

WHEELHOUSE RESTAURANT, TORKSEY

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

Site code	WRTO 03
NGR:	SK 8389 7799
LCCM Acc No:	2003.277

Report prepared for Mr. Croft

by

R. D. Gardner

August 2003



Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
Unit G
William Street Business Park
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2LP
Tel. & Fax. 01522 703800

©Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

NEGATIVE

Contents

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Location and description	2
3.0	Planning background	2
4.0	Archaeological and historical background	2
5.0	Methodology	4
6.0	Results	4
7.0	Discussion and Conclusions	5
8.0	Acknowledgements	5
9.0	Bibliography	5

Illustrations

- Fig. 1: Location of site at scale 1:25000
Fig. 2: Location of site at scale 1:1250
Fig. 3: Plan of building layout at scale 1:50, showing section locations
Fig. 4: Sample section drawings at scale 1:20

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Colour Plates
Appendix 2 Context Summary

Conservation
Services

03 SEP 2003

Highways & Planning
Directorate

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for an extension to the Wheelhouse Restaurant, Torksey, Lincolnshire.
- The watching brief identified only recent deposits and one relatively modern structure.

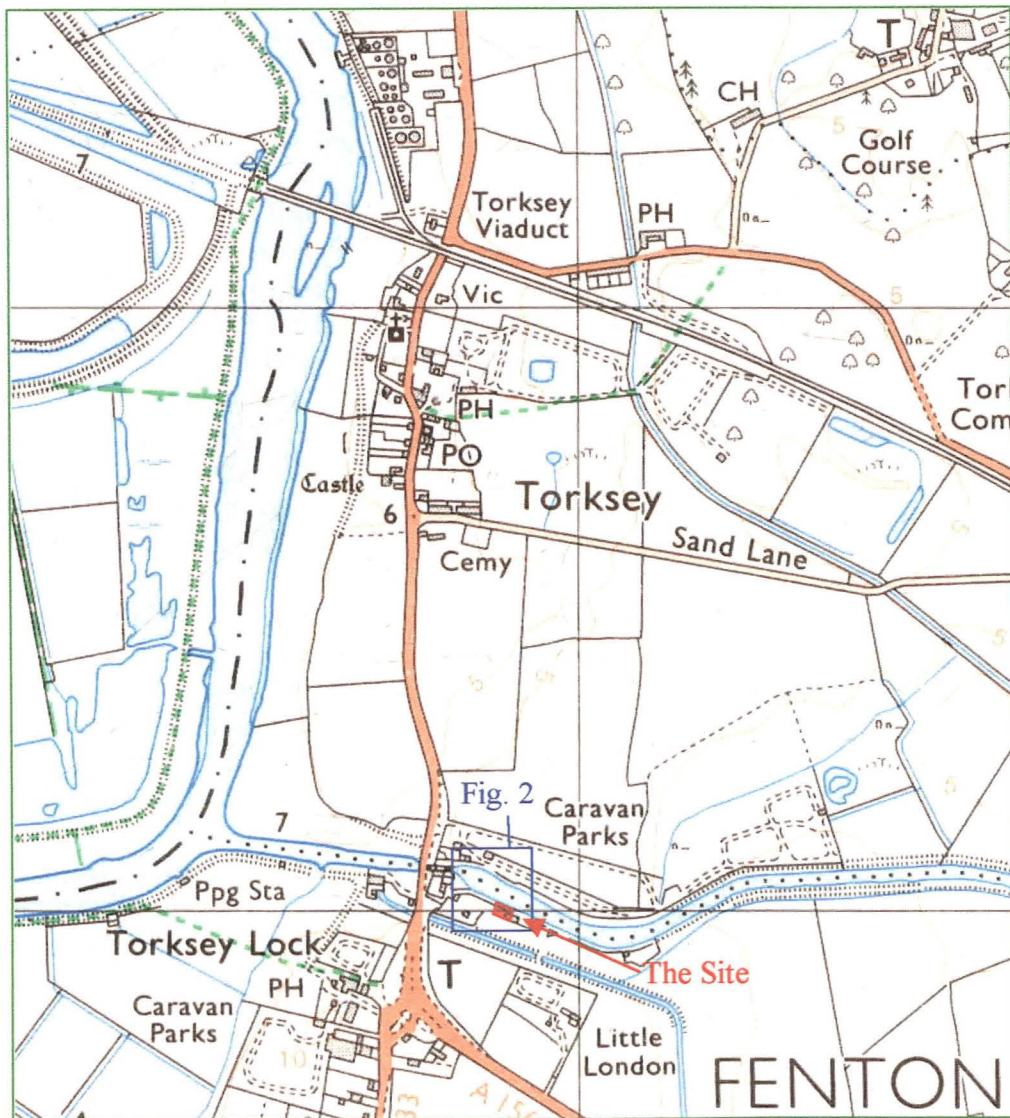


Fig. 1: Site location. The site itself is highlighted in red, and the area shown in Fig.2 is outlined in blue. Scale 1:12500. (OS copyright Licence AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the Wheelhouse Restaurant, Torksey Lock, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference SK 8389 7799). The work was commissioned by Mr. Croft, to fulfil a condition attached to a recent planning permission (Ref. M03/P/0516).

This report documents the results of the archaeological observation and recording undertaken on 04/08/03. 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 report will be deposited with the commissioning client, the Assistant Built Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council / the County SMR. Reports will also be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied by an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and Description (figs. 1 and 2)

Torksey Lock lies some 800m south of the main village of Torksey, approximately 12 km north-east of Lincoln and 9 km south of Gainsborough, on the east bank of the River Trent. The development site is located on the south bank of the Fosdyke navigation, east of the A156 (National Grid Reference SK 8389 7799), forming an extension to the present Wheelhouse Restaurant. It is situated to the south of what was once the centre of medieval Torksey.

The underlying geology of the area consists of wind-blown sand, with colluvial base deposits of sand and gravel, intermingled with Mercia Mudstone and pockets of alluvium (BGS 1999): it lies at approximately 5m above sea level.

Prior to development, the site formed approximately half of a garden adjacent to the restaurant, consisting of lawn turf and ornamental flower beds, with a low retaining wall raising the garden above the canal towpath to the north, and a small area of concrete paving on its east side, bordering the restaurant building.

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted for an extension on the west side of existing restaurant buildings, comprising new lavatories suitable for disabled access, and an extension to the restaurant with a bar. The permission was granted subject to an archaeological watching brief being undertaken on all groundworks.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

A small number of prehistoric artefacts have been recovered from around the present village, including a hand axe and a polished flint axe dredged from the River Trent. A Neolithic flint adze was discovered in a garden to the north of the present site, and

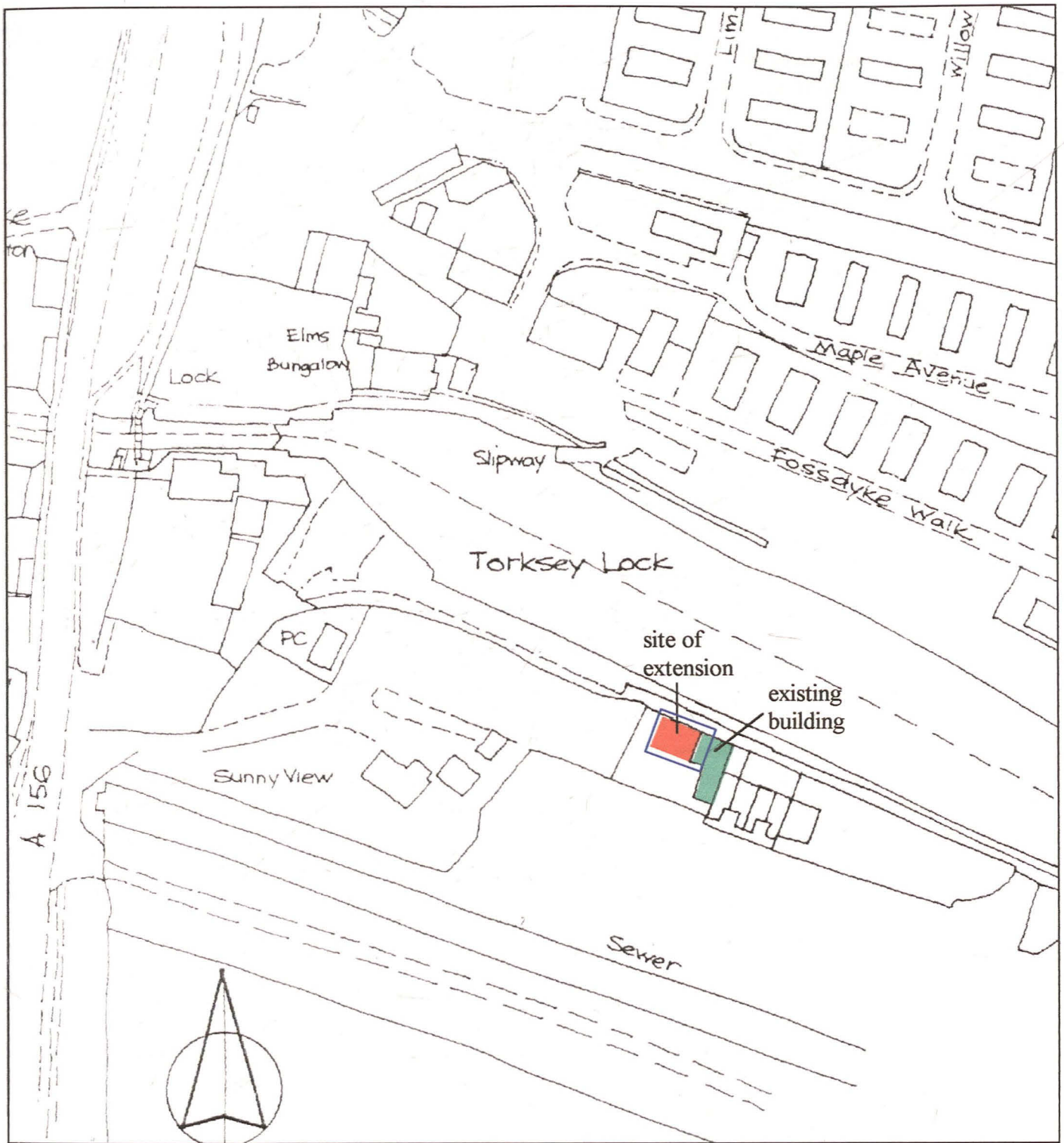


Fig. 2: location plan of the development site, scale 1:1250. The existing building is shown in green and the proposed extension in red: the area of fig. 3 is outlined in blue.

residual worked flints were recovered from excavations at Castle Farm (Johnson and Palmer-Brown 1997).

Torksey first became significant in the Roman period. Its position, less than one kilometre from the NW end of the Fosse Dyke (a canal linking the river Trent to the River Witham at Lincoln), made it ideally positioned to allow the rapid transport of local produce to the colonial cities of Lincoln and York (Whitwell, 1992). Pottery kilns of the 3rd century AD have been excavated at Little London Farm, close to the junction of the Fosse Dyke and the Trent, indicating that they were sited with export trade in mind. No evidence of Romano-British occupation has been found north of the Fosse Dyke (Barley 1964), although a single potsherd was found during an evaluation carried out by PCA in Torksey in 1996.

Torksey first appears in the historical record when an invading Danish army is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as wintering in a place called *Turcesige* in AD 872-3 (Hill 1965). Late Saxon activity is represented in the archaeological record by large amounts of 9th/10th century metalwork and coins. The town had a mint which was operating by the 9th century, and the variety and extent of the numismatic evidence suggests that a market or fair was being held here in this period. (Sawyer, 1998). A number of pottery kilns of this period have also been excavated in the vicinity of the current site, most recently at the former Castle Farm, Main Street (Palmer-Brown, 1995).

The Domesday Survey of 1086 places Torksey as the third largest borough in the county, after Lincoln and Stamford, although it was in fact already declining at this time: the 213 burgesses recorded before the Norman Conquest had been reduced to 102, and the coin record decreases correspondingly. This has been attributed to the silting up of the Fosse Dyke, which was not reopened until 1121. After the recutting of the canal, Torksey's fortunes again increased, chiefly by imposing tolls on cargo: no goods coming up the Trent from Gainsborough or down from Newark might be unloaded before reaching Torksey (Hill, 1965). Two religious houses, the Augustinian priory of St. Leonard and the Cistercian nunnery of St. Nicholas de Fossa, were founded in this period (Mee, 1970).

By the late 13th century, the canal was again beginning to fail and Torksey's prosperity began to decline. By the middle of the 14th century, wool, for example, was being transported by road from Lincoln to Barton upon Humber, instead of to Torksey and thence by boat to Hull (Hill, 1965). The development of Boston into a major port by this time took much of Torksey's trade with Lincoln (Sawyer, 1998), and eventually Gainsborough took over the town's position as a transhipment port (Everson, 1991).

Torksey Castle, which lies approx. 700m north-north-west of the development site, is in fact Sir Robert Jermyn's Elizabethan manor, and was partly built out of materials robbed from the ruins of St Leonard's Priory. It was sacked by royalists during the English Civil War in 1645 and never rebuilt.

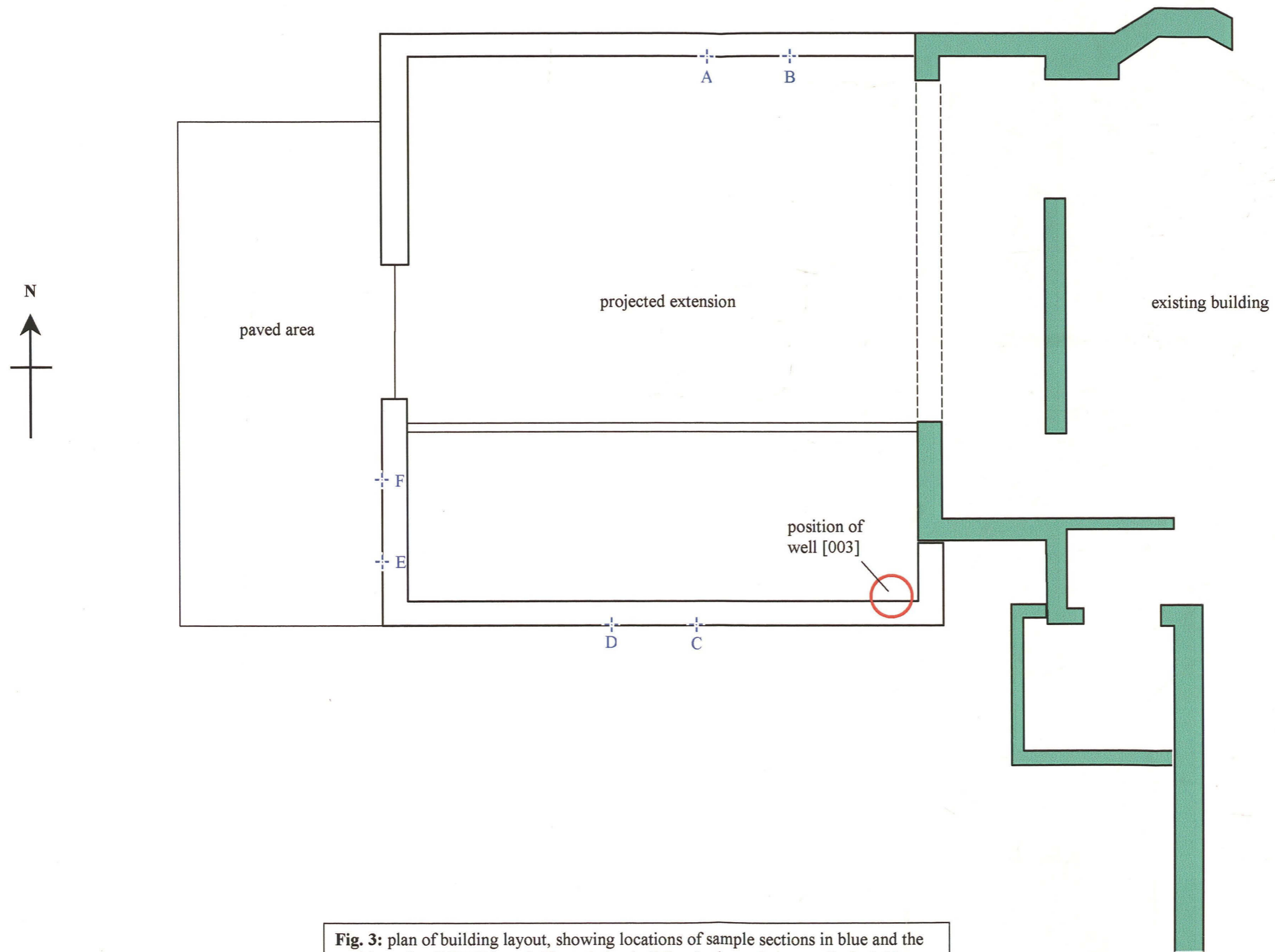


Fig. 3: plan of building layout, showing locations of sample sections in blue and the position of well [003] in red. The existing building is shown in green. Scale 1:50.

5.0 Methodology

The site was visited on 4th August 2003, when foundation trenches were cut for the extension footings (fig. 3). The retaining wall on the north side and the paving on the east edge of the site were first removed (plate 1), and the single U-shaped foundation trench, 7.9m long N-S and 6.6m E-W, was laid out by the contractors. The work was undertaken with a JCB excavator using a 0.6m wide bucket with small teeth, and a small dumper to remove excavated material. The foundation trench was generally 0.7m-0.8m wide. After a visit from the building inspector, it was agreed that, due to the presence of soft sand deposits in the trench sides, it should be excavated to a depth of 0.9m below the level of the towpath, giving a depth of 1.2m to 1.3m below the surface of the garden. Excavation work was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded.

The archaeological fieldwork comprised the observation of all exposed surfaces during excavation, followed by a thorough inspection after completion of the works, and cleaning and recording of sample sections. The well exposed in the south-east corner of the groundworks could only be recorded during excavation, as it had to be broken down and filled in before work could safely continue. The observation was recorded by written descriptions of each layer on standard watching brief context recording sheets, accompanied by colour photographs and scale drawings.

6.0 Results (fig. 4)

The modern topsoil, context 001, was uniformly 0.20m deep, and consisted of a friable dark brownish-grey clayey coarse-sandy loam, containing frequent small rounded river pebbles and occasional small fragments of coal. This topsoil was encountered across the whole site.

Below the topsoil on the north and south sides of the area of excavation lay a loose, unstable deposit of dark brown, dark grey and black clayey coarse sand containing approx. 30% brick rubble and modern refuse (glass bottles, transfer-printed china, stoneware jars etc.). This layer, context 002, did not extend into the western part of the trench, and was significantly deeper on the north side than on the south.

Below layer 002 on the north side of the trench was a layer of mixed, disturbed-looking greyish-brown sandy clays and clayey sands, 004, without charcoal flecking or any artefactual material.

Below these layers was a layer of loose, very pale yellowish-grey coarse sand (005), clean and homogenous in appearance, but with lenses of iron-panning and of compact light grey clay near the base, particularly on the west side of the trench. It extended over most of the trench, and was of greatly varying depth. Below 005 was layer 006, a mid-grey mottled mid-brown plastic coarse-sandy clay. Both these layers appeared to be natural.

In the SE corner of the foundation trench, a cylindrical brick structure was uncovered (003). It was 0.48m in external diameter, and approximately 4m deep, constructed of cut half-bricks (factory-produced) and sealed by a limestone slab (plate 3). When

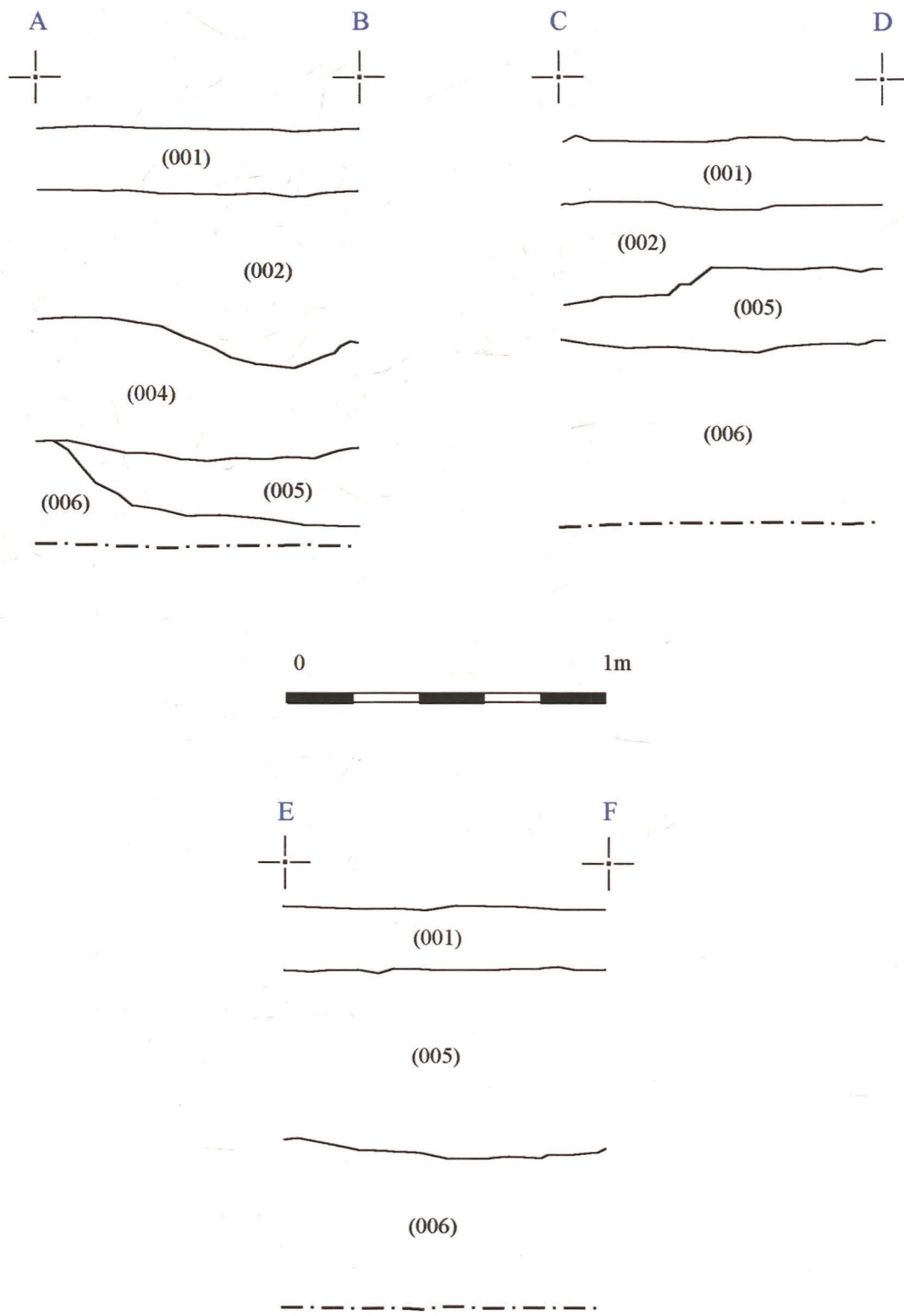


Fig. 4: Sample trench sections – see fig. 3 for location of individual section drawings. Scale 1:20.

found, it contained a lead pipe 45mm in diameter, and was about half full of water; it was filled with hardcore from the initial ground clearance and broken in by the contractors before work proceeded. The extremely narrow bore of this well indicates that it was constructed to serve a pump, rather than originally being dug to accommodate a bucket and winding gear, and adapted later.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The only feature seen during the watching brief was the brick-lined well 003. This was sealed by the modern deposit 002, presumably a levelling layer to raise and even out the surface of the garden, but did not necessarily go out of use when layer 002 was deposited. Mr. Croft, the current landowner, remembers that the building was still equipped with a pump when he moved in, indicating that the well may have continued in use until relatively recently.

Deposit 004, although archaeologically sterile, appears too disturbed to be natural. Its position on the canal side of the site indicates that it may also be a levelling layer, possibly of redeposited natural from work on the canal, although it does not appear silty enough to be a dredging dump.

Sand layer 005 is probably a wind-blown deposit. Other excavation work in the Torksey area has shown that deposits of this kind often seal significant archaeological remains, although none were present on this site.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. Croft for the commission and for his assistance during the watching brief.

9.0 Bibliography

Barley, M.W., 1964, *The Medieval Borough of Torksey: Excavations 1960 – 62*, *Antiq. J* 44

British Geological Survey, 1999, *Market Rasen, England and Wales Sheet 102, Solid and Drift Geology, 1:50 000 Provisional Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

Clay, C, 2001, *Archaeological Watching Brief Report: Plot 2, Main Street, Torksey, Lincolnshire*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report.

Garmonsway, G.N. (ed. and trans.), 1953, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London.

Hill, J F W, 1965, *Medieval Lincoln*

Johnson S C & Palmer-Brown C P H, 1997, *Archaeological Watching Brief Report:*

Lincoln Golf Club, Torksey, Lincolnshire, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report.

Knowles, D & Hadcock, R N, 1971, *Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales*

Morgan, P & Thorn, C (eds), 1986, *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire*

Palmer-Brown, C P H, 1995, *Castle Farm, Torksey: An Archaeological Excavation Report*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report.

Palmer-Brown, C P H, 1996, *Archaeological Field Evaluation Report: 'Verity', Church Lane, Torksey*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report.

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

Sawyer, P, 1998, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire III, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln.

Whitwell, J B, 1992, *Roman Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire II, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln.

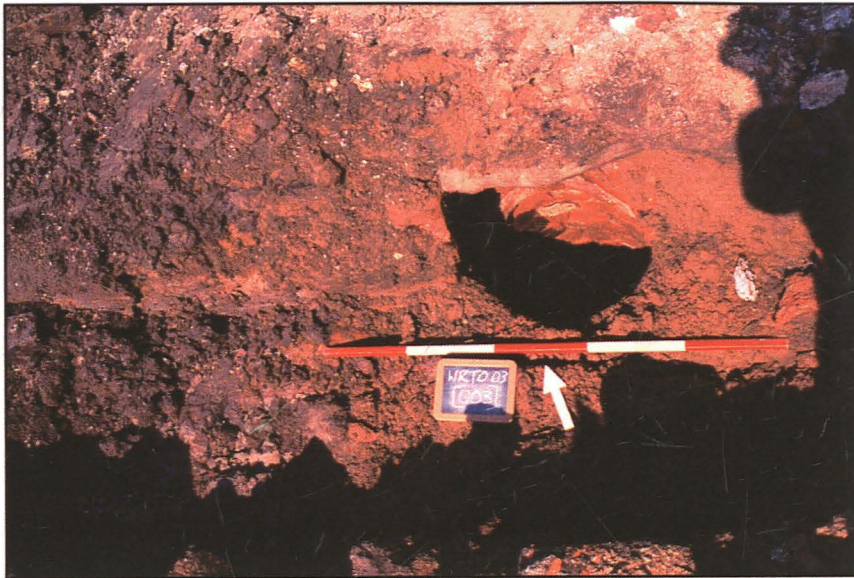
Appendix 1: Colour Plates



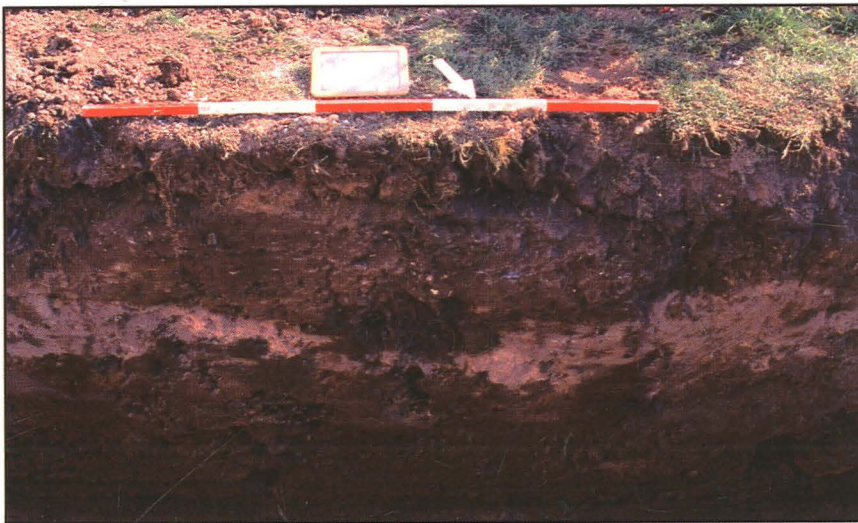
Pl. 1 (above): General shot at the start of machining, showing the removal of the turf and paving, looking NNE.

Pl. 2 (right): General shot during machining, showing the proximity of the site to the canal towpath on the right, looking W.





Pl. 3: Brick-lined well 003 during excavation, looking NNE.



Pl. 4: Sample section of the N facing baulk of the S part of the foundation trench, showing modern layer 002.



Pl. 5: Sample section of the E facing baulk of the W side of the foundation trench, showing blown sand 005.

Appendix 2: Context summary

Context	Description
001	Topsoil and associated modern structures
002	Modern levelling layer under 001
003	Brick-lined well
004	Mixed sand and clay layer with modern refuse
005	Very light yellowish-grey coarse sand natural
006	Mid-grey mottled mid-brown sandy clay natural