

**KERRY, CHURCH LANE,
ALVINGHAM,
LINCOLNSHIRE.**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

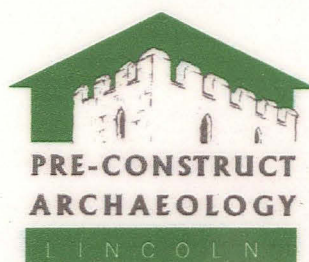
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Report prepared for Mr C. Barber

by

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Summary

- *Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Mr C Barber to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new stable block, shelter, hay store and septic tank on land at Church Lane, Alvingham, Lincolnshire.*
- *The project exposed a single cut feature, believed to pertain to a series of earthworks associated with the Former Gilbertine Priory, situated to the north of the site. This feature was filled with possible industrial waste, which may reflect upon the economic activity taking place at the priory.*

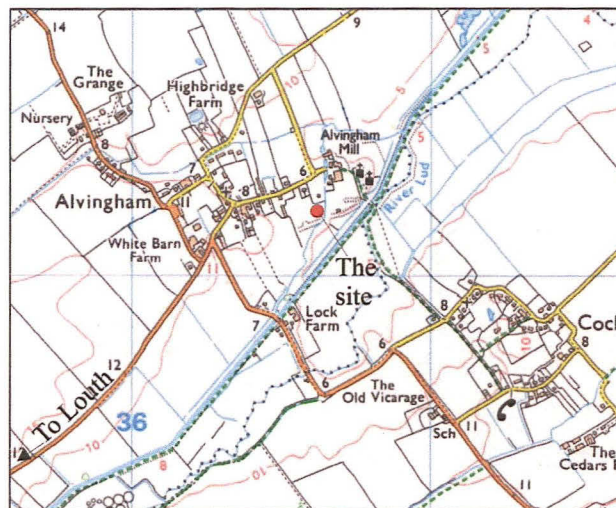


Fig. 1: Site location plan, for greater detail see fig. 2. Note also presence of earthworks to the east and west of the site.

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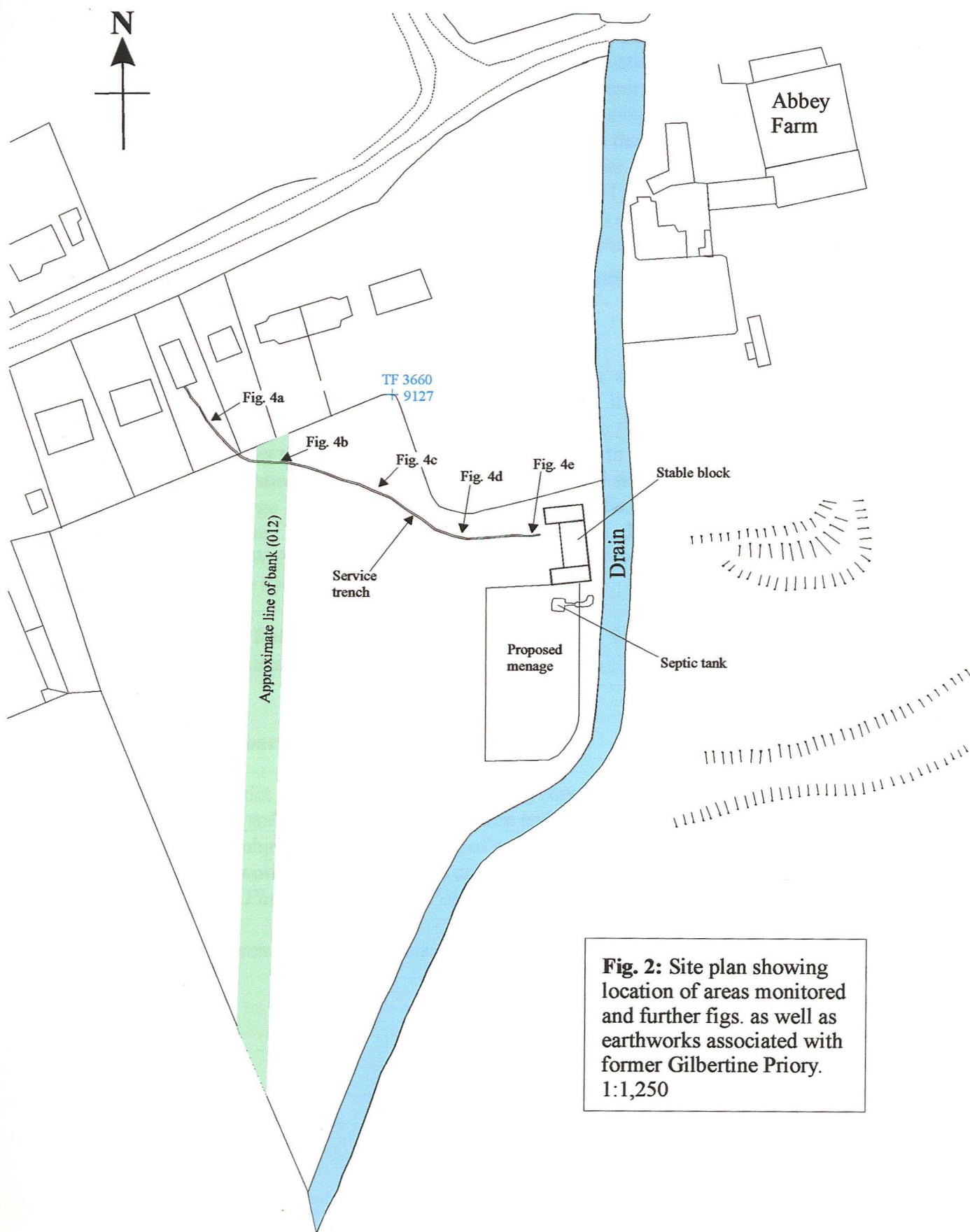


Fig. 2: Site plan showing location of areas monitored and further figs. as well as earthworks associated with former Gilbertine Priory. 1:1,250

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr C. Barber to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches and associated drainage on land to the immediate east of Alvingham, Lincolnshire. This work was commissioned to satisfy a planning requirement issued by East Lindsey District Council. The approach complies with the requirements of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, Dept. of Environment (1990); *Management of Archaeological Projects*, EH (1991) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, IFA (1999) and the LCC document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, 1998

2.0 Location and description

Alvingham is approximately 4.2km northeast of Louth and 15.6km northwest of Mablethorpe in the administrative district of East Lindsey. It is situated to the east side of the Wolds on the north bank of the River Lud where this exits onto the area of flatter land known as the Lincolnshire Marsh. The site lies to the east of the settlement, bordered by an existing paddock to the west, a fence and substantially higher field to the north and a large dyke which feeds into the Lud to the east and south. It is sub-rectangular in shape, 35m east-west and 60m north-south. The local solid geology is characterised by Welton Chalk overlain by Marsh Till with a band of alluvium associated with the River Lud to the south, (BGS, 1999)

The National Grid Reference for the site centre is TF 3663 9123, and the mean elevation is approximately 5m OD.

3.0 Planning background

East Lindsey District Council granted full planning consent for a development comprising a new stable block, shelter, hay store and septic tank with associated drainage works, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all intrusive ground works. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, 1990.

The planning reference number for this development is N/004/00505/04.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

A late Saxon church dedicated to St. Adelwold (SMR ref 41644) was built to the east of the village, some 200m north east of the site, probably in the later half of the 10th century. This was destroyed in the 11th century and thus receives no mention in the *Domesday Book* of 1086. The church was rebuilt in the medieval period and shares its churchyard with the church of St. Mary, an unusual arrangement given that the two serve separate parishes, (Sawyer, 1998).

The first historical reference to the village is in the *Domesday Book* itself, in which it appears as '*Aluingham*', meaning 'homestead of the family or followers of a man called *Ælf*', from the Old English (personal name + *inga* + *hām*), (Cameron, 1998).

The Gilbertine Priory at Alvingham was founded c. 1150 AD by William de Friston, (Owen, 1971). Considerable earthworks associated with this survive to the north west and south of the present churchyard. A water mill gifted to the priory in 1155 by William de Freiston is still visible to the north of the priory site.

A watching brief carried out by PCA at Abbey Farm exposed walls and floors from the medieval priory complex, associated with pottery dated from the late 10th to early 13th centuries, (Johnson & Palmer-Brown, 1995). A second PCA watching brief at Abbey Farm exposed two further stone walls; also believed to be parts of the former medieval priory with pottery suggesting that the buildings may have been demolished between the late 15th to mid 16th centuries, (Allen, 2001).

Extensive earthworks surround the village, demonstrating that it was somewhat larger in the medieval period. These include the remains of possible house-plots, tofts, crofts and ridge and furrow field systems.

5.0 Methodology

Four visits were made to the site by the author and Mr Chris Clay, on the 15th and 16th of July and the author on the 16th and 17th of September 2004. During the first two visits, foundation trenches were monitored as they were excavated; during the third visit the septic tank and associated drainage were monitored. On the fourth visit the service trench, which ran from the house to the new block, was examined. The land drainage proposed for the new ménage was not monitored, as this did not penetrate beneath the existing topsoil.

The foundation trenches were 0.30m wide and 0.7m deep while the service trench was 0.30m wide and up to 0.80m deep. For the dimensions of the septic tank and associated works see fig. 3.

All archaeological deposits identified were subjected to limited excavation, in order to assess their nature, dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each layer. Colour photographs and scale drawings, in both plan and section, compliment these accounts. Pottery and other finds recovered during these works were processed at the offices of PCA before being submitted for specialist examination, the results of which are appended to this report.

6.0 Results

Septic tank (fig. 3)

Once a layer of dark grey silty topsoil 001 was removed, a greyish brown clayey silt subsoil 002, containing occasional small fragments of coal and CBM was exposed. This in turn sealed 003, clean grey clayey silt interpreted as an alluvial deposit.

The alluvium sealed [006], a steep-sided 'U' shaped linear feature orientated approximately northeast – southwest, (see plate 2). Its primary fill, 007 was sticky very dark grey clayey silt containing frequent large and small charcoal pieces, angular limestone fragments, three fragments of domestic animal bone, one of which displayed butchery marks, (see Appendix 3), and six pieces of fired clay, the function of which was not determined, (see Appendix 4). This material appears to have been a dump of waste, much of it from burning. The complete absence of pottery and the relative paucity of animal bone suggest a non-domestic origin; it is therefore suggested that the material may represent waste from some kind of industrial process. The upper fill, 005 was mixed orange/brown and grey clayey silt with occasional limestone gravel. This material appeared to be a purposeful backfill. Given its proximity to the River Lud and the low-lying nature of the terrain, it seems that this feature was originally a drain.

The above was cut into deposit 004, an orange/brown silty clay (iron stained) with occasional grey mottling; interpreted as a natural water-lain deposit.

Service trench (fig. 4)

A number of sections were recorded along the length of the service trench, for the most part exposing alluvial layers beneath top or garden soil, (see Appendix 2). Some of these deposits warrant further consideration: in Section b, the material directly below the topsoil 012 was a mixed deposit, interpreted as possible bank material. A slight bank was visible running north-south across the field, (see plate 3), presumably the remains of a former boundary. This material was over 013, compact brownish silt containing occasional brick or tile fragments; interpreted as a former ground surface on which the bank was built.

7.0 Discussion and conclusions

The alluvial/glacio-fluvial materials that make up the natural strata observed on the site can be divided into two types; the lower deposits (004 & 015) were clean, containing no anthropogenic materials, whereas the layers that sealed them (009 & 011) contained charcoal, suggesting human activity in the area as they were forming. It is proposed that the lower materials represents depositions resulting from glacial melt-water, described by the British Geological Survey as Marsh Till, (B.G.S., 1999), while the layers with charcoal inclusions reflect alluvial events; deposited by the River Lud, which is canalised approximately 100m to the south east of the site.

This interpretation may be supported by the location of these deposits relative to the field bank 012; they are only present in Sections c & d (down-slope of the bank); their absence from Section e can be explained by the higher field to the north of the development area, the latter having been levelled (probably for the construction of the previous stable buildings) with a considerable depth of material being removed, (see plate 4). It possible that this bank served to restrict the ingress of these floodwaters, thus they only appear to the east of it: alternatively it may have served as a marker, delineating the area prone to flooding.

The only cut feature recorded on the site was a single ditch exposed in excavations for a septic tank; this seems to be a continuation of earthworks visible in the field to the east of the site, and also shown on the O.S. map as continuing to the west, (figs. 1&2, plate 5). These earthworks are an outlying part of the former Gilbertine Priory (Owen, 1971); given the nature of the banks visible in the field to the east, the low-lying situation and the proximity to the River Lud and associated drains, they may have been water management features.

The primary fill recovered from this cut seemed to be industrial waste, which suggests a change in use, with refuse having been dumped into a disused ditch or drain. Unfortunately this material could not be dated, although small-scale commercial activity was certainly taking place in the religious houses of Lincolnshire, (*ibid* pp. 67-8), and this feature may be evidence of a similar phenomena.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology employed allowed the sections of all intrusive works to be monitored for archaeological materials, and for a full record of the deposits encountered to be made. The methodology employed allowed this work to take place with minimal disruption to the primary scheme.

9.0 Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Mr C. Barber for commissioning this work and the groundworkers for assistance on site. Thanks also to the specialists who examined the finds from the site, Jen Kitch and Alan Vince.

10.0 References

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Owen, D.M., 1971, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire: History of Lincolnshire, Vol V*. History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln.

11.0 Site archive

The site archive (documentary and physical) for this project is in preparation and will be deposited with Lincolnshire City and County Museum within six months.

Access to the archive can be gained by quoting the universal accession number 2004.241

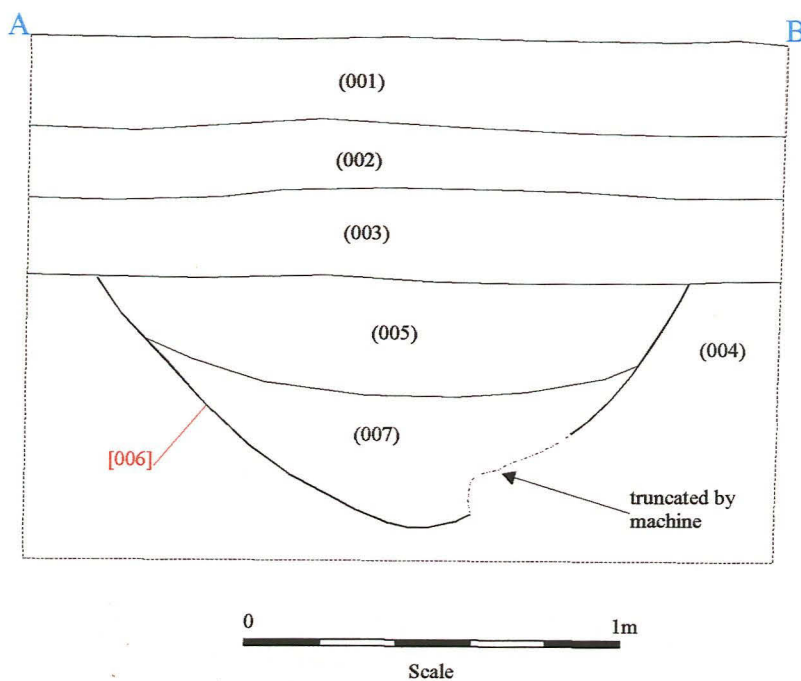
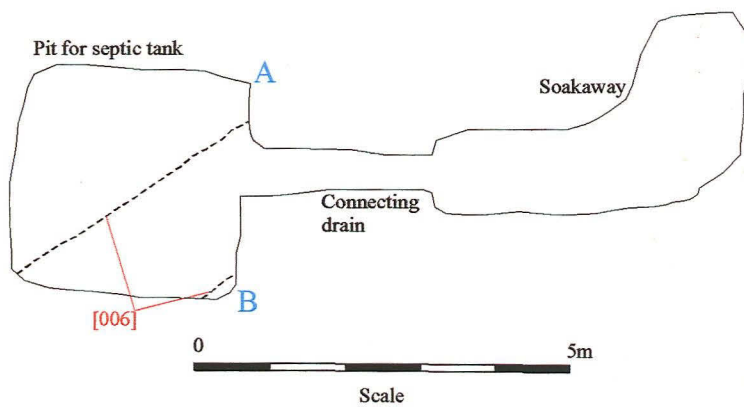
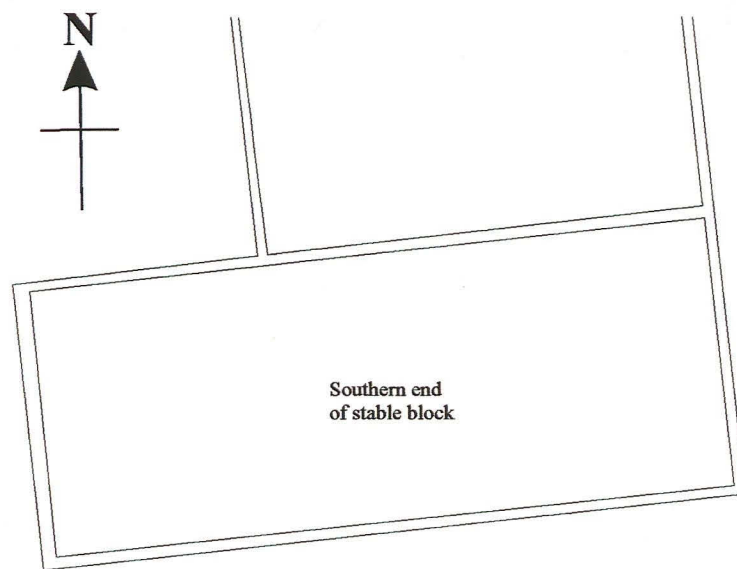


Fig. 3: Plan and section from septic tank excavations, showing ditch [006]. Plan at 1:100, section at 1:20

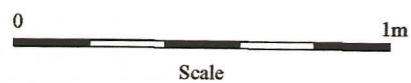
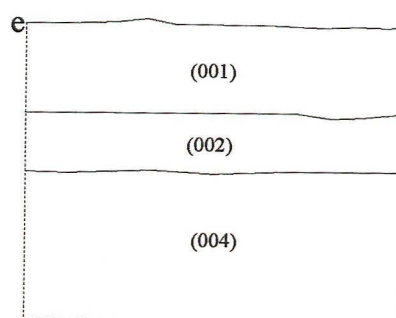
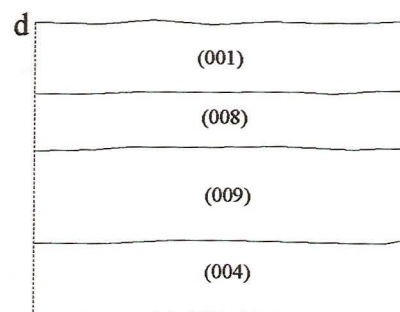
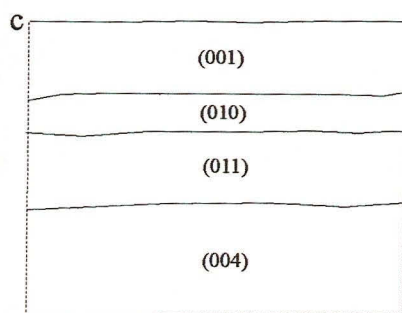
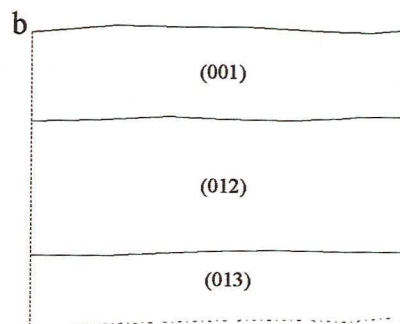
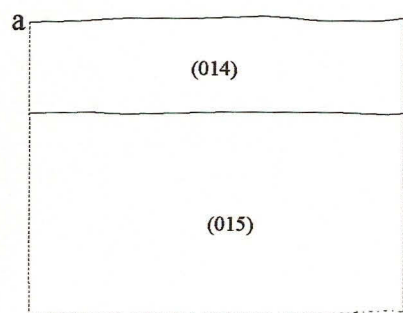


Fig. 4: Sections from service trench.
All south facing, all at 1:20

Appendix 1. Colour plates



PL. 1: Machine excavating hole for septic tank.
Looking SW



PL. 2: Ditch [006] visible in septic tank excavation. Lower darker fill was rich in burnt residues.
Looking E



PL. 3: Faint N-S bank, recorded in section as (012). Runs from mid foreground to top right of image.
Looking SE



PL. 4: Higher field to north of development area. New stable block is on right of image.
Looking NE



PL. 5: Earthworks associated with Alvingham Priory, visible in field to east of the site.
Looking E

Appendix 2. Context Summary

CONTEXT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
001	Dark grey silty topsoil
002	Grey brown clayey silt. Alluvium reworked to topsoil.
003	Grey clayey silt. Alluvium.
004	Orange brown silty clay. Alluvium.
005	FO [006]. Mixed orange brown and mid grey clayey silt. Redeposited natural, probably up cast from other diggings in area.
006	Ditch. Runs NE-SW. May be a continuation of earthworks visible on other side of river.
007	FO [006]. Dark grey sticky clayey silt. Freq charcoal and fired earth. Fired clay and Anbone recovered.
008	Compact greyish brown silt. Alluvium.
009	Mid brownish grey silt with occ charcoal. Alluvium.
010	Compact light greyish brown clayey silt. Alluvium.
011	Dark grey silt, moderate amounts of charcoal. Alluvium with some activity in area as forming.
012	Mixed deposit. Orange brown clayey silt mottled with greyish brown clayey silt lenses. Occ limestone gravel. Bank material.
013	Mid brownish grey compact silt with occasional flecks of CBM. Possible buried land surface.
014	Mid brown rooty and humic silty topsoil. Garden soil.
015	Light to mid brown silt with very occasional limestone gravel. Alluvial.

Appendix 3. Animal Bone from Church Lane, Alvingham

Jennifer Kitch

A total of 3 fragments (39g) of animal bone were recovered during the watching brief at Church Lane Alvingham. A fragment of cattle humerus, a large mammal sized rib and a sheep/goat femur was recovered from a single context (007).

The bone was in moderate condition with an overall average of grade 3 on the Lyman criteria (1996). Due to the moderate condition of the bone, it was possible to identify butchery and gnawing marks.

The large mammal rib fragment displayed butchery marks consistent with meat removal. The fragment of sheep/goat femur showed evidence of carnivore/omnivore gnawing on the midshaft. This suggests that the remains were left open to scavengers prior or post to deposition.

Little further information can be gained save the presence of the species.

Appendix 4. Assessment of the Fired Clay from Church Lane, Alvingham, Lincolnshire.

Alan Vince

A small collection of fired clay from an archaeological excavation at Church Lane, Alvingham, was submitted for identification and assessment. The site was investigated by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

Description

Fired Clay

Six fragments of fired clay were recovered from context 007, the fill of a linear feature, visible elsewhere in the village as an earthwork and thought to be associated with the Gilbertine Priory of Alvingham.

The fragments all have a similar fabric, containing moderate quantities of rounded chalk pellets up to 4.0mm across, sparse rounded quartz grains up to 0.5mm across, sparse angular bioclastic limestone with bivalve and ammonite fossils up to 10mm across and sparse rounded mudstone fragments up to 4.0mm across. The groundmass consists of baked clay with silt-sized quartz inclusions. There is no sign of organic temper.

The fragments have a variegated structure and have been roughly mixed by human agency. A few have original surfaces, which are concave, and there is no sign of wattle impressions, even though in places the fragments represent a thickness of at least 50mm.

Five of the fragments have been completely oxidized and one is completely reduced. This probably indicates burning after breakage and there is no sign of a temperature gradient from the original surface into the body of the clay.

Assessment

The clay is clearly humanly worked and from its character appears to have been obtained from an outcrop of chalky boulder clay. The range of inclusions found in the clay are consistent with an origin in boulder clay deposited to the east of the Wolds since they are either derived from the chalk itself or from earlier Jurassic deposits (bioclastic limestone, mudstone) over which the southward-travelling ice would have passed.

The clay might be from the lining of a domed structure, although the surviving original faces are too small to prove this point and they could alternatively have been derived from a mud brick structure.

No further work is required on the fired clay at this stage but it should be retained for possible future study. At that point, it might be possible to determine more accurately how the clay was used.