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# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;  
HOLLOWGATE HILL ROAD/LONG LANE,  
WILLOUGHTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: SK 9313 9307  
SITE CODE: WILL02  
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2002.494  
Planning ref. M/01/P/1151





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Report prepared for  
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December 2002

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## CONTENTS

Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site location and description	2
3.0 Planning background	2
4.0 Archaeological and historical background	3
5.0 Methodology	4
6.0 Results	4
7.0 Discussion and conclusion	4
8.0 Effectiveness of methodology	5
9.0 Acknowledgements	5
10.0 References	5
11.0 Site Archive	5
Appendix 1: Colour plates	6
Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts	7

### List of figures

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

**Fig. 2:** Site location, showing the position of drawn section (in blue) (main scale 1:100, inset 1:2500)

**Fig. 3:** Representative section, north-north-east facing (scale 1:20)

**Fig. 4:** Representative section, east-south-east facing (scale 1:20)

### List of plates

**Pl. 1:** General view of the development area, looking north-west

**Pl. 2:** Shot of stratigraphic sequence, south side of house plot, looking south-west

**Pl. 3:** Shot of stratigraphic sequence, west side of house plot, looking west-north-west

### Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a single house on land off Hollowgate Hill Road/Long Lane, Willoughton, Lincolnshire*
- *A seasonally occupied Mesolithic site has been identified close to the village. The site is also close to a medieval moated manor and a preceptory of the Knight's Templars*
- *No archaeological deposits were exposed during the groundworks for this development*



**Fig.1: General site Location. (Scale 1:25000)**  
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## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr. K. Vaughan to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a single house plot at the junction of Hollowgate Hill Road and Long Lane, Willoughton, Lincolnshire.

These works were undertaken to fulfil the objectives of a formal project brief issued by the Assistant Built Environment Officer, and a project specification prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). This approach is consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IFA, 1994), and the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: a manual of archaeological practice* (LCC, 1998).

Copies of this report have been deposited with the commissioning body and the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire. Reports will also be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

## 2.0 Site location and description

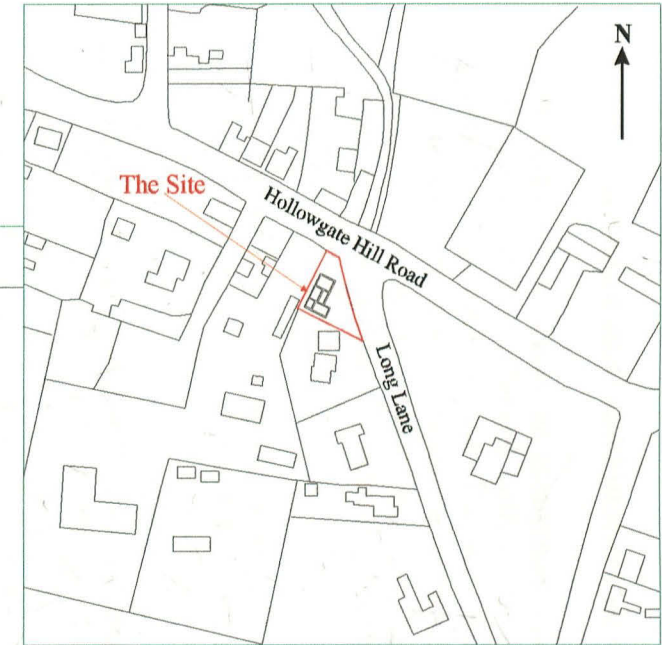
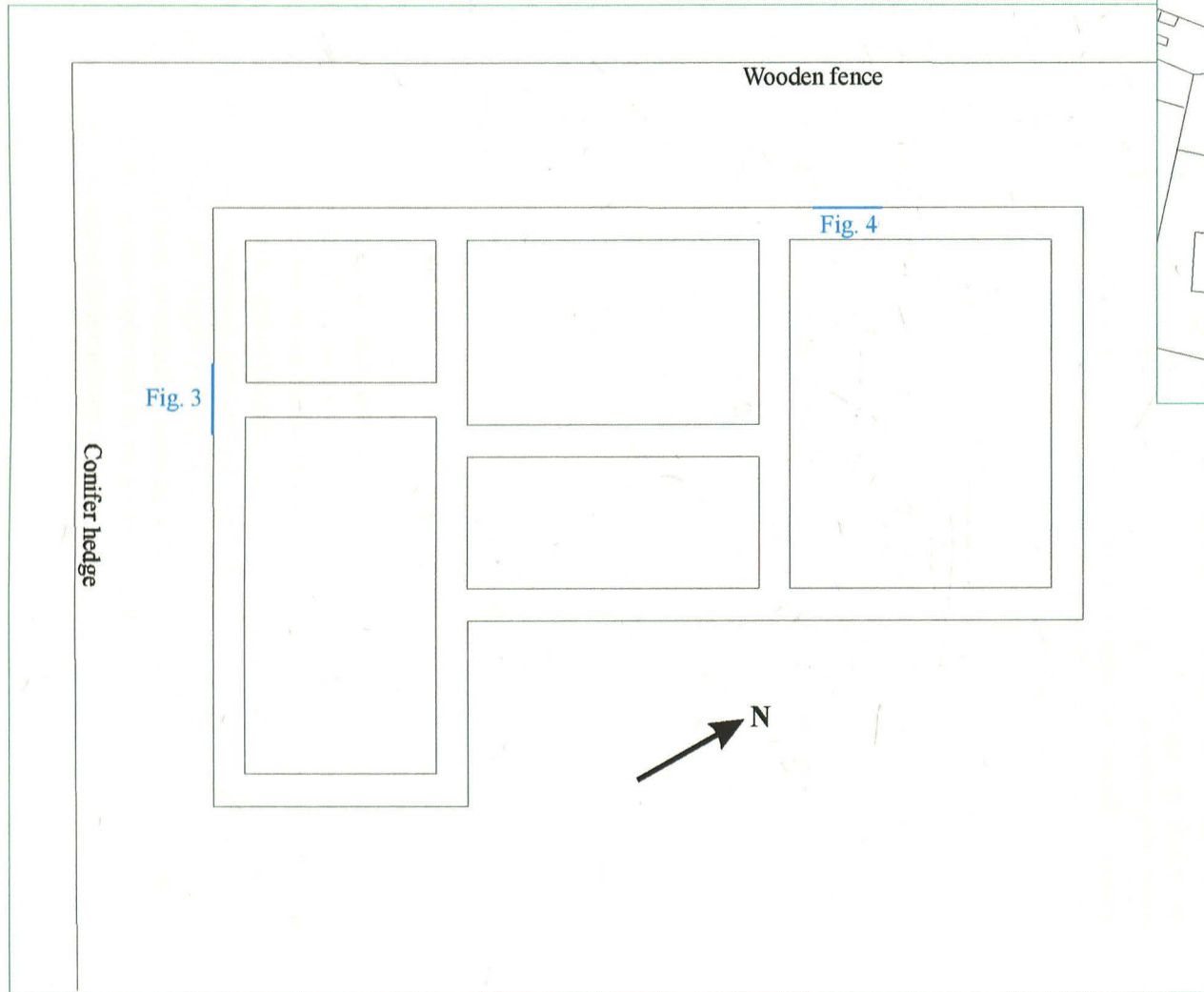
Willoughton is located in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 23km north-north-west of Lincoln, and 11km east-north-east of Gainsborough. The village occupies a position on the west side of the Lincoln Edge, where the escarpment shelves out at a height of approximately 35m OD. The development is close to the core of the village, and occupies a triangular plot of land to the south of Hollowgate Hill Road and to the west of Long Lane. A residential property bounds the west side of the house plot.

The site lies on a geology of Whitby Formation Jurassic Mudstone (British Geological Survey, 1982). This is overlain by seasonally waterlogged loamy/clayey soils of the Wickham 2 Association.

Central National Grid Reference SK 9313 9307.

## 3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission was granted for the erection of a single dwelling (planning ref. M/01/P/1151). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks.



**Fig. 2:** Site location, showing the position of drawn section (in blue) (main scale 1:100, inset 1:2500)



#### 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The edge of the limestone escarpment upon which Willoughton is located has long been a focus for settlement activity. In 1932, excavations took place close to the village in response to the discovery of a possible Mesolithic (c.8000-4000BC) occupation site at the crest of the scarp slope. This revealed an occupation layer that yielded approximately 4000 worked flints, and identified a number of hearths, interpreted as evidence of periodic, perhaps seasonal, occupation over an extended period of time (May, 1976).

To the north of Willoughton, a single Early Bronze Age spearhead was found at Grayingham, indicating a limited degree of archaeological activity at this time (*ibid.*).

The village also lies close to the Jurassic Way, a prehistoric track that meandered along the spring line that follows the escarpment; no doubt connecting settlements along its length. This did not take the form of a formal metalled track, but was a frequently used route that was probably subject to slight re-routings in order to maintain the most expedient path from place to place. The route northwards from Lincoln was later formalised by the construction of Ermine Street, an initially military road that ran in a straight line northwards from Lincoln (on the line of the modern A15), and runs approximately 3km to the west of the current site (Whitwell, 1992).

This spring line marked by the Jurassic Way was also a settlement focus in the Anglo-Saxon period. Fieldwalking has recovered substantial quantities of early Saxon pottery, and a sunken-feature building has been excavated to the south of the village (Everson et.al., 1991). The settlement also appears in the Domesday Book, at which time the principal landowners were Waldin the Artificer and Odo the Crossbowman, who held 188 acres of meadow between them (Morgan & Thorne, 1986).

The village saw considerable activity in the medieval period. In the reign of King Stephen (1135-54), land was granted to Roger de Builli to found a preceptory of the Knights Templars (VCH, 1908). The Knights Templars were a military and religious order established c.1119, with the purpose of protecting pilgrims travelling to the newly conquered Holy Lands and Jerusalem. Estate centres, or preceptories, established across Europe, which farmed the land and employed local populations, funded these activities. There were five such establishments in Lincolnshire, at Aslackby, Eagle, South Witham, Temple Bruer and Willoughton. Their huge wealth soon bought suspicion and jealousy, ultimately resulting in the violent suppression of the order in 1308-12. Many of these establishments passed into the hands of the Knight's Hospitallers, including the Willoughton preceptory (Mee, 1970). At this time, the preceptory was the richest such estate in the country, with an annual income of £284, and was the administrative centre of all the Hospitaller's estates in England (Everson et.al., 1991). This survives as earthworks at Temple Garth, at the west end of the village. At Monk's Garth, approximately 100m north-north-east of the site are the earthwork remains of a moated grange of the alien priory of St. Nicholas of Angers (Mee, 1970). After the Anglo-French wars of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, these estates were confiscated by the crown, eventually passing into the hands of King's College Cambridge in 1441. There is also believed to be a planned hamlet associated with this grange, which went by the name Helpesthorp (Everson et.al., 1991).



## 5.0 Methodology

Prior to the commencement of groundworks, the surface vegetation was stripped from the site. The excavation of the foundation trenches was carried out using a JCB fitted with a 0.45m toothed bucket. Initially, the trenches were excavated to a depth of c.1.1m. However, after a site visit by the NHBC building inspector, it was decided that the proximity of a conifer hedge along the south side of the site, necessitated the extension of the trenches closest to the hedge to 2.55m depth. The trenches were gradually stepped up to the north, to a minimum of 1.5m deep.

All plan and section surfaces were examined and intermittently cleaned, to examine the stratigraphic sequence. Where necessary, limited excavation by hand was carried out to establish the profile, orientation, date and function of exposed archaeological features. These features were accurately plotted on a site plan and section drawings were made at a scale of 1:20. Context information was recorded on standard watching brief record sheets. A colour photographic record was maintained, selected prints from which have been reproduced in this report.

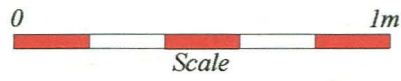
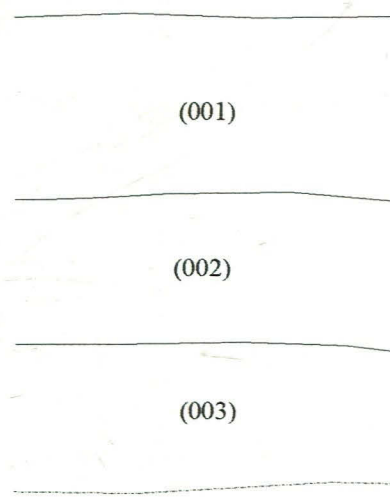
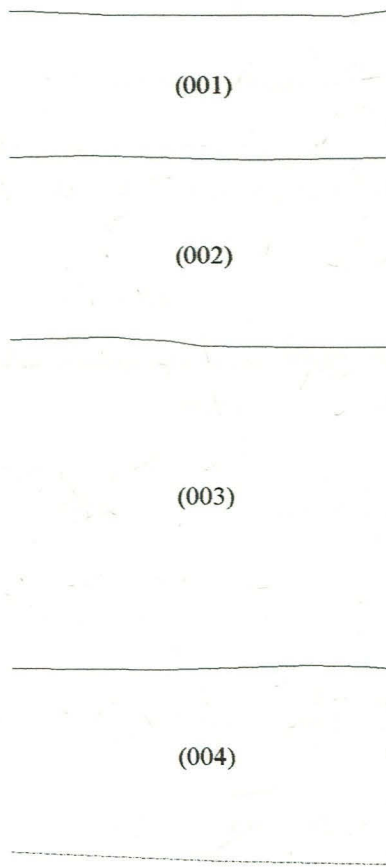
The fieldwork was carried out on Thursday November 28<sup>th</sup> and was monitored at all times by the author.

## 6.0 Results

The uppermost deposit across the site was a 0.3 – 0.5m thick topsoil of loose, dark grey loam, (001) with moderate root disturbance. This contained small amounts of building rubble and 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. It sealed a subsoil layer, (002), which consisted of mid grey chalky clay, with moderate inclusions of subangular limestone chunks. This in turn sealed a mixed yellow/brown and grey clay with occasional lenses of orange sand, (003), approximately 0.9m deep. This was archaeologically sterile and was interpreted as a naturally accumulated deposit. At the base of the foundation trenches, occurring approximately 1.8m below the modern ground surface, was a compact layer of dark grey shaley clay, (004), interpreted as the natural mudstone.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

No archaeological activity was observed during the monitoring of the groundworks. The only features of note that were observed within the development area were a live sewer pipe and a redundant brick built septic tank (see fig. 2); features relating to the modern village. Furthermore, there was no evidence of extensive truncation or reworking of archaeological deposits that may have obscured any previous settlement activity. It may be that the site lies beyond the traditional settled core of the village, in an area given over to pastoral or arable practices, which have left no sub-surface archaeological trace.



**Fig. 3:** Representative section, north-north-east facing (scale 1:20)

**Fig. 4:** Representative section, east-south-east facing (scale 1:20)



## 8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology chosen was appropriate to the development. It allowed a rapid assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, without interfering with the development programme. A more detailed level of archaeological intervention was not necessary, as suggested by the negative result of the fieldwork.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. K. Vaughan for this commission, and for co-operation during the groundworks.

## 10.0 References

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## 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 2002.494.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



**Pl. 1:** General view of the development area, looking north-west



**Pl. 2:** Shot of stratigraphic sequence, south side of house plot, looking south-west



**Pl. 3:** Shot of stratigraphic sequence, west side of house plot, looking west-north-west



## APPENDIX 2: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Topsoil: dark grey loam
002	Layer	Subsoil: mid grey chalky clay
003	Layer	Naturally accumulated grey and brown clay
004	Layer	Natural grey mudstone