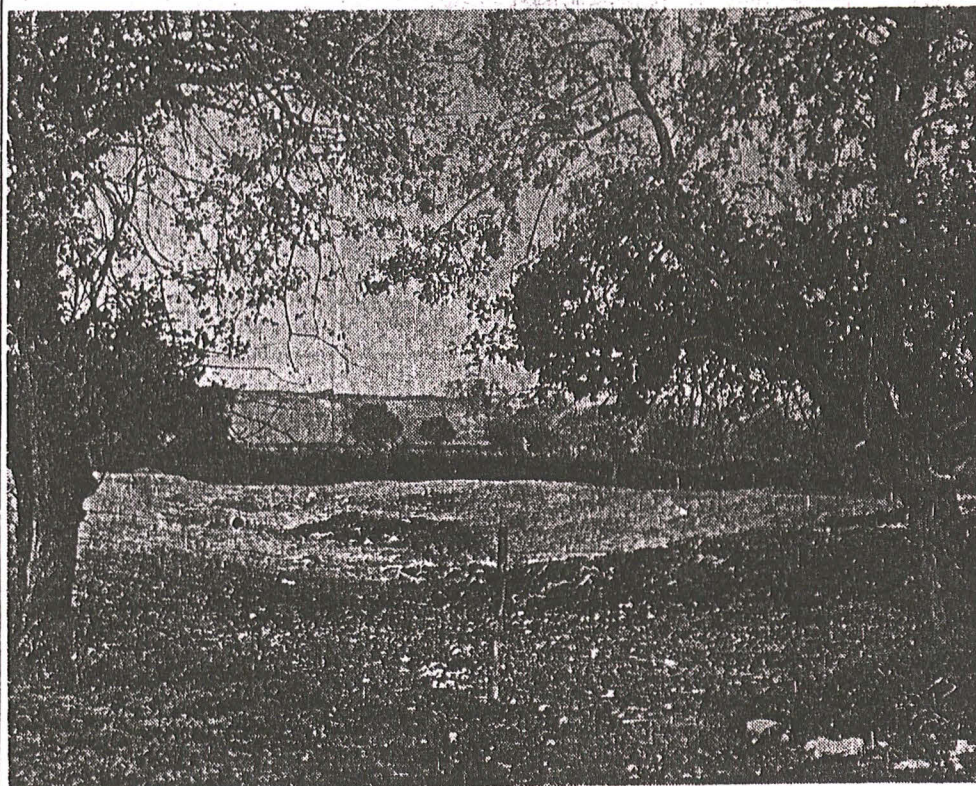


THE PERPENDICULAR SCALE IS SLIGHTLY
EXAGGERATED.

THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE SECTIONS ARE
IN FEET, AND START FROM AN IMAGINARY
BASE 50 FT. BELOW THE DITCH.

R. D.
LAINDON, ESSEX
JUNE 1912

Fig. 5 A survey of the castle earthworks dated 1912, by E.A. Downman



The site of an ancient monument. Piles of fresh earth can be seen between what may once have been ramparts at Castle Hill, Welbourn.

Welbourn's Famous Castle Hill Is Safe

RESIDENTS of Welbourn who feared that the ancient monument, Castle Hill, was destined to be levelled for housing development can relax.

These rumours have been strongly denied by Mr. R. E. J. Fleetwood, the Lincoln builder, who bought the land 12 months ago.

Castle Hill is a three-acre area of fairly complex earthworks between Welbourn parish church and the centre of the village.

Though not yet excavated by archaeologists, it is thought most likely to be of medieval origin. Some say it was a Roman fort.

SCHEDULED

Whatever its actual origin, Castle Hill is considered to be of such importance to the national interest that it is scheduled as an ancient monument.

Anxiety of the villagers was aroused when they saw earth had been dumped in ditches on the site — although only in small quantities. One mound they thought, had been bulldozed.

But Mr. Fleetwood has no intention of building on the monument, and, he told the Echo, never has had.

He explained that the dumping was done by his workmen without his knowledge while he was away in hospital. He will now certainly have this earth removed. He denied that a mound had been levelled.

REGRETS BUYING

Mr. Fleetwood complained that "people had jumped to conclusions," since he bought the three acres along with another half acre plot alongside.

It was only on this plot, formerly two old cottages and a farmyard, that he intended to build.

There he already has outline planning consent for two new bungalows, and hopes that North Kesteven Rural District Council housing committee will grant permission for the third when they meet tomorrow.

The ancient monument

would continue to be used as grazing land. He regretted ever having bought it but would comply with Ministry conditions.

Mr. Fleetwood said that if anybody was interested in archaeological excavation of the earthworks they would have his permission, provided his tenant was agreeable.

Fig. 6 Newspaper article concerning Castle Hill, Welbourn (Lincolnshire Echo, October 8th 1964)



Reference

⊙ Find location with bag number

Contours are in 0.1m intervals.
Levels are in metres to a O.S. datum, origin
BM on St Chads Church value 34.71m

Site

**Castle Hill
Welbourn**

Plan

**Earthworks Survey
Fig 7**

Scale : 1/500

Date : 19/8/99

Plan Ref No. : LAMSE/1196-2



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TELEPHONE 01522 544554 FACSIMILE 01522 522211
EMAIL las @ lasarchaeology.demonco.uk



Reference

Find location with bag number

Contours are in 0.1m intervals.
Levels are in metres to a O.S. datum, origin
BM on St Chads Church value 34.71m

Site

**Castle Hill
Welbourn**

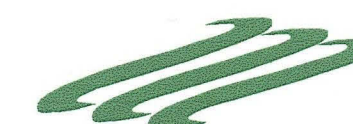
Plan

**Contour Survey
Fig 8**

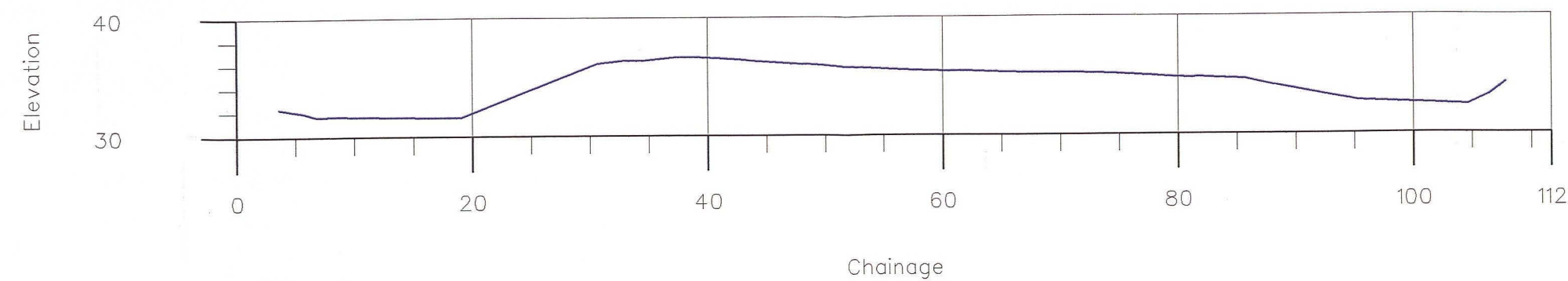
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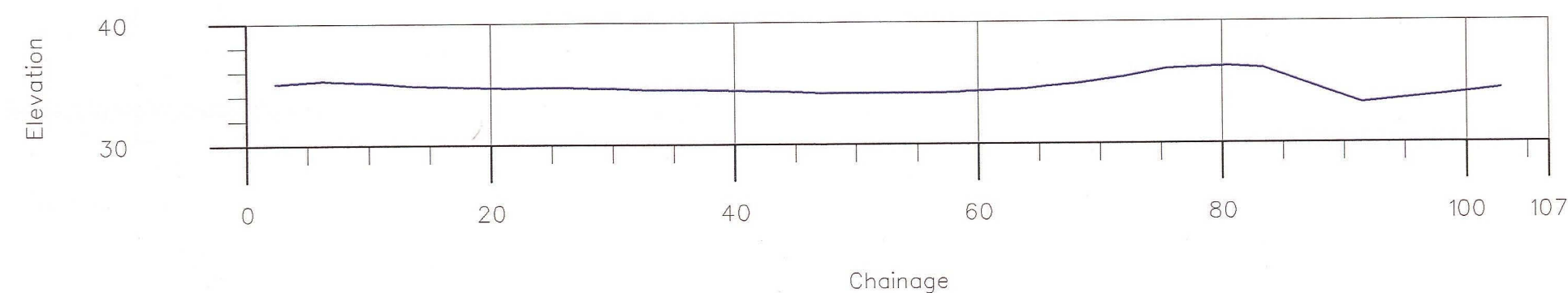
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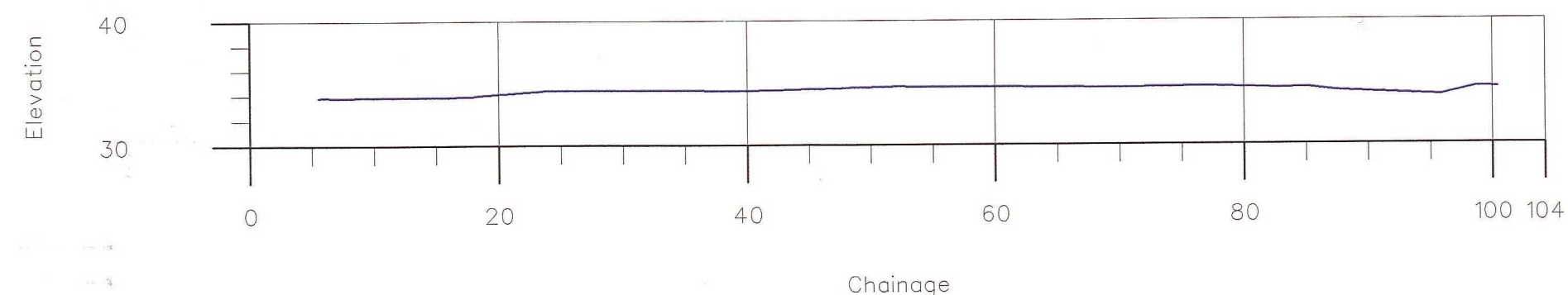
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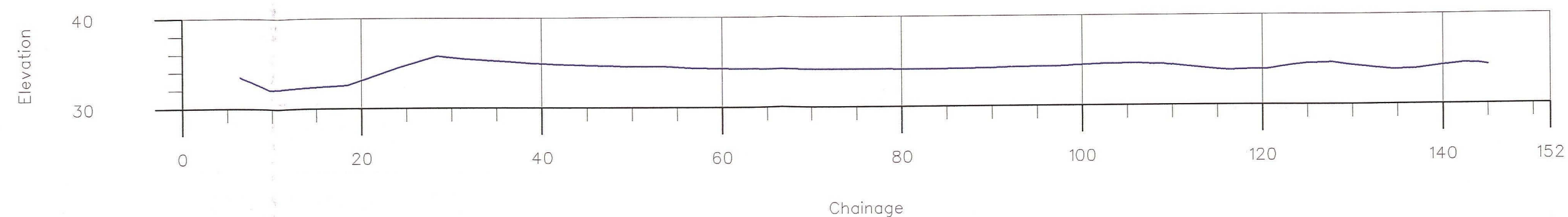
Section A-A



Section B-B



Section C-C



Section D-D

Reference

Contours are in 0.1m intervals.
Levels are in metres to a O.S. datum, origin
BM on St Chads Church value 34.71m

Site

**Castle Hill
Welbourn**

Plan

**Sections through
Earthworks
Fig 9**

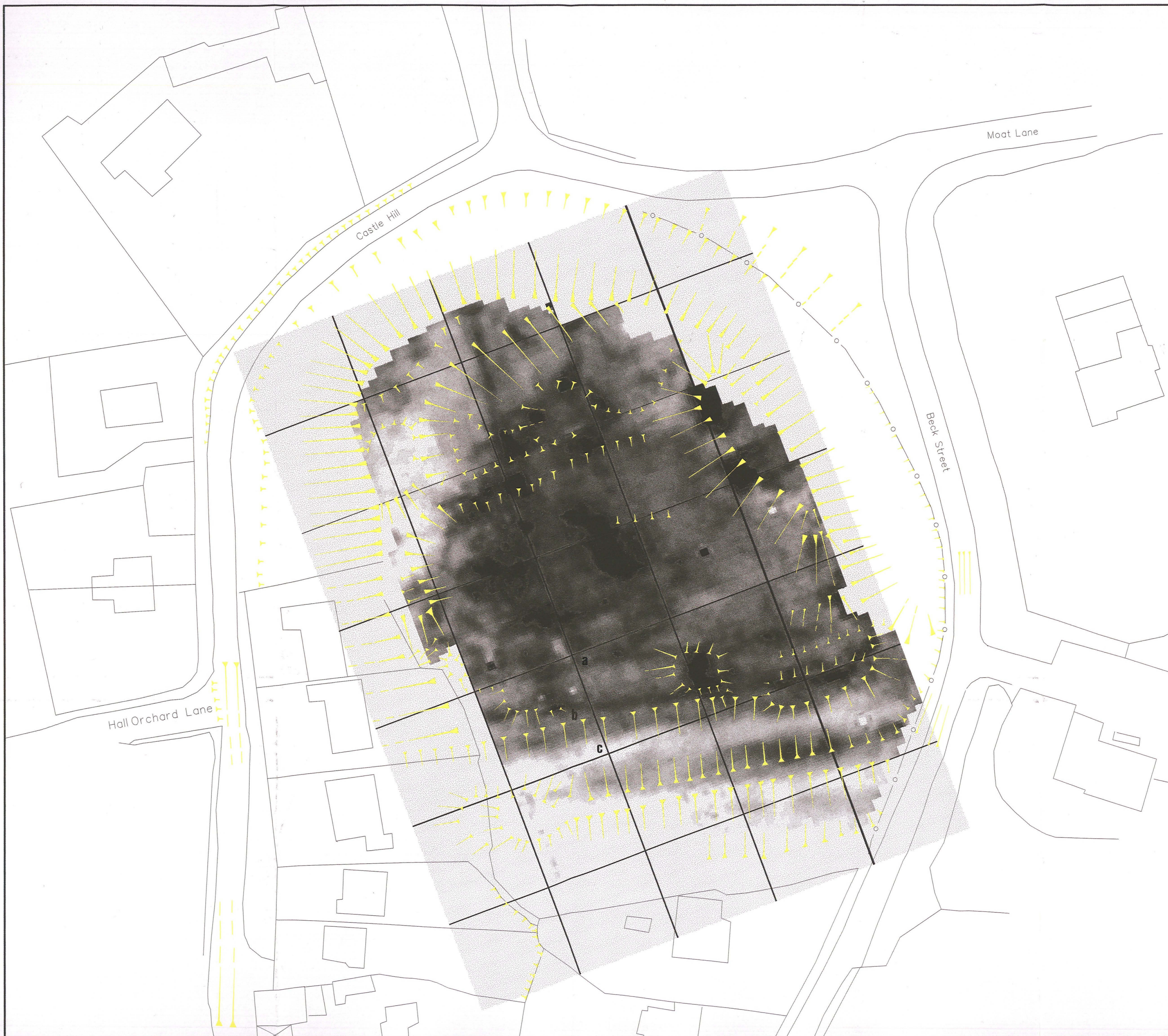
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Date : 19/8/99

Plan Ref No. : LA/MSE/1196-3



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Reference

Site

**Castle Hill
Welbourn**

Plan

**Fig 10
Earthworks and
Geophysical Survey**

Scale : 1/500

Date : 19/8/99

Plan Ref No. : LA/MSE/1196-4



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Pl. 1 Aerial view of Welbourn looking south, with Castle hill near the centre and the church below. Note the remains of medieval ridge and furrow. The straight line of the railway lies to the west (right) of the village. Cambridge University collection of Air Photographs ©. (ref. No ARC 60, taken in 1967).



Pl. 2 Castle Hill, north-west side of the moat (wet)

Pl. 3 Castle Hill, east side of the moat (dry)





Pl. 4 General view of Castle earthworks looking south

Pl. 5 Ridges at the south end of the site, looking west





Pl. 6 Castle Hill earthworks, looking west (panorama, part 1)



Pl. 7 Castle Hill earthworks, looking north (panorama, part 2)



Pl. 8 Castle Hill earthworks, looking east (panorama, part 3)



Pl. 9 General view of Castle earthworks looking north