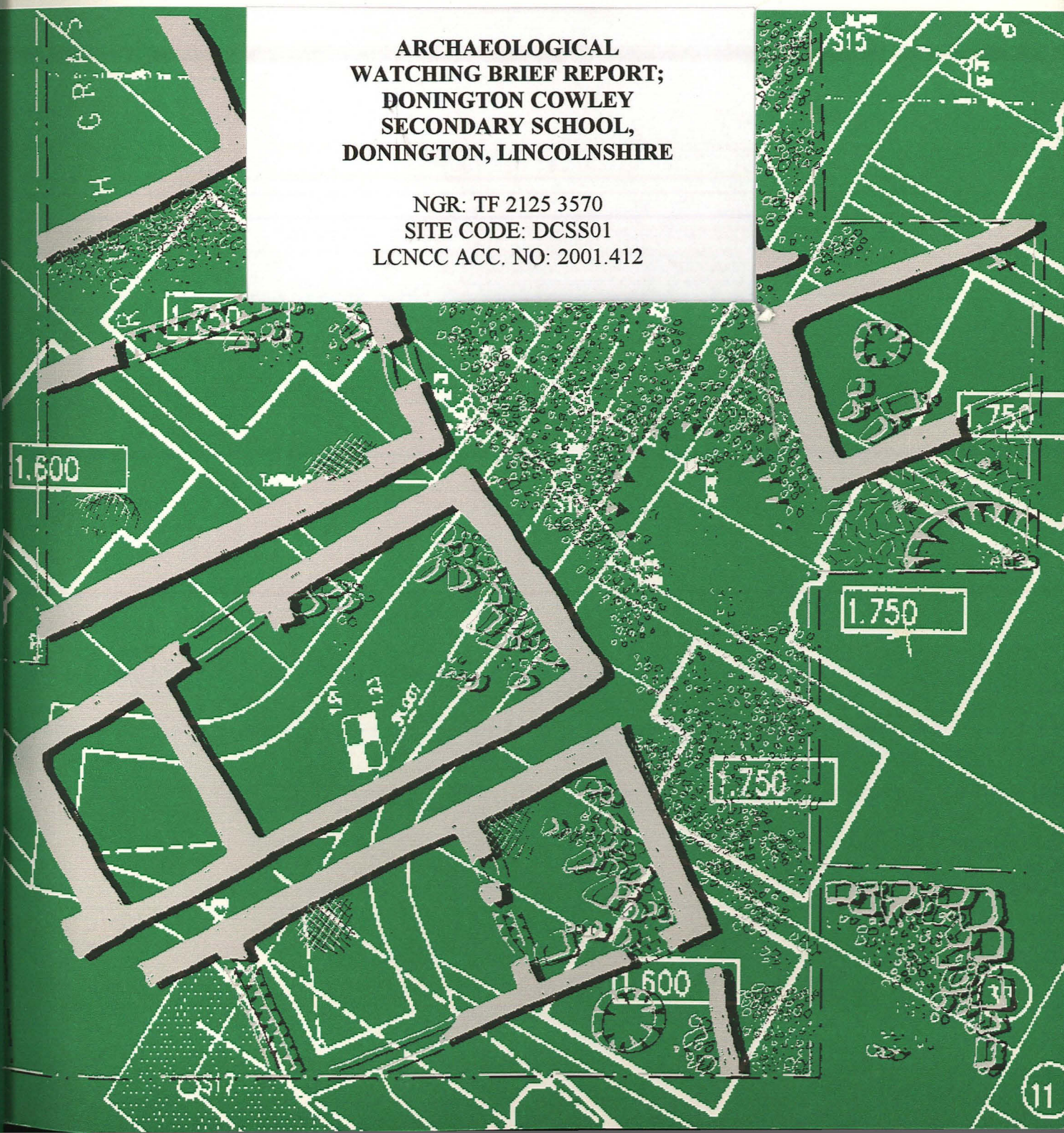


# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;  
DONINGTON COWLEY  
SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
DONINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 2125 3570  
SITE CODE: DCSS01  
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2001.412





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Report prepared for  
Hyder Business Services  
by Chris Clay  
December 2001

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Conservation  
Services

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Highways & Planning  
Directorate

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### Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a new classroom at Cowley Secondary School, Donington, Lincolnshire.
- Cropmarks and pottery scatters from the area indicate the potential of revealing settlement activity from the Romano-British to post-medieval periods.
- The groundworks exposed 19<sup>th</sup> century demolition deposits, associated with brick walls and a brick well. These appear to correspond with buildings that are depicted on the 1905 Ordnance Survey map.



Fig 1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)



## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Hyder Business Services to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for an extension to Cowley Secondary School, Donington, Lincolnshire. This was undertaken to fulfil a planning requirement of South Holland District Council.

This report details the result of the fieldwork. It is written to conform to both 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

Donington is in the administrative district of South Holland, approximately 13km north of Spalding and 15km south-west of Boston.

The development area is on the eastern side of the school, which is in the north-east corner of the village. The site centres on NGR TF 2125 3570. It consists of a flat area of land, covered by short mown grass (fig.2).

The local geology consists of Terrington Beds: salt marsh, tidal creek and river deposits, which have accumulated since the Romano-British period. This seals a solid geology of Ancholme Group Clay (British Geological Survey, 1995).

## 3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted by Lincolnshire County Council for the construction of an extension to the existing complex of school buildings, comprising two classrooms, a corridor and a store. The planning permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks.

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

There is substantial evidence for Romano-British activity in the area. The County Sites and Monuments Record lists several scatters of pottery, as well as numerous cropmarks indicative of Romano-British settlements and field systems. The A52, which runs east to west through the village, is on the course of Bridge End Causeway, an extension of the Roman Salter's Way, a road which connects with the Fosse Way north of Leicester and runs through Saltersford (south of Grantham), through to Donington and eastwards, where its route is lost beneath post-Roman accumulations of alluvial silt (Whitwell, 1992).



Donington appears in the Domesday Book as *Duninctune*, from the Old English for 'village/farmstead of Dunn' (Cameron, 1998). The land was in the ownership of St. Peter's of Peterborough and Count Alan. The Domesday Book mentions 11 'salt houses' in the area (Morgan & Thorne, 1986), evidence for which have been detected in the fields surrounding Donington (SMR records).

The school itself was originally constructed in 1719, and rebuilt in 1812.

A watching brief took place in 2000 during the groundworks for a classroom, and this revealed a series of modern deposits and a possible medieval or earlier well (Allen, 2000).

## 5.0 Methodology

The groundworks involved the excavation of a ring beam trench and three internal crossbeams to support a raised floor. An area was excavated on the west side of the development to allow for the construction of a porch. A portion of the building footprint within the ring beam was also stripped (fig.3).

The excavations were carried out using a 360° mechanical tracked excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket for the foundation trenches, and a 1.5m wide toothless blade for the stripping of the building footprint. The fieldwork was carried out by the author between November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

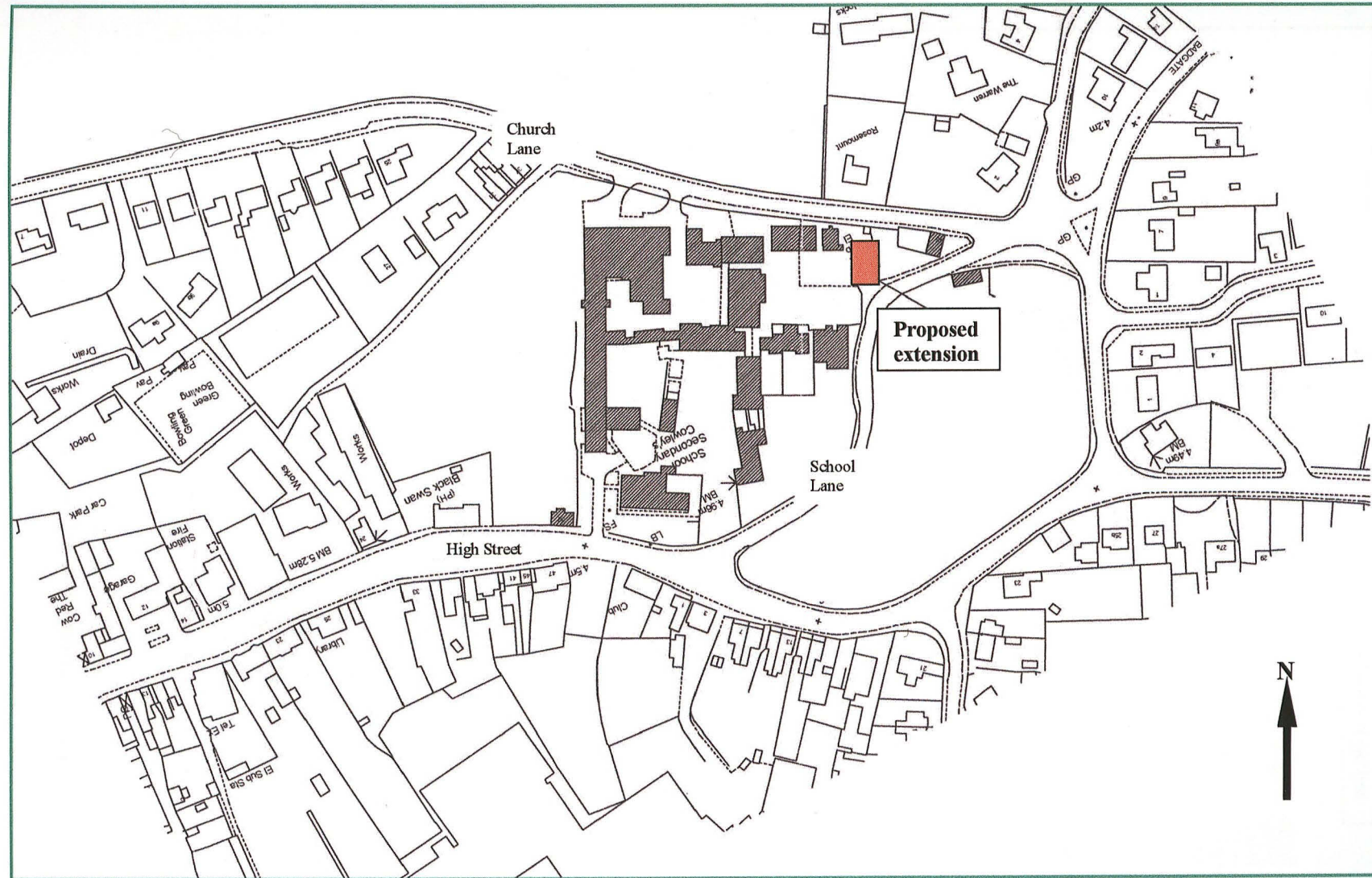
## 6.0 Results

The trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m below the modern ground surface (fig.4). At the base of the trenches was a light brown silt, (005), representing a natural alluvial deposit. Sealing this throughout much of the site was a very dark greyish brown silty loam, (003), which was approximately 0.25m deep. This contained small fragments of brick and tile, as well as several sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century willow pattern china, and a single clay tobacco pipe bowl, and was interpreted as a former topsoil deposit.

Along the north edge and north-west corner of the development, and intermittently throughout the foundation trenches, was a 0.3m thick mid greyish brown sandy silt, (004). This contained considerable quantities of brick, tile, and subangular chalk fragments, and was interpreted as a demolition deposit, relating to earlier building activity on the site. Overlying (003) was a homogenous brownish yellow sand, 0.15m deep (002). The uppermost deposit was a 0.2 – 0.3m deep layer of dark brown silty topsoil, (001).

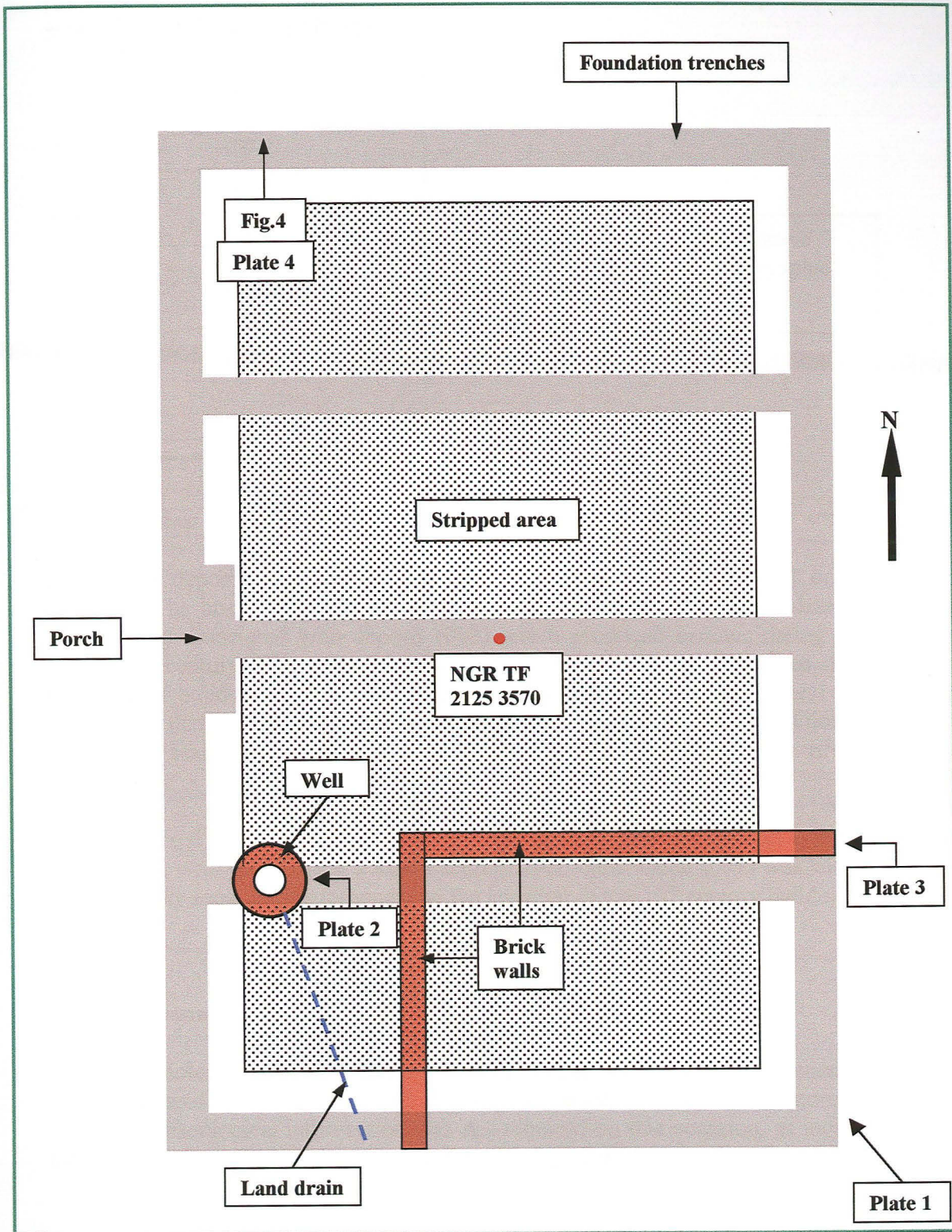
The stripping of an area within the building footprint extended to a maximum depth of 0.5m below the modern ground surface (fig.3). In the south-east corner of the site this exposed two brick walls, aligned north to south and east to west (Plate 3). Less than 2m to the west of this was a circular brick well. This had a diameter of





**Fig.2:** Site location, showing the proposed extension in relation to the existing school buildings (scale 1:2500)

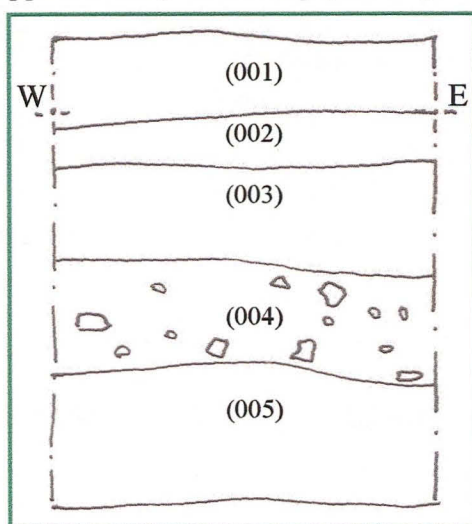




**Fig.3:** Development plan, showing the layout of the monitored groundworks, and location of photographs and drawn section (scale 1:100)



approximately 1.2m at its base, corbelled to a 0.5m diameter at the top. The well was approximately 1.5m deep (Plate 4).



**Fig.4:** representative section of stratigraphic sequence

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

All of the deposits exposed during the brief relate to post-medieval or modern activities. The brick walls and the well are likely to be of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, as they were closely associated with deposit (003) which produced ceramic dating evidence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second edition Ordnance Survey map of the area shows the presence of buildings within the footprint of the development (fig.5), and it would seem likely that the deposits exposed relate to these buildings. The demolition deposit (004) was sealed by (003) and may indicate a slightly earlier phase of building activity.

The uppermost deposits, (001) and (002), appear to represent a deliberate resurfacing of this area, with (002) being a sand bedding layer, onto which (001) was laid as turf. This probably took place subsequent to the levelling of the 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

## 8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology employed was appropriate to the scheme of development. It has allowed a rapid assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. A more detailed level of archaeological intervention was not required on this occasion, as indicated by the limited range of the archaeological deposits exposed.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Hyder Business Services for this commission. Thanks also go to the staff and students of Donington Cowley Secondary School, and to the site staff (V. Couzens (Stamford) Ltd.) for their co-operation during the recording brief.



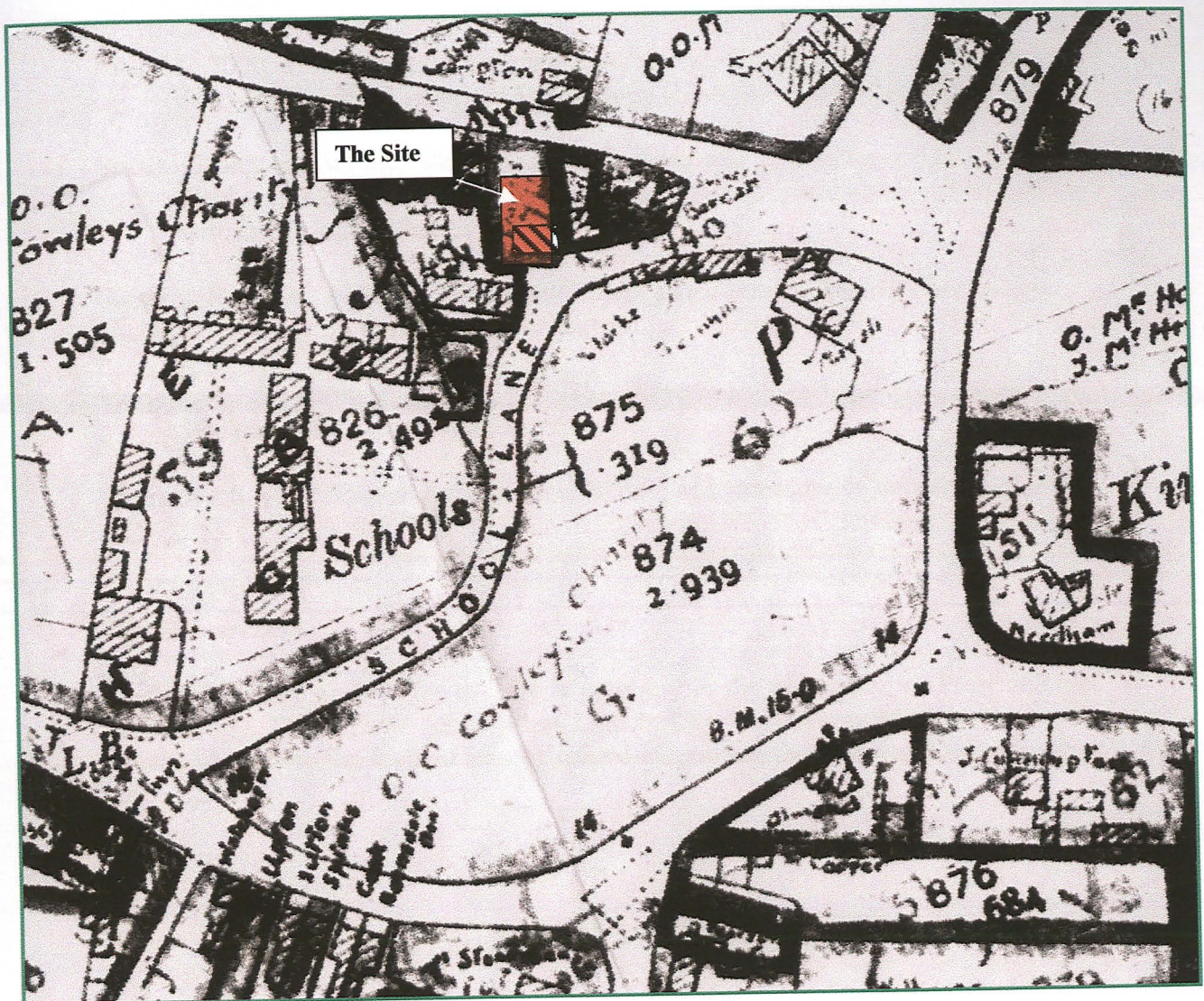


Fig.5: Second edition Ordnance Survey map (1905), showing structures within the area of the development (25 inch scale).



## 10.0 References

- Allen M., 2000, *Archaeological watching brief report, Cowley School, Donington, Lincolnshire*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) unpublished report
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- Morgan P., & Thorn C., (eds.), 1986, *Domesday Book: vol.31: Lincolnshire*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Chichester
- Whitwell J.B, 1992, *Roman Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln

## 11.0 Site archive

The documentary archive for the site is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. This 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 2001.412.



## 12.0 Appendices

### 12.1 Colour plates



PL1: General shot of the development area, looking north-west

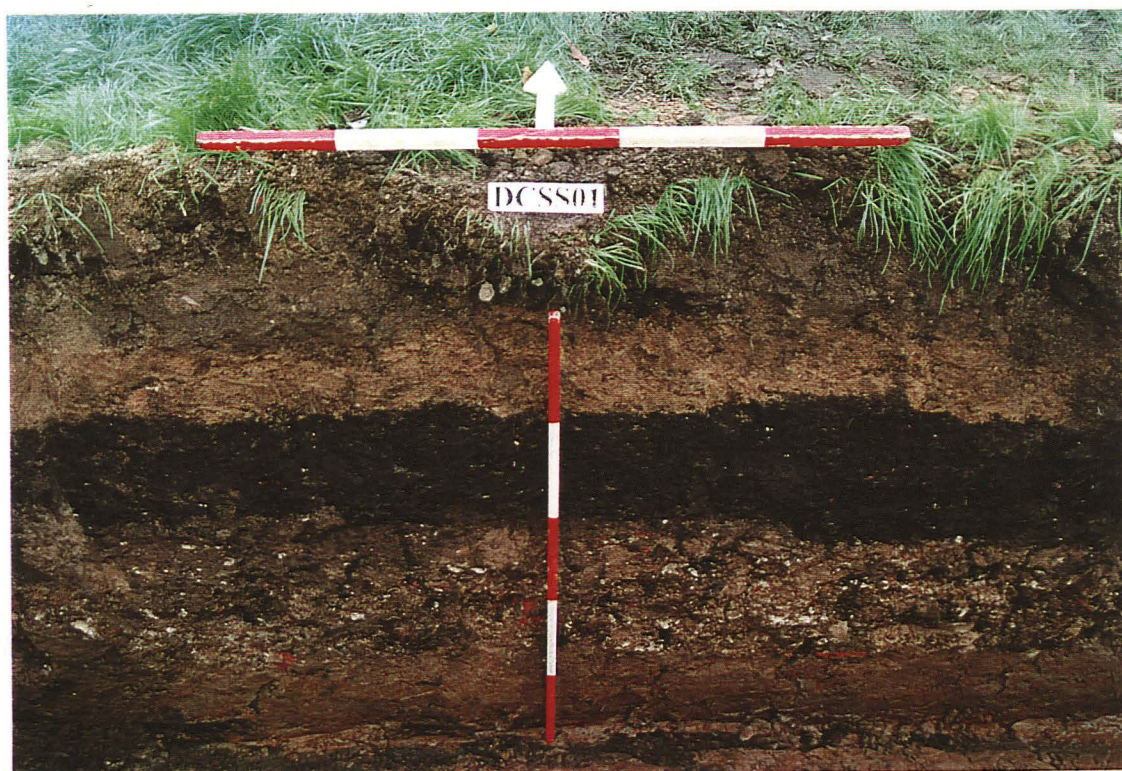


PL2: The well exposed on the west side of the development, looking west





**PL3:** Brick walls exposed during topsoil stripping, looking west. The well is visible in the background.



**PL4:** Shot of the stratigraphic sequence within the foundation trenches, looking north



**12.2 List of archaeological contexts**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Layer	Topsoil/Turf layer
002	Layer	Sand bedding layer
003	Layer	Former topsoil
004	Layer	Demolition deposit
005	Layer	Natural alluvial deposit