

**REAR OF THE OLD HOUSE, OLD LINCOLN ROAD,
CAYTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

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Report prepared for Stephen Roberts Associates

by

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Conservation
Services

15 APR 2004

Highways & Planning
Directorate

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a house and garage on land at the rear of The Old House, Caythorpe, Lincolnshire.
- The site lies within the core of the old village, in the area of the parish church and Caythorpe Hall.
- Two structural features of relatively recent date were observed during the watching brief.

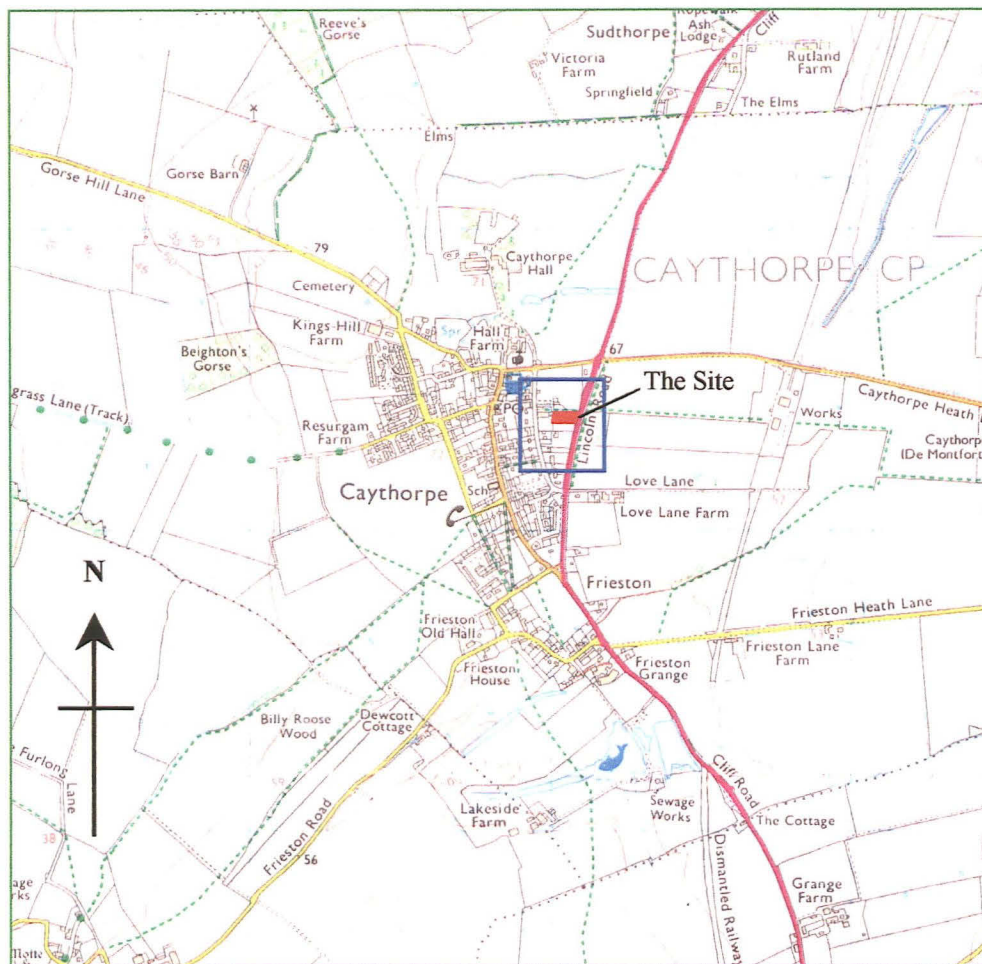


Fig. 1: General location map. The site is shown in red, and the area covered in Fig. 2 is outlined in blue. Scale 1:25 000. (O.S. copyright licence no. AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Stephen Roberts Associates to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a house and garage on land at the rear of the Old House, Caythorpe, 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 Caythorpe is within the administrative district of South Kesteven, approximately 13.3km WNW of Spalding and 13.8km SE of Newark-on-Trent. It is positioned on the higher ground in a wide loop of the River Witham, with the route of Ermine Street, the main Roman north-south road, to the east. The development site lies on the north-east side of the village, backing on to the modern Lincoln Road (the A607), some 300m south of the church of St. Vincent and 600m south-south-east of Caythorpe Hall.

The site comprises the northern half of a single field, with an additional strip for access purposes along the western field edge, and an entrance from the south-west corner of the field on to the Old Lincoln Road. The grounds of the Old House form the western boundary of the field, with a sports field to the north and residential development to the south. The field is currently pasture, with a single mature tree in the centre; it slopes slightly to the east, and has an irregular surface appearance, but with no recognisable earthworks.

The local geology is Marlstone Rock Bed, comprising ferruginous oolitic limestone, ironstone and calcareous sandstone (British Geological Survey, 1972).

Central National Grid Reference: SK 94030 48363.

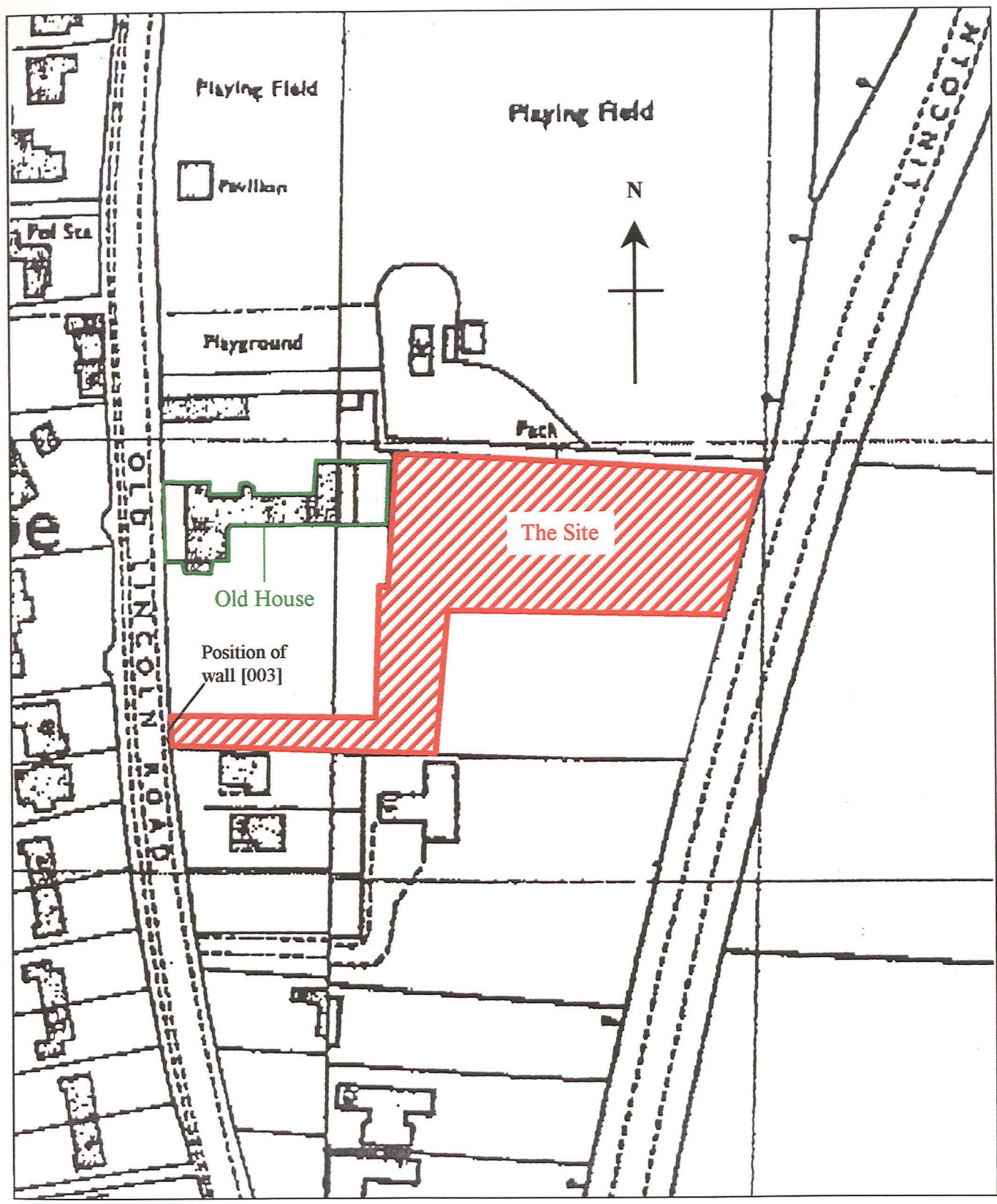


Fig. 2: Location plan, showing the development site in red. The position of the Old House is outlined in green. Scale 1:1250.

3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission was granted for the construction of a single dwelling with integral garage, on land at the rear of the Old House (planning ref. S03/0811/03). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological recording brief on all groundworks.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The Sites and Monuments Record locates numerous prehistoric finds in the vicinity of Caythorpe. A scatter of worked flints is recorded to the north of the development site, at Caythorpe Hall: it included Neolithic and Bronze Age scrapers and arrowheads of both leaf-shaped and barbed-and-tanged types. Further Bronze Age finds in the area include a complete cup and a hoard of axe- and spearheads, and a fragment of Iron Age horse harness has also been found.

Archdeacon Trollope records the ploughing up of a deposit of Roman material in a field at Caythorpe in 1857: a small pottery vessel containing 16 coins, mainly of the late 4th century AD, was found enclosed in a pillar base, along with a small stone altar and fragments of a stone statuette, assumed to be a funerary monument (Trollope, 1872). Hoards of Roman coins from this period are common in the Lincoln area, and probably represent the last phase of Romanised commerce in the region (Jones, 1993).

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery in the Caythorpe area was destroyed by ironstone mining at the end of the 19th century. Spearheads, a square-headed brooch, and stamp-decorated urns were found, indicating that both inhumation and cremation burials had been present (Leahy, 1993).

At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Caythorpe was a substantial settlement on the lands of Robert of Vessey, with full jurisdiction over Frieston, Normanton and West Willoughby, and associated farmlands in Heckington. The total population of this lordship numbered 170 – extremely high for an 11th century rural area, but the lands involved were extensive, with arable land for 48 plough teams, and 880 acres of meadow. Two churches with priests are listed among Caythorpe's taxable assets, and Robert also received half the profits from a mill. The total taxable value of the district is calculated at a phenomenally affluent £50 – half the sum due from the City of Lincoln, and considerably higher than that paid by the wealthy and important town of Torksey (Morgan and Thorn, 1986).

Unsurprisingly in such a prosperous area, there is nothing left of the original Norman church. The present church, dedicated to St. Vincent, dates to the late 13th and early 14th centuries, and has an unusual double nave (Pevsner, 1989).

5.0 Methodology

The groundworks began by stripping the access road from the Old Lincoln Road to the house plot, using a JCB excavator with toothless ditching bucket. A drive area approximately 11m x 9m in the NW corner of the development site was also stripped.

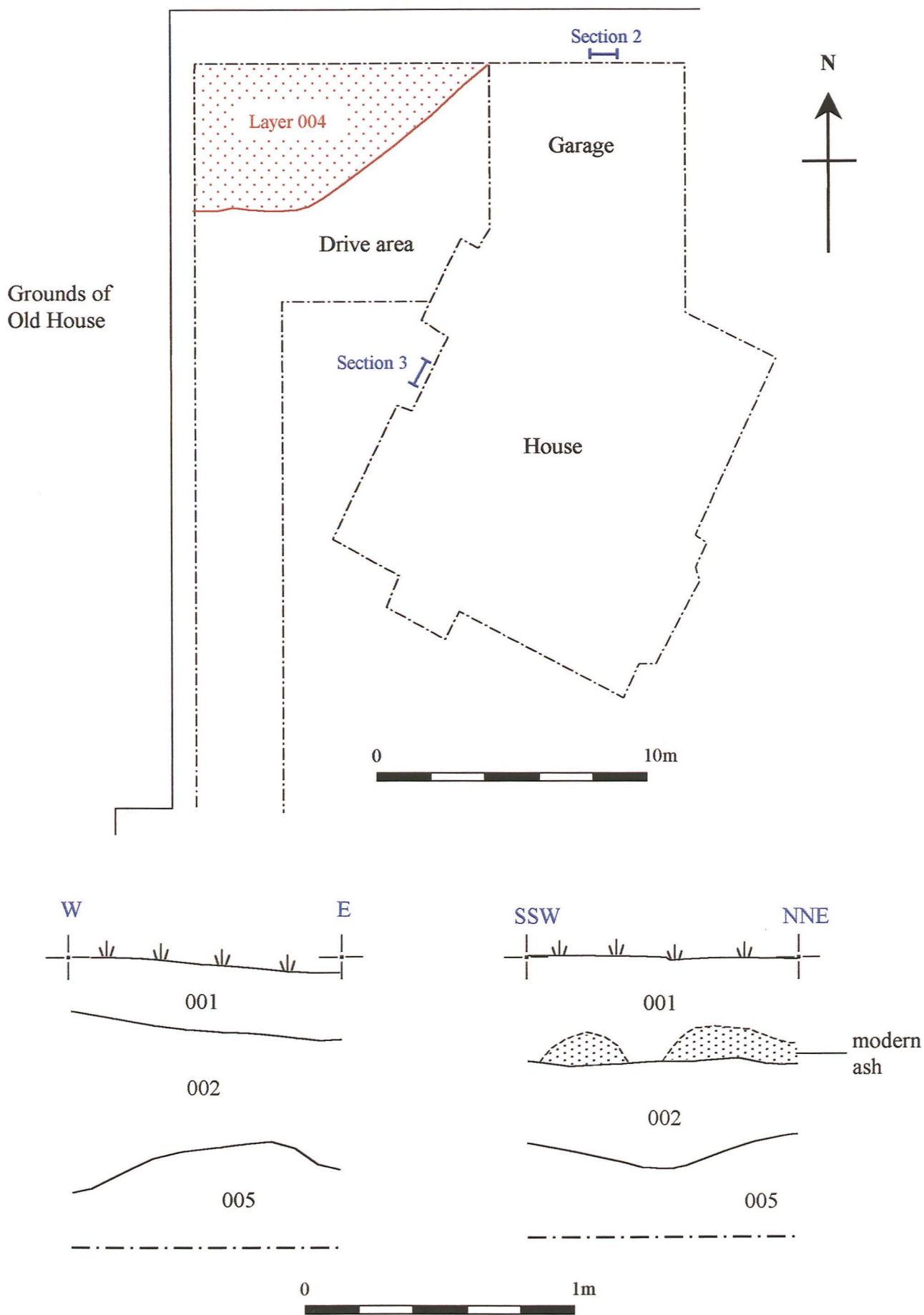


Fig. 3: Site drawings. Sketch plan of the development (top) showing the location of layer 004, scale approx. 1:200; sample sections 2 (above left) and 3 (above right), scale 1:20.

Topsoil 001 was removed, and subsoil 002 exposed, but not penetrated to any depth. The access road strip was carried out over the 3rd and 4th of March 2004, and was observed by A. Brett.

Excavation work recommenced two weeks later with the groundworks for the house plot. The footprint of the house and garage was deturfed and stripped to a level, using a JCB excavator with ditching bucket. Since the development site is on a slight slope, the strip was 0.20m deep on the west side, but did not extend below the turf on the east: at no point was the topsoil removed to its full depth. The foundation trenches were then excavated, using a 0.70m toothed bucket for the external walls and a 0.60m toothed bucket for the internal walls. The trenches were generally between 1.0m and 1.1m deep. The house groundworks took place on the 22nd and 23rd of March 2004, and were observed by the author and C. Clay.

All the groundworks could safely be entered after excavation: where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording. Deposits and features observed were recorded on standard watching brief recording sheets and masonry sheets; sample sections were drawn in the foundation trench. A complementary colour photographic record was also maintained (Appendix 1).

6.0 Results (fig. 3)

The site was sealed to a depth of 0.25m-0.30m by topsoil 001, a mid brownish-grey sandy loam, which contained large patches of recent ash and burning debris in the house footprint area. Below this was subsoil 002, a layer of light brown sandy silt, generally 0.50m-0.65m in depth, and containing no dating evidence. Where excavations were deep enough to expose it, natural 005 underlay 002: it consisted of irregular, platy limestone and ironstone fragments in a matrix of mid-brown clayey coarse sand.

Excavation at the beginning of the access route exposed the foundation of a limestone wall, 003, which had been demolished for access to the field at an earlier date. This portion of the boundary wall could be seen to post-date the standing wall to the north, and modern material was found among the demolition rubble.

In the NW corner of the stripped area, layer 004 was seen under topsoil 001. This layer was 0.05m to 0.10m deep, and consisted of limestone fragments in a matrix of brown silty sand; it contained occasional fragments of brick or tile. The similarity to natural stony layer 005 indicates that this deposit may be redeposited natural, possibly utilised as a yard surface or hard-standing area associated with the farm buildings to the rear of the Old House, adjacent to this corner of the site (plate 2).

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Although the site lies near the core of a large and extremely wealthy early medieval settlement, no indication of occupation other than stony layer 004, which can tentatively be assigned to the late 18th or early 19th century in association with the adjoining buildings, was seen during the watching brief. The most likely conclusion is

that the plots of land along the Old Lincoln Road represented the eastern border of Caythorpe village, and that the buildings on them, as was customary at the time, directly fronted the road. Consequently, the majority of the development site may have lain outside the village in an area of pasture or cultivated land – probably a private plot, rather than a part of one of the great communal strip-fields, which might still be visible as ridge-and-furrow earthworks.

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 Stephen Roberts Associates for this commission. Thanks are also due to Humberstone and Pulford (Builders) Ltd. for their 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 (right): The Old House, looking SE from the Old Lincoln Road, showing the barn (rear left) which backs on to the development site.



Plate 2 (left): General shot of the house footprint after excavation, looking SE, showing the barn to the rear of the Old House behind the boundary fence.

Plate 3 (right): General shot of the development area during initial topsoil stripping, looking NE from the access road.



Plate 4 (left): Working shot: topsoil stripping in the house footprint, looking NNW towards the church.

Plate 5 (right): Wall foundation [003] exposed in the access road strip, looking SE.



Plate 6 (left): The combined house and garage plot after completion of the topsoil strip, looking NE.

Plate 7 (right): Sample section 2, on the N edge of the house plot, showing stony natural 005 near base of section, looking N.



Plate 8 (left): Sample section 3, on the W edge of the house plot, showing the modern ashy material in topsoil 001, looking WNW.

Appendix 2: List of contexts

- 001 Topsoil: mid brownish-grey sandy loam with large patches of recent ash and burning debris.
- 002 Light brown, slightly sandy silt subsoil
- 003 Foundation of a limestone boundary wall
- 004 Stony layer in NW corner of driveway strip
- 005 Sand and limestone brash natural