

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT FORMER DOCTORS SURGERY BRIDGE STREET, LOUTH, LINCOLNSHIRE.

532560 387450
NGR: ~~532115~~ 387900
LCCM ACC. NO. 2002.255
Site Code: ODSL 02
Planning Ref.: N/105/00587/00



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Directorate

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT
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Report Prepared for
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September 2002

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Contents

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Summary | 1 |
| 1.0 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2.0 | Location and description | 2 |
| 3.0 | Planning background | 2 |
| 4.0 | Archaeological and historical background | 3 |
| 5.0 | Methodology | 3 |
| 6.0 | Results | 3 |
| 8.0 | Discussion and conclusions | 5 |
| 9.0 | Effectiveness of methodology | 5 |
| 10.0 | Acknowledgements | 5 |
| 11.0 | References | 5 |
| 12.0 | Site archive | 6 |

Appendices

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Colour photographs |
| Appendix 2 | Post-Roman pottery archive report by J. Young |
| Appendix 3 | List of archaeological contexts |

Illustrations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Fig. 1: | Area of investigation at 1: 25,000 |
| Fig. 2: | Site location at scale 1:2500 |
| Fig. 3: | Location of monitored area at scale 1:500 |
| Fig. 4: | North-facing section at scale 1:20 |

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief took place at Bridge Street, Louth, Lincolnshire, during the groundworks associated with redevelopment of the former doctor's surgery.
- Two successive layers may indicate flooding of the River Ludd during the 12th and 15th to 16th centuries. These were sealed by Victorian ground-raising and modern layers that elevated the ground level a further 1m.
- Medieval and earlier archaeological deposits may exist beneath the flood layers, however these are deemed to be so deeply stratified as to preclude any damage from the development.

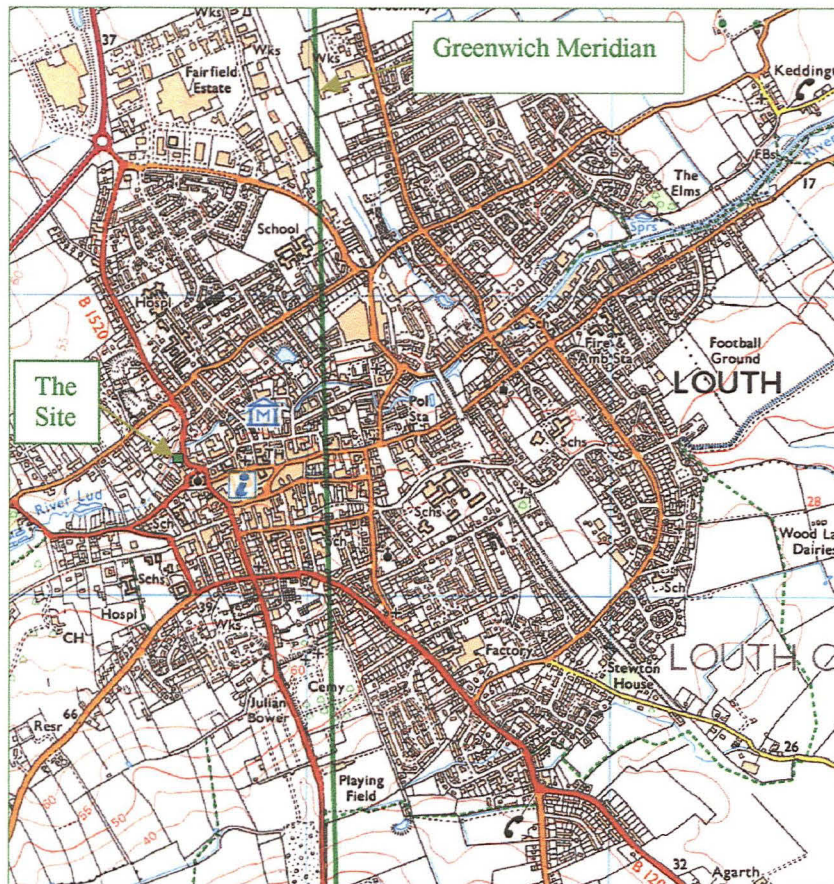


Figure 1: Area of investigation at 1: 25,000
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1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out for George Smith (Alford) Ltd at a former doctor's surgery, Bridge Street, Louth (figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned to fulfil a planning requirement associated with the modification of a listed building and construction of a detached bungalow (fig. 3).

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Lincolnshire County Council publication *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998): national guidelines produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists were also adhered to (IFA, 1994). Both documents were central to the structure and content of this report.

The archive for this report will be held at the Lincoln City and County Museum.

2.0 Location and description

Louth is within the administrative district of East Lindsey, at the east edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds, approximately 27km south of Grimsby, 25km north-east of Wragby.

The redevelopment site is situated on the north-east side of the town, sandwiched between Bridge Street (east side) and the River Ludd (west side).

Prior to redevelopment, the site incorporated the former doctor's surgery (part of which is Grade II Listed) and a courtyard leading to the road frontage through a brick arch. The ground surface lies at approximately 25m OD, sloping down towards Bridge Street.

The site lies to the landward side (west) of a buried cliffline on land that comprises Upper Cretaceous chalk. This is sealed by a Quaternary drift deposit of glacial Marsh Till (BGS 1999).

Central National Grid Reference: ⁵⁶⁰532⁴⁵⁰~~115~~ 387~~900~~.

3.0 Planning background

Lincolnshire County Council granted full planning consent, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all works involving ground disturbance to the development (Ref. N/105/00587/00). A complex of buildings were to be added to the rear of the listed building, with some modification of the existing doctor's surgery.

The watching brief was required due to the possibility that the development would expose settlement remains of late Saxon and/or medieval date.

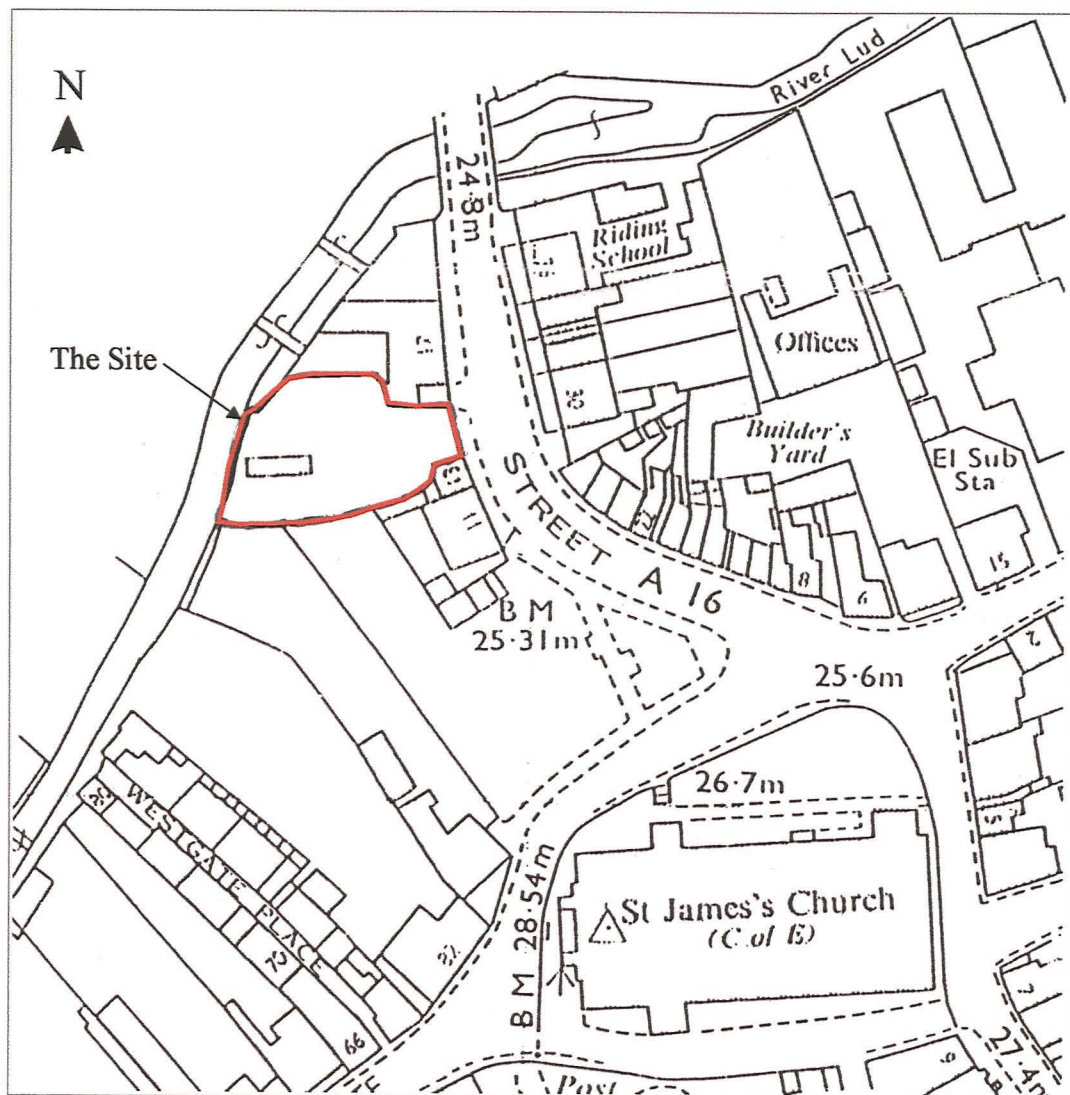


Figure 2: Site location at scale 1:2500

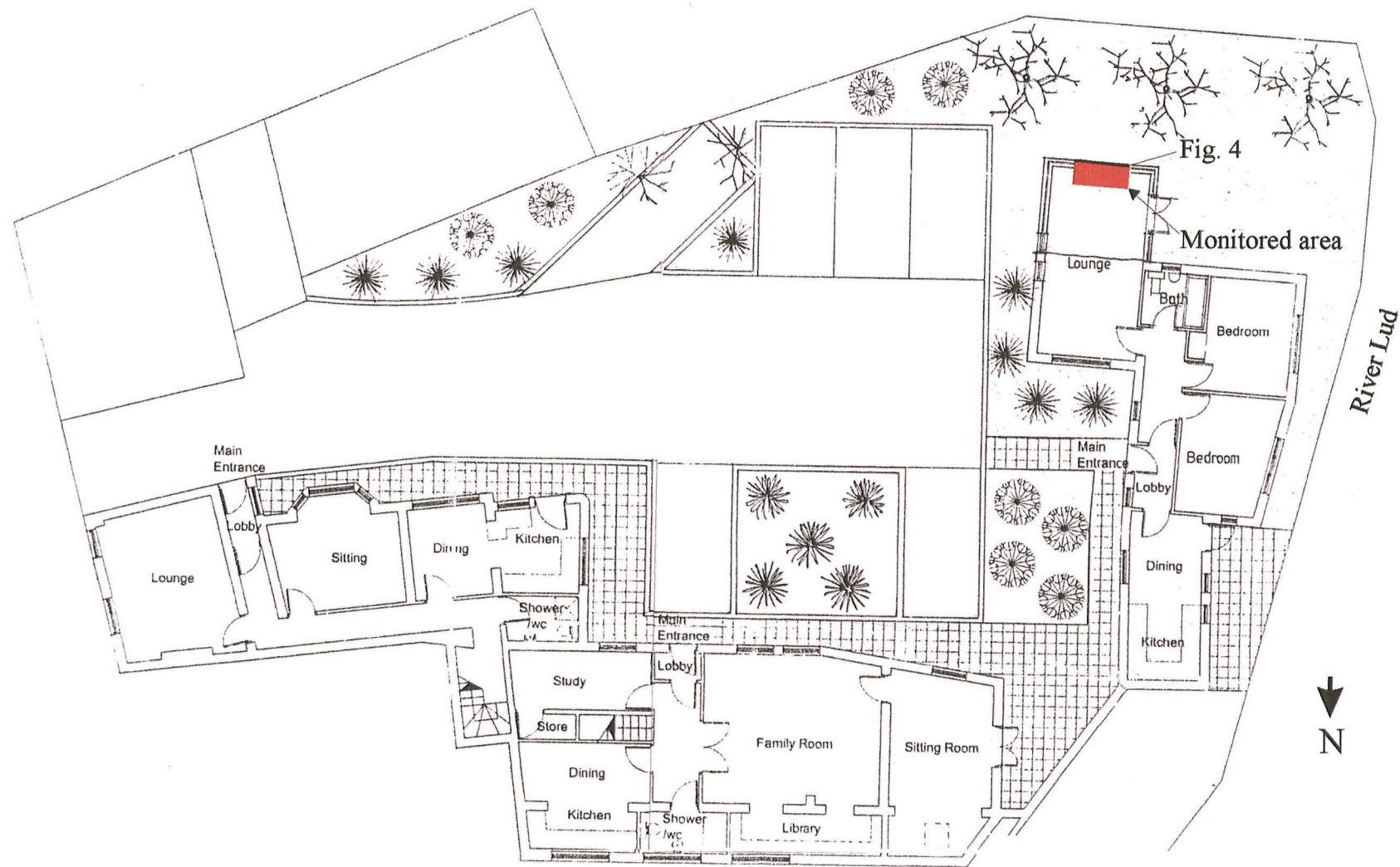


Figure 3: Location of monitored area at scale 1:500.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Evidence of use of the area in prehistoric times is poorly understood, although a number of artefacts have been recovered from the town environs, now held at Louth Museum (May 1976). These include Neolithic stone axes, flint arrowheads, beaker sherds and items of Bronze Age metalwork.

More recently, a single worked flint of early Bronze Age date was recovered from the town. This residual thumbnail scraper was found within a post-medieval rubbish pit during an archaeological evaluation at Spout Yard (APS 2000).

There are no records pertaining to Romano-British occupation of the area.

The first mention of the present town comes from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, when in 790 AD Abbot Aethelheard of a monastery at Louth became the Archbishop of Canterbury (Garmonsway 1972).

By the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Louth (known as *Ludes*) possessed a market and was held by the Bishop of Lincoln (Morgan and Thorn 1986). During the medieval period the town prospered, principally due to its wool and clothing trades (Pevsner and Harris 1990). Archaeological evidence for this period is rare, although some medieval building remains are known at Eastgate and north of Mount St Mary house (SMR Ref.: 41390).

Louth is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Ludes*, taking its name from the River Lud, with some Scandinavian influence (Cameron 1998).

5.0 Methodology

The monitored trench was excavated in spits not exceeding 0.2m in depth, by a JCB using a back-actor fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket. The removal of these deposits was monitored constantly to ensure that any archaeological features exposed by this process were identified.

The archaeological fieldwork entailed the cleaning by hand of all exposed surfaces within the trench, followed by a thorough inspection. All archaeological deposits identified by this process were subjected to limited excavation, in order to assess their nature, dimensions, and to attempt to recover datable materials. The topsoil and subsoil stripping allowed for more detailed excavation and recording work to be carried out. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each layer upon standard watching brief context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings, in both plan and section, compliment these accounts.

6.0 Results

A trench within the area of the footings for the detached bungalow was monitored between existing foundations and the River Ludd (fig. 4).

This revealed a 0.15m deep tarmac and limestone hardcore horizon (001) sealing a demolition deposit (002), comprising black silt sand with occasional modern brick fragments (fig. 4). Below this was a single course modern brick surface, (003), lying above a levelling layer of grey clayey silt sand with numerous brick fragments, mortar, tile and charcoal, (004). This lay above a possible terracing deposit, (005): mid grey silt clay with occasional brick, tile, mortar and charcoal fragments. This sealed two flood horizons, (006) and (007) at approximately 1.1m below the surface ground level. Layer (006) was olive green silt clay with some small chalk pieces and flecks of charcoal; a single sherd of 15th to 16th century pottery was recovered from this layer during cleaning. Layer (006) sealed (007), olive brown silt clay with very occasional flint nodules and smaller chalk pieces and charcoal flecks. A fairly unabraded sherd of pottery from this layer may date the flood event to the 12th century.

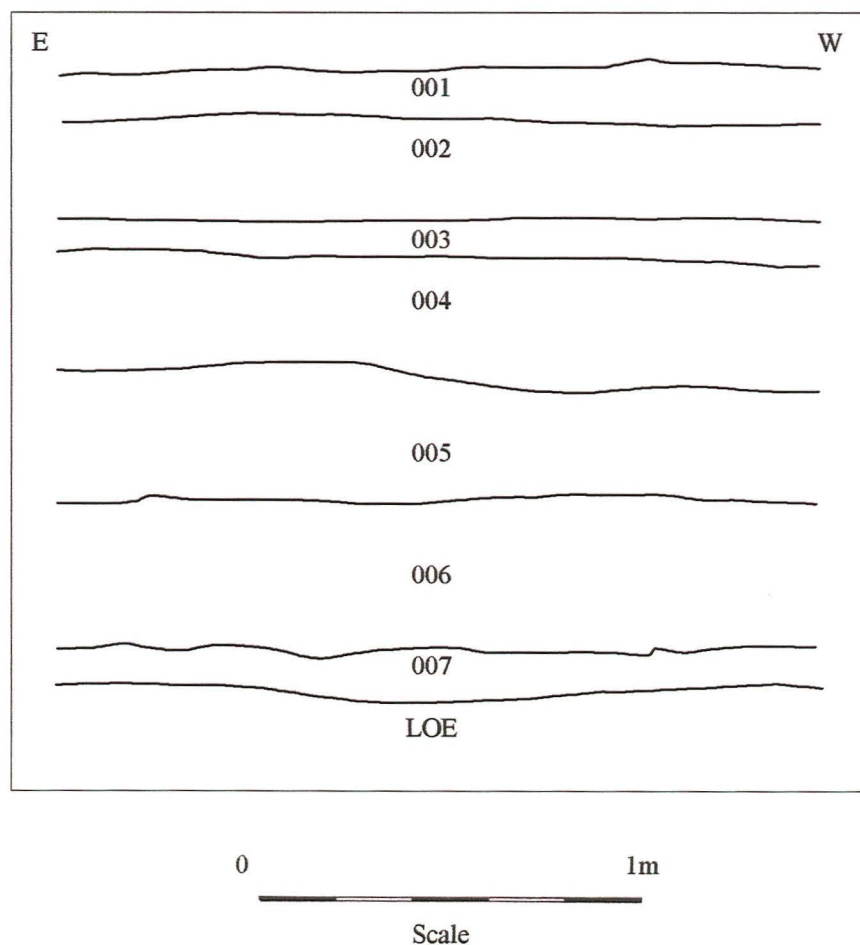


Figure 4: North-facing section at scale 1:20

8.0 Discussion and conclusions

Previous investigations at the edge of the River Ludd (approximately 250m to the east) have exposed substantial Victorian ground-raising dumps over earlier deposits (Brett 2002). With regard to the current site, the build-up deposits were relatively shallow, exposing River Ludd flood horizons of medieval date and early post-medieval. Pottery from the lowest exposed deposit (layer (007)) indicates some form flooding during the 12th century. A successive phase was dated to the 15th/16th century; both dates being derived via limited pottery evidence.

9.0 Effectiveness of methodology

It is concluded the methodology for the watching brief was appropriate to the development. Unfortunately, however, several elements of the development were not monitored (mainly service trenches) as PCA were not informed when groundworks took place. The excavation of a trench in the area of the foundations for the detached bungalow were not entirely in accordance with the planning condition, although the increased depth and width of this trench assisted the recording and interpretation of the general archaeological sequence.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank George Smith (Alford) Ltd for this commission.

11.0 References

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Pevsner, N. & Harris, J. 1990 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (2nd Edition revised by N. Antram). London, Penguin.

12.0 Site archive

The site archive (documentary and physical) for this project is in preparation and will be deposited at the Lincoln City and County Museum and the Lincolnshire Archives Office (documentary) within six months. Access to the archive may be granted by quoting the global accession number 2002.255.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



Pl. 1: Site of development looking north, showing former doctor's surgery.



Pl. 2: Site of development looking north-east. Prior to groundworks commencing.



Pl. 2: Monitored trench, north-facing section, looking south.

APPENDIX 2: Post-Roman pottery archive report

Jane Young Lindsey Archaeological Services

| context | cname | full name | sub fabric | form type | sherds | weight | part | description | date |
|---------|-------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------|--|--------------|
| 006 | HUM | Humberware | | jar? | 1 | 23 | base | int glaze | 15th to 16th |
| 007 | EMLOC | Local Early Medieval fabrics | OX/R/OX;med sandy;hard | jug ? | 1 | 4 | BS | splashed amber glaze;comm-abun subround quatz occ larger rounded mod-comm fe | 12th |

APPENDIX 3: List of Archaeological Contexts

| <i>Context No.</i> | <i>Category</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 001 | layer | tarmac and limestone hardcore |
| 002 | layer | demolition deposit |
| 003 | layer | brick surface |
| 004 | layer | demolition/levelling deposit |
| 005 | layer | ?terracing layer |
| 006 | layer | flood horizon |
| 007 | layer | flood horizon |