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WAITHE VILLAGE LV DISTRIBUTION

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

WAITHE, Nr GRIMSBY,

LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code WLV 97

National Grid Reference (NGR) TA 2838 0065

AOC (Archaeology) Ltd

on behalf of:

Yorkshire Electricity

May 1997

On behalf of:	Yorkshire Electricity Ladysmith Road Grimsby DN32 9SN
Prepared by:	David Tyler
Watching brief by:	David Tyler
Illustration by:	David Kenyon
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Enquiries:	AOC (Archaeology) Ltd 40 Langham Street London W1N 5RG *Tel:* (0171) 436 1988 *Fax:* (0171) 436 1989

1) SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by AOC (Archaeology) Ltd on behalf of Yorkshire Electricity to monitor the excavation of approximately 390m of trenches for electric cable laying in Waithe, Lincolnshire. No archaeological remains were encountered.

2) INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site Location (Fig. 1)

The site is situated in Waithe, Lincolnshire and lies at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TA 2838 0065 (centre of site). The proposed cable trench follows a line to the south of Church Lane, with branches leading to St Martin's Church and residential housing. The site is level and lies at approximately 33m above Ordnance Datum.

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological remains exist in the area. The depth of groundworks has the potential to disturb archaeological remains and as such the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council has recommended that the groundworks be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

2.3 Archaeological Background

The small hamlet of Waithe is all that remains of a once much larger village. The village was formerly quite extensive although little obvious evidence survives on the ground today. The Domesday Book reveals that a considerable amount of land was under cultivation during the late 11th century. The present church at Waithe is of early origin, also probably dating to the 11th century. Aerial photographs indicate extensive former settlement to the south of the church and towards Waithe House Park.

3) INVESTIGATION OBJECTIVES

3.1 To see if remains associated with the medieval village are present. In particular does the cable trench pass through an area where buildings or paddocks existed? Is it possible to determine the date for the establishment and decline of the medieval village?. To see if there is evidence for roads/tracks and if so what date are the remains. If settlement evidence is present, then was it always or did this area start or end as fields as the village grew and declined.

3.2 Was the graveyard formerly larger than its present extent?

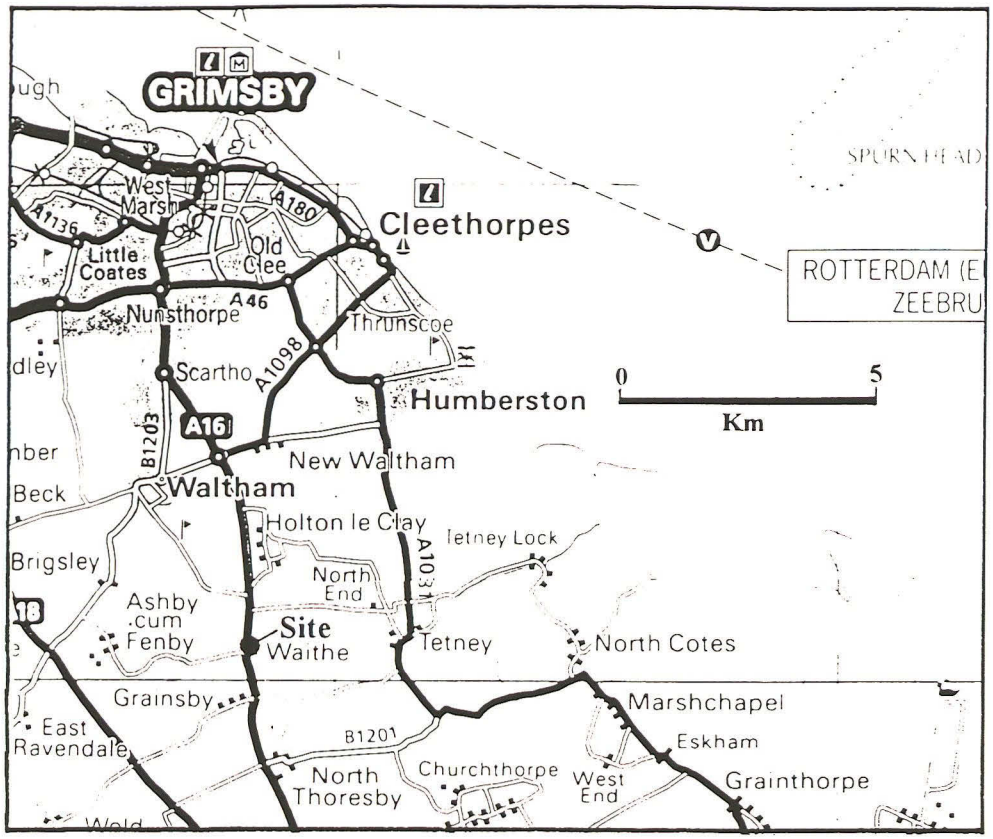

Figure 1. Site Location

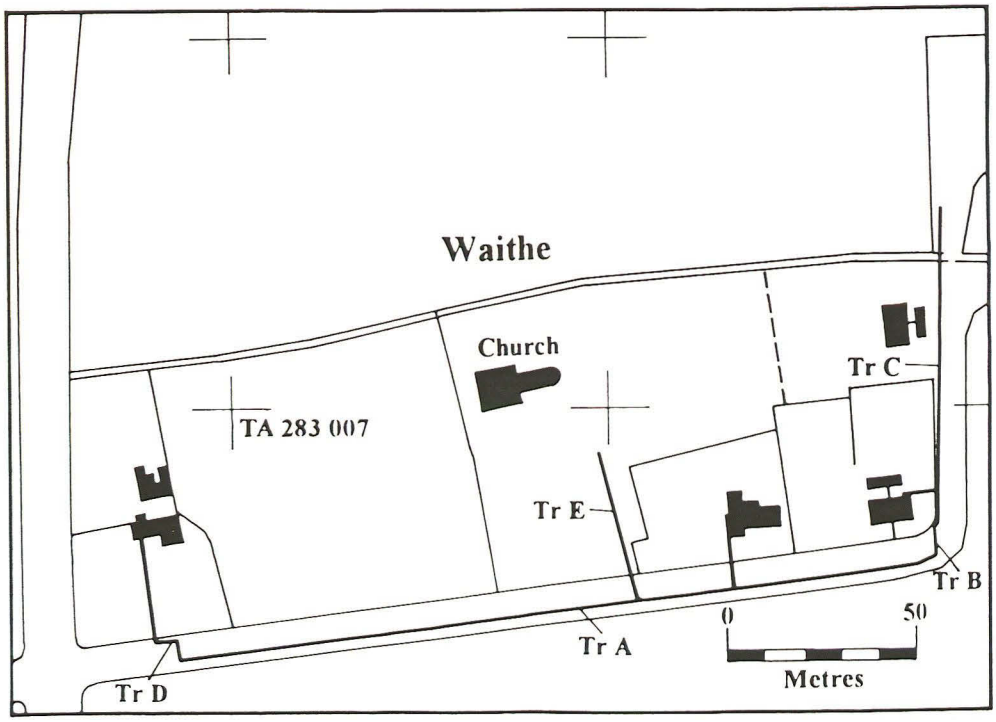

Figure 2. Trench Locations

4) STRATEGY

4.1 Research Design

A scheme of investigation was designed in agreement with the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council. This involved monitoring the machine excavation of the trenches, 0.25-0.4m wide, to a final depth of 0.5-0.7m. Any archaeological deposits exposed during the course of the excavation would then be hand excavated to determine their date and character. Any inhumations encountered during the groundworks would be exhumed in accordance with the Burial Act 1857.

Provision was made for post-excavation analysis and reports to Level 3 as outlined in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (1991).*

The work was carried out to the standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and was monitored by Mr. Jim Bonner, Assistant Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council.

4.2 Methodology

Trenches A, B, C and D (Fig. 2) were excavated using a mini-excavator equipped with a 0.2m toothed bucket to a depth of 0.5-0.7m. Trench E (Fig. 2) was excavated using a 0.15m toothed bucket to a depth of 0.5m. The tarmac road surface was broken out using pneumatic tools. Following machining, hand tools were used to clean the trench sides where appropriate to define the stratigraphic sequence. All artefactual material was collected and retained.

Following consultation with Mr. Jim Bonner, the service trenches to the residential housing were not subject to a watching brief due to the lack of significant archaeological remains evident in the excavated trenches.

Standard AOC (Archaeology) Ltd. techniques were used throughout involving the completion of an appropriate drawn and written record for the deposits encountered. A photographic record was also made, using black and white and colour slide film.

5) RESULTS

5.1 Excavation results

Trench A (205m x 0.3-0.4m)

The basal deposit consisted of medium brown sandy silt mixed with chalky limestone gravel and occasional pebbles (105) and evident in the trench to a maximum depth of 0.15m. The surface of this deposit undulated and existed at different levels along the length of the trench. This was overlain by a 0.15-0.2m thick layer of dark brown sandy silt containing occasional gravel (103). From the middle of the trench and towards the eastern end, the deposit contained rounded pebbles and occasional larger cobbles (<150mm) with brick fragments intermixed opposite the houses. The layer was interpreted as a former plough soil. At the

western end of the trench this deposit was overlain by stony dark brown subsoil (102) and a deposit of unused/waste road surface material and gravel (101), 0.2-0.25m thick. Along the rest of the trench the deposit (103) was sealed by dark brown sandy silt containing frequent gravel and pebbles with occasional natural fractured flint nodules (104), 0.15-0.25m thick. Towards and opposite the houses, the deposit contained brick and tile fragments and small quantity of 19th/20th century pottery. Topsoil was present along the length of the trench forming a roadside verge with the exception of 25m at the eastern end. The topsoil comprised medium brown sandy silt containing occasional gravel and pebbles (100).

Trench B (10m x 0.3m)

The basal deposit (105) was the same as that in Trench A and existed to a height of c.0.1m. This was overlain by 0.35m of compact coarse sand and gravel with frequent pebbles (107) possibly representing a foundation or a former surface. Frequent small to medium brick fragments were evident at the top of the deposit immediately beneath the overlying tarmac road surface (106).

Trench C (30m x 0.3m)

The base deposit consisted of grey brown silty sand and gravel containing pebbles and occasional natural flint fragments (110), very similar in composition to the natural deposit (105) in Trenches A and B. This was overlain by a layer of compact gravel and pebbles and orange brown sandy silt (109), 0.15-0.25m thick in turn sealed by 0.2-0.3m of dark brown topsoil containing occasional gravel, pebbles and brick fragments (108). The stratigraphic sequence had been disturbed by a telephone cable trench running along the same course as the proposed electric cable trench. It was decided that further monitoring of the excavation of this trench would be unecessary due to the destruction of any significant archaeological remains by both the telephone cable trench and construction of the gravel road surface.

Trench D (6m x 0.3m)

The basal deposit consists of 0.3m of dark brown sandy silt containing pebbles (113), with small fragments of brick and flecks of charcoal concentrated at the top of the layer. This was overlain by a layer of compact gravel and pebbles bound by orange brown sandy silt (112), 0.15-0.20m thick. This layer provided a foundation for a tarmac road surface 0.10m thick (111) and was sealed on either side of the road surface by c.0.2m of topsoil (100).

Trench E (35m x 0.3m)

The earliest deposit encountered consisted of medium brown sandy silt containing gravel and pebbles (116) evident in the base of the trench and to a maximum height of 0.15m. This was sealed by dark brown sandy silt containing moderate gravel (115) and severely disturbed by tree roots. Overlying this deposit was a track surface of dark brown sandy silt mixed with chippings, brick rubble and sandy gravel (114), 0.2m thick. Beyond the end of the track, deposit 115 was sealed by topsoil.

5.2 Finds

A few sherds of 19th/20th century pottery were recovered from deposit 104 (Trench A) opposite the houses at the corner of Church Lane. A sherd of pottery of similar date was found at the top of the gravel deposit (107 Trench B) beneath the tarmac road surface. In Trench E a fragment of animal bone and a sherd of 19th/20th century pottery were recovered from the track surface material (114).

6) DISCUSSION

During the course of the excavation of the trenches no archaeological features associated with the medieval village were identified and no diagnostic artefactual material was recovered. It remains a possibility that the trenches passed through an open area where paddocks or fields existed and deposits 103, 113 and 115, from their composition, may represent subsoil that previously underlay a cultivated area. The construction of the nearby houses in 1858 and any contemporary landscaping or subsequent garden cultivation, in addition to the surfacing of Church Lane, may have destroyed any existing archaeological features.

The compact gravel and pebble deposits in Trenches B and D (107 and 112 respectively) may represent former road surfaces or alternatively act as a foundation layer for the tarmac road surface and be contemporary with it.

No evidence was recovered to suggest that the graveyard was formerly larger than its current extent. Mature trees around the periphery of the graveyard, in particular the yew trees delimiting the western side, may indicate that it has maintained its current size for some time.

7) BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC (Archaeology) Ltd. (1997): *Waithe Village LV Distribution. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investiation.*

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