

**KIRKBY LA THORPE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL
KIRKBY LA THORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

Site code	KLTS 03
NGR:	TF 0994 4598
LCCM Acc No:	2003.362
Planning ref.	N/34/0825/03

Report prepared for Hyder Business Services

by

R. D. Gardner

December 2003



Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
Unit G
William Street Business Park
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2LP

Tel. & Fax: 01522 703800
e-mail colin.pca@virgin.net

©Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

Contents

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	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 Conclusions	5
8.0	Effectiveness of Methodology	5
9.0	Acknowledgements	5
10.0	References	5
11.0	Site archive	6

Illustrations

- Fig. 1:** Location of site, scale 1:25 000
Fig. 2: Plan of proposed development, scale 1:500
Fig. 3: Overall site plan, scale 1:100
Fig. 4: Plan and section drawings, scale 1:20

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Colour Plates
Appendix 2 List of contexts

Conservation
Services

17 DEC 2003

Highways & Planning
Directorate

Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to Kirkby La Thorpe Primary School, Kirkby La Thorpe, Lincolnshire.*
- *The site lies on the west side of an area of medieval earthworks.*
- *Roman activity, including gravel quarrying, has been recorded in the locality.*
- *A single archaeological feature was observed during the watching brief, along with indications that the earthworks visible to the east may have extended to the west edge of the development site.*

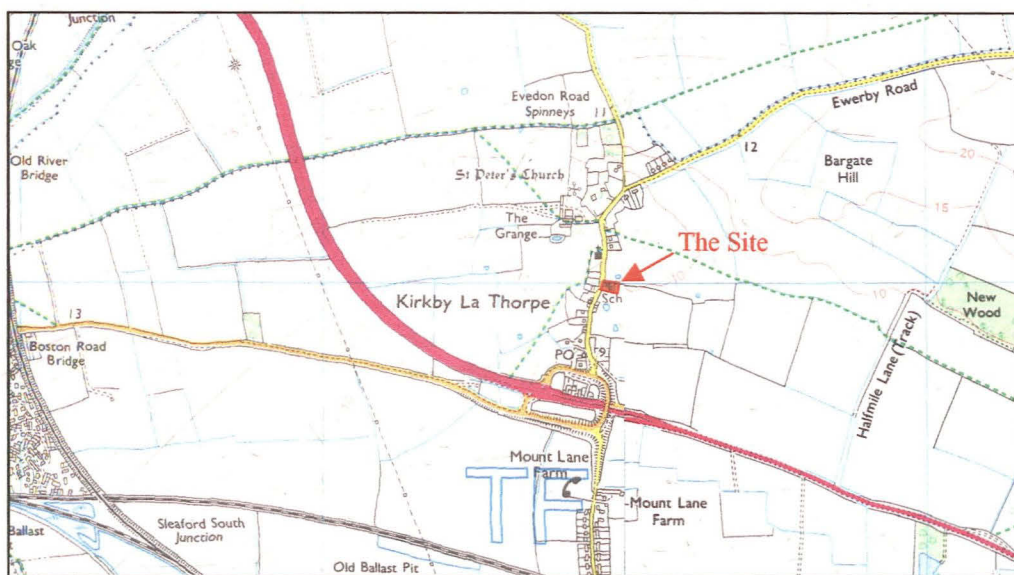


Fig. 1: Site location map. The development site is marked in red. Scale 1:25 000.
(O.S. copyright licence no. AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Hyder Business Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for an extension to the east side of the main school buildings at Kirkby La Thorpe Church of England Primary School, Kirkby La Thorpe, 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 Kirkby La Thorpe lies on the north side of the A17(T) in the administrative district of North Kesteven, approximately 3km east of the centre of Sleaford. It is a linear settlement, stretched out along both sides of the north-south running Church Lane.

The development site is situated on the east side of Church Lane, about 100m south of the church, which lies on the west side. The main school buildings are adjacent to the road: the new development is attached to the east side of the current buildings, occupying part of the present playground. On the east side of the development site is a pasture field in which ridge-and-furrow and other earthworks can be seen.

The local geology consists of drift deposits of Fen Sand and Gravel, overlying Oxford Clay (British Geological Survey, 1972).

Central National Grid Reference TF 0994 4598.

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension on the east side of the main school buildings (planning ref. N/34/0825/03). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of a watching brief on all groundworks.

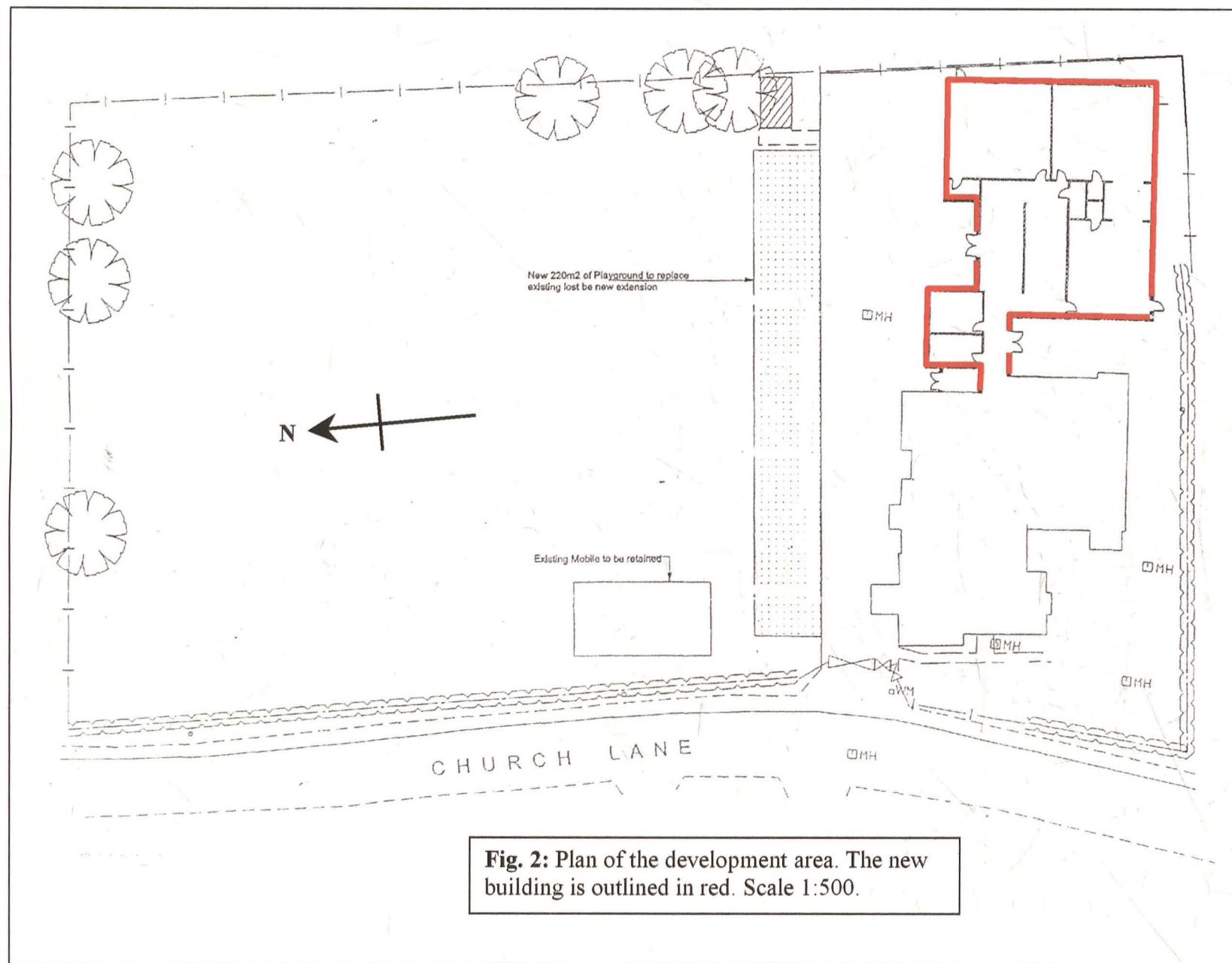


Fig. 2: Plan of the development area. The new building is outlined in red. Scale 1:500.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

An Early Bronze Age pottery bowl with cord decoration, containing burnt bones, is recorded in Kirkby La Thorpe (exact location unknown). It was presumably part of a burial assemblage, and indicates Bronze Age activity in the area (May, 1976); other finds indicate that this activity may have been ceremonial rather than associated with a permanent settlement (Palmer-Brown, 1995).

Iron Age pottery has been found on the NE edges of the parish, and a field-walking project in the mid-1990s recovered a quantity of Romano-British pottery. An evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) at Mount Lane, south of the village on the other side of the A17, indicated that gravel was being quarried there in the Roman period, probably associated with a road construction project, and that a settlement in the area may have included a high-status building such as a villa (*ibid.*); finds of Roman coins have certainly been reported in the area (Trollope, 1872).

Although PCA's 1995 evaluation produced no evidence for the period between the end of the Roman empire in Britain and the Norman Conquest, farming certainly took place in the area during this time, as a charter dated AD833 records a grant of land at 'Laythorpe and Kirkby' by the king of Mercia to Crowland Abbey (Sawyer, 1998). Archdeacon Trollope's history of the area records the discovery of 'Saxon remains' in the parish, including a small vessel containing human bone, and a pair of iron shears or scissors (Trollope, 1872).

The name Kirkby la Thorpe is a misreading of the original '*Kirkby Laythorpe*', referring to the combined parish of Kirkby and Laythorpe. Both names are from the Viking period, as is shown by the typical '-by' and '-thorpe' endings. *Kirkby* is a common place-name meaning 'the village with a church', and indicates that there was a church already standing at the beginning of the Viking period. *Laythorpe* is derived from the Viking name *Leithulfr*, 'Leithulf's secondary settlement', indicating that this village was a later offshoot of Kirkby (Cameron, 1998).

At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, part of Kirkby la Thorpe was royal land, attached to a manor which also contained land in Evedon, East Thorpe, Howell, Heckington and Quarrington, and before the Norman Conquest had belonged to the defeated Earl Morcar. The manor had a half-share in the profits of the village church; its population was relatively small, with a quoted total of 24, but its pre-Conquest taxable value of £4, already extremely high for a settlement of its size, had doubled by 1086. The Domesday Book also records an outstanding lawsuit against the king, in which a man named Kolsveinn was claiming '2 bovates of land and 1 garden' from Earl Morcar's manor (a bovat was a measurement estimating a year's ploughing work for one ox). The rest of the district – arable land with a quoted population of 37 – was owned by Gilbert of Ghent.

Traces of medieval agriculture can be seen in the field on the east side of the site, where the ridges and furrows caused by strip ploughing are visible as low earthworks; a deep linear depression running along the west edge of the field may represent the course of a hollow-way (a footpath or farm track worn deep into the ground with use). Extensive earthworks associated with the shrunken medieval village of Laythorpe can

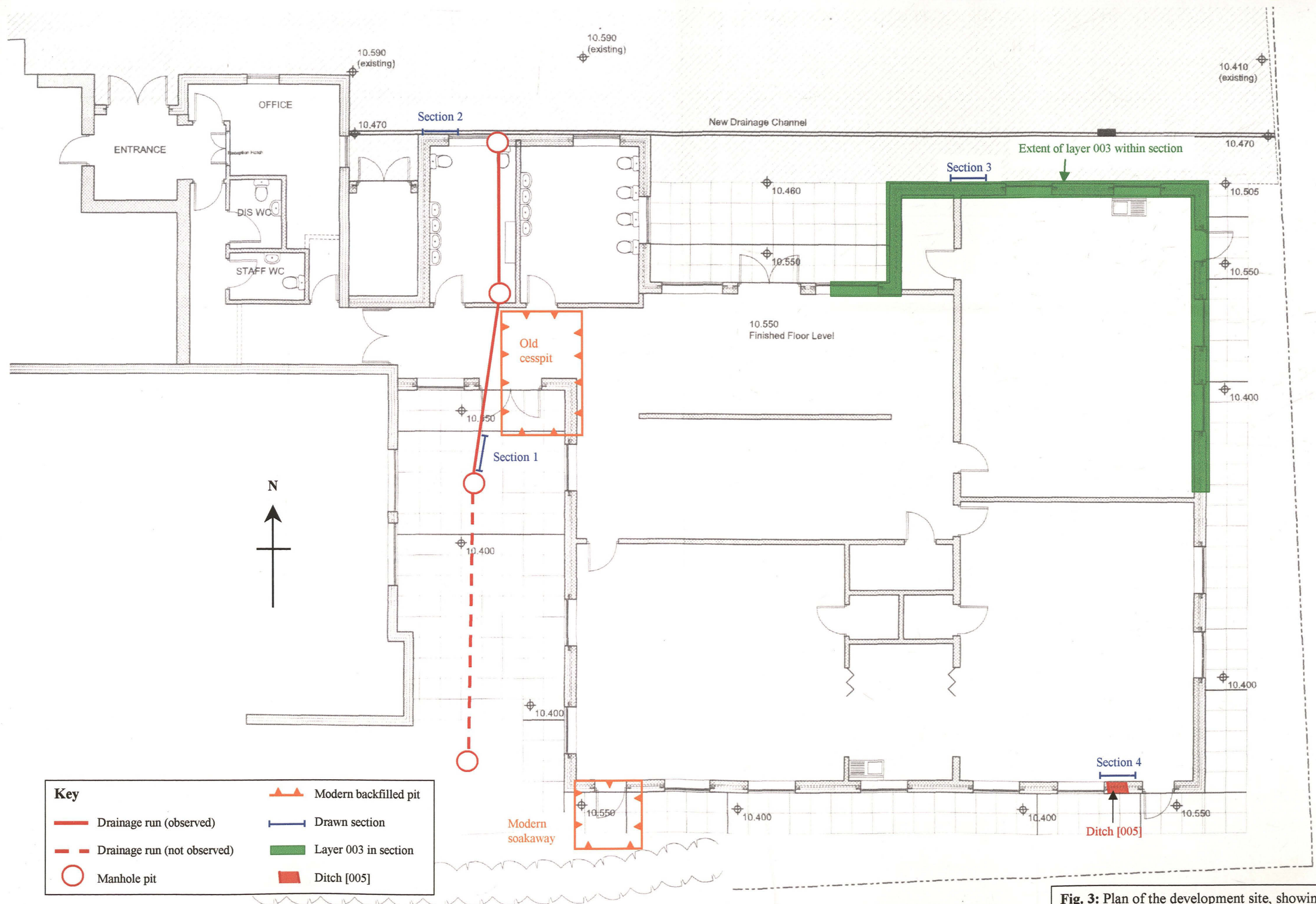


Fig. 3: Plan of the development site, showing features observed during the watching brief, and location of section drawings. Scale 1:100.

be seen south of Kirkby, on the south side of the A17.

Kirkby's present church (St. Denis) has frequently been rebuilt, but retains one Norman doorway, and two fragments of Anglo-Saxon decorated stone are inlaid in the tower wall (Pevsner, 1989). During the medieval period, Kirkby had two churches, but the church of St. Peter was demolished at the end of the 16th century, and is visible only as a series of earthworks near the rectory (Palmer-Brown, 1995).

The earliest (stone) building of the present Church of England school dates from 1860; it has a number of recent brick extensions.

5.0 Methodology

The asphalt surface and limestone rubble bedding layer of the school playground was removed before the start of the archaeological watching brief, along with parts of the standing buildings and several trees. Groundworks began on 31st October, with the excavation of a trench for drainage pipes, part of which was also completed before archaeological supervision commenced (fig. 3). Work began on the foundation trenches on 4th November, using a mini-digger with a 0.6m toothed bucket and finishing the trenches to a level by hand; the back-filled cesspit was emptied with a 360° excavator using a toothed bucket. The foundation trenches were 0.6m wide, and ranged from 0.6m to 1.0m deep.

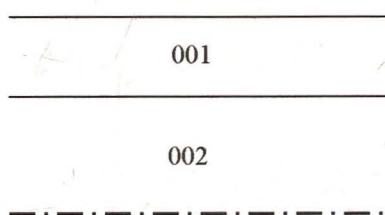
Apart from the old school cesspit, all excavations could safely be entered. The trench sections were cleaned by hand and closely examined, and sample sections were recorded where the trenches were deep enough to cut into the natural sand or where more than one layer was present. The single feature seen in plan was excavated by a section 0.20m wide. Recording was done on standard watching brief record sheets, accompanied by drawings at a scale of 1:20 and a colour slide photographic record.

The fieldwork was completed on 6th November 2003. It was monitored by the author and S. A. Savage.

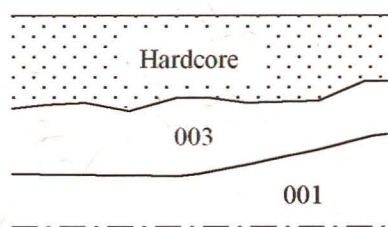
6.0 Results (figs. 3 and 4)

Below the levelling layers for the school playground was a deep layer (up to 0.76m) of very dark brown silty sand, 001, which may have been a buried topsoil representing a previous ground surface. Over most of the area of the site, 001 lay directly over the drift geology, varicoloured sand and gravel layer 002 (fig. 4). A dark grey silty sand layer, 003, overlay 001 in the NE quadrant of the site (figs. 3 and 4); it contained fragments of modern glass and china.

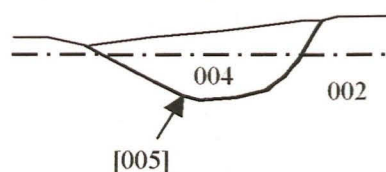
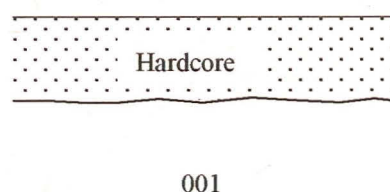
On the east side of the drainage run, excavations for the foundation trenches encountered a redundant earthenware drainpipe within a brick inspection chamber, which proved to be sunk into the brick rubble filling a larger structure. This cistern-like structure measured approx. 2.7m x 2.4m x 1.8m, was built of modern machine-made brick with a concrete base and lid, and was partially flooded: it appeared to be the cess-pit pertaining to the outside toilets of the original school building. A brick-



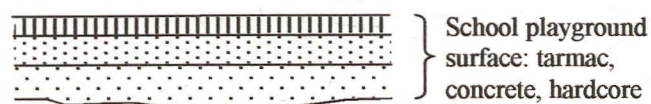
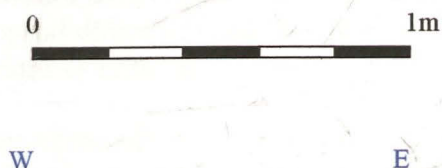
Section 1: ESE facing sample section in the drainage pipe trench.



Section 3: S facing sample section in the NE corner of the site, showing layer 003.

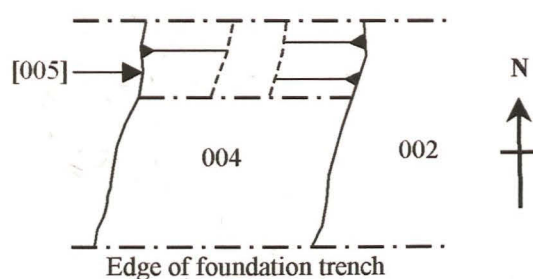


Section 4: S facing section showing feature [005].



Cut stepped back

Section 2: S facing sample section in the NW corner of the site.



Plan 5: post-excavation plan of feature [005] within foundation trench.

Fig. 4: Plan and section drawings within the foundation trenches. Scale 1:20.

lined soakaway pit associated with a more recent drainage system was encountered in the SW corner of the site; a small dump of modern refuse (glass bottles, transfer-printed china and fragments of iron) in the topsoil directly NE of this pit extended into its backfill. No features were seen in the sections of either pit.

Linear feature [005] appeared in the SE corner of the site: this was the last section of trench to be dug, and owing to unforeseen delays in the groundworks, this feature had to be excavated and recorded very rapidly, as the concrete for the foundations had already arrived. [005] was a narrow ditch base or gully, 0.60m wide and 0.16m deep, filled by dark brownish-grey clayey sand 004 (fig. 4); it produced one fragment of Roman *tegula* roof tile (J. Young, *pers. comm.*) and three fragments of unidentifiable animal bone.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Although the site is directly adjacent to an area of surviving medieval earthworks, and its position near the church almost certainly puts it within the bounds of the medieval village, no features of a medieval date were seen. However, it is possible that the modern layer 003, which overlay the buried topsoil, was deposited as a levelling layer in a hollow pertaining to the earthworks.

The fragment of Roman tile found in feature [005] is indicative of a building in the vicinity, but there is no suggestion of the presence of a villa, as many low-status Roman buildings had tiled roofs. The feature itself has probably been severely truncated by recent activity, and its function cannot be identified.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology chosen was sufficient to the requirements of the archaeological record: a more detailed level of intervention is unlikely to have added significant new data.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Heyder Business Services for this commission, and John Martin Hoyes (contractors) for their co-operation during the watching brief.

10.0 References

British Geological Survey, 1972, *Grantham. England and Wales Sheet 127. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50 000 Provisional Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey.

Cameron, K., 1998, *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names*. The English Place-Name Society, Nottingham.

IFA, 1999, *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*. Birmingham, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

LCC, 1998, *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*. Lincoln, Built Environment Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

May J., 1976, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire, History of Lincolnshire I*. History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln

Morgan P., & Thorn C., (eds.), 1986, *Domesday Book: vol.31: Lincolnshire*. Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Chichester

Palmer-Brown, C. P. B., 1995, *Mount Lane, Kirkby La Thorpe, an archaeological field evaluation report*. Unpublished report, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

Pevsner N., & Harris J., 1989, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire, second edition*. Penguin, London

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

Trollope, E., 1872, *Sleaford and the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn in the County of Lincoln*. Heritage Lincolnshire, Sleaford.

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 (right): The original school building (dated 1860), looking NE from the main road.



Plate 2 (left): General shot of the development site during excavation of the foundation trenches, looking NW.

Plate 3 (right): Working shot, showing excavation of foundation trenches in the NE corner of the site with the rear of the school buildings behind, looking N.



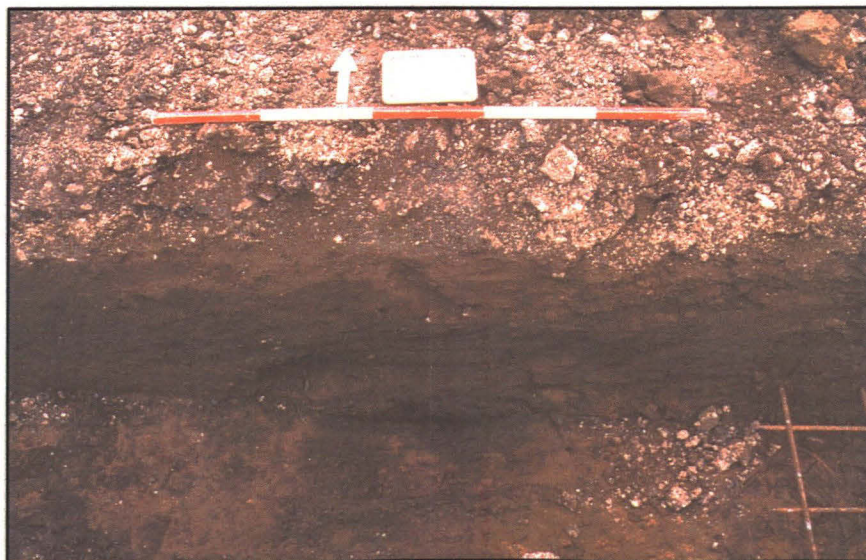


Plate 4 (above): W facing section of cess-pit after removal of brick structure, looking E.



Plate 5 (left): Foundation trench on the S side of the site, showing sand natural 002 in base of trench and modern soakaway pit at rear, looking W.

Plate 6 (below): Feature [005] after excavation, in the base and S facing section of the foundation trench, looking N.



Appendix 2: Context list

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 001 | Dark brown silty sand, probably buried topsoil |
| 002 | Natural sand and gravel |
| 003 | Dark grey silty sand layer |
| 004 | Dark brownish-grey clayey sand filling feature [005] |
| 005 | Narrow linear feature running NNE-SSW |