

# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

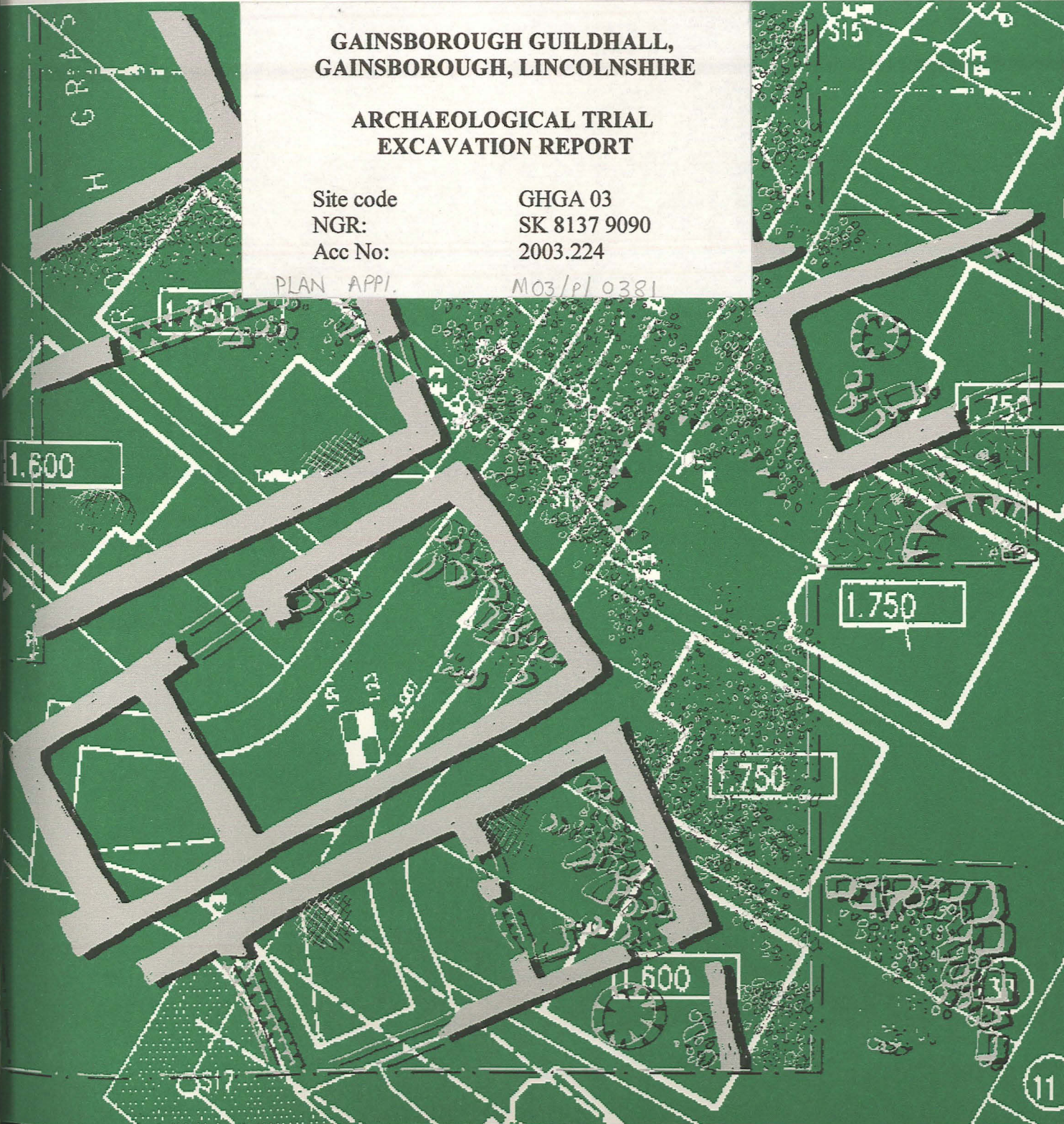
L I N C O L N

**GAINSBOROUGH GUILDHALL,  
GAINSBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
EXCAVATION REPORT**

Site code	GHGA 03
NGR:	SK 8137 9090
Acc No:	2003.224

PLAN APPI. M03/p/0381



EVENT L14337 SOURCE L18905 L18906

55528

PRN ~~54844~~ } - MEDIEVAL

PRN ~~54845~~ } - POST MEDIEVAL

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Report prepared for West Lindsey District Council  
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## Summary

- An archaeological field evaluation has been undertaken to inform the planning process in respect of a proposed extension to Gainsborough Guildhall, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire
- Investigations within a single trial excavation trench exposed a range of earth-cut and structural features of medieval date; however, these remains have been substantially reduced by the effects of cellar digging in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century
- Development of the area may impact upon medieval archaeological deposits, although the survival of such remains is not great due to the damaging effects from high impact post-medieval/industrial age developments that were widespread in this part of Gainsborough



**Fig. 1:** Site location. The site itself is highlighted in red, and the area shown in Fig.2 is outlined in blue. Scale 1:25000. (OS copyright Licence AL 515 21 A0001)

## 1.0 Introduction

A programme of archaeological trial excavation took place to assess the impact of a proposed extension to Gainsborough Guildhall, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. This work was commissioned by West Lindsey District Council (Planning Reference: M03/P/0381).

This report documents the results of archaeological investigations undertaken between 9.6.2003 and 10.6.2003. It has been prepared to meet the requirements of current local guidelines (*Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice, 1998*); and a formal project specification prepared by this company.

Copies of this document will be deposited with the commissioning body, the Assistant Built Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council, and the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). A short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*; and this will feature as a short note in due course. Reports will also be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

## 2.0 Location and Description (Figs 1 and 2)

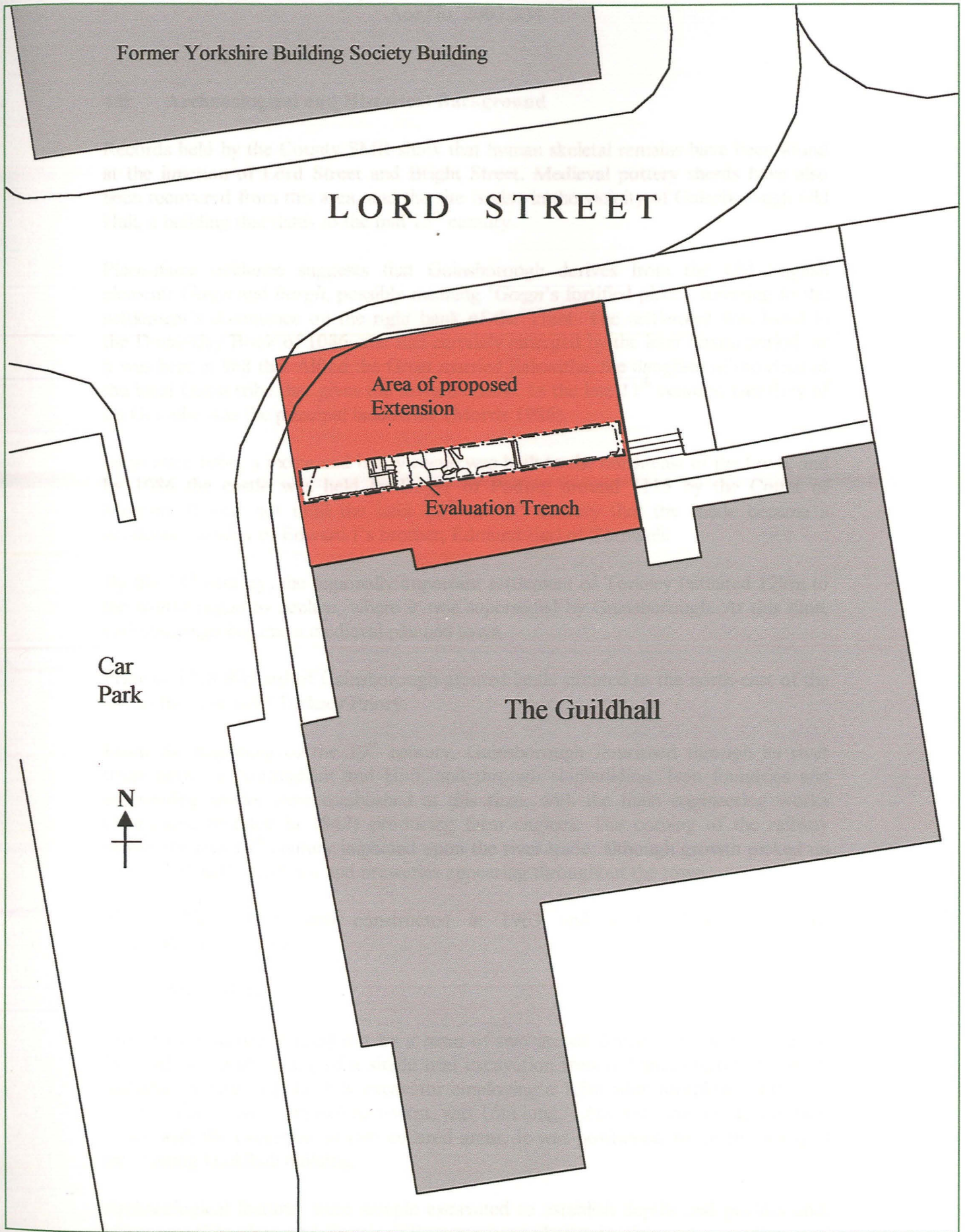
Gainsborough is situated in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 13km north-east of East Retford and 25km north-west of Lincoln. The Guildhall lies on the west side of the town, adjacent to the River Trent. The site of evaluation lies to the immediate north of the present building, on the south side of Lord Street, c.50m south of Gainsborough Old Hall (National Grid Reference: SK 8137 9090). It comprises a rectangular unit, with a total area of approximately 175m<sup>2</sup>.

The site occupies an elevation of approximately 7.5m OD, where the underlying solid geology comprises Permo-Triassic Keuper Marl overlaid by First Terrace drift deposits (BGS 1967).

The area of proposed development currently comprises part of the guildhall car park, situated immediately to the north of the existing building. It is a level area of tarmac, with a small shrubbery situated in the north-west corner.

## 3.0 Planning Background

The development will comprise a two to four-storey extension to the north side of the Guildhall, which will include a first floor link to the former Yorkshire Building Society building on the north side of the street, along with a pedestrian access to this part of Lord Street. Due to the known archaeological potential of this area, the Assistant Built Environment Officer of Lincolnshire County Council recommended that an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken in advance of development to determine the overall archaeological potential of the site and advise the application.



**Fig. 2:** Plan showing the Guildhall, the area of the proposed extension, and the position of the archaeological evaluation trench. Scale 1:200.

#### 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Records held by the County SMR show that human skeletal remains have been found at the junction of Lord Street and Bright Street. Medieval pottery sherds have also been recovered from this area, and the site is also in the vicinity of Gainsborough Old Hall, a building that dates to the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Place-name evidence suggests that Gainsborough derives from the Old English elements *Gægn* and *burgh*, possibly meaning 'Gægn's fortified place', referring to the settlement's dominance on the right bank of the Trent. The settlement was listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, and had certainly emerged by the later Saxon period, as it was here in 868 that Alfred the Great married Ealswitha, the daughter of the chief of the local Gaina tribe that gives the town its name. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, Geoffery of La Geurche was the principal landowner (Morris 1986).

Soon after 1066, a motte and bailey castle was built to the north-east of the town, and by 1086 the castle was held by Roger of Poitou; around 1115 by the Count of Mortain. It was not until the later 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century that the castle became a residence, notably of Edward I's brother, Edmund Earl of Cornwall.

By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the regionally important settlement of Torksey (situated 12km to the south) began to decline, where it was superseded by Gainsborough. At this time, Gainsborough became a medieval planned town.

Prior to 1218 Richard of Gainsborough granted lands situated to the north-east of the site to the canons of Torksey Priory.

From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gainsborough flourished through its river trade between Nottingham and Hull, and through shipbuilding. Iron foundries and engineering works were established at this time, with the main engineering works (Marshalls, founded in 1842) producing farm engines. The coming of the railway before the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century impacted upon the river trade, although growth picked up again, with mills, maltings and breweries appearing throughout the town.

The Guildhall itself was constructed in 1963 and is therefore of minimal archaeological interest.

#### 5.0 Methodology

The evaluation was carried out by a team of two archaeologists, and it involved the excavation and recording of a single trial excavation trench. Initial excavations were undertaken using a JCB 3CX excavator employing a 1.5m wide toothless blade. The trench, which was orientated east-west, was 16m long, 1.6m wide and not deeper than 1.2m, with the exception of two cellared areas. It was positioned 4m to the north of the existing Guildhall building.

Archaeological features were sample excavated to establish depths and profiles and, where possible, date and function. Features were drawn in plan and in section, and written accounts were prepared on pro forma context record sheets. A colour

photographic record was maintained throughout the project, and selected prints have been reproduced in this report.

## 6.0 Results (Fig. 3)

The uppermost layer, 001, was part of the modern asphalt car park, which was 100-120mm thick and sloped slightly from south to north. This was over 250mm of rolled 'type 1' aggregate (002), which rested over a geotextile membrane.

At the eastern end of the trench, context (002) stripped directly onto the fill of a brick-cellar (003). This consisted of modern demolition rubble, presumably deposited prior to the construction of the Guildhall in 1963. The cellar (structure [004]) occupied the eastern 5m of the trench; it had a limestone flag floor [005] set on a sharp sand layer and founded 2.1m below the present ground level. Beneath this floor, only naturally deposited Keuper marl (Mercia Mudstone) was exposed. Brick dimensions suggest that this structure dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Beneath 002, in the area situated outside of cellar, a layer of very dark grey cemented sandy clay was exposed - 007. This contained abundant small fragments of brick and tile, occasional limestone fragments and frequent chalk and charcoal flecks.

Sealed beneath 007, a second cellar was exposed (structure [009]), occupying the western 4.5m of the trench. This also had a limestone-flagged floor [010], and was slightly shallower than the other cellar, being founded 1.8m below present ground level. Again, beneath this floor, Mercia Mudstone was exposed.

The western cellar had been inserted against an earlier stone foundation, [012]. This was 0.8m wide and was made of medium and large limestone fragments set in friable clayey sand. It probably represents an earlier property division situated between the building into which the cellar was later added and its neighbour to the east. Pottery recovered from the clay matrix of the wall has been dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> century.

In the area separating the two cellars, a concentration of post-medieval and medieval archaeology was investigated. Partially sealed beneath layer 007, was a layer of compact dark grey, and charcoal-rich, sandy clay, 008, which was up to 0.2m deep. The layer incorporated occasional small brick, tile and limestone fragments and chalk flecks.

Two features had been cut through layer 008; both located close to the eastern cellar, [021] and [023]. Pit [021] was only observed in the south-facing section and had been truncated to the east by the construction trench of cellar [004] - [006]. It was filled by 020: a clean mid-brown friable clayey sand containing occasional small flecks of charcoal. A tile fragment recovered from this material has been dated between the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century, and animal bone included sheep and cattle, some exhibiting signs of butchery and dog chewing.

Feature [023] was observed in both section faces; it had very steep sides, and was filled by 022: a mid greyish brown friable clayey sand containing limestone fragments, occasional pebbles/cobbles and small flecks of charcoal, as well as



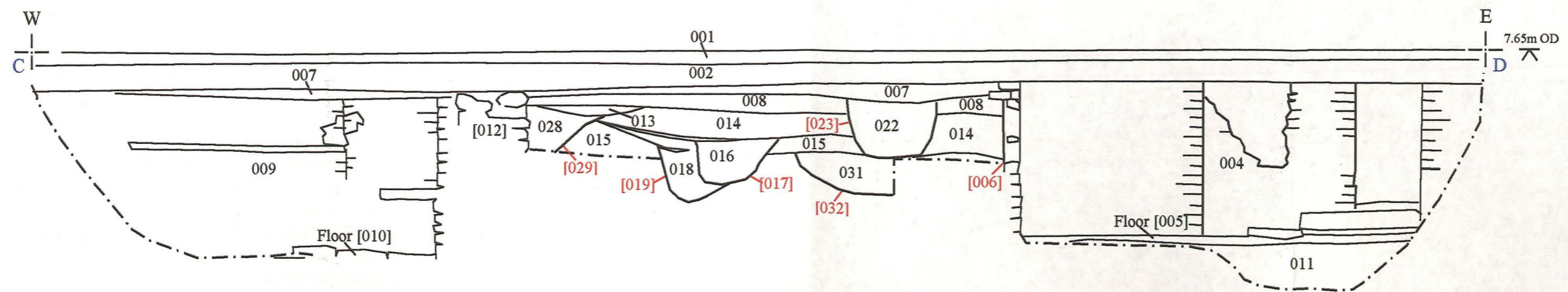
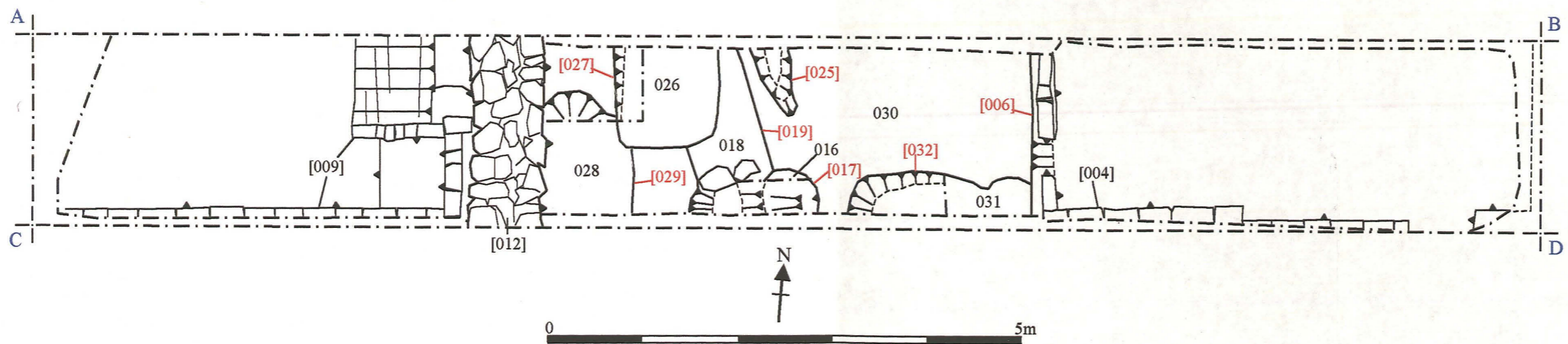
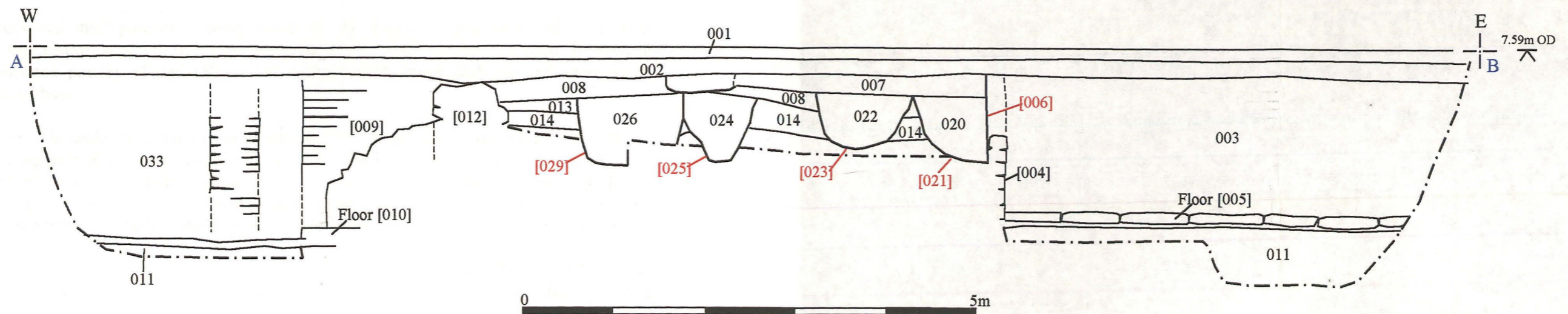


Fig. 3: Sections and plan of evaluation trench. Scale 1:50

occasional small patches of redeposited Mercia Mudstone. The form and orientation of this feature suggests that it probably represents a stone robbers trench. Its backfill contained pottery of mid-15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century date, along with pig and sheep-sized animal bone.

Layer 008 sealed a shallow layer of redeposited Mercia Mudstone, up to 0.15m thick, and again probably derived from cellar excavations, 013. This in turn sealed clean mid-brownish grey friable clayey sand containing only occasional charcoal flecks. This layer was observed across the entire trench, and it contained sherds from a large jar of North Lincolnshire shell-tempered fabric, dating to the late 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Several pits were cut into layer 014: [025], [027] and [029]. Pit [025] was 0.75m wide and 0.75m deep with steep sides breaking sharply to a flat base. It was filled by 024, a clean mid-greyish brown friable clayey sand containing only a thin lens of redeposited marl. Immediately to the west of this was pit [027]. It was rectangular in plan, 1.25m wide and 0.78m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. Its fill 026 comprised dark greyish brown sandy clay containing occasional light brown clay patches, occasional small brick, tile and limestone fragments and large charcoal flecks. Pit [027] was cut through pit [029], an ovoid feature located to its immediate south-west, which again displayed steep sides and a flat base. Its fill, 028 comprised dark greyish brown clayey sand, mottled with redeposited blue marl and containing occasional flecks of charcoal and burnt limestone chunks; possibly derived from a discarded hearth.

Layer 014 sealed a layer of clean mottled dark brown friable slightly clayey sand, 015, which was only observed on the south side of the trench. This was cut by pits [017] and [019]. Pit [017] was circular in plan, with steep sides breaking to a flat base. It was filled by 016, compact pinkish brown clayey sand containing occasional small charcoal flecks and one potsherd of a mid 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century date. Pit [017] cut [019], which was a linear feature or elongated pit, seen crossing the base of the trench from NNW to SSE. This feature had a very steep western side breaking sharply to a 'U'-shaped base; its eastern side was unclear, as it had been cut away by pit [017]. It was filled by 018, mottled yellowish grey friable clayey sand containing moderate small charcoal flecks and several limestone fragments. The presence of these fragments could suggest that this feature represented the line of a robbed wall foundation. However, the feature yielded relatively large quantities of pottery and animal bone, suggesting that its latest use was for the deposition of refuse. Associated pottery has been dated to the mid/late to late 12<sup>th</sup> century, and animal bone included cattle, sheep and pig.

Layer 015 overlay layer 023, a mottled mid orange brown sand which appeared to have been naturally deposited over the Mercia Mudstone seen below the bases of the cellars. Only one pit was cut into this material - [032]. This was located on the south side of the trench and had been truncated by cellar [004]. It appeared to be an elongated oval shape in plan, but extended beyond the edge of the trench to the south. It had a very steep north side but its west side was somewhat shallower; the edges however were fairly indistinct – the result of natural sand slumpage. Pit [032] was filled by 031, a mid- slightly pinkish brown mixture of friable clayey sand and clay containing small flecks of charcoal and occasional small limestone fragments.

## 7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Between the two cellars, the construction of which has destroyed many features of potential archaeological interest, a sequence of archaeological deposits was investigated. This appears to represent a series of levelling/occupation horizons, interspersed with refuse pits – typical activity in an area situated to the rear of street-frontage properties. The dating of the pottery recovered from these features suggests that this activity took place in the medieval/late medieval period and continued until the construction of the building that housed the eastern cellar. The early date of the potsherd recovered from wall [012] is interesting, and although possibly residual in this context, an early date for such a wall is not surprising if it represents a structural component which became fossilized into a long-established property boundary. Cellars had been constructed by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the Ordnance Survey map of 1854 shows this area to have been completely occupied by buildings.

It is likely that there are further medieval archaeological deposits in this area, both towards the street-front, and perhaps to the south of the cellars. However, any such deposits will have been truncated as a result of cellar construction in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Important in situ archaeological deposits are therefore expected to survive only as a series of 'islands'.

## 8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Despite the construction of cellars on the east and west sides of the area, medieval features were identified towards the centre of the plot, and it has been possible to identify and date most of the significant archaeological horizons.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank West Lindsey District Council for this commission and for their assistance during the evaluation. Thanks are due to R D Gardner for her assistance on site, and to UCS for their cooperation during the trial excavation programme.

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**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1 (left):** General view of the site, looking south-east.

**Plate 2 (right):** General shot during machining, looking west.



**Plate 3 (left):** General view of the trench after cleaning, looking west.



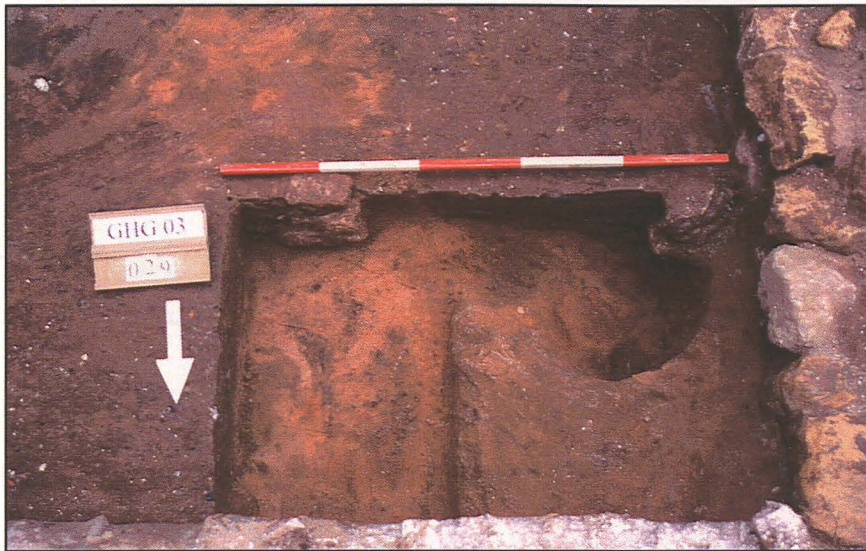
**Plate 4 (right):** Post-excitation view of the trench, looking east.



**Plate 5 (left):** Post-excitation view of stone wall [012], looking west.



**Plate 6 (right):** Post-excitation view of pits [017] and [019], looking south.



**Plate 7 (left):** Post excavation view of pits [027] and [029], looking south.



**Plate 8 (right):** Post excavation view of pit [032], looking east.

## APPENDIX 2: Post-Roman pottery archive

site	context	date	comments
ghga03	012	11th to 12th	
ghga03	014	late 12th to	
ghga03	016	mid 12th to	
ghga03	018	mid/late to late	
ghga03	020	13th to 15th	
ghga03	022	mid 15th to	



site code	context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	weight	part	descriptio
ghga03	012	LFS	Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware		?	1	1	9	base	thick soot c
ghga03	014	NLST	North Lincolnshire Shell-tempered		large jar	3	1	167	base & BS	soot;? ID c
ghga03	016	MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	light	jug	1	1	4	BS	abraded;pe
ghga03	018	EMX	Non-local Early Medieval fabrics	OX/R/OX;me	jug	2	1	45	base	yellow
ghga03	018	BEVO1	Beverley Orange ware Fabric 1	A	jug	3	1	335	base & BS	fresh
ghga03	018	BEVO1	Beverley Orange ware Fabric 1	A	jug/jar	1	1	3	BS	
ghga03	018	NSP	Nottingham Splashed ware	sandy	jar	3	1	20	BS	soot
ghga03	018	LEMS	Lincolnshire Early Medieval Shelly		jar	1	1	16	shoulder	ridged
ghga03	022	NOTG	Nottingham glazed ware		large jug	1	1	144	base	large fresh
ghga03	022	CIST	Cistercian-type ware		cup	1	1	4	handle	brown fabr

site code	context	cname	full name	frags	weight	description	date
ghga03	018	DAUB	Daub	1	31	burnt;fine micaceous	-
ghga03	020	PEG	Peg tile	1	37	square hole:mod	medieval
ghga03	020	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	1	17	flat roofer:mod	medieval
ghga03	020	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	1	100	corner;flat roofer:mod	medieval

**APPENDIX 3:** Archive Catalogue of Animal Bone from Gainsborough Guildhall, Lincolnshire

site	context	species	bone	no.	side	fusion	zone	butchery	gnawing	toothwear	path	comment	preservation
GHGA03	016	OVCA	UM3	1	R					K12		COMPLETE	4
GHGA03	018	SUS	MAN	1	R					fgh15J5		5 FRAGMENTS- FEMALE?	3
GHGA03	018	CSZ	RIB	1	F							DISTAL END	4
GHGA03	018	CSZ	RIB	1	F							MIDSHAFT FRAGMENT- 2 PIECES	3
GHGA03	018	SUS	AST	1	R		1					ERODED	3
GHGA03	018	CSZ	UNI	1	F			C				INDET-CHARRED	4
GHGA03	018	OVI	SKL	1	F							PAROETAL- 4 PIECES	3
GHGA03	018	BOS	PH3	1	R		1					TIP LOST	3
GHGA03	018	SSZ	LBF	1	F							SHAFT FRAGMENT	3
GHGA03	018	OVCA	CEV	1	F	AN	4					PART CENTRUM	3
GHGA03	018	UNI	UNI	4	F							INDET	3
GHGA03	020	OVI	SKL	1	R		1248					OCCIP AND TEMPORAL- 3 PIECES	3
GHGA03	020	OVCA	INN	1	L	EF	3579		DG			ISCHIAL AND ILIAL SHAFT WITH PART ACETAB-POST CHEWED- 2 PIECES	4
GHGA03	020	CSZ	RIB	1	F			CH				SHAFT FRAGMENT-CHOPPED	4
GHGA03	022	OVCA	RAD	1	L	PFDN	1236					PROX END AND SHAFT	4
GHGA03	022	SUS	FEM	1	R	DN	4					DISTAL 2 THIRDS SHAFT	4
GHGA03	022	SSZ	RIB	1	F							MIDSHAFT FRAGMENT	4
GHGA03	022	SSZ	LBF	1	F							SHAFT FRAGMENT	4
GHGA03	028	SSZ	TRV	2	F	CNAN	45					CENTRUM AND ARCH-SAME ANIMAL-ARTICULATING-OVCA	4
GHGA03	031	SUS	RIB	1	F			CH				DISTAL HALF-PROX END CHOPPED	4
GHGA03	031	CSZ	LBF	1	F							SHAFT FRAGMENT	4

**Appendix 4: Context Summary.**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Asphalt surface
002	Bedding layer for 001
003	Rubble fill of cellar [004]
004	Brick cellar at East end of trench
005	Stone floor of [004]
006	Construction cut of [004]
007	Rubble layer between cellars
008	Dark charcoaly layer below 007
009	Brick cellar at West end of trench
010	Stone floor of [009]
011	Natural clay (Keuper marl)
012	Stone wall next to [009]
013	Pinkish layer below 008
014	Brown layer below 013
015	Light brown layer below 014
016	Pinkish fill in pit [017]
017	Pit, cuts 018
018	Grey sandy fill of pit [019]
019	Pit
020	Fill of pit [021]
021	Pit immediately West of cellar [004]
022	Rubbly fill in pit [023]
023	Pit
024	Fill of pit [025]
025	Small pit in South facing section
026	Fill of pit [027]
027	Large pit in South facing section
028	Fill of pit [029]
029	Pit adjacent to wall [012]
030	Natural sand
031	Fill of pit [032]
032	Large pit in North facing section
033	Rubble fill of cellar [009]