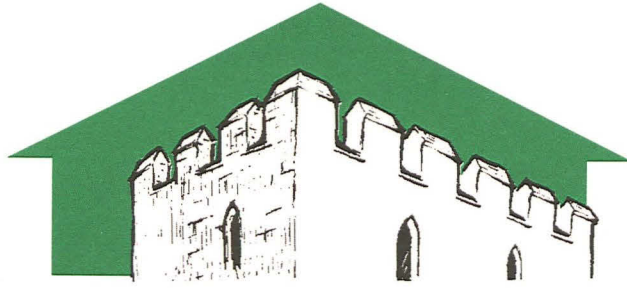


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# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;  
PLOT 2, MAIN STREET,  
TORKSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: SK 8373 7880  
SITE CODE: MSTA01  
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2001.47  
Planning ref.: M00/P/0817 *L15585*





Event LI 2010  
Sources LI 6736 LI 6737  
PNS 54556 LI 81717  
54557 LI 81719  
54558 LI 81723

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Report prepared for  
Mr. M. Thomas  
by Chris Clay  
May 2001

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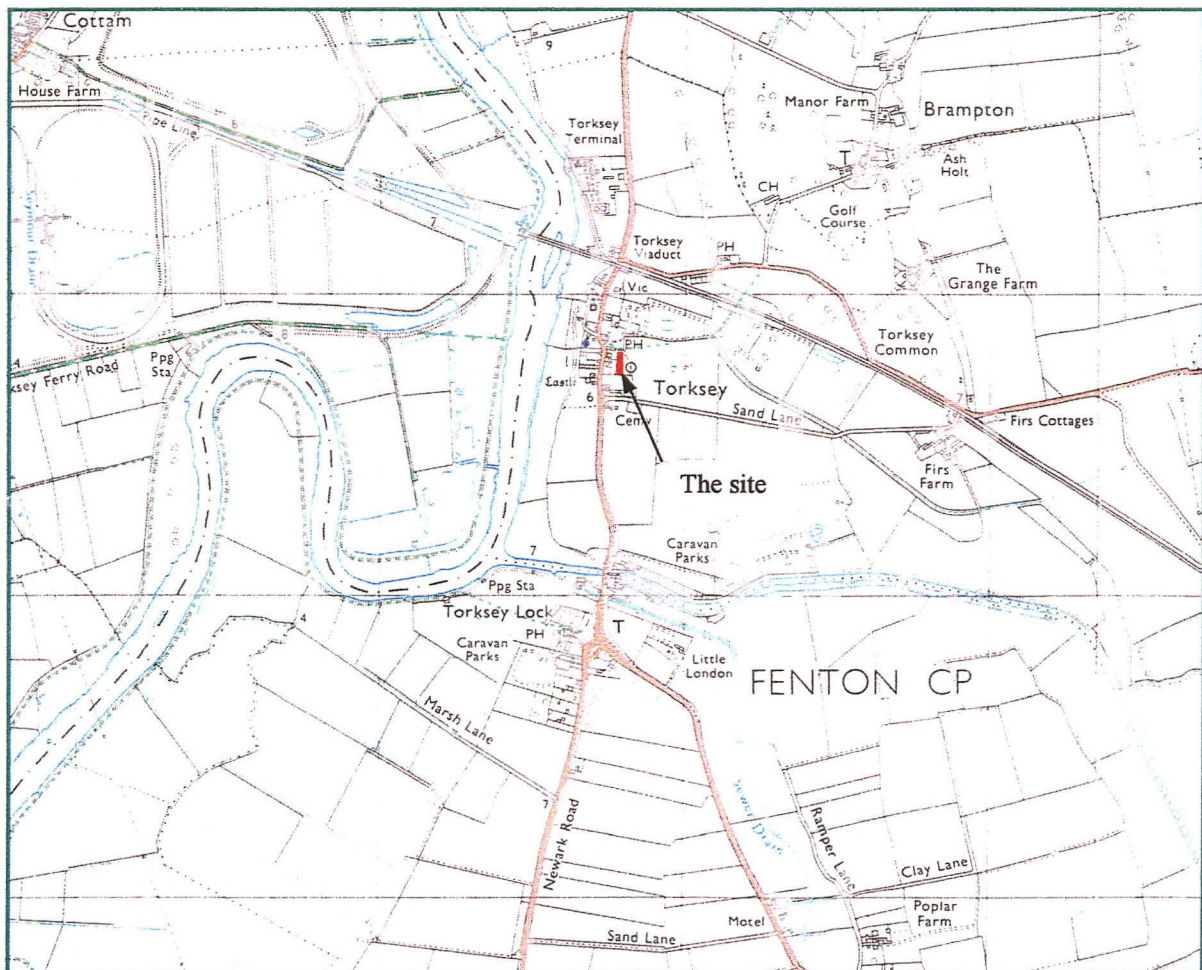
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**PL1:** General view of the site, looking north

**PL2:** Representative shot of ring beam trench, looking south

### Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a dwelling plot on Plot 2, Main Street, Torksey, Lincolnshire.
- Torksey was a major Saxon and medieval port on the River Trent, and the site lies close to the core of the traditional settlement, and the known Late Saxon pottery industry.
- The groundworks penetrated no deeper than the topsoil. Consequently no archaeological features were exposed. However, quantities of locally produced Late Saxon pottery were recovered.
- It is concluded that the development has had no significant impact on the archaeology, and that the most important deposits have been preserved in situ.



**Fig.1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)**  
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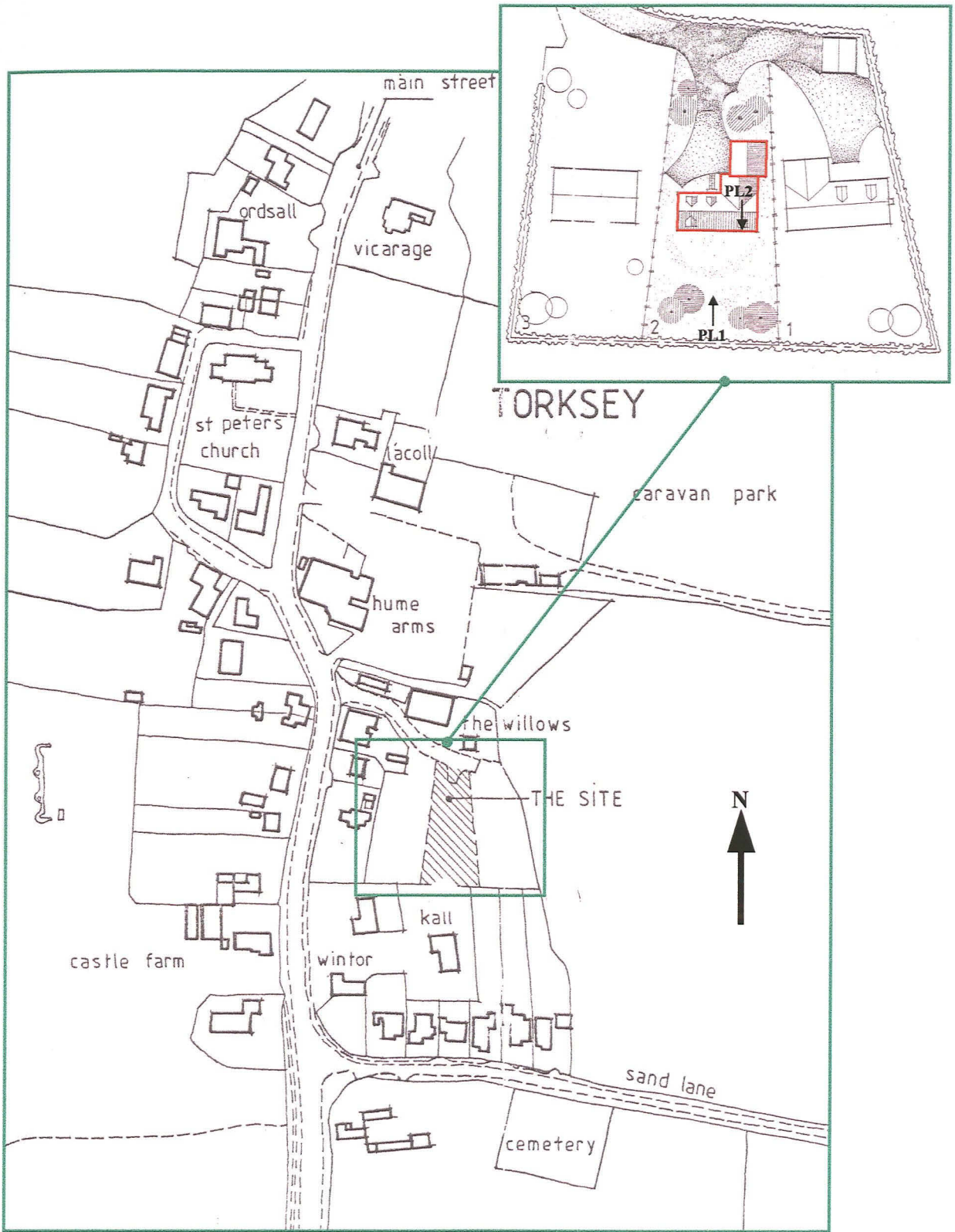


Fig.2: Site location (ring beam highlighted in red) (scale 1:2500, inset 1:1000)

## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Mr. M. Thomas to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a single residential property with attached garage, on land to the rear of the Old Post Office, Plot 2, Main Street, Torksey, Lincolnshire.

This report details the results of the fieldwork. It is written to conform to national and local guidelines as set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998).

## 2.0 Site location and description

Torksey is in the administrative district of West Lindsey, on the east bank of the River Trent. It is approximately 15km north-north-west of Lincoln and 10km south of Gainsborough. The proposed development is in the centre of three plots, on the east side of the village, set back approximately 45m from Main Street (see fig.2). The site centres on NGR SK 8373 7880

The site lies on a drift geology of glaciofluvial sand and gravel, overlying Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey, 1999).

## 3.0 Planning background

Full planning consent was granted for the erection of a single dwelling with integrated garage (planning ref.: M00/P/0817). The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during all groundworks.

The adjacent plots, 1 and 3, were constructed on raft foundations, to preserve *in situ* any significant archaeological deposits. This approach was deemed to be satisfactory when archaeological watching briefs were carried out on these two plots in 1999. A similar approach was a condition of the planning permission.

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Small quantities of prehistoric material have been recovered from the area of the village. A hand axe and a polished flint axe have been recovered from the Trent, as well as a flint adze from within the village, and residual worked flints from excavations at Castle Farm (Johnson & Palmer-Brown, 1997).

Torksey became significant during the Roman period. It was situated less than 1km north of the north-western end of the Fosse Dyke, an artificial channel connecting the Trent at Torksey with the Witham at Lincoln. Pottery kilns of the third century AD have been excavated at Little London, close to the junction of the Fosse Dyke and the



Trent. This industry was ideally situated to allow the rapid shipment of goods northwards along the Trent, and south-east along the Fosse Dyke, to the large urban markets provided by the *coloniae* at Lincoln and York (Whitwell, 1992).

Although Little London was the focus of Romano-British activity, Torksey receives its first historical reference, as *Turecesieg*, when an invading Danish army wintered there in AD872-3 (Sawyer, 1998). Supporting artefactual evidence for Late Saxon activity in Torksey includes large amounts of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century metalwork and coins, and a number of pottery kilns, excavated less than 100m south of the current site, on both sides of the main road (Palmer-Brown, 1995). The town also had a mint operating by the ninth century, and the variety and extent of the numismatic evidence from Torksey may suggest that there was a market or fair operating at the same time (Sawyer, 1998).

The town's fortunes declined somewhat in the eleventh century: the Domesday Book numbers 213 burgesses before the Conquest, and only 102 after 1086 (Morgan & Thorne, 1986), and the coin record begins to diminish in the eleventh century. This may have been due to the gradual silting up and blockage of the Fosse Dyke, which was not reopened until 1121 (Hill, 1965). Nevertheless, the town was still the third largest borough in the county, after Lincoln and Stamford, and maintained its commercial role in the early medieval period. The reopening of the Fosse Dyke in the twelfth century gave rise to renewed prosperity, and two priories were founded: the Augustinian priory of St. Leonard and the Cistercian priory of St. Nicholas de Fossa (Mee, 1970).

In the early thirteenth century Torksey once again fell into decline. Boston had developed as a major port in the twelfth century, and took much of Torksey's trade with Lincoln (Sawyer, 1998), and the town eventually lost its status as a trans-shipment port to Gainsborough (Everson, 1991).

The Elizabethan manor of Sir Robert Jermyn stands in ruins on the west side of the village (Pevsner & Harris, 1989).

## 5.0 Methodology

Prior to excavation of the foundation footprint, the surface vegetation and a proportion of the topsoil had been removed. Subsequently, the external ring beam trenches were excavated to between 0.2m and 0.65m, using a JCB fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed trenching bucket.

During excavation, all plan and section surfaces were examined and intermittently cleaned to determine the presence/absence of archaeological features. Information was recorded on standard watching brief record sheets, and a colour photographic record of the work was maintained. The fieldwork was carried out by the author on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2001.

## 6.0 Results

Excavation commenced in the south-west corner of the plot, where the modern ground surface was at its lowest. Hence the excavations here were only 0.2m deep, increasing to a maximum depth of 0.65m in the north-east corner of the plot. The stratigraphy exposed was homogenous throughout the building plot, consisting of a very dark brown/black sandy topsoil. Only at the deepest point, in the north-east corner of the plot, was a very small area (maximum 0.02m deep) of a lighter brown subsoil exposed.

Although no archaeological features were exposed, the topsoil produced substantial quantities of pottery, consisting of large unabraded sherds of the locally produced Torksey Ware, dating to the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Occasional sherds of medieval/post-medieval pottery were also recovered, but no discrete archaeological features were exposed during the brief.

## 7.0 Conclusions

Very little interpretation can be offered (or is necessarily required) on the basis of the results. The groundworks did not intrude below the topsoil, and hence no archaeological features were exposed. The abundance of pottery from the site is hardly surprising, given the numerous examples of Late Saxon kilns excavated within the village. The results also concur with the results of watching briefs carried out on the adjacent plots 1 and 3 in 1999 (Snee, 1999, Albone, 1999), which recorded the depth of topsoil between 0.5 and 0.6m.

In conclusion, the raft foundation used for this property, as with Plots 1 and 3, has been appropriate to the development, allowing the preservation *in situ* of the most significant archaeological deposits.

## 8.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. M. Thomas for this commission and for his co-operation during the fieldwork.



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## 10.0 Site archive

The primary records for this investigation are currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. They will be deposited at Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive may be gained by quoting the global accession number 2001.47.



## 11.0 Appendices

### 11.1 Colour plates



PL1: General view of the site, looking north



PL2: Representative shot of external ring beam trench, looking south



## 12.2 Pottery report

# Pottery Archive MSTA01

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

A small group of pottery was recovered from topsoil on the site. Most of the assemblage comprises Torksey ware of late 10th to mid 11th century date. The pottery is not obviously waste material, however there is little evidence that it has been used.

context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	description	date
001									
	BL		bowl	1	1		base	abraded;Staffs ?	mid 17th-18th
	GRE		hollow	1	1		BS	abraded	16th-18th
	GRE		hollow	1	1		BS	abraded	17th-18th
	LMLOC	OX/R;fine-med sandy hard	jug	1	1		BS	cu specks in thin glaze	15th-16th
	MEDLOC	OX/R/OX;med-coarse sandy;hard	?	1	1		base		13th to 15th
	MEDX	OX/R;very fine sandy;hard	jug	1	1	thumbed basal edge	base	int dep ?;smooth fabric	13th-14th
	TORK		large bowl	1	1		rim	everted rim	
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		rim	deep EVERA1 rim;oxidised	
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		rim & BS	square EVERA3 rim	
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		rim & BS	square EVERA1 rim	
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		rim & BS	square EVERA1 rim	
	TORK		medium jar	2	1		rim & BS	EVERA1 rim;overfired	
	TORK		small jar	1	1		neck		
	TORK		large bowl	1	1		rim	everted rim	
	TORK		jar	1	1		BS	overfired	
	TORK		large bowl	1	1		rim	everted rim;waster ?	

context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	description	date
	TORK		small jar	1	1		rim	EVERA1 rim	
	TORK		small jar	1	1		BS		
	TORK		large storage jar	1	1		BS	handmade ?;abraded/waster	
	TORK		jar	2	2		BS		
	TORK		?	1	1		BS	overfired	
	TORK		?	5	5		BS		
	TORK		?	3	3		base		
	TORK		small jar	1	1		base		
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		base	spalled;soot	
	TORK		large jar	1	1		base		
	TORK		bowl ?	1	1		base		
	TORK		medium jar	1	1		BS		

**cname key**

cname	full name	earliest date	latest date
BL	Black-glazed wares	1550	1750
GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	1500	1650
LMLOC	Late Medieval local fabrics	1350	1550
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	1150	1450
MEDX	Non Local Medieval Fabrics	1150	1450
TORK	Torksey ware	850	1100