

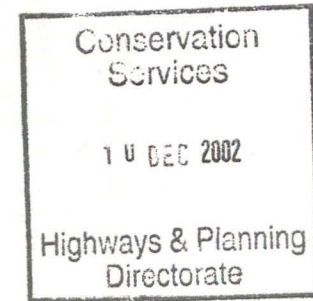
# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

**ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH,  
NEWPORT, LINCOLN.  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

Site Code: SNCL02  
 NGR: SK 9768 7244.  
 Planning Ref. N/A  
 Accession No. 2002.435.  
 480



Event L13724  
Source L18397  
L18398  
Mon L183834  
70312



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Report prepared for M.B. Architecture.  
by  
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## Summary

- *A program of archaeological watching brief took place during excavation of a pipe trench dug as part of the installation of a disabled toilet at St Nicholas' Church, Newport, Lincoln.*
- *During the course of the watching brief 2 layers were observed below the topsoil. A deposit of limestone rubble was interpreted as a construction layer from the church itself. This is supported by the presence of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery from the buried topsoil below it.*
- *The limestone bedrock was observed in the centre of the trench but not at the northern or southern ends. This may be because cut features were present which were not exposed by this relatively shallow trench.*
- *The presence of the construction layer is significant as it will serve to protect any deeper archaeological remains from later disturbance.*

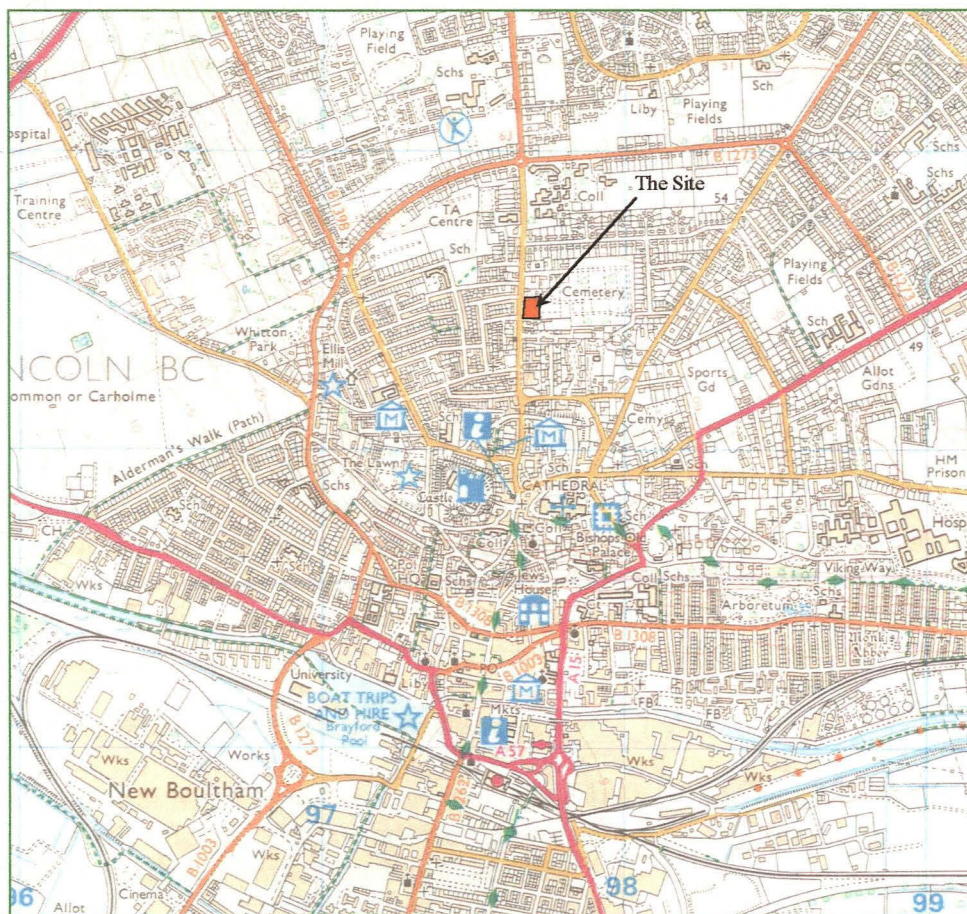


Fig. 1 : Site location. Shows area illustrated in fig. 2. 1:25,000

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by M.B. Architects to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the installation of a sewer for a disabled toilet facility at St Nicholas' Church, Newport, Lincoln. This work was undertaken to fulfil the objectives of an agreed archaeological mitigation strategy that was based on the recommendations of St Nicholas' Church Diocesan Advisory Committee. This approach complies with the requirements of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, Dept. of Environment (1990); *Management of Archaeological Projects*, EH (1991); *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*, IFA (1994) and the LCC document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, 1998.

## **2.0 Site location and description**

The site is located in the Newport area of the city, towards the north of the modern conurbation, approximately 650m north of the cathedral. It is bordered by the thoroughfare Newport to the west, the Stags Head public house to the north, a cemetery to the east and housing to the south.

This project involved monitoring the excavation of a trench to carry a foul water sewer across the open space to the west of the church. The ground surface is a mixture of York stone paths and grass, with redundant grave markers.

The local geology is undivided Lincolnshire Limestone, with no overlying drift deposits, (BGS, 1973). Street level outside the site is approximately 64m OD.

## **3.0 Planning background**

A Faculty was granted by the Chancellor of the Diocese for the construction of a toilet and drink making facility at St Nicholas Church, Newport, Lincoln. Permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological scheme of works. This involved an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a trench across the graveyard, and the results of this watching brief are communicated in this report; copies of which will be submitted to the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record.

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The church of St Nicholas at Newport was built c.1839 – 1840 by Sir G. G. Scott. The church is Early English, with a south-west tower with spire, and the existing structure was built to replace an earlier (medieval) building.

The church fronts Newport, which follows the line of Roman Ermine Street. This was one of the principal routes leading out of Roman Lincoln and would have attracted commercial ribbon developments, as well as cemeteries, which were located outside of the walls of Roman towns (Jones, 1993). Romano-British remains have been found at shallow depths on nearby sites; for example, at Bishop Grosseteste College.

## 5.0 Methodology

The author inspected the site on one occasion to observe excavations for the pipe trench; this was on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

All exposed sections were cleaned by trowel, examined and recorded using scale drawings, pro-forma context sheets and colour photographs. Following completion of the fieldwork, an ordered project archive was assembled prior to the preparation of this report. The project archive will be deposited with the City & County Museum, Lincoln, and copies of this report have been deposited with the County SMR.

## 6.0 Results

The uppermost deposit was (001), a dark grey silty sand topsoil containing occasional limestone fragments. Immediately beneath this material was (002), a layer of limestone fragments bonded with coarse limestone sand and gravel. This was interpreted as a construction layer, formed of waste stone when the present church was constructed.

The above sealed a deposit of dark grey silty sand, (003) which appeared to be a buried soil horizon. Seven bone fragments including 2 possible pieces of disarticulated human bone, were recovered, and these will be returned to the church for re-burial. Associated pottery was dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards, and included a cream ware table vessel and a black (iron glazed) storage vessel. A copper alloy ring, possibly from a hose-pipe, was also recovered. (Finds identification by S. Whatley)

The archaeological deposits sealed limestone bedrock, (004) towards the centre of the trench.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusions

Only two deposits of any note were exposed during the course of this watching brief: beneath the modern topsoil was a layer of crushed limestone sand and chippings which probably dates to 1839-40, when St Nicholas' Church was built. An examination of this structure appeared to indicate that the tower and spire on the southeast corner were additions, and so the main archaeological horizon could conceivably be more specific to this phase of work. Pottery recovered from the underlying buried topsoil dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beneath this material was what appeared to be a buried topsoil, which would have pre-dated the construction of the present church. The overlying material protects this deposit.

The natural limestone bedrock was only exposed towards the centre of the trench, and it could be that, where this was not present, there may be cut archaeological features, possibly graves. The recovery of small quantities of disarticulated human bone would support this view.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

The methodology employed allowed all the deposits disturbed during the course of this work to be examined and recorded with minimal inconvenience to the contractors on site, or the church authorities.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank M B Architecture for commissioning this report, and the ground-workers for their cooperation during the course of the investigation.

## **10.0 References**

B.G.S., 1973, *Lincoln – England and Wales Sheet 114*. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50,000 Provisional Series. (Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey).

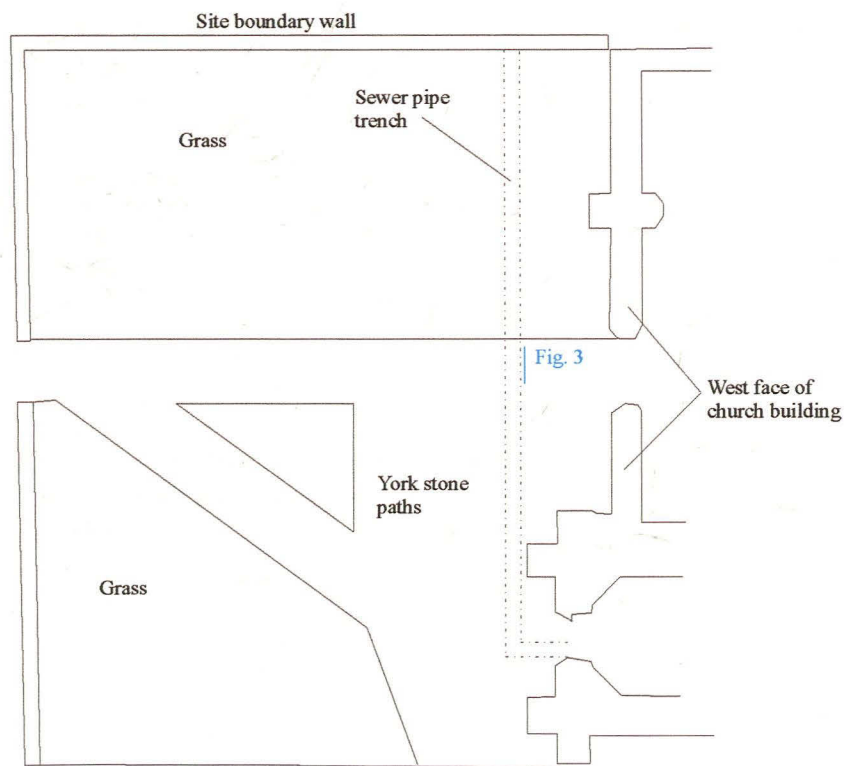
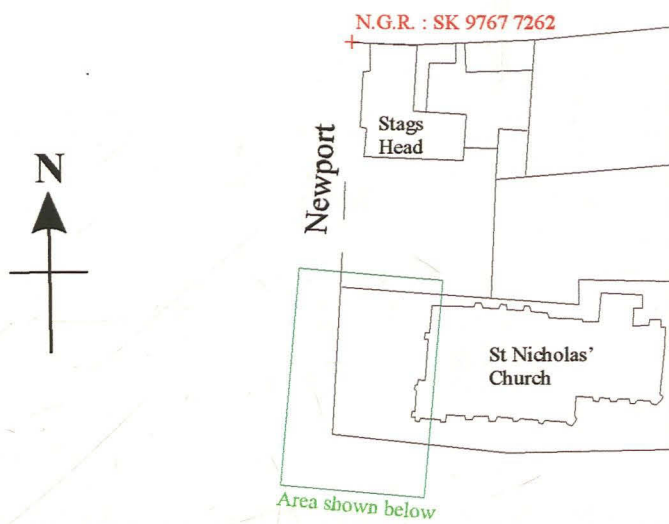
Jones, M. J., 1993, *Roman Lincoln* in *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire* (Bennett & Bennett eds). The University of Hull Press.

Pevsner N. & Harris J. 1989, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised by N. Antram). London, Penguin

## **11.0 Site archive**

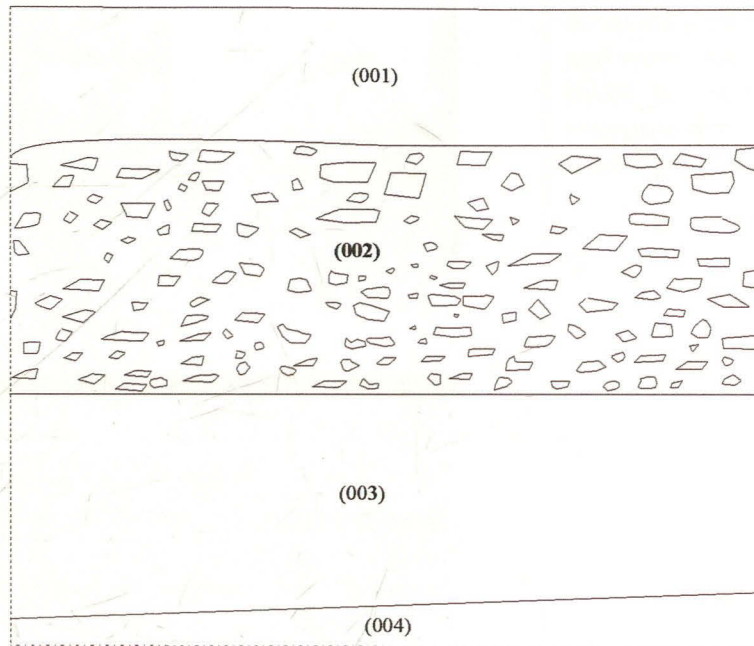
An archive consisting of written, drawn, photographic and object elements is in preparation and will be deposited at the Lincoln City and County museum within six months of the completion of this report.

Access can be gained to it by quoting the L.C.C. Museum accession number 2002.480.



**Fig. 2:** Shows block of land highlighted on fig. 1 (top, 1:1,250) and close up (shown in green) from same which shows location of trench and section drawing (1:200).





0 0.5m  
Scale

**Fig. 3:** Representative west facing section from pipe trench. Shows construction layer (002) and buried soil (003). 1:10

**Appendix 1. Colour plates**



**Pl. s 1&2 :** Showing machine excavation of drainage trench, and west facing section with a rubble horizon that was interpreted as construction debris from the building of the church.



**Appendix 2. Context summary.**

CONTEXT NUMBER	CONTEXT DESCRIPTION
001	Topsoil. Dark grey silty sand.
002	Limestone rubble. Construction horizon.
003	Buried topsoil. 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century pottery recovered.
004	Limestone bedrock.