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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Land West of Mill Lane

Middle Rasen, Lincs.

NGR: TF 0899 8899

Site Code: MMR 00

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 2000.31

W. Lindsey District Council Planning Application No. 99/P/0297

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Report for

Mr D. Fussey

by

N. Field and G. Tann

LAS Report No. 390

February 2000

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**Middle Rasen, Lincs.
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Summary

The application site lies within a land block apparently taken from an open field, in about the twelfth century, to form an addition to the Middle Rasen Drax settlement. Activity on the site before the medieval period is possible but not likely; early remains are likely to relate to a north-south route rather than the present west-east main road. After the twelfth century the potential for features moves to the northern side of the site, but most of the frontage with the A46 Gainsborough Road has been disturbed by a possible clay extraction pit. At least one toft or dwelling site may survive on the east side of that frontage, and such remains would be of interest because most of the toft sites along the A46 have been redeveloped without archaeological recording. Finds from this area would allow closer dating of the settlement addition.

The centre of the application site probably contains the crofts of about four medieval properties. One croft boundary ditch is visible at ground level, and a ditch which may mark the rear of the tofts is just visible on air photographs.

The southern edge of the site contains the distinct earthwork of a hollow-way, probably of twelfth century date. This appears to be a replacement of an open field access lane on the site of Gainsborough Road, moved to the south when the land block was developed. The field contains the junction with the lane to the south (leading to common pasture land 5km away).

The site also shows signs of more recent disturbances and some form of cultivation. There are no signs of late medieval ridge and furrow, but earlier ploughing features may be masked by the croft areas.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in January 2000 by Mr D. Fussey to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment of land west of Mill Lane in Middle Rasen, Lincs. (Figs. 1 and 2).

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is to identify the archaeological potential of the application site by collating available existing information.

The Application Site

Middle Rasen is situated 20km NE of Lincoln, and 2km west of Market Rasen, in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire.

The application site is located to the south of the A46 Gainsborough Road, west of Mill Lane (Figs. 1 and 2). The 0.8ha plot extends back from the Gainsborough Road, with its southern edge alongside Mill Lane (Pls. 1 and 2). The eastern side extends to the rear of properties built off Mill Lane, and the western side is a field boundary hedge. The plot extends behind the modern development called 'Mill Rise' which fronts onto Gainsborough Road. At present, the site is under rough pasture. The application is for outline consent for residential development.

Methods and Sources

A desk top study of the application site within a 0.5km surrounding area was undertaken in order to identify and assess all archaeological constraints. Research for the assessment was conducted by N. Field and G. Tann between January 21st and February 9th 2000. The following sources were consulted and available information researched:

- Lincolnshire County Council County Archaeology Office (Sites and Monuments Record),
- Lincolnshire Archives Office (Enclosure map, Ordnance Survey maps, manuscript maps and other documentary and published sources)
- Lincoln Central Library Reference Department, Local Studies Collection

Topography and Geology

Middle Rasen is sited on boulder-clay/till at the western edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds on both sides of the River Rase, a small tributary of the River Ancholme. The northern part of the site is at about 19m OD, and the southern side is at about 22m OD.

Archaeological and Historical Background (Fig. 1)

Previously recorded sites and findspots are listed in the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record. These have been allocated Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) and these are used, in bold, in the text. A summary list of entries in the vicinity is provided in Appendix 1.

Prehistoric

A Neolithic polished stone axe (**SMR 52016**), found in the Brimmer Beck 750m NE of the application site, is the only reported prehistoric find in the study area.

Roman

The significance of this district in the Roman period derives from the industrial scale pottery production to the south and east of Market Rasen and in the adjoining parishes of Linwood and

Buslingthorpe. The production centre is one of several concentrations NE of Lincoln, together with known sites at Claxby and Walesby.

South of Middle Rasen, a fourth century Roman coin (SMR 52015) was reportedly found in 1963 in the garden of Mill House, 150m south of the application site. Slightly further to the east, a scatter of Roman pottery was found in the 1960s (SMR 52017). Other finds (SMR 52030-4) have been reported since from metal detecting about 800m SE of the application site. In the 1960s, 'quantities of Roman pottery' (SMR 52020) were recovered from potato picking between Mill Lane and Lincoln Lane, probably at about 1.4km from the site (copies of Ordnance Survey record cards held by LAS). Unfortunately, the provenances of each findspot are uncertain.

Dr. Alan Vince has suggested that the location of the former St. Paul's Church (SMR 52014) indicates an importance to the Low Church Lane crossing of the River Rase which is no longer obvious (pers. comm.). It may lie on one of a series of north-south long distance routes which connect with east-west roads of Roman or earlier origin. Mill Lane leads south from the village to Gibbet Lane, an east-west route followed by parish boundaries. To the south of that junction, the Linwood/Buslingthorpe parish boundary extends the line. North of Middle Rasen possible continuations can be argued but the supporting cartographic evidence is poor.

Saxon and Medieval

The earliest recorded forms of the place-name are *Rase*, *Rasa* and *Resne* [all 1086 Domesday Survey], although a thirteenth century document purporting to copy a source dated 973 records the form as *aet raesnan*. The name appears to derive from the Old English 'place at the planks/plank bridge', also associated with the other settlements of Market Rasen and West Rasen (Mills 1996, 268). All three lay within Walshcroft wapentake, in the North Riding of Lindsey. Consideration of the parish boundaries suggests that Middle Rasen parish originally included Market Rasen, referred to as East Rasen (Everson, RCHME archive). Middle Rasen appears as *Media Rasa* in the early twelfth century, passing through innumerable variations in subsequent centuries. The settlement was divided by the River Rase into the parishes of Middle Rasen Drax and Middle Rasen Tupholme; this reflected the sizeable land holdings of Drax Priory (West Yorks.) and Tupholme Abbey (Lincs.). The application site lies within the area known as Middle Rasen Drax by 1331.

At Domesday, land in Middle Rasen was divided between three manors. Values ascribed to holdings in Middle Rasen approximately doubled between 1066 and 1086.

The regular form of the Drax parish is suspected to be the product of some deliberate planning of additions to the southern settlement, but the date of this expansion is not known (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, 17). A twelfth century date would accord with population expansion prompted by climate and other factors. The abandonment and demolition of the church in Drax parish is unusual because, despite earthworks showing abandoned medieval house sites north of Gainsborough Road (now

redeveloped) the settlement does not appear to have declined as markedly as the amalgamation of the parish churches suggests (Everson 1991).

Much of the Middle Rasen Drax settlement, as shown on the 1774 Enclosure map, was 'a formless or irregular group of streets and properties near St. Paul's Church' (Everson 1991). A much more regular arrangement of crofts and tofts either side of Gainsborough Road probably represents a deliberately planned addition to the settlement (Fig. 3).

It is possible that Gainsborough Road is a realignment of the main route through the village, but the cartographic evidence is inadequate to substantiate this. The present arrangement of plots hints at an earlier, lost, course of the through road deflecting from the modern road at the junction of Dungeon Lane (now Wilkinson Drive), part surviving as a track as far east as Church Street, extant as the road linking Church Street with Low Church Road, then continuing as Gallamore Lane after a short stretch of property boundaries. Not only does Church Street lead off this alignment, cutting across plot divisions to reach North Street, but another possibly earlier north-south lane can be traced by boundaries and ditches about 100m to the west.

Gainsborough Road therefore appears to be a road bypassing the early Drax parish settlement, and acting as a catalyst or focus for the planned settlement along it. One possibility is that its present course was the access and headland of the southern open field, behind the crofts of older properties fronting onto the postulated early course. This explanation equates well with the anomalous road network.

Post-medieval

A pot kiln, possibly of medieval date, is suspected within the Middle Rasen parish (**SMR 52019**). A pit alongside Lincoln Lane has been traditionally called 'the brick pit' and a brickyard was sited to the NE of Middle Rasen parish in the nineteenth century (letter in SMR parish file; OS 1956b).

Site Visit (Fig. 2)

The application site was visited on January 21st 2000, in dry, bright conditions. Water was standing in some depressions (Pls. 1 and 2).

The eastern plot boundary, a linear ditch running parallel to Mill Lane, appears from the 1892 Ordnance Survey map to have once had trees growing along it; from the larger scale 1906 map its irregular course suggests it may have been a minor watercourse (Figs. 4 and 5; OS 1892; OS 1906). The boundary was extant in 1774, with a narrow plot separating it from Mill Lane. There is a slight possibility that this boundary was the course of an earlier lane.

The 1774 Enclosure Award plan marks a length of lane leading westward off Mill Lane, and running along the rear boundaries of the crofts. It formed a 'T' junction at the southern end of the application

site. It is clear that the present NW-SE and NE-SW alignments at the southern end of the site are relics of the outside of that junction, and that the pasture field has incorporated part of that junction. As proof of this, a short stretch of 'ditch' crosses the field in the position of the former lane along the croft boundaries (Pl. 2).

During the twelfth century, it is conceivable that a lane led off Gainsborough Road on the line of Mill Lane, around the eastern and southern limits of the new crofts (providing replacement access to the South-West Field and the South-East Field), and may have rejoined Gainsborough Road near Marsh Lane. Mill Lane need not be as early as this; no windmills are known in England before the late twelfth century, when they were introduced as a result of the Crusades. One possibility is that with the construction of a windmill (one is known in the village in 1337) the lane acquired a spur to serve the mill, and after Enclosure in 1774 Mill Lane was constructed across the Open Field beyond the mill. However, until 1849, Middle Rasen had rights to common pasture in Lissingleys, 5km to the south, and the lane may be of medieval origin (SMR parish file). The existence of the route prior to Enclosure is support for the suggestion of this route as a Roman or earlier path.

A dense network of lanes is evidenced to the north of Gainsborough Road, and may be an indication either of paths created before the settlement was developed, or paths formed as short-cuts across unused land during a period of decline within the settlement. Only the lane across the southern edge of the site was still recognised in 1774, although a track crossed the site north-south by 1885, and had become a public footpath by about 1930 (OS 1892; OS 1956). This path probably evolved from a boundary between crofts; the line of a ditch apparently subdividing the plot is visible from the ground (Pl. 3). A lesser west-east ditch feature faintly discernible on air photographs may be defining the rear of the toft sites (HSL UK 72 60 23/5/1972; Run 9, 1315-1316).

At the NW corner of the plot is a broad depression, occupying most of the Gainsborough Road frontage and extending back into the site (Pl. 1). This seems to be an artificial feature, and may be a clay extraction pit. It was not observed on any of the maps inspected. A second depression with standing water, close to the SE edge of the field, is unlikely to be of great antiquity as it lies within the former hollow-way (Pl. 3).

The bank alongside the hollow-way is of irregular height, and from the northern side of the field this has the appearance of ridge and furrow (Pl. 4). No ridge and furrow was seen on vertical air photographs of this field, and if these are cultivation earthworks they are unlikely to have been of long duration.

Planning Policies

Middle Rasen is in West Lindsey. The West Lindsey Local Plan for the period to 2002 was placed on deposit in March 1994. An extract relevant to archaeological issues is appended (Appendix 2).

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Buildings Listed as of Special Architectural or Historic Interest within the application site or which would be affected by development on the application site.

Archaeological Potential of the Application Site

Prehistoric and Roman

Only casual finds of prehistoric stone artefacts have been made in the area and the potential for remains on this site is low. There is a greater chance of Roman remains because of the reported coin findspot 150m south, and the pottery scatter 1.4km to the south.

If St. Paul's Church was sited on a post-Roman north-south through route of more contemporary importance than the west-east route through the village, the application site lies close to it. The linear depression forming the eastern edge of the application site could be an earlier course of Mill Lane, perhaps of prehistoric or Roman date. In that eventuality, there is potential for early activity on the application site.

Saxon and Medieval

As far as is known, the application site lies outside the early settlement of Middle Rasen, and no Saxon remains are predicted other than sherds spread on fields with farmyard waste.

The site appears to lie within a row of planned medieval properties, fronting onto the present course of Gainsborough Road. These properties are likely to have been of regular width, although the varied widths of modern plots along the frontage represent subsequent amalgamations and sub-divisions. Each plot is likely to have contained a dwelling and ancillary domestic structures on a slightly raised 'toft' area beside the street frontage. A larger area of land to the rear, the 'croft', served for domestic cultivation and rearing of livestock such as a pig. Air photographs show ridge and furrow of medieval ploughing in some crofts to the west of the application site, but no such remains are visible on 1972 commercial vertical air photographs of the site. Most of the plots have been redeveloped during the twentieth century, and the extent of survival on this site is not known.

The northern side of the application site may have contained two (possibly three) medieval dwelling sites and associated rubbish pits, drainage features and metalled surfaces. These may have originated in the twelfth century on open ground. The dating material present would allow the creation of this settlement addition to be determined more precisely. The ground close to the road retains water in surface depressions, and there is potential for the survival of organic artefacts and environmental remains in deeper features. Behind Mill Rise, up to four crofts might be present. There is lower potential for medieval features other than ditches within the crofts, although croft boundaries might be of interest. One obvious ditch is almost certainly a croft boundary.

Post-medieval

The linear depression at the southern edge of the site is interpreted as a former course of a lane leading to the open fields behind the crofts. This is likely to be contemporary with the crofts, and is probably twelfth century in origin.

Ground to the rear of the site has probably been cultivated at some stage since the medieval period. Although regular north-south aligned undulations reminiscent of ridge and furrow are visible at the southern edge of the field, no earthworks are visible on the 1972 air photographs, and another cultivation practice may be responsible. The absence of obvious ridge and furrow signifies that archaeological deposits across the centre and much of the southern part of this plot may remain relatively undisturbed.

A number of areas of apparent ground disturbance within the application site are likely to be unrelated to the medieval road layout. These may be the result of clay extraction pits and various dumping events. There is no documented explanation for these features, which are probably of late post-medieval and twentieth century date.

Potential Archaeological Impact of the Proposed Development

If developed for housing, strip foundations with associated drainage and landscaping would affect underlying remains on the site. Archaeological deposits at the northern part of the site, if they survive, would be especially vulnerable to development damage.

Conclusion

The application site is within a medieval addition to the Middle Rasen Drax parish. In the twelfth century, this land block was probably carved out of part of an open field and laid out as regular plots with dwellings and rear yard areas. There are indications that lanes to the open fields passed around and across the application site. Since these fell from use there has been varied ground disturbance for unknown reasons.

The pasture field is certainly an area of archaeological potential. The earthworks could be surveyed without difficulty, but this might not offer further explanation for the features.

Evaluation trenching within the field could reveal a glimpse of medieval and earlier land use within the application site. Further excavation might be justified if archaeological features are located by the evaluation trenches.

Acknowledgements

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archaeologists in the Built Environment Team, Lincolnshire County Council (Highways and Planning Directorate), especially Jim Bonnor, Dr. Beryl Lott, Mark Bennet, Sarah Grundy and Judy O'Neill; staff at the Lincolnshire Archives Office and Lincoln Central Library Reference Collection; Russell Kirk (Lincolnshire Echo).

The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Naomi Field and Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
15th February 2000

References and Background Sources

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- HSL UK 72 60 23/5/1972 6000'; Run 9, 1315-1316 (copies at Lincs. County Council Planning Dept.)

Appendix 1

Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record Summary

PRN	NGR (all TF)	Description
52013	0873 8951	St. Peter's Church
52014	0907 8943	site of St. Paul's Church
52015	0907 8873	Roman coin, Gratian, 367-383.
52016	0935 8975	Neolithic polished stone axe, found 1957.
52017	093 887	Roman pottery, 4th century.
52019	unlocated	possible medieval pottery kiln
52020	089 878	Romano-British pottery scatter
52022	0900 8920	Drax shrunken medieval settlement
52026	0761 8824	ridge and furrow
52029	0952 8949	ridge and furrow
52030	0980 8860	Roman metalwork
52032	0980 8860	Saxon metalwork
52033	0980 8860	post-medieval metalwork
52034	0980 8860	undated metalwork
52042	0910 8880	windmill
52518	0874 8948	Early Medieval ditch
54310	0840 8891	post-medieval brick kiln

Abbreviations

PRN: Primary Record Number, Lincs. County SMR

NGR: National Grid Reference

Appendix 2

Planning Policies

Relevant policy initiatives followed by West Lindsey District Council are detailed in its Draft Local Plan (WLDC 1992a, 57-60; Deposit Local Plan March 1994):

Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance: Policy SA9

The Local Planning Authority will seek to protect the District's archaeological heritage, including all known sites of archaeological importance.

Planning permission will not normally be granted for development which would adversely affect the archaeological remains on, or under, a site or affect the character or setting of a site. This is particularly so in the case of archaeological remains of national or great local importance.

Where development is proposed on a site where there is considered to be an archaeological interest and the information about the archaeology is insufficient to determine an application the applicant may be required to provide further information needed to determine the application; in the absence of this the local planning authority will consider the need to refuse permission for the proposals.

If planning permission is granted for a development which if carried out would adversely affect the archaeology of the site it will be subject to conditions, agreements or planning obligations as appropriate to:

- i) Ensure preservation of the archaeology in situ and/or*
- ii) Ensure an adequate record of the site is made. Depending on the importance of the site, this may take the form of*
 - a) excavation, adequate opportunity being provided by the developer for an archaeological body approved by the District Council to carry out such works*
 - b) watching brief*
 - c) field survey*

Such excavation or recording shall normally be carried out before development commences. The publication of results of any excavation or survey will be required as part of any agreement or set of conditions.

Where the character setting or physical structure of an archaeological site is being or would be adversely affected by permitted development, the local authority will give consideration to the need for making an order under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988.

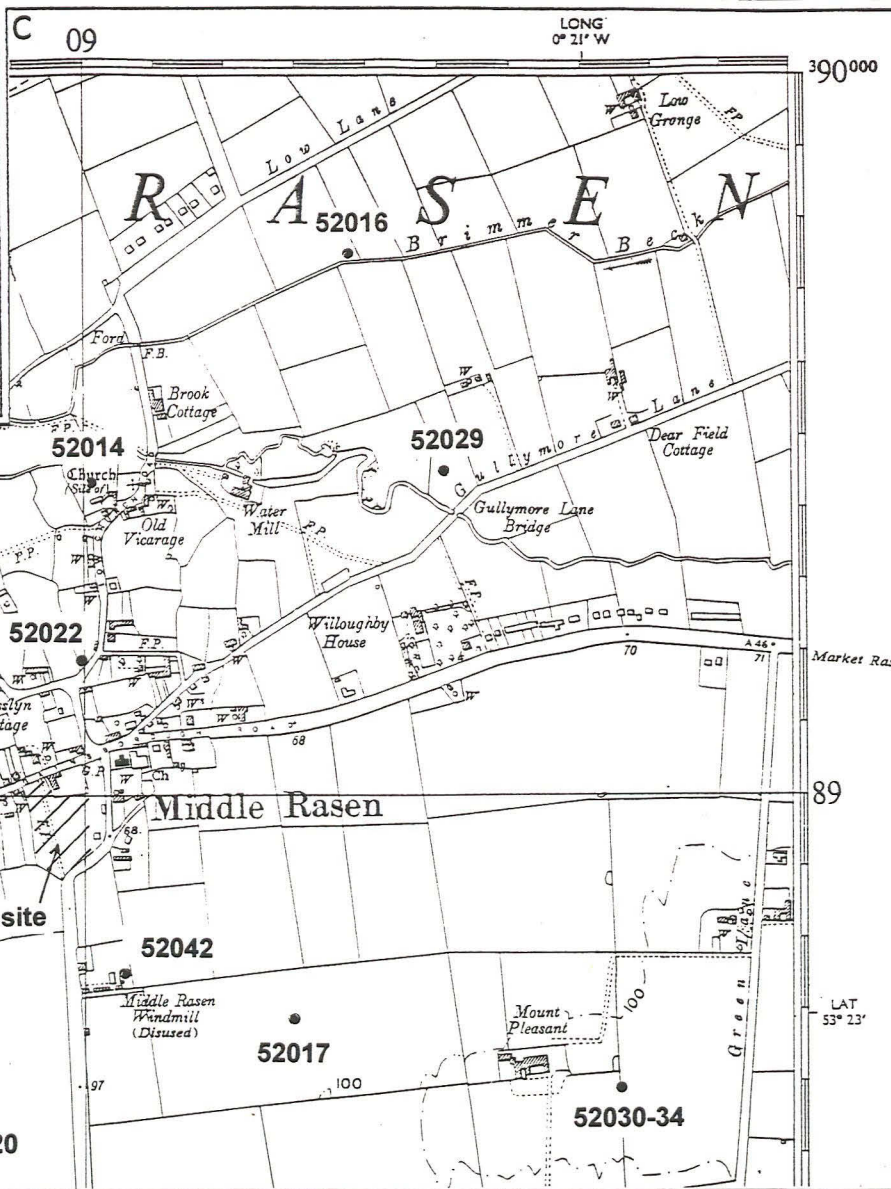
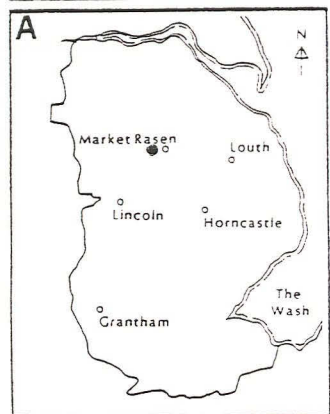
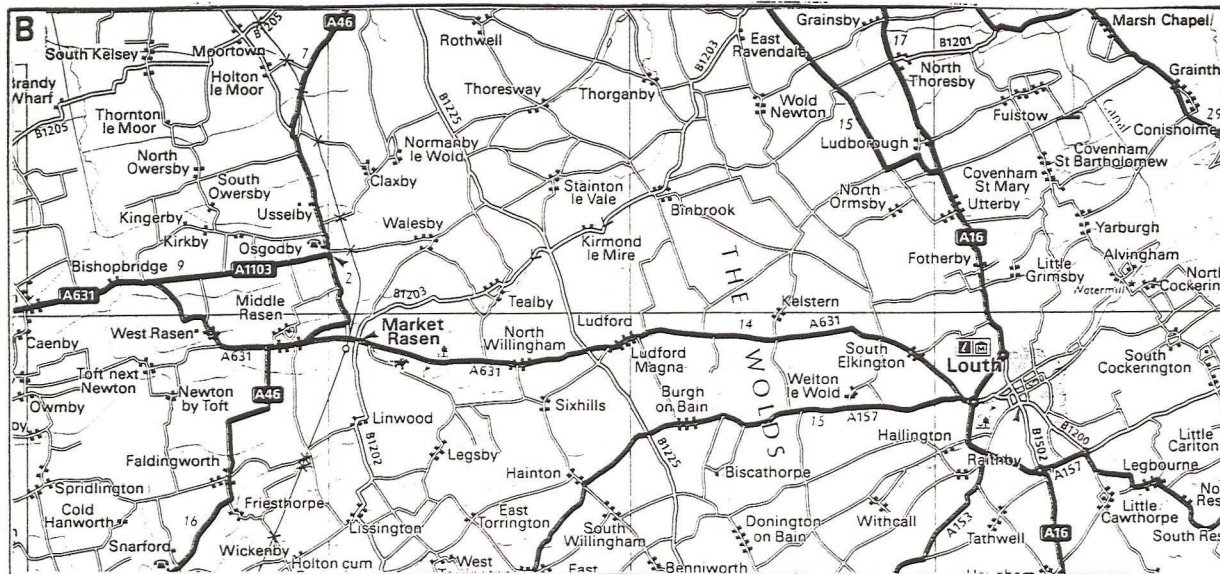


Fig. 1 Location of Middle Rasen, showing recorded archaeological sites and findsspots (inset C based on the 1956 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map sheet TF 08NE. Additional information plotted from Lincolnshire SMR. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

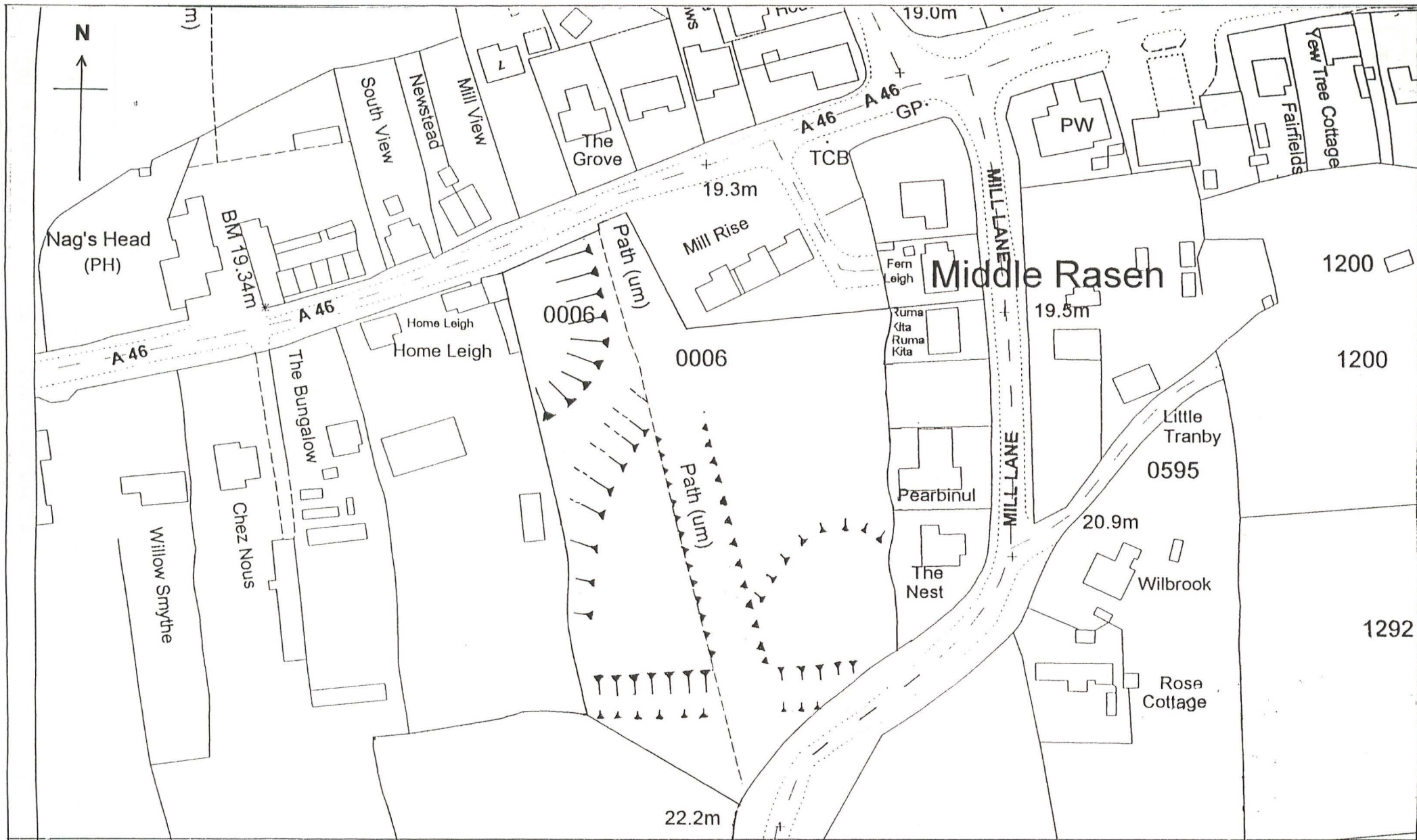


Fig. 2 The Application Site, showing earthworks identified during the site visit. (McDaid after Field, based on a 1:1,250 plan supplied by the client. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

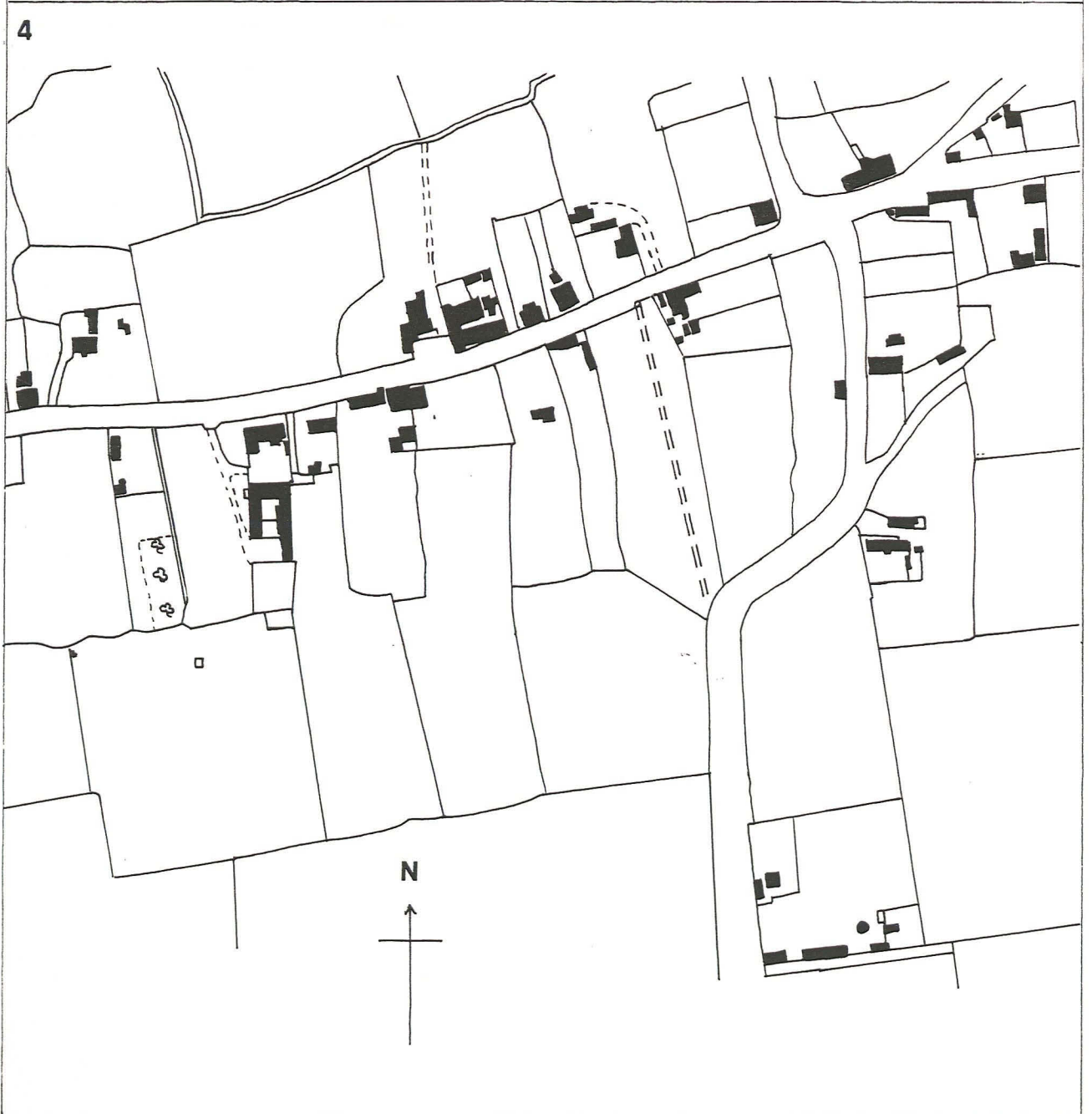
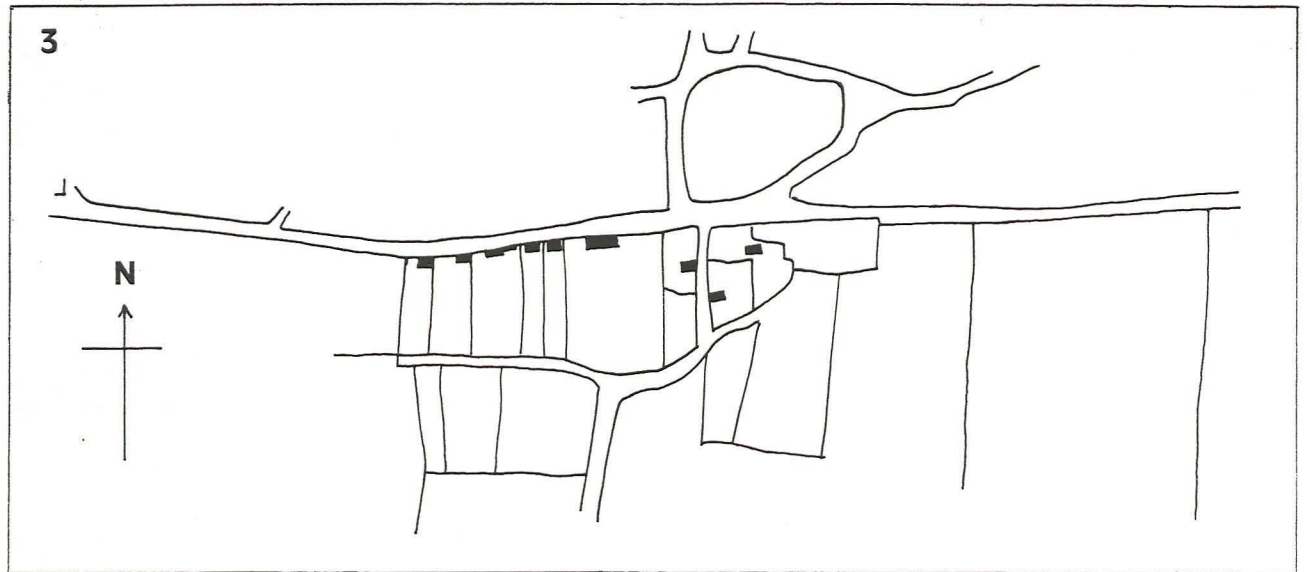


Fig. 3 Extract from the 1744 Middle Rasen Enclosure Map (traced from LAO Par 17).

Fig. 4 The application site in 1906 (after the 1906 OS 1:2,500 map Sheet Lincs. 45.12, reproduced at reduced scale).

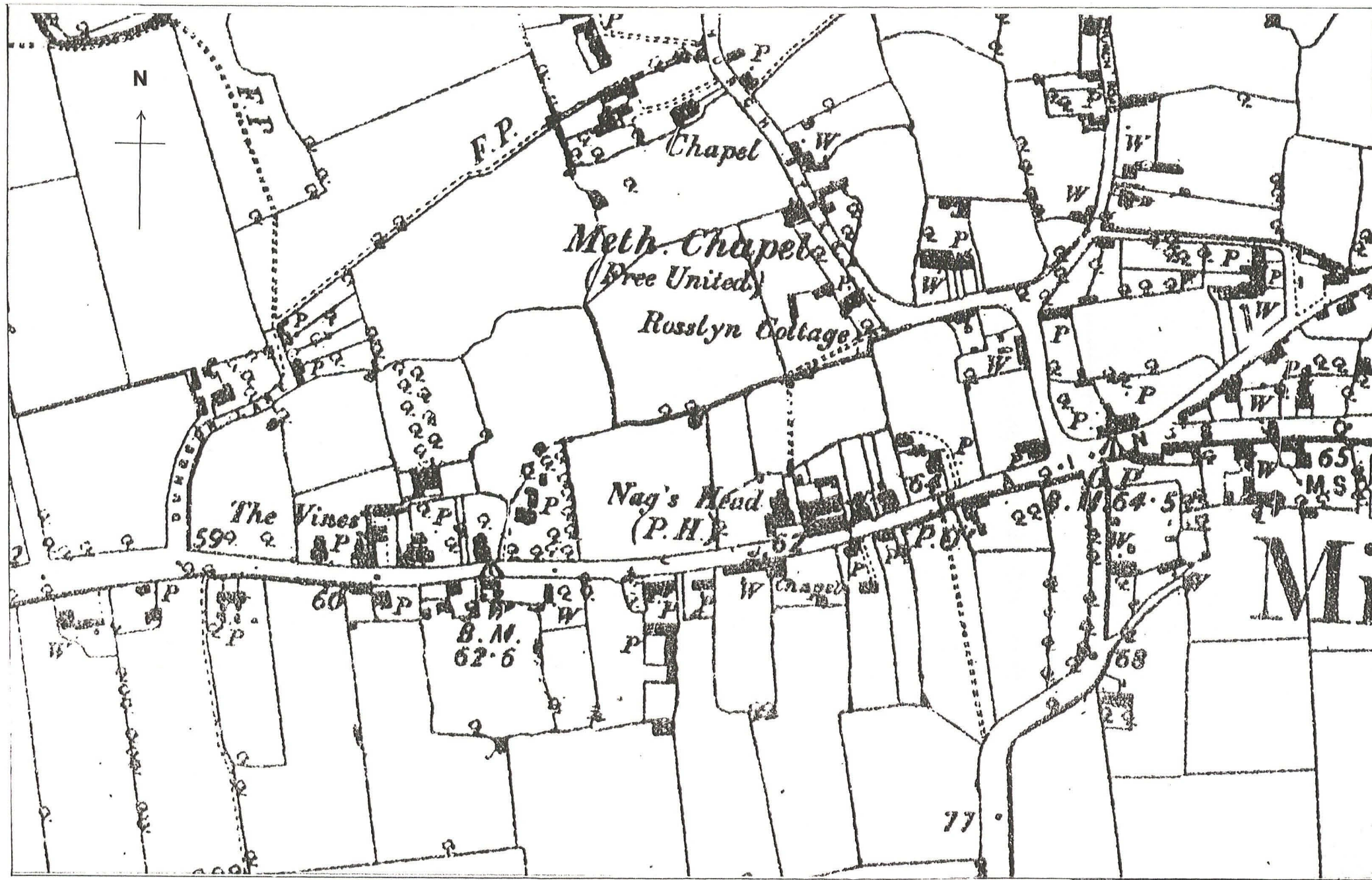


Fig. 5 Extract from the 1892 OS 1:10,560 map Sheet Lincs. 45SE.



Pl. 1 Panoramic view of the application site, looking south from the Gainsborough Road frontage.



Pl. 2 Panoramic view of the application site, looking NE from Mill Lane. The medieval hollow-way crosses the field beside the standing water.



PI. 3 A tree stump marks the ditch between two crofts (looking NE from Mill Lane).



Pl. 4 Undulations visible at the southern side of the field are thought to be post-medieval cultivation, but not necessarily ridge and furrow.