

**MANOR FARM HOUSE, STAINFIELD,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

Site code	MFHS 03
NGR:	TF 1056 7310
LCCM Acc No:	2003.335
Planning ref.	M02/P/1224

Report prepared for Mr. P. Roberts

by

R. D. Gardner

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

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Conservation
Services

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Highways & Planning
Directorate

Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a house and garage on land adjacent to Manor Farm House, Stainfield, Lincolnshire.*
- *The site lies to the west of an extensive area of medieval earthworks connected with Stainfield Hall, the Benedictine priory which preceded it, and the deserted village of Stainfield.*
- *No archaeological features or artefactual remains were observed during the watching brief.*

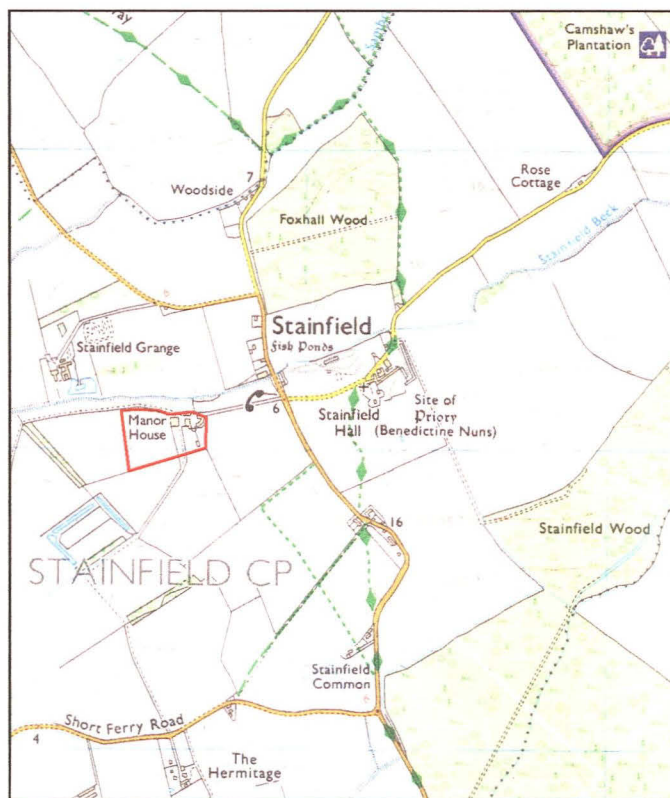


Fig. 1: Location map. Manor Farm House and the development area are outlined in red. Scale 1:25 000. O.S. Copyright licence No. AL 515 21 A0001

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr. P. Roberts to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a house with detached garage on land adjacent to Manor Farm House, Stainfield, Lincolnshire.

These works were undertaken to fulfil the objectives of a formal project brief issued by the 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.

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

The village of Stainfield is within the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 13km ENE of Lincoln and 15km NW of Horncastle. The development site lies to the west of the widely dispersed modern village, some 500m west of the former Benedictine priory.

The site is in open arable farmland, in the NE corner of a field currently under a crop of parsnips, directly to the west of standing farm buildings (modern brick and sheet-metal barns and sheds; the older farm buildings and the Manor House itself are further to the east). On the north side is a mixed planting belt of seedling trees.

The local drift geology consists of undifferentiated river sands and gravels, overlying Amphill Clay (British Geological Survey, 1973).

Central National Grid Reference: TF 1056 7310.

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted for the construction of a single dwelling with garage, on land adjacent to Manor Farm House (planning ref. M02/P/1224). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of a watching brief on all groundworks.

new mixed planting belt
to be established in 2003

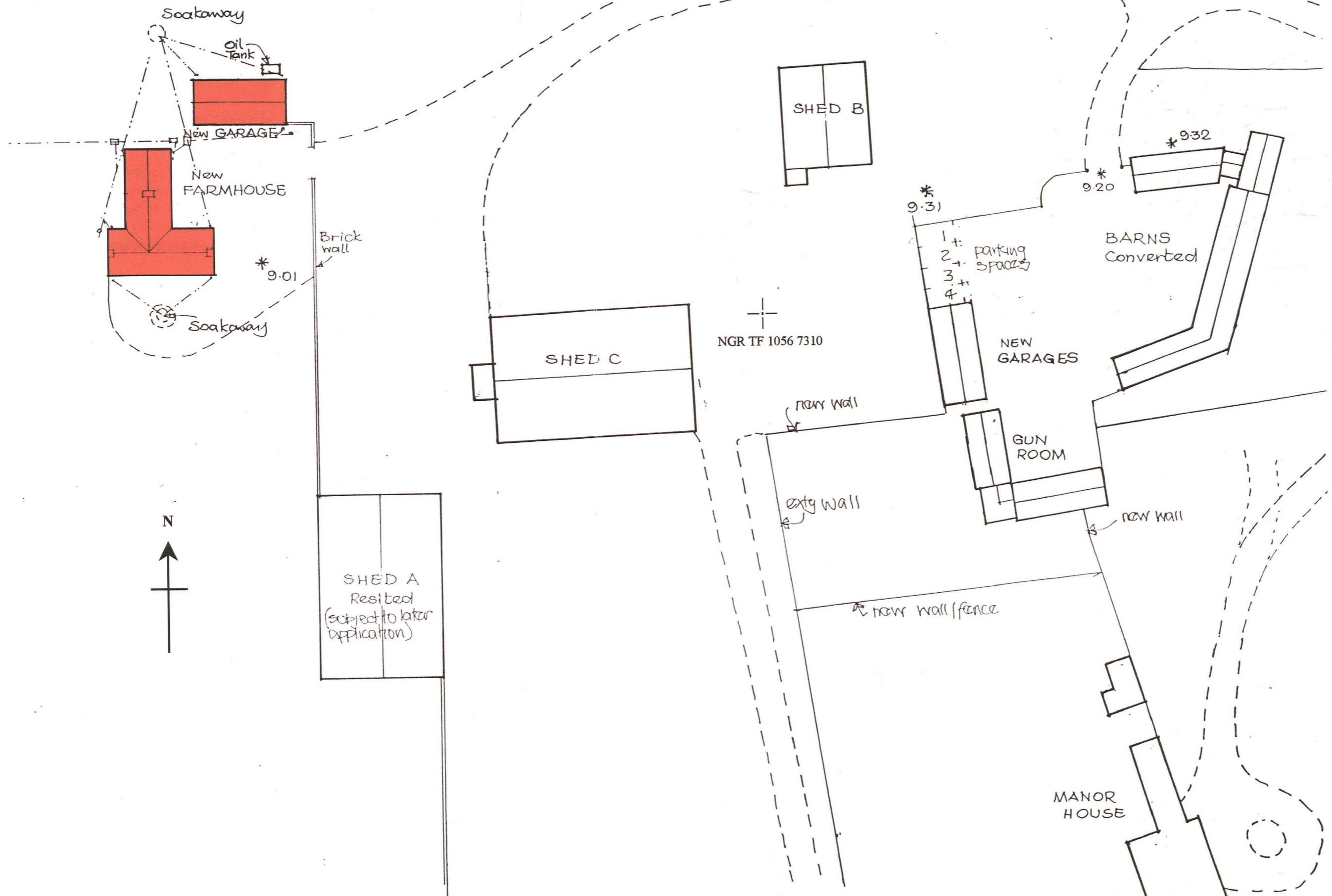


Fig. 2: Location plan of the proposed new buildings within Manor Farm (shown in red). Scale 1:500.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record observed cropmarks to the west of the development area, which have been interpreted as linear features and possible trackways, although these cannot presently be dated.

A complex of Bronze Age round barrows – a collective Scheduled Ancient Monument – is situated to the west of the development area (NGR TF 098 733). They have been partially destroyed by ploughing, but can be seen as circular crop-marks in summer (Field and White, 1984).

The Domesday Survey of 1086 describes *Stainfelde*, on William of Percy's land, as a prosperous agricultural settlement specialising in animal husbandry: with a total mentioned population of 23 and cultivated land for 8 ploughs, Stainfield had 60 acres of meadow and 381 of woodland pasture, and its taxable value since the Norman Conquest had increased from 30 shillings to 60 (Morgan and Thorn, 1986).

East of the development site, in the park of Stainfield Hall, the earthworks of two successive deserted medieval villages, with those of the priory and traces of the formal gardens of the (no longer extant) Tudor hall, could be seen until 1979, when they were largely destroyed by ploughing (Everson *et al.*, 1991). The priory, founded c. 1154 by Henry Percy, was a house of Benedictine nuns: in 1376, it held a population of 20 sisters and a prioress. It is known to have exported wool in the 12th century, continuing the agricultural use of Stainfield as grazing rather than arable land (Owen, 1971). The original village appears to have been moved at the time of the founding of the priory (Everson *et al.*, *ibid.*) – it was not unusual for a religious order to ensure its seclusion by evicting its secular tenants – and again when the Hall lands were enclosed and the park laid out at the beginning of the 17th century, which has resulted in the present village's scattered layout and lack of a traditional centre.

The original Stainfield Hall was built by Sir Robert Tyrwhit, to whom the priory lands were granted after the Dissolution of the Monasteries (Mee, 1970). The church (St. Andrew), which stands within the park, was rebuilt in 1711 to form a vista from the Hall. The present Hall dates from 1856; the only remnants of the earlier buildings are a barn range dated 1707 and a single pillar of the old Hall gateway (Pevsner, 1989).

5.0 Methodology

Prior to undertaking the watching brief, vegetation had been removed from the site and the intended footprints of both buildings laid out with paint. The footprint of the house, in the SW corner of the site (recorded as Trench 1) was topsoil stripped, using a JCB with ditching bucket, and the foundation trenches laid out: no features were seen in the stripped area, although the very dry, loose topsoil made for unfavourable observation conditions. The foundation trenches were dug by using a 0.6m toothed bucket: the trenches were 0.6m wide, 0.7m deep at the W side becoming 0.8m deep at the E side of the house plot. Spoil was removed by a JCB 'Loadall' bulldozer.

The footings were laid out and dug in several stages; as each stage was cleared, the trench sections were cleaned and closely examined. Sample sections at each end of

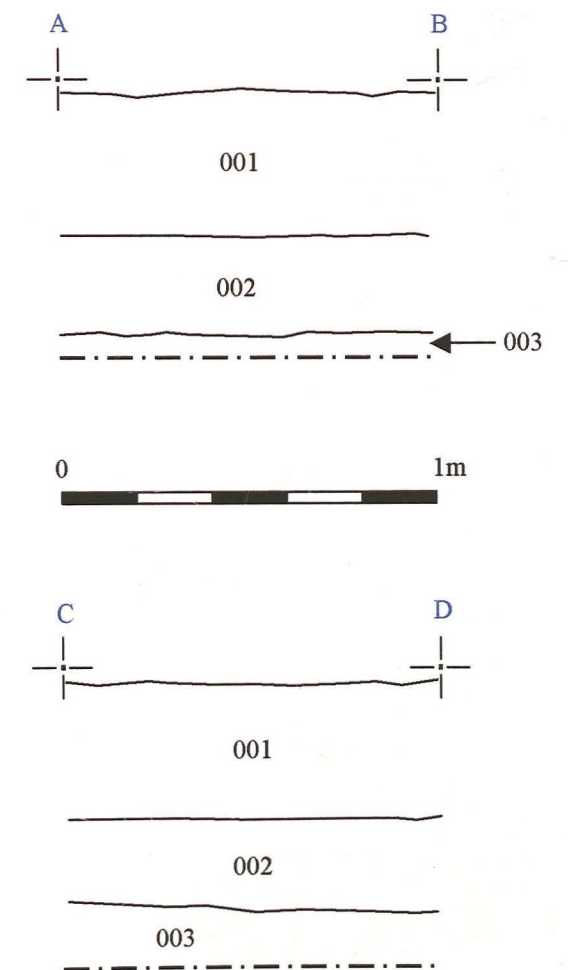
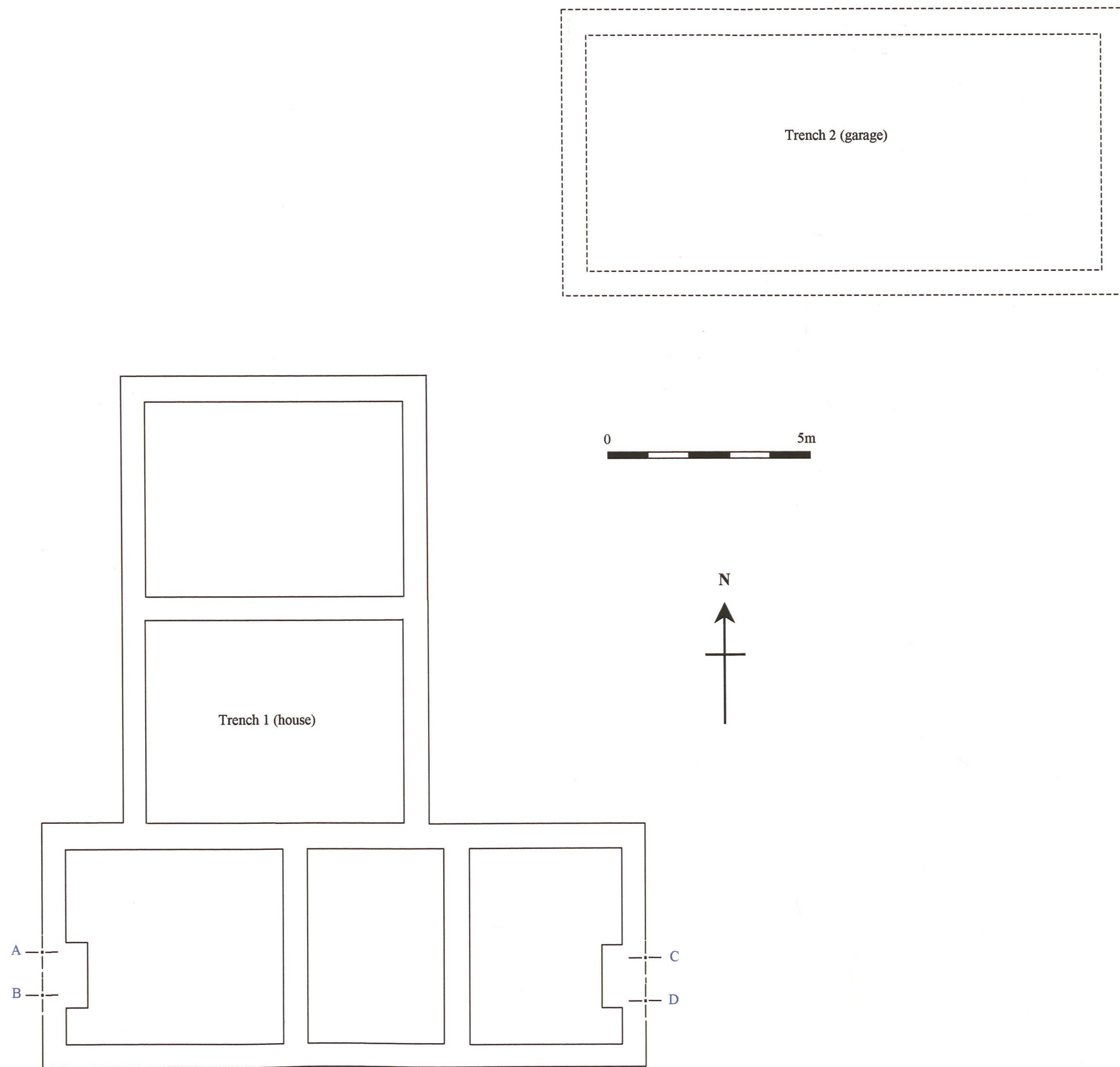


Fig. 3: plan of the foundation trenches (broken lines indicate those parts of the works which were not observed) at scale 1:100, with two sample sections (located on the plan) at scale 1:20.

the house plot were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and located on a sketch plan of the foundation trench layout (fig. 3). Context information was recorded on standard watching brief sheets. A colour photographic record was maintained, selections from which have been reproduced in this report.

At the close of the day, no archaeological features of any kind had been observed, nor had any artefactual material been retrieved from the topsoil or subsoil.

The fieldwork was carried out on 29th September 2003, and was monitored by the author and C. Clay.

6.0 Results (fig. 3)

Trench 1 was sealed by topsoil 001, a dark brownish-grey humic medium sand with very frequent flint fragments, to a maximum depth of 0.40m. No artefactual material was seen in this layer, not even the modern china or rubble fragments which would normally be expected in ploughsoil. This layer could be seen to extend over the area of Trench 2, which was not excavated under observation. Below 001 was subsoil 002, a light brownish-grey friable fine/medium sand with c. 10% flint fragments and moderate small pebbles, with a maximum depth of 0.26m. At the base of Trench 1 was natural deposit 003, a friable fine/medium sand varying from light yellow through mid-yellow to mid yellowish-brown, containing c. 10% flint fragments and moderate small pebbles and gravel. No features of any kind were seen cutting this layer.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Although the site lies very close to an extensive palimpsest landscape representing several centuries of medieval and early modern occupation, there was no indication of earthworks extending over the development area. Traces of ridge-and-furrow ploughing from medieval strip fields would normally be expected at this distance from a rural settlement, but none was observed: it is possible that, if ridge-and-furrow was once present, it was shallow enough to have been completely destroyed by modern ploughing.

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.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. Roberts for this commission and for his co-operation during the watching brief.

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 with Lincoln Museum within six months from the completion of the project.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of site, looking WSW: excavation beginning for the foundation trenches of the house plot (Trench 1).



Plate 2: General shot of excavation of Trench 1, looking N; sample section C-D is visible in the centre of the picture.

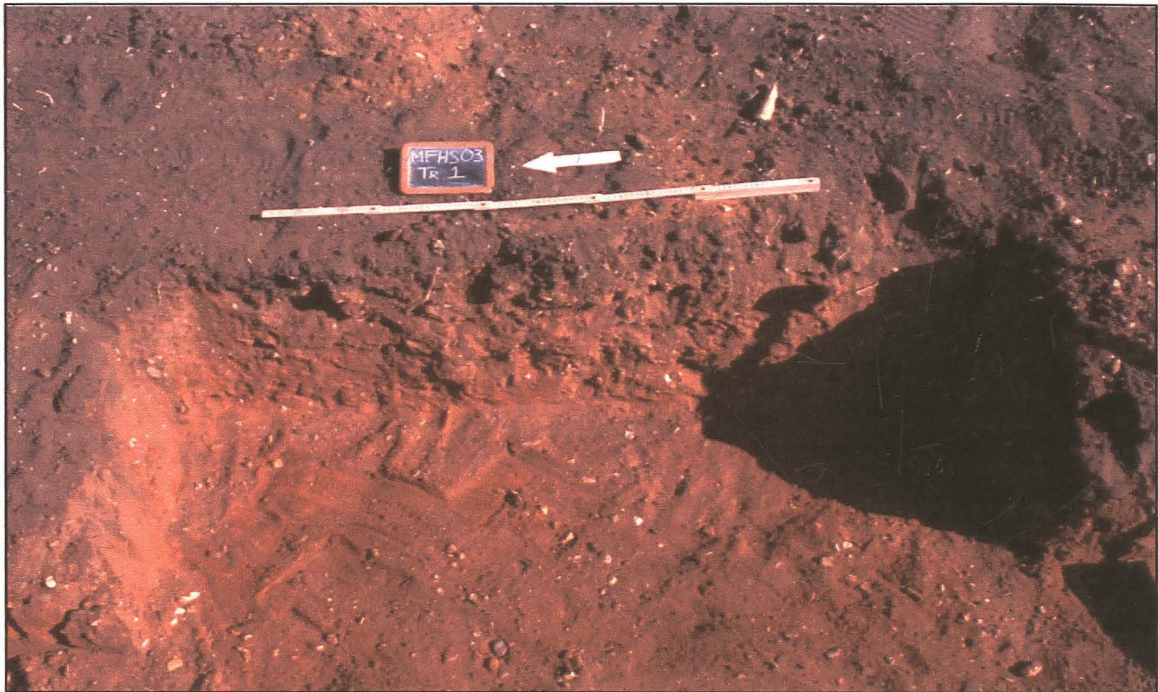


Plate 3: sample section on the west side of Trench 1, showing stratigraphic sequence: looking E, with 1m scale.



Plate 4: sample section on the east side of Trench 1, showing stratigraphic sequence: looking W, with 1m scale.

Appendix 2: List of contexts

- 001 Dark brownish-grey sand topsoil with very frequent flint fragments
- 002 Light brownish-grey sand and flint subsoil with moderate small pebbles
- 003 Natural sand and flint layer, light yellow to mid yellowish-brown, with moderate small pebbles/gravel