

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
PLOT 3 MAIN STREET, TORKSEY,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: MST99

LCNCC Acc No. 30.99

NGR: SK 8379 7875

99/11

L13936.

EVENT L12013
SARCES L16740 L16741
PRIS S4556 L181717
S4557 L181719
S4558 L181723

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July 1999

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Summary

- * *An archaeological recording brief took place during the groundworks for a single detached dwelling (plot 3) on land to the rear of the Old Post Office, Main Street, Torksey, Lincolnshire*
- * *Although residual late Saxon, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered as a result of the groundworks, important archaeological remains were not disturbed*
- * *It is concluded that the archaeological methodology employed was successful and that the most important archaeological remains have been preserved beneath the new structure*

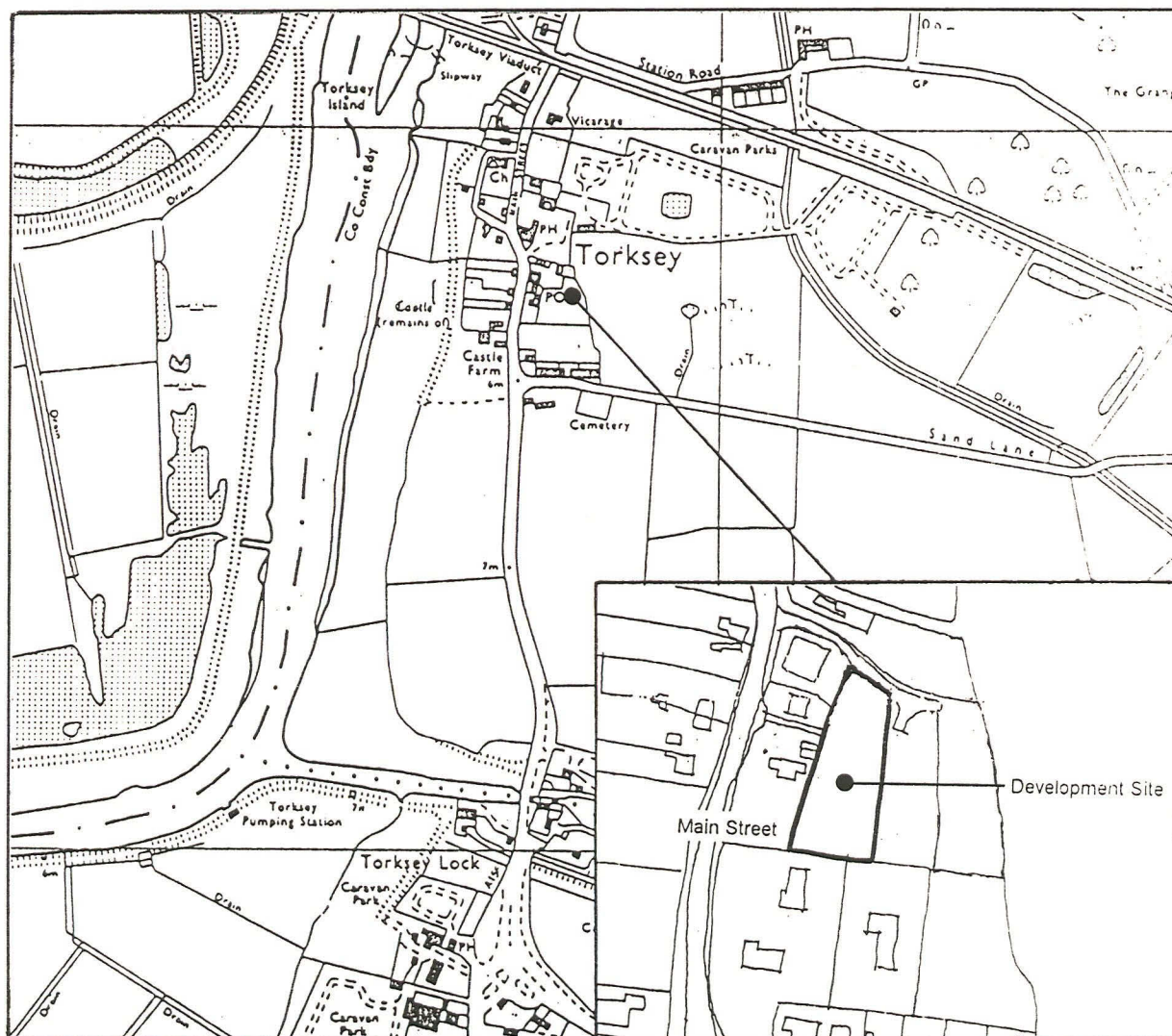


Fig. 1 1: 10,000 site location (inset at 1: 2500)
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1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Mrs Cullen to fulfil a planning requirement associated with the construction of a single dwelling at plot 3 on land to the east of Main Street, Torksey, Lincolnshire.

This project was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section publication *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook; A manual of archaeological practice*, 1998. It also followed the procedures set out in a formal project specification by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), dated February 1999.

2.0 Location and description

Torksey is in the administrative district of West Lindsey on the east bank of the River Trent, immediately north of its junction with the Fosse Dyke. The development site is located to the east of Main Street to the rear of the Old Post Office and centres on NGR SK 8379 7875.

Prior to development, the site (which is one of three plots) was covered with rough grass vegetation.

The underlying geology consists of wind-blown sands of varying depths, overlying Mercia Mudstone (clay).

3.0 Planning background

The site was allocated for housing development in the West Lindsey District Council Local Plan (To1).

Full planning consent was granted for the construction of a single detached dwelling. The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during ground disturbance.

As a condition of planning, both the dwelling and the garage footings were constructed on raft / slab foundations. This was a precautionary measure, designed to limit ground disturbance and the impact to archaeological resources which are known to lie within the broad site area (McDaid 1997).

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric artefacts have been recovered from around the present village, including a hand axe and a polished flint axe which was dredged from the River Trent on the west side of Torksey Island. A Neolithic flint adze was recovered from the garden of a

property which lies a short distance south of the present site, and residual worked flints were recovered from the excavations at Castle Farm (Palmer-Brown, 1995).

Torksey was certainly of some economic importance in the Roman period: pottery kilns of 3rd century date have been excavated on the south side of the Fosse Dyke at Little London Farm. The potters were specialising in the production of grey ware vessels and, like similar production sites at Lea and Knaith, were ideally placed for water transportation to important centres such as Lincoln (*Lindum*). No evidence of Romano-British occupation has been found north of the Fosse Dyke (Barley 1964, 172).

A programme of excavation on the former site of Castle Farm in 1994 exposed two late Saxon pottery kilns, three further kilns (which may also have been used for pottery production) and a possible medieval lime kiln. To the north of this 'industrial zone' was an inhumation cemetery which may have been contemporary with the kilns. A context for the cemetery was not established, though it was thought possible that it related to the Church of All Saints, the site of which is currently unknown.

In the medieval period, Torksey was one of the principal towns in Lincolnshire. The earliest reference to the settlement occurs in AD873 when the Danish army came under their king, *Halfdene*, to Lindsey and wintered at a place called *Turcesige* (Hill 1965, 306). At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), Torksey was the third largest borough, after Lincoln and Stamford.

There were three medieval churches in the parish: dedicated to All Saints, St Peter and St Mary; each of which came into the hands of the Augustinian priory of St Leonard which was founded during the reign of Henry II. A small Cistercian nunnery was established south of the town which became known as St Nicholas de Fosse, or the Fosse Nunnery. The foundations of these religious houses seem to belong to the second half of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century - the period associated with the towns greatest prosperity (*ibid.*).

Torksey owed much of its growth and prosperity to its privileged position at the junction of the Trent and Fosse Dyke. By the late 13th century, the canal was beginning to fail and, by the middle of the 14th century, wool, for example, was being transported by road from Lincoln to Barton on Humber, instead of to Torksey and thence by boat to Hull (*ibid.*, 311).

An area close to the present site was evaluated by Lindsey Archaeological Services in 1997 (McDaid 1997). Three trenches established the presence of important archaeological remains c. 0.9m beneath the modern ground surface. A series of Late Saxon / Saxo-Norman features were exposed. Although the evaluation did not expose any Late Saxon pottery kilns (which are abundant in this part of the settlement), pottery waster sherds were recovered, suggesting that such structures do indeed lie within the area sampled. A watching brief carried out during the construction of a single dwelling with a detached garage on plot 1 of the same site produced only a quantity of residual Saxon and later pottery (Snee 1999). The foundation design employed during that development was the same as at the present site and had proved successful in preserving the archaeological remains without disturbance.

5.0 Methodology

The watching brief was carried out by the writer on the 2nd July 1999. The fieldwork element of the project consisted of archaeological observation during all the excavations and a thorough inspection of all plan and section surfaces exposed as a result of the groundworks. Recording was undertaken using standard watching brief record sheets and photographic recording was undertaken (some prints are reproduced in this report). The photographs, and the paper record, will form the basis for a long-term project archive. Medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered and an archive list is included in the appendices.

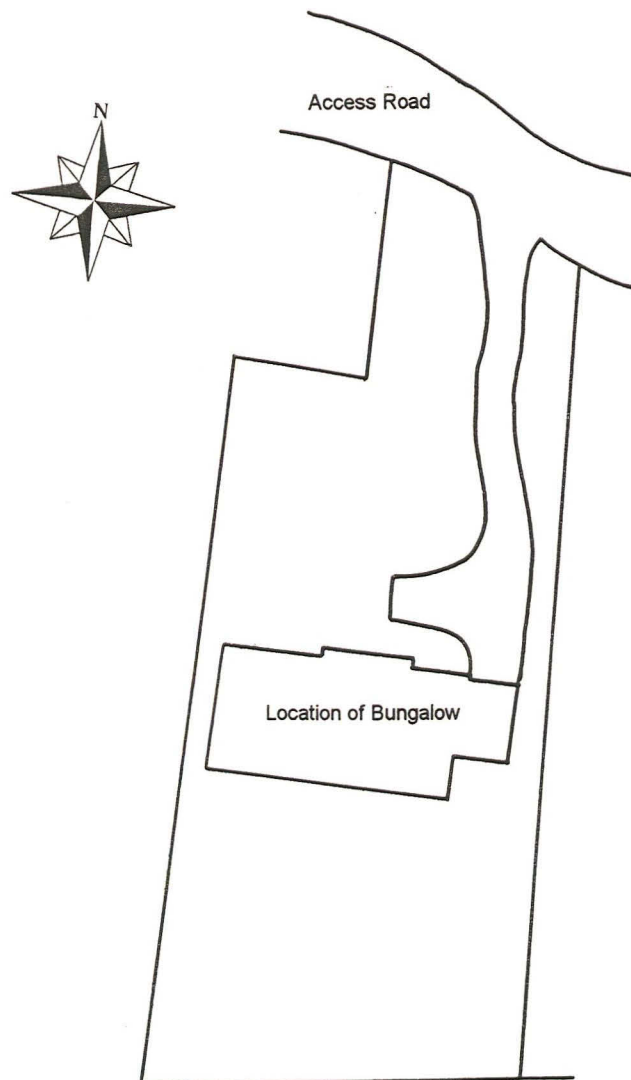


Fig. 2 Plan of the development area (1:500)

6.0 Results

Ground disturbance for the raft footings consisted of a topsoil strip to a depth between 0.2m and 0.4m and the excavation of a strip trench around the perimeter of the raft to a depth of 0.8m.

No archaeological features were observed in any of the exposed soil surfaces. The basic stratigraphy comprised only two layers. The most recent was a thick topsoil, a dark grey-brown silty-sand (up to c.0.5m thick). A quantity of pottery dating from the late Saxon to early modern times (ninth to eighteenth centuries) was recovered from this layer. Below the topsoil was a thick layer of mid-brown wind blown sand (greater than 0.3m). No artefactual remains were recovered from this layer.

7.0 Conclusions

The watching brief did not result in the exposure of sensitive archaeological remains: technically, therefore, the methodologies employed (both architectural and archaeological) were well suited to this project.

The occurrence of residual late Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery sherds confirms the use of the site in these periods and it is without doubt that associated remains must now lie successfully preserved beneath the modern building complex.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to express their thanks to Mrs Cullen for this commission. Thanks are also extended to Mark Bennet of the County SMR.

9.0 Site Archive

The archaeological archive will be transferred to Lincoln City and County Museum. Access may be granted by quoting the site accession number, 30.99.

10.0 References

- | | | |
|-------------------|------|---|
| Barley, MW | 1964 | 'The Medieval Borough of Torksey: Excavations 1960 - 62', <i>Antiq. J.</i> 44, 164 - 87. |
| Hill, JFW | 1965 | <i>Medieval Lincoln</i> |
| McDaid, M | 1997 | Land to the rear of the Old Post Office, Main Street, Torksey. archaeological field evaluation report (unpublished) |
| Palmer-Brown, CPH | 1995 | Castle Farm, Torksey: archaeological excavation report (unpublished) |
| Snee, J | 1999 | Archaeological watching brief report. plot 1 Main Street, Torksey. (unpublished) |

archive of pottery mst99

trench	context	cname	form	nosh	nov dec	part	description	date
plot 3	1							
		TORK	jar	1	1	rim		late 9-11th
		SLIP	dish	1	1 trailed	BS		17/18th
		SLIP	dish	1	1 trailed	rim		17/18th
		SLIP	dish	1	1 trailed & spots	rim		17/18th
		MP	jug/jar	1	1	BS		15/16th
		MEDLOC	jug	1	1	BS		14/15th
		HUM	jug/jar	1	1	BS		14-16th
		HUM	jug/jar	1	1	base		14-16th
		BL	?	1	1	BS		17/18th
		BL	?	1	1	base		17/18th
		STSL	?	1	1	BS	plain?	18th
		TORK	jar	1	1	rim	evera1	10th?
		TORK	bowl	1	1	BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar/bowl	1	1 pressed rim	rim		late 10/11th
		TORK	jar	1	1	BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1	BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1	BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1	BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1	BS		late 9-11th

<i>trench</i>	<i>context</i>	<i>cname</i>	<i>form</i>	<i>nosh</i>	<i>nov</i>	<i>dec</i>	<i>part</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>date</i>
		TORK	jar	1	1		BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1		BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1		BS		late 9-11th
		TORK	jar	1	1		base		late 9-11th
		BERTH	jar	2	1		rim & BS		17/18th

Appendix 2.



P.1 General view of development site, looking south.



P.2 View of soil stripping for the raft foundation in progress, looking south.