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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT LAND NEXT TO THE GREEN, MAIN ROAD, NOCTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (NTG98)



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> ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT LAND NEXT TO THE GREEN, MAIN ROAD, NOCTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (NTG98)

> > Work Undertaken For Stonewell Homes Ltd

Report Compiled by James Albone MA, PIFA

November 2001

Planning Application No: N/42/334/97 National Grid Reference: TF-0586-6100 TF-0587 WALL .

City and County Museum Accession No: 170.98

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Highways & Planning Directorate



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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of two detached house and garages on land at Wrays Yard, The Green, Nocton, Lincolnshire. The development was located in a former farmyard close to the core of the medieval village. As such there was a possibility of medieval remains being disturbed during the groundworks.

Three medieval pits, one possibly a pond feature, were identified during the watching brief. A small quantity of locally produced 13th to 14th century pottery was recovered from the fills of all of these features. A further pit, of post-medieval or modern date, was also recorded.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as, 'a formal program of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits maybe disturbed or destroyed.' (IFA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Stonewell Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development on land adjacent to The Green, Nocton, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application N/42/334/97. The watching brief was carried out between July and October 1998 in accordance with a brief set by the

Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven District Council (Appendix 1).

2.3 Topography and Geology

Nocton is situated approximately 11km southeast from Lincoln and 16km north of Sleaford within North Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The present village lies on the dip slope of the Lincolnshire edge, towards the western edge of the River Witham valley.

The development is situated in the centre of the village on the Main Road at National Grid Reference TF 0586 6100 (Fig 2). The area of the site lies at approximately 17m OD and was formerly a farmyard.

Soils present at the development site comprise clayey stagnogleys of the Beccles 1 Association (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 117). The underlying geology consists of boulder clay over Jurassic limestones and clays.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The proposed development site lies in an area of known archaeological activity dating from the Neolithic period and later. The site also lies close to the core of the medieval village.

Artefacts dating from the prehistoric period have been recorded close to the area under development. To the east of the site, a Neolithic polished axe has been retrieved. Additionally, 300m to the south of the development area, bone along with a scored ware pot dated to the Iron Age period has been recorded.

The settlement of Nocton is first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The placename is Old English in origin and refers to, 'the farmstead where the wether-sheep are kept' (Cameron 1998, 92). At that time the manor of *Nochetune* was held by Norman of Arcy and included a church and priest (Morris 1986).

Settlement evidence dating from the medieval period and later has been recorded within the vicinity of the development area. A carved stone animal's head has been recorded c.200m to the southeast of the site, and possibly originates from the medieval church. Excavation of a water pipeline to the northeast of the site revealed a possible medieval building and human burials.

Other watching briefs carried out during residential development to the north of the present site produced limited results, with only sparse medieval and later remains being recorded (Cope-Faulkner & Walker 1998; Herbert 2000; Albone 2001).

The parish church of All Saints was constructed in the 19th century and replaced an earlier, medieval, church (Pevsner & Harris 1989, 577). It is considered that the medieval church lies in close proximity as fragments of its stonework have been recorded and the font in the existing church dates from the 14th century.

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to record and interpret archaeological features exposed during the excavation of foundation trenches of the development. The objectives were to determine the form, function, spatial arrangement, date and sequence of any archaeological remains encountered.

4. METHODS

Excavation of the foundation trenches of the two houses and garages were monitored. The depth and thickness of each deposit was

measured from the present ground surface. Each deposit or feature revealed within an opened area was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. Natural geological deposits were also recorded where exposed.

Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A photographic record was also compiled. Recording of the deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

5. RESULTS

Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. Three phases of activity were identified:

Phase 1 Natural deposits
Phase 2 Medieval deposits
Phase 3 Post-Medieval and Modern deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed and described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

5.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The earliest deposits encountered during the watching brief were natural geological deposits which varied across the site.

In the garage excavations a light brown clay deposit (008) was recorded. The natural deposits encountered in Plot 4 comprised Medium orange clay (018) sealing mixed orange and light blueish grey clayey gravelly sand (017). At the southern end of the site, in Plot 5, medium brownish yellow clayey silt (014) was recorded.

5.2 Phase 2: Medieval deposits

In the northwestern corner of the foundations for the Plots 1 and 2 garages, a pit or possible pond [009] was recorded cutting the natural deposits. This feature had a shallow sloping eastern side although its full extent was not revealed within the foundation trenches (Figs. 4 and 5).

The primary deposit in this feature comprised medium grey silt (007). A single sherd of 13th to 14th century pottery was recovered from this deposit. Sealing this fill, was dark brownish grey clay containing occasional charcoal fragments (006). The upper deposit within the possible pond [009] consisted of light brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks (005).

Cutting through, or possibly re-cutting, the pit or pond [009] was another pit feature [004]. It had comparatively steep sides although its base was not revealed (Fig.5). The fill of this feature comprised dark brown silty clay containing limestone fragments (004). Further sherds of 13th to 14th century pottery were recovered from this deposit.

A third medieval feature, a small, steep-sided pit [013] with a flat base was identified in Plot 5 (Figs. 4 and 5). The fill of this feature (012 / 015) comprised medium yellowish brown and light grey silt containing occasional limestone fragments. Artefacts recovered from this deposit also included 13th to 14th century pottery and animal bone.

5.3 Phase 3: Post-Medieval and Modern Deposits

A pit was identified in the northern part of Plot 4 (Fig. 5). The feature [023] had steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 4). The primary fill comprised dark brown organic clay (019)

from which animal bone was recovered. Sealing this deposit was light greenish yellow clay (020) which contained further animal bone. The upper fill of this feature comprised medium orange clay in which no artefacts were identified. Although the fills of this feature were undated, the condition of the animal bone recovered suggested a modern date of deposition.

A disused well was identified in the southeast corner of the Plot 1 and 2 garage excavations (Fig. 4). Due to the modern date of this feature, detailed recording was not undertaken.

Further modern deposits were identified sealing the archaeological features. A light to medium brownish yellow silt subsoil was recorded in Plot 5 (Fig. 5). This was sealed by medium to dark brown silt topsoil (010 / 016). Modern artefacts were recovered from both of these deposits and a quantity of pig bone from (016) may represent an animal burial. A limestone rubble layer (001 / 022), representing the former surface of the farmyard, was identified in Plot 4 and the garages of Plot 1 and 2 (Fig. 5).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural geological deposits were exposed in all of the monitored foundation trenches. The earliest archaeological features encountered consisted of two pits and a possible pit or pond of 13th to 14th century date. Although these features suggest some activity at the site during the medieval period, the level of this seems to be low. Previous investigations in close proximity have revealed a similar low level of medieval activity (Cope-Faulkner & Walker 1998; Herbert 2000; Albone 2001). Cumulatively this suggests that this part of Nocton was peripheral to the medieval settlement zone.

Post-medieval and modern deposits identified reflect the more recent use of the site and include the formation of a farmyard surface during early 20th century.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at Wrays Yard, The Green, Nocton were undertaken because the site lay within an area of known archaeological activity. The site lies in close proximity to previous finds of prehistoric artefacts and later remains, which suggested a likelihood of archaeological remains being disturbed during the development

Three medieval pits, including a possible pond, comprised the only significant remains identified during the watching brief. The limited amount of medieval evidence encountered at the site suggests a low level of activity there during that period. Other remains recorded related to the use of the site as a farmyard during the 19th and 20th centuries.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Paul Goy of Stonewell Homes Ltd. for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor coordinated the work and edited this report with Tom Lane. Background information was kindly provided by Joanna Hambly, the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council. Hilary Healey and Gary Taylor examined the finds.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor Site Supervisors: Neil Herbert, Rene Mouraille and Fiona Walker Finds Processing: Denise Buckley Photographic Reproduction: Sue Unsworth Post-excavation Analysis and CAD illustration: James Albone

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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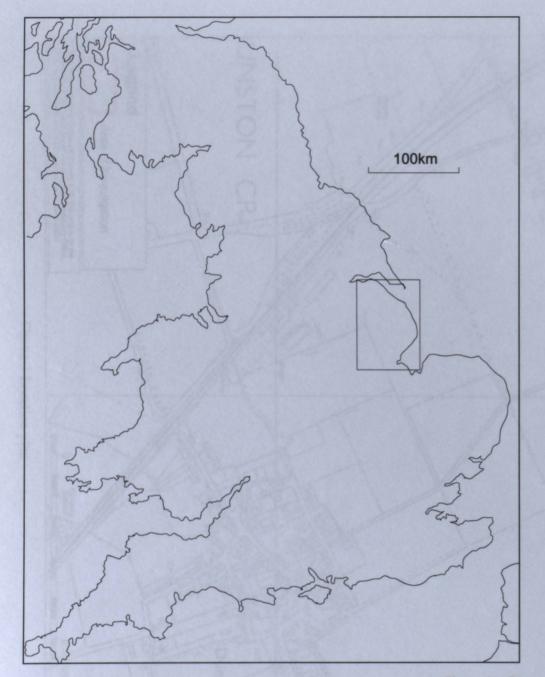
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Pevsner, N. and Harris, J., 1989, The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



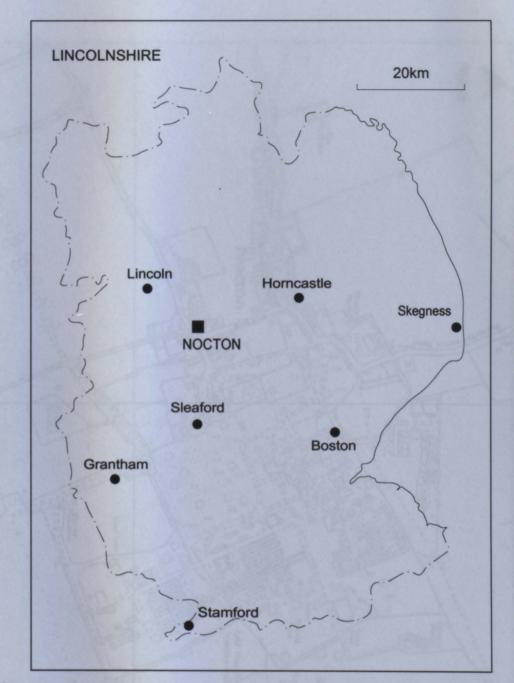


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



Figure 2 Location plan



Figure 3: Site plan showing monitored areas

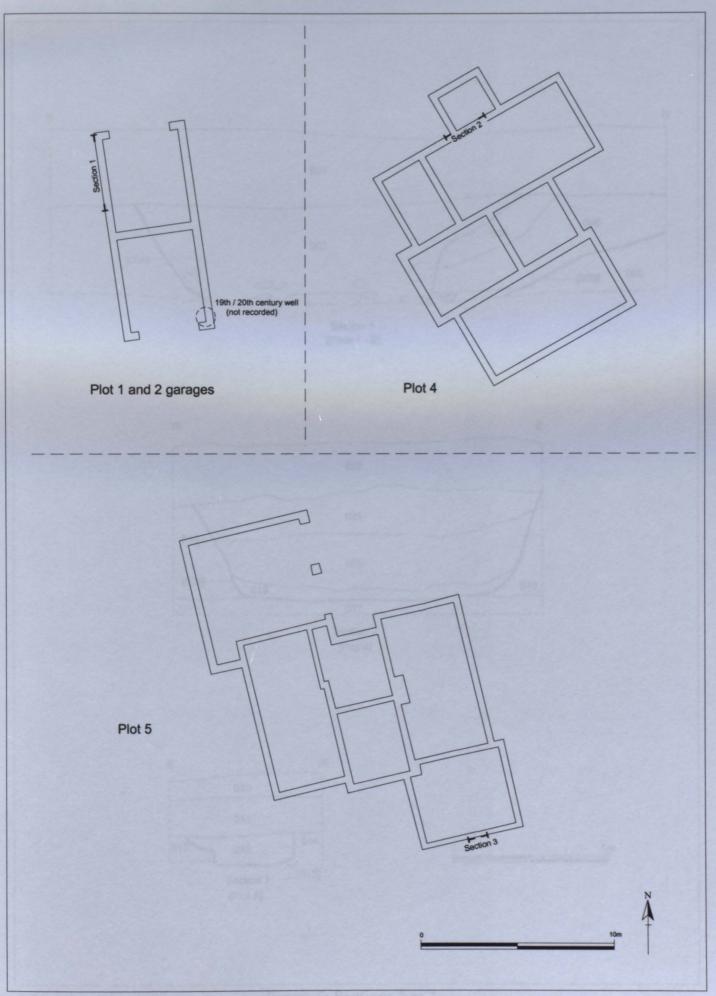


Figure 4: Plans of the monitored plots showing section locations

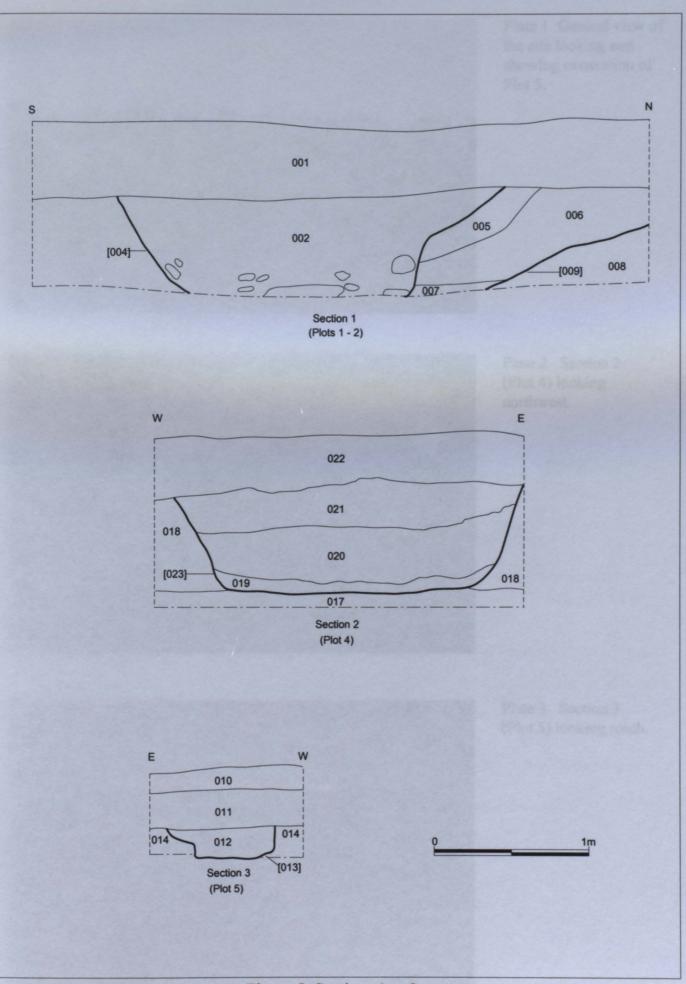


Figure 5: Sections 1 to 3



Plate 1 General view of the site looking east showing excavation of Plot 5.



Plate 2 Section 2 (Plot 4) looking northwest.



Plate 3 Section 3 (Plot 5) looking south.

BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING (WATCHING BRIEF)

WRAYS YARD, NOCTON, LINCS

Planning Application Number:N/42/334/97

NGR: TF 0386 610

Applicant: Nocton Ltd

Agent: Savills

1. Summary

- 1.1 This brief should be sent to archaeological contractors as the basis for the preparation of a detailed archaeological project specification. In response to this brief contractors will include the anticipated working methods, timescales and staffing levels.
- 1.2 These detailed specifications will be submitted by the client for approval by the North Kesteven Heritage Officer. The client will be free to choose between those specifications which are considered to adequately satisfy the brief

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Nocton is fen edge village situated approximately 12km south east of Lincoln. The development is in the centre off the village on the main road, near the Post Office and opposite a house called 'Hallyard'. (See enclosed map).
- 2.2 The site used to be a farmyard, and barns enclose a gravelled area in the centre.

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 Outline planning permission has been given to erect four houses in Wrays Yard.
- 3.2 The same site received planning permission with a condition for a watching brief previously (953/92).

4. Archaeological Background

4.1 The development site is located in the centre of the old part of the village near the nineteenth century church. The site of the medieval church is not recorded but is likely to be under or near the present church as fragments of its stonework have been

found in the Vicarage garden 100m to the west of the church.

- 4.2 An Anglian Water watermain trench dug in 1971, approximately 300m to the north east of the site uncovered part of a well built stone wall and skeletons in a pit.
- 4.3 Medieval settlement remains are likely to survive below ground and should be recorded in the course of the development.

5. Requirements for Work

- 5.1 The objective of the watching brief should be to ensure that any archaeological features exposed by the groundworks are recorded and interpreted.
- 5.2 Any adjustments to the brief for the watching brief project should only be made after consultation with the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven.
- 5.3 The following details should be given in the contractor's specification:
 - 5.3.1 A projected timetable for the various stages of work.
 - 5.3.2 Details of the staff structure and numbers including person hours for onsite work.
- 5.3.3 It is expected that all on-site work will be carried out in a way that complies with the relevant Health and Safety legislation and that due consideration will be given to site security.
 - 5.3.4 A full description of the recovery and recording strategies to be used.
- 5.3.5 An estimate of time and resources allocated for the post-excavation was and report production in the form of person hours. This should include lists of specialists and their role in the project. It is expected that medieval finds will be encountered and therefore adequate provision should be made for specialists in this area.

6. Methods

- 6.1 The project should be carried out by a recognised archaeological body in accordance with the code of conduct of The Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 6.2 The watching brief should involve:
 - 6.2.1 archaeological supervision of topsoil stripping;
 - 6.2.2 inspection of subsoil for archaeological features;

- 6.2.3 recording of archaeological features in plan;
- 6.2.4 rapid excavation of features if necessary;
- 6.2.5 archaeological supervision of subsoil stripping
 - 6.2.6 inspection of natural for archaeological features and recording them.
- 6.2.7 any human remains encountered must be left in situ and only removed if absolutely necessary. The contractor must comply with all statutory consents and licences regarding the exhumation and interment of human remains. It will also be necessary to comply with all reasonable requests of interested parties as to the remains or associated items. Attempt must be made at all times not to cause offence to any interested parties.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The Heritage Officer for North Kesteven will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project and will require preferably fourteen days notice but at least five working days prior to the commencement of the work. The Heritage Officer should be kept informed of any unexpected discoveries and should be regularly updated on the project's progress. They should be allowed access to the site at their convenience and will comply with any health and safety requirements associated with the site.

8. Reporting Requirements

- 8.1 A full report should be produced and deposited with the planning department of North Kesteven District Council, the Heritage Officer, the client and the County Sites and Monuments Record. The report should include:
 - 8.1.1 location plan of the trenches;
- 8.1.2 section and plan drawings, with ground level, Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scales as appropriate;
 - 8.1.3 specialist descriptions of artefacts and ecofacts;
- 8.1.4 an indication of potential archaeological deposits not disturbed by the present development;
- 8.2 After agreement with the landowner, arrangements are to be made for long term storage of all artefacts and paper archive in an appropriate museum.
- 8.3 If the receiving museum is to be the City and County Museum, Lincoln then the archive should be produced in the form outlined in the museum's document 'Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives', see address below.

9. Publication and Dissemination

9.1 The deposition of a copy of the report with the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record will be deemed to put all information into the public domain, unless a special request is made for confidentiality. If material is to be held in confidence a timescale must be agreed with the North Kesteven Heritage Officer but is expected this will not exceed six months. Consideration must be given to a summary of the results being published in 'Lincolnshire History and Archaeology' in due course.

10. Additional Information

10.1 This document attempts to define the best practice expected of an archaeological watching brief but cannot fully anticipate the conditions that will be encountered as work progresses. However, changes to the programme are only to be made with the prior written approval of the Heritage Officer.

10.2 Further contact addresses

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Mr T. Page
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LN2 5AL

Department of Planning
North Kesteven District Council Offices
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 7EF

Brief set by Heritage Officer, North Kesteven 30/5/1997

Appendix 2 CONTEXT SUMMARY

CONTEXT NO.	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
001	Limestone rubble	Yard surface
002	Dark brown silty clay containing limestone fragments.	Fill of 004
003	Dark brown silt containing grit	Fill of 004
004	Broad, shallow cut with concave sides	Cut (?Re-cut) of pit / pond
005	Light brown clay containing occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of 009
006	Dark brownish grey clay containing occasional charcoal	Fill of 009
007	Medium grey silt	Fill of 009
008	Light brown clay	Natural deposit
009	Broad shallow cut with sloping sides.	Cut of possible pond
010	Medium to dark brown organic silt	Topsoil
011	Light to medium brownish yellow silt	Subsoil
012	Medium yellowish brown silt with occasional limestone fragments	Fill of 013
013	Rectilinear cut with steep sides	Pit / gully cut
014	Medium brownish yellow clayey silt	Natural deposit
015	Mixed medium yellowish brown / light grey silt	Fill of 013
016	Medium to dark brown organic silt	Topsoil
017	Mixed medium orange and light blue grey clayey gravelly sand	Natural deposit
018	Medium orange clay	Natural deposit
019	Dark brown organic clay	Fill of 023
020	Light greenish yellow clay	Fill of 023
021	Medium orange clay	Fill of 023
022	Limestone rubble	Yard surface
023	Circular steep-sided cut	Refuse pit cut

THE FINDS Paul Cope-Faulkner, Rachael Hall, Hilary Healey and Gary Taylor

Provenance

Artefactual remains were principally recovered from the fills of features, with additional material from subsoil and topsoil deposits.

Most of the earlier, medieval, pottery was made at Potterhanworth, only 2km north of Nocton, though there is one piece that may be a Lincoln product, manufactured 11km to the northwest. The single post-medieval pottery fragment is probably a Staffordshire product.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the tables.

Pottery, brick/tile, glass, metal objects and animal bone were recovered. Locally-made medieval pottery is the most abundant artefact type, though animal bone dominates the moderately-sized assemblage.

Table 1: The Artefacts

Context	Context Description			
002	4x Potterhanworth ware, 1 sooted externally, 1 with brown ?ferrous concretion, very similar to piece from 007. Probably 4 separate vessels.	13th- 14th century		
007	1x Potterhanworth ware with brown ?ferrous concretion, very similar to piece from 002	13th- 14th century		
010	1x creamware bowl, early-mid 19th century	very late 19th- 20th		
	1x bottle glass, green, very late 19th- 20th century	century		
	1x iron implement, 300mm long, 11mm wide, with impressions of wood along 150mm of length, this part of object having sub-round section; probably wooden handled knife/tool			
011	1x ?field drain, late post-medieval	late post-		
	1x ?fireclay tile, in 2 linked pieces, late post-medieval	medieval		
	1x glass			
012	1x ??Lincoln ware, small, abraded, 13th- 14th century/medieval	13 th - 14 th century/medieval		
	1x unidentified oxidized ware, very small and abraded			
016	1x iron nail, rectangular section			

Most of the pottery is locally-made Potterhanworth ware. Two of the pieces, one from (002) the other from (007), have brown, possibly ferrous, concretions. Although these two fragments do not link they are very similar in other characteristics and probably derive from a single vessel. If this is the case then it would imply the possibility of some chronological or functional relationship between the two deposits.

Table 2: The Animal Bone

Context	Species	Description
002	Cattle	metacarpus (2 fragments)
012	Cattle sized Cattle sized unknown Sheep sized Sheep sized	humerus (juvenile) humerus epiphysis (unfused, juvenile) skull fragment ribs (8 fragments) phalanges (5 individual bones, juvenile)
015	Dog Dog? unknown	2x tibia fragments 8x rib fragments unidentified fragments
016	Pig	Skull fragments, scapula, ribs etc of juvenile animal
019	Cattle Cattle Cattle Cattle sized Cattle sized unknown	humerus ulna ribs (4 individual bones) skull fragments (x3) femur head (unfused) unidentified fragments
020	unknown	collection of unidentified unfused bone fragments.

Much of the animal bone is from juvenile animals. This might indicate they were meat stock, although the presence of a young pig in (016) might indicate a diseased animal, although no trauma on the bone was identified. The cattle bone from (019) comes from a large beast and may be post-medieval improved stock.

Condition

Although some of the ceramics are abraded, all of the material is in good condition and present no long-term storage problems. Archive storage of the collection is by material class.

Documentation

There have been several previous archaeological investigations at Nocton, including in close proximity to the present site, which are the subjects of reports. Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the files of the North Kesteven Heritage Officer and the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Potential

Although a small artefact assemblage, the material has moderate local potential and may indicate the presence of medieval settlement in the vicinity of the investigation site. The faunal remains probably represent a mixture of refuse discard and the burial of dead stock.

GLOSSARY

-	_	_	4			4
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An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, *e.g.* [004].

Cut

A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.

Domesday Survey

A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.

Fill

Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).

Layer

A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.

Medieval

The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.

Natural

Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity

Neolithic

The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.

Post-medieval

The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

Prehistoric

The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.

THE ARCHIVE

The site archive consists of:

- 3 Daily site record sheets
- 23 Context records
- 4 Sheets of scale drawings
- 1 Photographic record sheets
- 2 Boxes of finds

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services The Old School Cameron Street Heckington Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum 12 Friars Lane Lincoln LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 170.98

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: NTG98

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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