

99/18

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
LAND OFF TRINITY COURT/WEST STREET, CROWLAND,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: WSC99

LCNCC Acc No. 190.98

NGR: TF 2380 1014

Planning Ref. H02/1049/96

ALSO

H/02/1044/98 - WB



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Report prepared for Mountains Building Contractors Ltd.
by James Snee, BSc.

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Lincoln
LN1 2JP
Tel. & Fax. 01777 228155

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Fig. 4: Section through ditch/channel [108] at the north end of the development (location shown on Fig. 2)

Summary

- * *An archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for twelve dwellings and associated access on land situated off Trinity Court and West Street, Crowland, Lincolnshire (TF 2380 1014).*
- * *The archaeological remains exposed consisted predominantly of post-medieval drainage channels.*
- * *Finds were recovered, including a leather shoe sole and a selection of medieval pottery sherds dating from the fourteenth century onwards.*



*Fig. 1 Map showing site location. Scale 1:10,000.
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1.0 Introduction

An archaeological recording brief was commissioned by Mountains Building Contractors Ltd to fulfil a planning requirement associated with the construction of twelve dwellings, a new highway from Trinity Court, and a private driveway from West Street. The brief 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).

2.0 Planning background

A detailed application for residential development was submitted in 1996 (Ref. H02/1049/96) - to erect twelve dwellings, a new highway from Trinity Court, and a private driveway from West Street (a previous application was granted, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological recording brief during development).

It was recommended by the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section that the site should be evaluated prior to determination of the planning permission. However, following a refusal of planning and an appeal, a watching brief condition was issued: to take place on all groundworks.

3.0 Archaeological and historical background

Crowland is in the district of South Holland, approximately ten kilometres north of Peterborough. The town stands, almost like an island, on the north-east end of a long narrow promontory surrounded by the fens.

A search through the SMR for Lincolnshire produced 27 records relating to the town and the immediate vicinity of the development area, and details of these records are included as Appendix 4

The geology of the town and the surrounding parish varies considerably. The town is situated on a promontory of gravel that may be the remains of an ancient river terrace. The lands around this promontory are peat fens which give way to silt fens to the north-east. Throughout the parish there is a network of palaeochannels (buried creeks and water courses) which has been mapped by aerial observation.

Little evidence has been uncovered of settlement from the early prehistoric periods, although it is likely that the contemporary landscape on which these settlements existed is now deep under fenland silts, clays and peats. The exception to this is the 'island' of Crowland itself which has been interpreted as a ritual landscape. Some evidence of Iron Age activity exists, mainly in the east of the parish. Most of the Iron Age remains relate to saltmaking. This pattern continues through the Roman period until the founding of the religious community in the Anglo-Saxon period. This religious community and the settlements it attracted, dominated the area from the Late Anglo

Saxon period until the dissolution in the 16th century. Crowland village continued as an 'island' settlement throughout the post medieval period, retaining some of its prosperity due to its position on the route to Boston. During the Civil War (1642-1649) Crowland declared for the King, and a fortress was constructed around the remains of the Abbey. The town was besieged and reduced by the army of the Eastern Association. This, however, was not the end of Crowland's troubles as a number of attempts were made by Royalists to re-establish a stronghold and after the Civil War there was a Royalist uprising in Crowland. This activity would have resulted in the destruction of houses and probably caused damage to the Abbey. It is also possible that digging for fortifications would have modified the buried archaeological remains.

There is evidence of fen drainage for land management and possibly land reclamation throughout the medieval period in the surviving records of Crowland Abbey. However the first major attempt to drain and reclaim the Postland Fen commenced in the seventeenth century, and continued through the eighteenth century to produce the modern landscape of Crowland parish. At some point after the Civil War the two rivers that met at the Trinity Bridge were filled in and the West Bank was constructed. This was probably done to consolidate the land on the edge of the gravel bar as the village expanded.

The site of the project is close to the centre of Crowland, very close to the course of one of the trinity rivers which ran through the centre of west street. Therefore there was the potential for archaeological remains relating to Crowland's early history as a religious site or possibly relating to the use and exploitation of the riverside.

4.0 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken by the writer between 3rd August 1998 and 6th January 1999. He was present to monitor the groundworks for the access to West Street and ten out of the twelve house footings. Due to a breakdown in communications, the main access road to Trinity Court and the footings for house plots one and two (at the extreme south of the site) were not monitored.

The fieldwork element of the project consisted of archaeological observation during all excavations and a thorough inspection of all plan and section surfaces exposed as a result of these works.

A record was made of all archaeological features and stratigraphy. That record included scale drawing (in plan and section), colour photography, and written descriptions of contexts (on standard record sheets). Wherever possible, archaeological features were subjected to limited rapid excavation to retrieve dating evidence and to clarify their form and orientation. Some of the monitoring was restricted by the health and safety constraints of working in deep unsecured trenches. Health and safety considerations also limited the recovery of finds and prevented the taking of environmental samples: at the north end of the site this was due to deep trenching and problems of section collapse and falling debris (see Appendix 1; P.1 & P.2); at the south end this was due to modern disturbance, including diesel contamination (see Fig.

2). As a result of this, a large number of finds were unstratified and allocated the context number [100].

Artefacts removed from the site were washed and processed and then submitted to approved specialists for written appraisal.

5.0 Results

5.1 Main stratigraphic sequence (See Figs. 2 & 3)

The site was sealed by a layer of grey-brown clay silt [101] approximately 60cm deep. This layer was very mixed and contained a lot of root and other organic material, it also contained a large amount of building rubble. It was frequently disturbed by modern buildings and drains. The layer contained nineteenth and twentieth century pottery and modern rubbish, and it clearly constituted made up ground.

Below the topsoil was a layer of mid-grey-brown clay-silt subsoil [102], approximately 30cm thick. The deposit probably formed by tillage and the effect of drying on a peaty soils. A sixteenth or seventeenth century pottery sherd recovered from this layer suggests formation in the post medieval period.

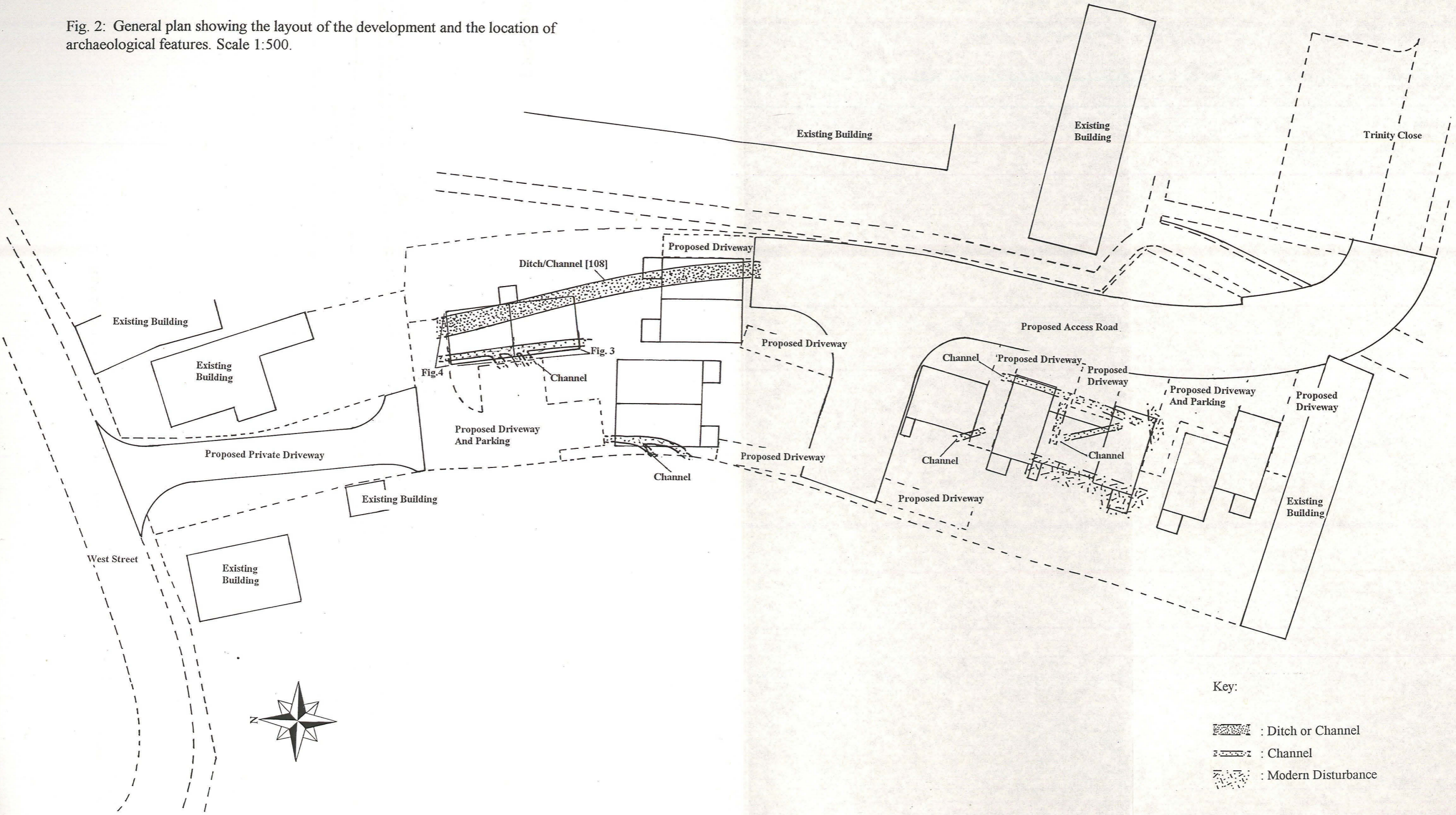
Below the subsoil was a layer of very dark grey-brown peaty clay [106] approximately 15cm thick. The layer varied in its state of preservation: at the north end of the site it was waterlogged, at the south end it was drier and less well preserved. It contained flint gravel (more frequent at the north end of the site). In places there were lenses of grey clay either at the top or the base of the layer. These lenses were up to 6cm deep and as broad as 5m. Also evident were a series of small channels that showed as dips in the base of the peat layer that were filled completely with peat. The peat contained pottery dating between sixteenth and eighteenth centuries and was interpreted as marsh deposits associated with a dendritic network of shallow creeks (a single piece of nineteenth century brick may have been intrusive). The lenses of blue clay were probably formed by temporary pools of standing water.

Below the peat was a layer of pale orange-brown silt [107] approximately 20cm thick (in some places it was thinner, having been eroded by action of creeks). No finds were recovered from this layer and it was interpreted as naturally deposited silt.

The lowest deposit (exposed at depths of approximately 125cm in the north end, approximately 90cm at the south end of the site) was firm orange-brown silty sand mixed with flint gravel [109]. This was exposed in the base of the footing trenches, and was natural sand and gravel which forms part of the Crowland promontory and pre-dates all the human activity on the site.

Unstratified pottery sherds were recovered during machining from across the whole of the development area (context [100]). These ranged from late medieval to 18th century.

Fig. 2: General plan showing the layout of the development and the location of archaeological features. Scale 1:500.



Key:




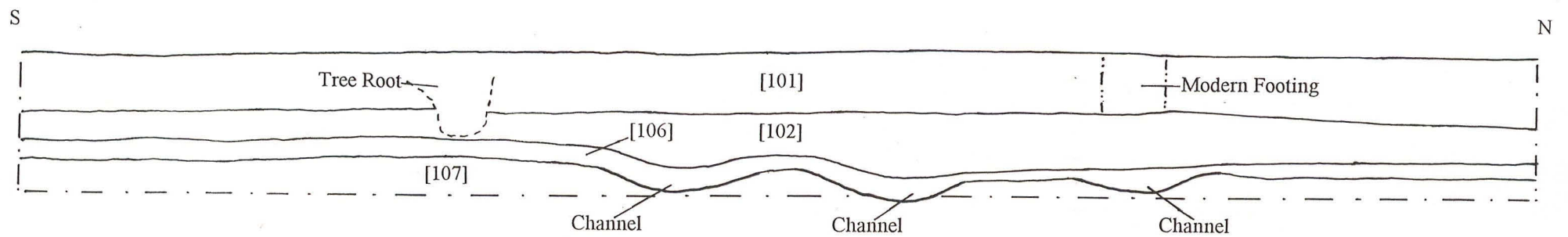
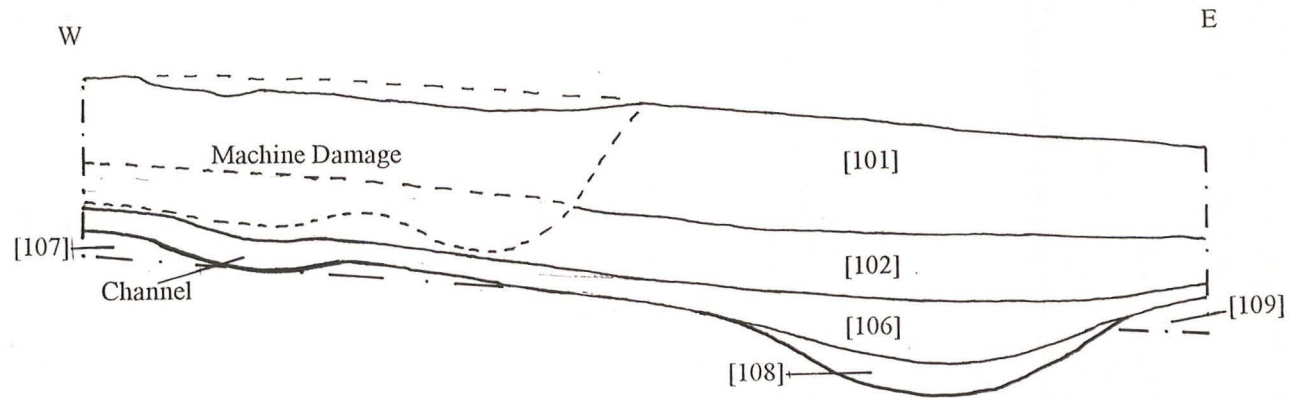
-  : Ditch or Channel
-  : Channel
-  : Modern Disturbance

Fig. 3 Section showing the main stratigraphic sequence, including three small channels, looking west.
Scale 1:50.



Location on Fig. 2

Fig. 4 Section through ditch/channel [108] at the north end of the development, looking north.
Scale 1:50.



Location on Fig. 2

5.2 Archaeological features

Surprisingly, only one feature of possible human origin was identified. This was a broad ditch or channel [108] in the north-east corner of the development, oriented roughly north to south. It had sloping sides and a rounded base and it had a basal fill of black waterlogged peat and gravel. Above this, the peaty clay layer [106] sealed the top of the feature. A preserved leather shoe sole was recovered from the basal fill, and a piece of late medieval pottery was also discovered in close proximity. The leather sole was not recovered in situ, but was brought to the surface by mechanical excavator. Its stratigraphic context, however, was never in doubt.

The sole has provisionally been dated to the seventeenth century, although similar soles have been found in Lincolnshire in much earlier contexts. Other pieces of medieval and later pottery were recovered from the feature in another part of the development, but it was not possible to be certain whether these pieces came from the basal fill or the upper peaty clay. (See Fig. 4)

6.0 Conclusions

The watching brief produced no evidence of human activity at the site before the medieval period. Evidence for medieval and later activity was found in the upper layers of the stratigraphic sequence (and a number of unstratified medieval pottery sherds were recovered during machining). The only substantial feature was ditch/channel [108] which was possibly a drain that flowed into the Welland tributary that ran through the centre of West Street. Taken on balance, the evidence associated with the current brief suggest that the area was peat marsh during the post medieval period and was probably drained relatively in recent centuries.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mountains Building Contractors Ltd for this commission. Thanks are also extended to Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy of the SMR for their assistance.

8.0 Site Archive

The site archive (paper and object) will be transferred to Lincoln City and County Museum. Access may be granted by quoting the site accession number, 190.98.

The site archive contains:

- x1 archive list
- x1 context summary sheet
- x5 record sheets
- x1 drawing index
- x3 sheets of drawings

x4 colour films
x1 report
x1 specification
x2 daily account sheets
x1 developer plan
x1 box of pottery

9.0 Bibliography

- Hayes, P.P. 1992 The Fenland Project Number 5: Lincolnshire Survey,
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Appendices

- Appendix 1 Colour Photographs
- Appendix 2 Post Roman pottery archive and comment by J.Young.
- Appendix 3 The leather shoes, by J. Cowgill.
- Appendix 4 Records derived from the County Sites and Monuments Record for
Lincolnshire

Appendix 1: Colour Photographs.



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



P.2 Leather shoe sole and inner from ditch/channel [108].



P.3 General view of section through Ditch/Channel [108] at north end of the site, after fall of debris. Looking east.



P.4 General view of footing showing section collapse, looking east.

Appendix 2

West Street, Crowland (WSC98)

Post-Roman pottery archive: ware types by context

By Jane Young

| Context | Ware | Sherds | Form | Comments |
|---|------|--------|------------------|---|
| 100 | BOU | 1 | BOWL | RIM; LARGE FRAG; FRESH BREAKS |
| | BOU | 1 | BOWL | RIM; LARGE FRAG; GREY FABRIC; FRESH BREAKS |
| | BOU | 2 | JUG/CISTERN | BASE; LARGE FRAGS; FRESH BREAKS |
| | BOU | 2 | CISTERN | BASE; LARGE FRAGS; FRESH BREAKS; PLAIN SIMPLE HOLE VERY LOW SET |
| | BOUA | 1 | JAR | BS; NO GLZE; FRESH BREAKS |
| | BOUA | 1 | JUG | RESTRICTED BASE |
| | BL | 1 | BOWL | RIM; 18THC |
| | BOU | 1 | JAR?/ CHAMBER | BASE LARGE FRAG; INT DEP; CU SPECKS IN GLZE |
| DATE: MH10-PMH4 ; 16/17TH CENTURY. EXCEPT SINGLE BL DATE 18TH CENTURY; ?INTRUSIVE | | | | |
| 101 | LPM | 4 | - | VARIOUS; COLOUR GLZE; 19THC |
| | BL | 1 | BOWL | RIM; 19THC |
| DATE: 19TH CENTURY | | | | |
| 102 | BOU | 1 | JUG/CISTERN | BASE; CRACKED |
| DATE: MH10-PMH4; 16/17TH CENTURY; PROB FIRST HALF 16TH CENTURY | | | | |
| 106 & 108 | LPM | 1 | - | BL/W |
| | BL | 1 | - | 17/18THC |
| | MISC | 2 | - | ?BRICK; 19THC |
| DATE: 19TH CENTURY | | | | |
| 106 | CIST | 1 | CUP | 3 HANDLED; LARGE FRAG |
| | CIST | 1 | CUP | BS |
| DATE: MH10-PMH4; ?16/17TH CENTURY | | | | |
| 108 | MEDX | 1 | JUG | THU BASE; APPLIED STRIP DEC; V FINE FABRIC; LIGHT GREY; BURNT GREEN GLZE; ?COULD BE AN IMPORT |
| DATE: MH6-10; 14-16TH CENTURY | | | | |

Comments

A small assemblage consisting mainly of large fresh fragments of post-medieval Bourne ware (BOU). It is difficult to date any group containing only Bourne and Cistercian types as little typological work on either has been done in the area. It seems probable that given the fineness of the Cistercian ware and the crudeness of the Bourne ware vessels that a date in the first half of the 16th century would be acceptable, but cannot be proven. The Bourne cistern in (100) has an unusually low bung hole not seen on vessels from Bourne before, possibly indicating that this may represent another production centre. The sherd size is abnormally large for domestic rubbish, especially given that most vessels had fresh breaks. Such a large sherd to vessel ratio is usually only commonly found on groups from deposits such as kiln waster groups, Dissolution or Civil War deposits. There is no direct evidence that the Bourne wares represent kiln waste, in fact one base in (100) has an internal white deposit probably indicating its use as a chamber pot. A Civil War date is possibly too late for the fine Cistercian cup in (106) and also the fabric and glazing on the Bourne ware is more typical of 16th century production, so it is a faint possibility that these vessels may represent clearance after the Dissolution if they do not just belong to an abnormally well preserved domestic rubbish group.

Appendix 3

THE LEATHER SHOES FROM THE WATCHING BRIEF AT WEST STREET, CROWLAND (WSC98)

Introduction.

Two pieces of leather shoe were recovered from ditch 108.

Catalogue.

RF 1. A large virtually complete left foot shoe sole, 290mm long (larger than an adult size 8 or a continental size 42). It is made from thick leather, probably cow hide, by the welted method of construction, the edge/flesh stitches around the edge being c. 8mm apart. The sole is not particularly worn except around the toe and where a slit has cut the heel probably because there is evidence for both forepart and heel clumps (often repair pieces attached by tunnel stitching but sometimes added to new shoes to make them last longer). There is a large (20 x 17mm) worn hole in the middle of the forepart under the ball of the wearers foot probably formed by general wear but possibly due to a pathological condition. The insole described below could be from this shoe but the lack of any welt (which would have joined the two together) suggests otherwise.

The sole is heavily encrusted with iron salts and these mask the condition of the outer surface.

RF 2. The instep of an inner sole from a welted shoe, both the toe and heel sections have worn off. It is from a large left shoe and as is normal practice the grain side faced upwards. The stitching around the edge is grain/flesh with individual stitches c. 5mm apart.

The insole has suffered from only slight penetration from iron salts.

Discussion.

Both pieces are from a large shoe or shoes that were used for work rather than being fashionable items. It is difficult to date such plain items of footwear – soles similar to these (except for the clumps) are still being made today. The earliest they could date from is the late 17th century and any date after that could be appropriate for this shoe or shoes.

Recommendations.

These pieces have no display potential and do not warrant any conservation treatment. It is therefore recommended that they are air dried if they are to be retained; they could possibly be used for educational purposes although the iron salts have made them quite brittle.

Jane Cowgill

October 1998

Appendix 4 Records derived from the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire

1. The ruins and site of Crowland Abby (PRN: 20551). The original monastery was founded in the early eighth century and was destroyed by the Danes in the ninth century. It was refounded as a Benedictine Abbey in the mid-tenth century and continued until dissolution in 1539. During this time it underwent a series of extensions and rebuilds. After dissolution much of its structure was demolished except for the nave and isles of the Abbey church which were reused as the parish church. The standing remains (other than the present parish church and its tower) are now listed and the buried remains are Scheduled.
2. The buried remains of the Anglo-Saxon hermitage and monastery at the site of Crowland Abbey (PRN: 23519). St Guthlac is believed to have arrived in AD 699, establishing a hermitage for himself and his followers. The structures relating to this are thought to have been scattered over the whole of the original peninsula of Crowland, in some cases superimposed on the remains of pre-Christian burial mounds. Medieval tradition linked some of these to the site of the later Abbey church, these are included in the Schedule for that site.
3. The Civil War defences at the site of Crowland Abbey (PRN: 22051). During the Civil War, Crowland Abbey church served as a Royalist Stronghold and was surrounded by earthwork defences, probably constructed of banks and ditches. These are included in the Schedule for the Abbey.
4. In the centre of Crowland, near the market place is the Trinity Bridge (PRN: 20552). It was built in the late fourteenth century and consists of three arches joined at an angle of 120 degrees. It was built to serve three streams at the junction of the Nene and Welland: it may also have been the base of a great cross.
- 5, 6 & 7. A collection of pottery was found during building works for the old people's home which includes:- nineteenth century wares, some slipwares and stonewares, Cistercian ware, Midlands purple ware and post-medieval green glazed wares (PRN : 22009); Stamford ware and other medieval wares including green glazed ware (PRN: 22010); and sherds of Romano-British pottery (PRN: 22011).
8. The remains of a small tower mill believed to date from the late eighteenth century, now part of a house (PRN: 20267).
9. A post-medieval mounting block in East Street (PRN: 22050).
10. The site of the medieval settlement of Crowland as established from documentary sources (PRN: 20268).
11. Finds of medieval pottery from Crowland (PRN: 20543).
12. A mound, no longer visible, that is probably a post-medieval mill mound (PRN: 22020).

LCNCC : 190.98

13. An undated mound, no longer visible, possibly a mill mound (PRN: 22986).
- 14 & 15. Two Neolithic flint axes found on the new school grounds (PRN: 22004 & PRN: 22004).
16. A medieval bone knife handle found at Crowland Abbey (PRN: 20266). It is carved into the shape of a man with a hawk. Crowland knives with metal, wooden or bone handles were given away at each St Bartholomew's day until the custom ceased in the late fifteenth century. Many were found in Crowland itself and in the Welland in the eighteenth century.
17. A Romano-British intaglio found in the ruins of the 'Great Isle' in the Abbey (PRN: 22049).
18. A hoard of Crowland Farthing's (probably tradesman's tokens from the 1660's) was found during demolition work at the Abbey in 1774 (PRN: 22015).
19. An Iron Age bronze ring-head pin (dating to the third century BC) was found in Crowland Abbey, it was purchased by the British Museum (PRN: 22018).
20. A Roman coin found on a new housing estate at Crowland in 1951 (PRN: 22017).
21. A collection of early Bronze Age potsherds were found on a building site (PRN: 20263).
22. There is evidence of a kiln site near the Abbey, sampled in 1962 (PRN: 22012).
23. There are a number of mounds recorded at Crowland (PRN: 22022). In the past these have been regarded as tumuli, however a more recent appraisal suggests that many of these are mainly mill mounds.
24. A scatter of worked flints on an exposed area of gravel was recorded on a development area to the east of Crowland (PRN: 22014).
25. A number of worked flints were found during the initial stages of a development close to the Crowland bypass, east of the town in 1976 (PRN: 22980).
26. A barrow cemetery, probably dating to the Bronze Age, constructed along the axis of the peninsula (PRN: 20265). There is a recording of the destruction of a barrow in 1880, from which a number of finds were recovered including Bronze Age pottery, metalwork and Romano-British pottery. This barrow was one of a line running from the Abbey to the hill in Anchorage field, and south-west from the Abbey to Mill Stream Lot. Barrows are relatively common along this part of the fen margin.
27. A barrow mound severely damaged by the construction of the Crowland bypass, it was also disturbed by what was probably post-medieval gravel extraction (PRN: 23261). This mound was probably part of the barrow cemetery (PRN: 20265, see 26 above).