

**1, CHURCH LANE COTTAGES,
NORTH ORMSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

Site code
NGR:
LCCM Acc No:
Planning ref.

CLNO 03
TF ~~3545 3796~~ 28857 93200
2003.305
N/130/02199/02

Report prepared for Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson

by

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September 2003



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EVENT - LI 4377

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NEGATIVE

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Conservation
Services

11 SEP 2003

Highways & Planning
Directorate

Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to 1, Church Lane Cottages, North Ormsby, Lincolnshire.*
- *The site lies directly north-east of an extensive area of well-preserved medieval earthworks connected with Ormsby Abbey.*
- *No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief.*

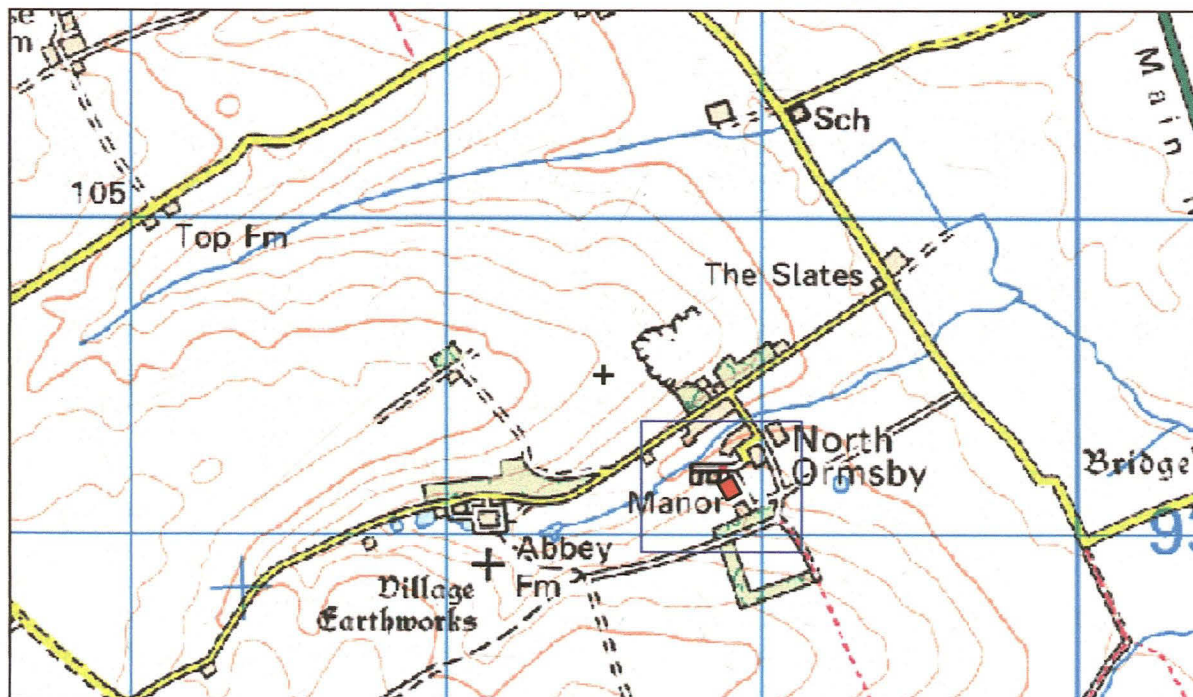


Fig. 1: Location map, showing the site in red and the area of fig. 2 in blue. Scale 1:25 000.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a house extension at 1, Church Lane Cottages, North Ormsby, Lincolnshire.

These works were undertaken to fulfil the objectives of a formal project brief issued by the Assistant Built Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council, 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) and *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IFA, 1999).

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

2.0 Site location and description (figs. 1 & 2)

North Ormsby is a shrunken medieval village, located approximately 7km north-west of the small market town of Louth, in the administrative district of East Lindsey at the eastern edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds.

The existing house stands on the south side of Church Lane, on the western edge of the shrunken village: the earthworks of the deserted medieval village extend to the south and west of the end of the lane. North Ormsby Manor lies to the south-east, and the deconsecrated church of St. Helen, now a private house, to the north-east (fig. 2). Due to the slope of the ground, the house stands on a terrace, raised above surrounding ground level to the north and cut into it to the south (plate 3): the meadow land directly south of the property lies some 1.5m above the ground level of the house.

The local geology consists of drift deposits of glacial till, overlying Ferriby Chalk (British Geological Survey, 1990).

Central National Grid Reference TF 3545 3796.

28857 93200

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension on the south-west side of the house (planning ref. N/130/02199/02). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of a watching brief on all groundworks.

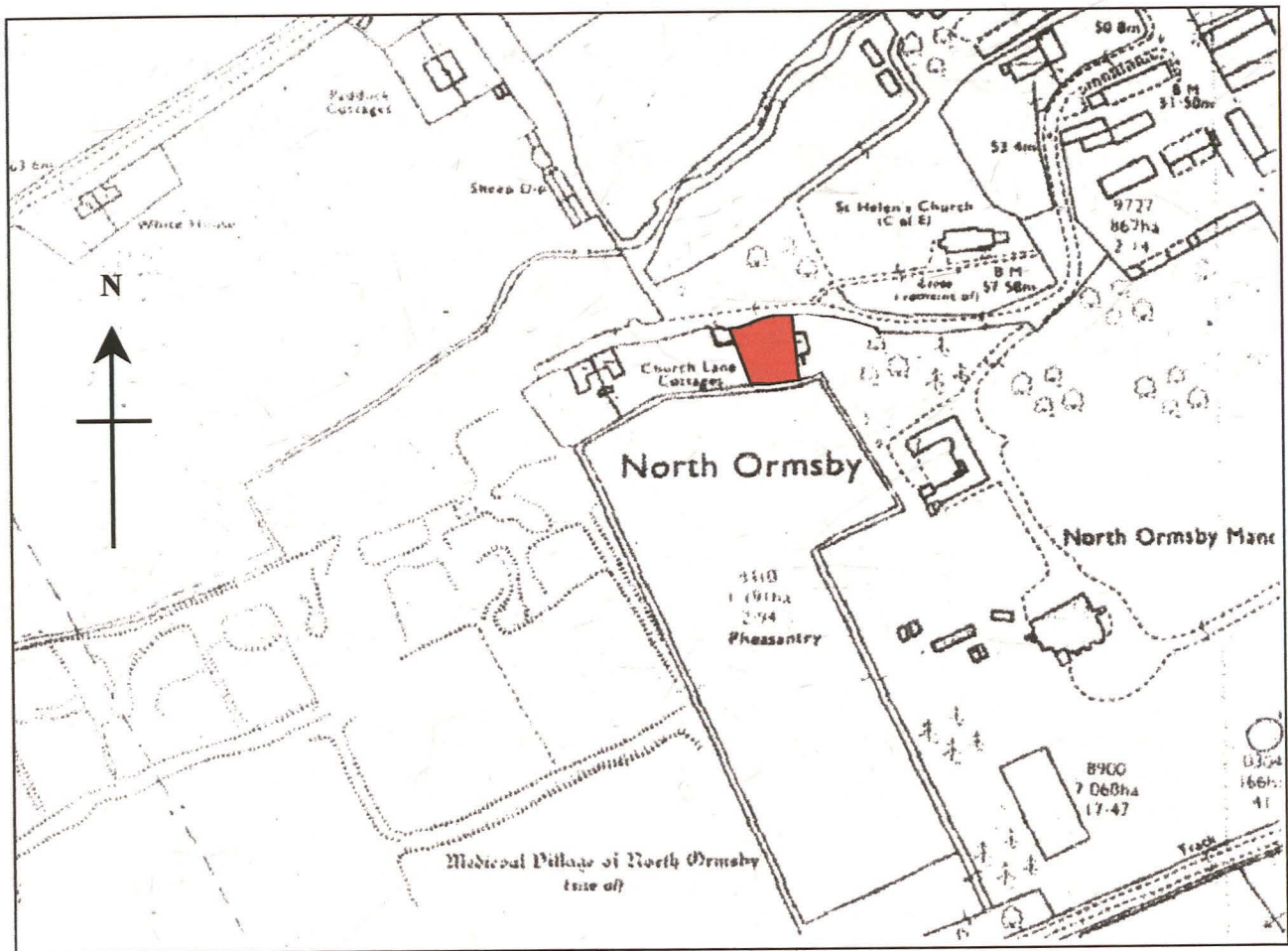


Fig.2: Location plan: the site is shown in red. Scale 1:2500.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Although Louth certainly existed in the late Anglo-Saxon period – a monastery there is referred to in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 790 AD – no historical reference to Ormsby is known until 1066-68, in a charter in which Will of Ulf disposed of land *æt Vrmesbyg*: the name is Old Danish, ‘Orm’s village’, probably indicating a Viking period origin (Cameron, 1998). It appears in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Ormesbi*, and was at that time divided between three landholders: the Bishop of Lincoln and the Norman noblemen Ivo Tallboys and Drogo of La Beuvriere. Land use included arable farming, pasture and managed woodland, with a total recorded population of two named sub-tenants (Wigmund, Ivo’s man and Geoffrey, Drogo’s man), 19 freemen, 4 villagers and 1 smallholder.

The Gilbertine priory of Ormsby Abbey was established by Gilbert Fitzrobert of Ormsby in 1148-1154 AD, after which the village is sometimes referred to as Nun Ormsby; Gilbertine houses were double, containing both monks and nuns. The earthworks directly south-west of the site may represent a part of the village which was demolished when the priory was built (the Gilbertines were an austere, exempt order who would not have permitted secular neighbours), while those further to the west represent the remnants of the monastic buildings (Pevsner, 1989).

The church of St. Helen, now deconsecrated, which lies north-east of the site, has late 13th century details, and part of the 14th century church cross remains (Pevsner, 1989).

In a pasture adjacent to Abbey Farm, north-west of the present village on the main road (see fig. 1), is a life-size classical statue known as the ‘White Lady’, which was set up in the area around 1850 (plate 4). This statue is said by Pevsner to be late Roman, but is described as ‘18th century style’ by English Heritage in the scheduling document for the earthworks (Pevsner, 1989; landowner of Abbey Farm, *pers. comm.*).

The main building of 1, Church Lane Cottages dates to 1875 (Mr. Sanderson, *pers. comm.*), and two cottages in an identical style, now derelict, at the end of Church Lane to the west are likely to be of the same date.

5.0 Methodology

Prior to undertaking the watching brief, the concrete surface of the extension area was removed, including the brick rubble bedding layer and several redundant drains and water pipes within it, to a total depth of 0.15m-0.20m. This took place on the previous day. Excavation was carried out using a ‘Bobcat’ mini-digger with a 0.70m wide toothed bucket, and spoil was removed by wheelbarrow. A single L-shaped foundation trench was excavated (fig.3), to a maximum depth of 1.0m; the last part of the trench to be excavated – the centre of the west side – could not be reached by the mini-digger and was completed by hand.

Due to the confined area, the trench could not be entered until machining was completed: excavation was observed from outside the trench, and the spoil was checked for finds. After excavation was completed, the trench sections were cleaned

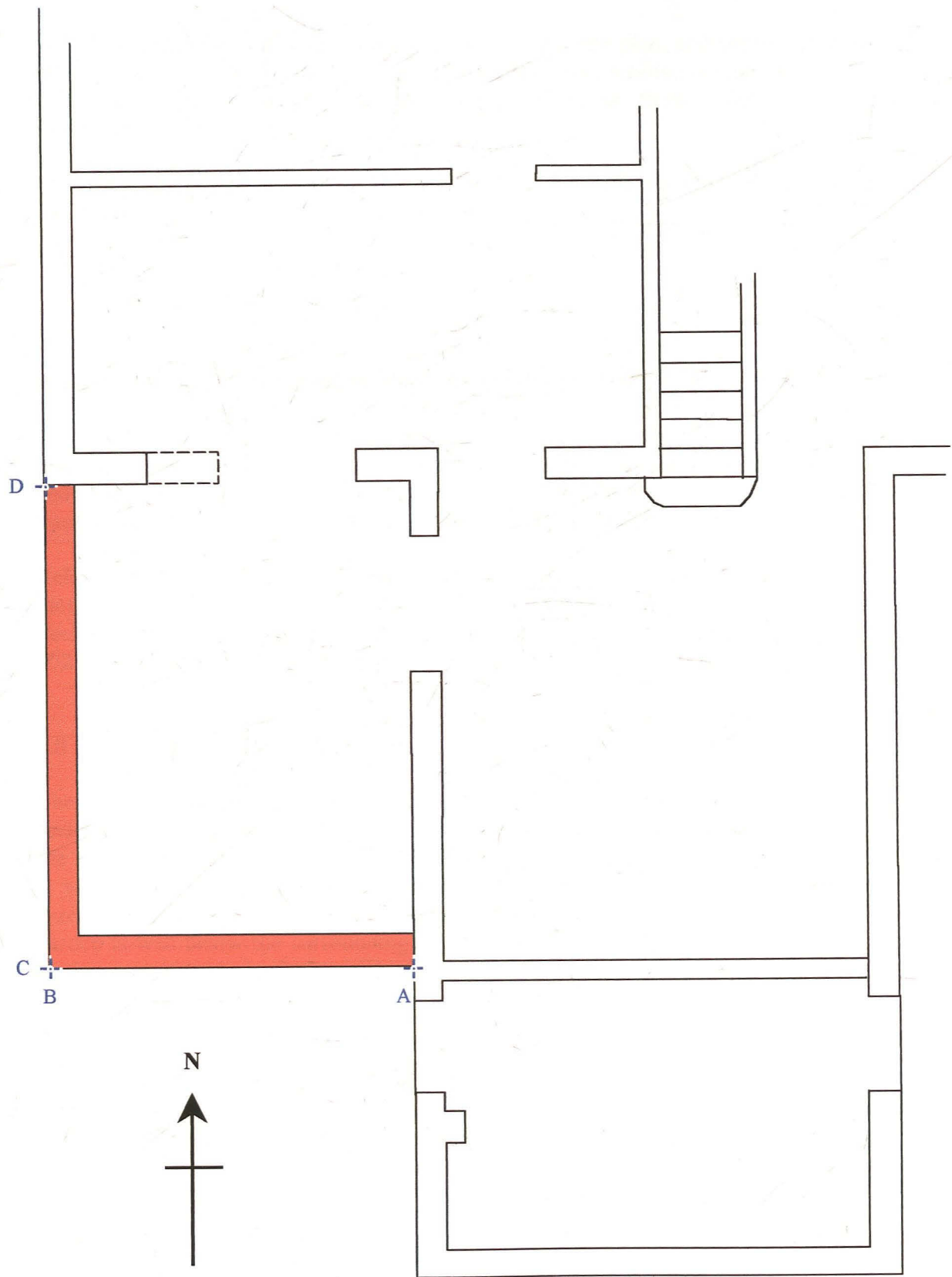


Fig. 3: extract from architect's plan, showing trench location in red.
Scale 1:50.

and closely examined. The sections were plotted on a site plan, and section drawings were made at a scale of 1:20. Context information was recorded on the drawings. A colour photographic record was maintained, selections from which have been reproduced in this report.

The fieldwork was carried out on 19th August 2003, and was monitored throughout by the author.

6.0 Results (fig. 4)

The upper part of the trench was occupied almost entirely by the back-fill of modern services: the fill of the existing drain to the house septic tank, with brick-built inspection pit, in the south leg of the trench, and two redundant drains and the existing house water main (broken during excavation) in the west leg. All these fills were jointly recorded as 001. A single green-glazed potsherd was retrieved from the west end of the north-facing section, within the drain fill: it was later identified as a fragment of a Toynton ware jug or jar, dating from the late 13th or the 14th century.

Below the modern fills was natural clay 002: a compact, plastic mid-brown clay, mottled light grey near the base of the trench and containing very frequent small chalk flecks and occasional flint fragments. Where no modern disturbances were present, 002 occupied the full depth of the trench.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

The site lies at the edge of an extensive and well-preserved area of medieval earthworks (plates 1 and 2), but no earth features were seen in the groundworks, and the single medieval potsherd was residual, having been disturbed by the modern drain. It seems most likely that this is due to the position of the house and proposed extension, on a terrace set back into the hillside. The south side of the building and garden is well below the surrounding ground level (plates 3 and 5), and any features in this area would almost certainly have been destroyed during the building of the present house.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology chosen adequately demonstrated the absence of significant archaeological remains in the development area: a more detailed level of archaeological intervention would not have been necessary.

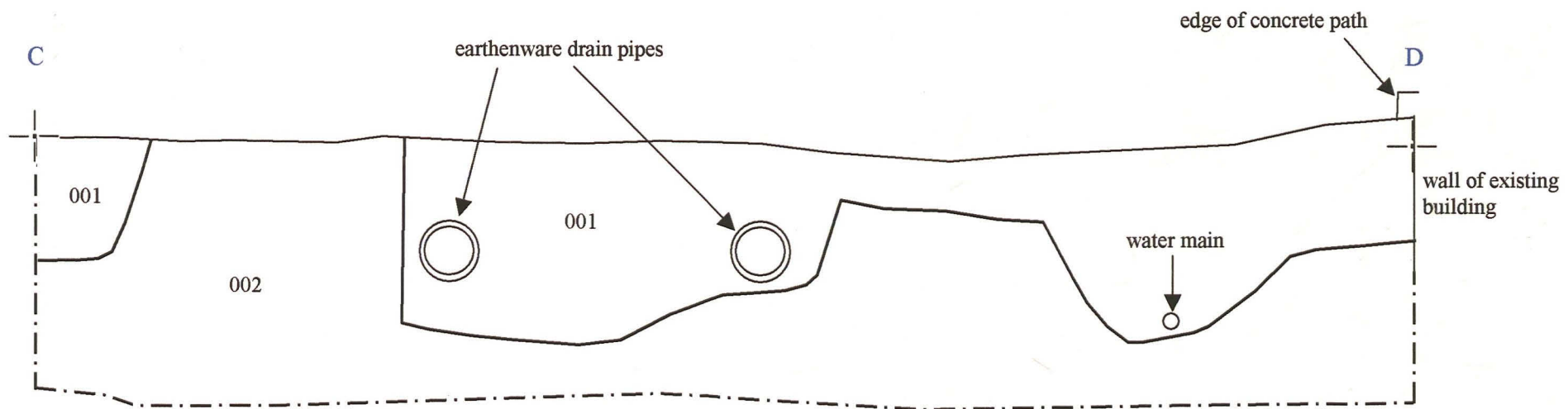
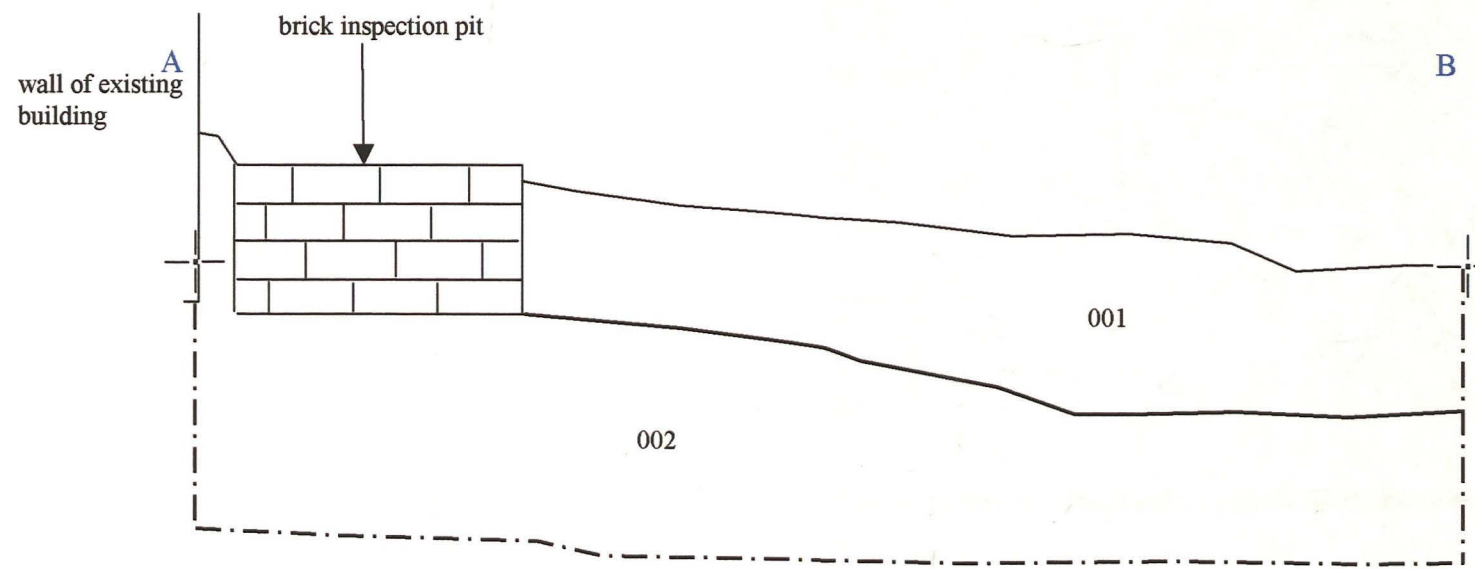


Fig. 4: section drawings of foundation trench, scale 1:20.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. Sanderson for this commission and for his co-operation during the watching brief. The author would also like to thank the occupants of Abbey Farm for allowing access to the 'White Lady', and P. Masters for his assistance in compiling this report.

10.0 References

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11.0 Site archive

The documentary and physical archive for the site is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. This will be deposited with Lincoln Museum within six months from the completion of the project.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: view of the medieval earthworks from the main road, looking SE.



Plate 2: view from the main road towards Church Lane Cottages (the buildings furthest left) showing their proximity to the earthworks, looking E.



Plate 3: the west side of the existing house (area of excavation to the right), showing the slope of the surrounding ground.



Plate 4 (above left): The 'White Lady', looking SE.

Plate 5 (above): Working shot during excavation, showing the difference in height between the house platform and the adjacent field, looking SE.



Plate 6: The west side of the completed foundation trench, looking SW.



Plate 7: The south side of the completed foundation trench, looking SE.

Appendix 2

Pottery Archive CLNO03

Jane Young

<u>context</u>	<u>cname</u>	<u>sub fabric</u>	<u>full name</u>	<u>form type</u>	<u>sherds</u>	<u>weight</u>	<u>part</u>	<u>description</u>	<u>date</u>
001	TOY	D	Toynton Medieval Ware	jug/jar	1	8	BS	no glaze	late 13th to 14th