

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:
LAND TO THE REAR OF 37 MAIN ROAD,
WASHINGBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 0195 7083
SITE CODE: MRW04
ACC. NO.: 2004.266
Planning ref.: N/71/1535/03

Report prepared for Mr S. Hewitt.

by

Chris Clay

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Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
Unit G
William Street Business Park
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2LP
Tel. & Fax. 01522 703800
e-mail colin.pca@virgin.net

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EVENT L15580
INTERVENTION L19738
EXCAVATION L19739

negative

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Summary

- An archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to residential development on land to the rear of 37 Main Road, Washingborough, Lincolnshire.
- The site lies on the floodplain immediately to the south of the River Witham, and thus had the potential to reveal settlement remains and possibly evidence relating to ritual activities dating to the later prehistoric period. The site lies close to the junction of the Witham with the Roman Car Dyke. There was also a potential for the site to reveal important palaeoenvironmental evidence in this area of the Witham Valley.
- The evaluation showed the site to have limited archaeological potential; the only man made feature being an early modern soakaway. The trench exposed a typical wetland palaeoenvironmental sequence, with a prehistoric land surface sealed by a desiccated peat layer. A radiocarbon date was taken to date the onset of the peat formation, the results of which will form an addendum to this report.

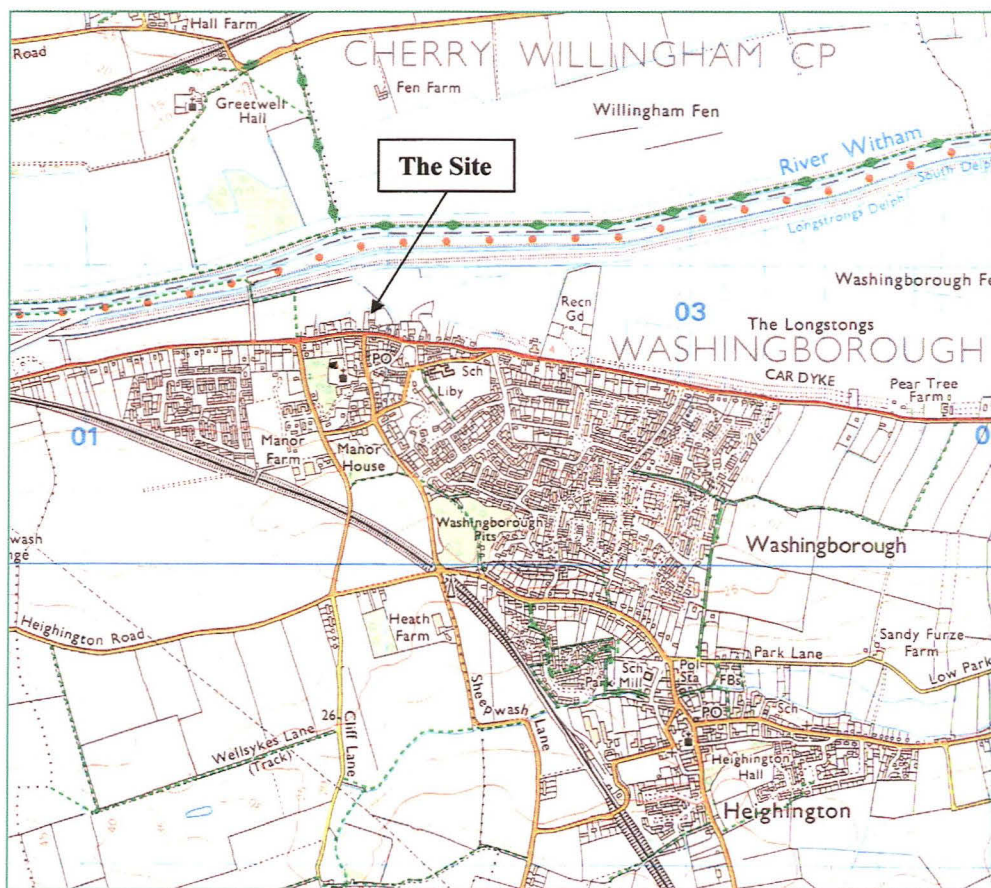


Fig.1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)
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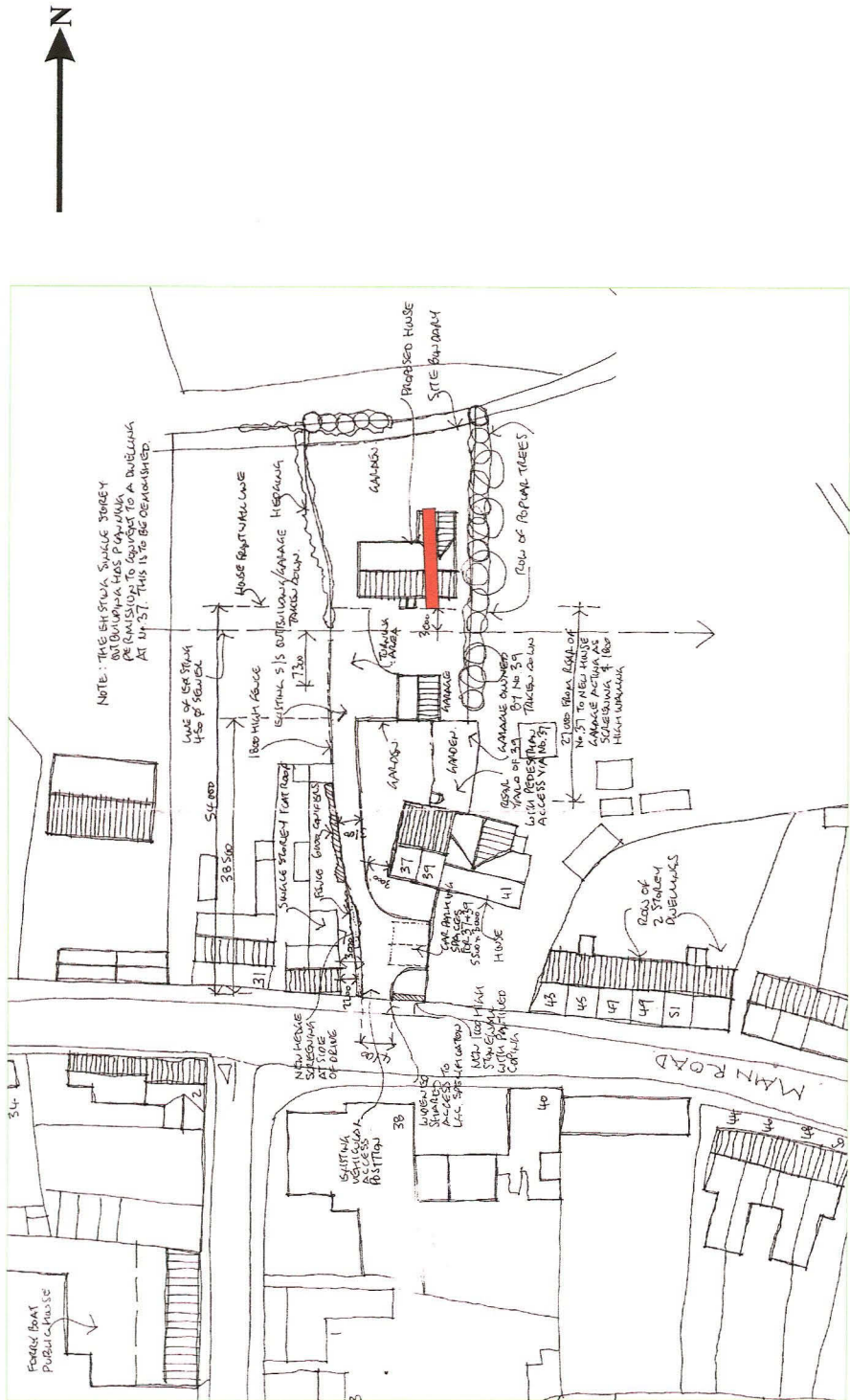


Fig. 2: Site location, showing the evaluation trench (in red) within the building footprint (scale 1:1000)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mr. S. Hewitt to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of residential development on land to the rear of 37 Main Road, Washingborough, Lincolnshire. These works were undertaken to fulfil the objectives of a formal project brief issued by the North Kesteven District Council Heritage Officer (Hambley, 2003), 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*), Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation (*IFA, 1999*), and the Lincolnshire County Council document Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: a manual of archaeological practice (*LCC, 1998*).

Copies of this report have been deposited with the commissioning body and the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire. Reports will also be deposited with the North Kesteven District Council Heritage Officer and the City and County Museum, Lincoln, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

2.0 Site location and description

Washingborough is situated in the administrative district of North Kesteven, approximately 4.5km east-south-east of central Lincoln. 37 Main Street lies to the north of the village core, on the north side of Main Street. The proposed development area is within the former garden of no. 37, to the north of the existing property. Hedges of adjoining properties bound the site to the east and west, with a field of pasture adjoining a hedge on the northern boundary.

The site lies on the edge of the southern flood plain of the Witham Valley, at a height of approximately 3.5m above Ordnance Datum. The local drift geology consists of post-glacial deposits of alluvial sand, deposited by episodic flood events. This overlies a solid geology of Lower Crossi Bed deposits of Jurassic Clay (British Geological Survey, 1973).

Central National Grid Reference TF 0195 7083.

3.0 Planning background

An outline planning application has been submitted for the demolition of two outbuildings and the construction of a new residential property and garage (planning ref. N/71/1535/03). A programme of archaeological trial investigation has been requested in order to inform the planning process; by establishing the archaeological potential of the site, the threat to archaeological resources that a development may have, and suggesting methods by which the effects of development on archaeological resources may be mitigated to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The Witham Valley was a focus for settlement, agricultural and ritual activities throughout prehistory. Fieldwalking by the Washingborough Archaeology Group in the parish has identified numerous scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints on the floodplain (Rylatt, 2001). In the Bronze Age, a series of barrow cemeteries developed along both sides of the valley, between Lincoln and Stainfield. One such cemetery extends through much of Washingborough Fen and contains up to 30 barrows (SMR ref.60327).

Just over 2km east-north-east of the current site, excavations at Washingborough Pumping Station identified an antler cheek piece, 59 sherds of Late Bronze Age/Iron Age pottery, animal bone, human bone and worked wood, indicative of some form of extensive settlement activity, sealed by the onset of peat formation from about 1000BC (Coles et. al., 1979). Present excavations at the site in advance of flood defence improvements have exposed further evidence of Late Bronze Age settlement activity and possible metalworking (Allen, *pers.comm.*).

During the construction of the Lincolnshire Loop Line, three late Bronze Age swords, representing a votive deposit were discovered, approximately 400m to the north-east of the site (SMR ref.61295).

An evaluation at 81 Main Road identified a buried land surface of Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic date. A Late Bronze Age spearhead was found in this level, which appeared to have been deliberately pushed into the ground through an overlying peat layer. A radiocarbon date from the base of the peat suggested that it began to form in the period 1260 - 905BC (Holt, 2004).

In the Romano-British period, Lincoln developed as a major urban and administrative centre. This no doubt inspired the construction of the Car Dyke, an artificial canal and drainage feature, connecting Lincoln via the Witham with the agricultural hinterland of the Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire Fens. A section of the Car Dyke survives as an earthwork approximately 350m to the east of the site (SMR ref. 60714). It has been traced in field boundaries to the west of this, and may have turned north-westwards, passing within 50m of the site, before joining the Witham at a point approximately 250m to the north-west of the proposed development area.

Further evidence of Romano-British activity from the vicinity of the site includes two pots found near to the three ritually deposited swords (above), and Roman pottery on the south side of Longstongs Delph, to the north of the site (SMR ref. 61288). A coin of Tetricus II has been found to the south of Main Road, within 100m of the site, with another coin being found at 15 Main Street, associated with an urn (SMR ref. 61278) and two 3rd century coins from Washingborough Hall (SMR ref. 61285).

Washingborough appears in the Domesday Book as *Washingeburg*, a place name which derives from the Old English suffix *-burh*, meaning 'fortified place' and *Wassinga*, the tribal group which occupied this region in the Saxon period (Cameron, 1998). At the time of the Domesday Survey, the region was part of a royal estate (Morgan & Thorn, 1986).

5.0 Methodology

A single evaluation trench was excavated within the proposed building footprint (aligned broadly north – south) to record a profile of the stratigraphic sequence running across the floodplain towards the river. The trench was 12m long and was excavated using a JCB fitted with a 1.8m wide trenching bucket. The project specification anticipated the discovery of a peat horizon overlying a sandy buried soil horizon, and required machining through the peat onto the sand layer and no further.

Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits not exceeding 0.2m, until the anticipated sand layer was exposed. Further excavation through this sand layer was carried out by hand.

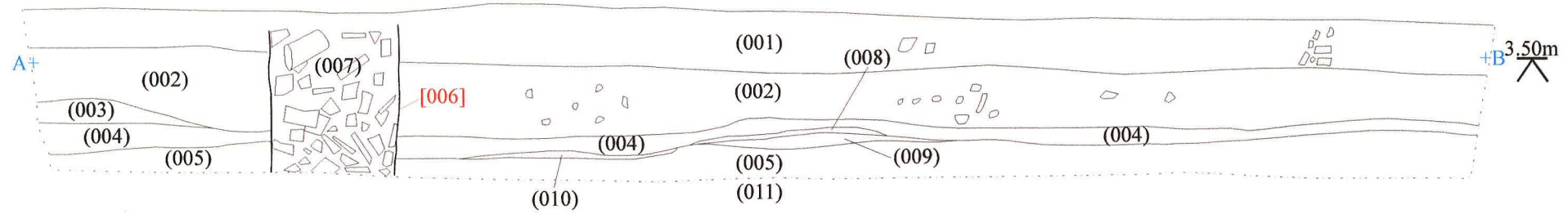
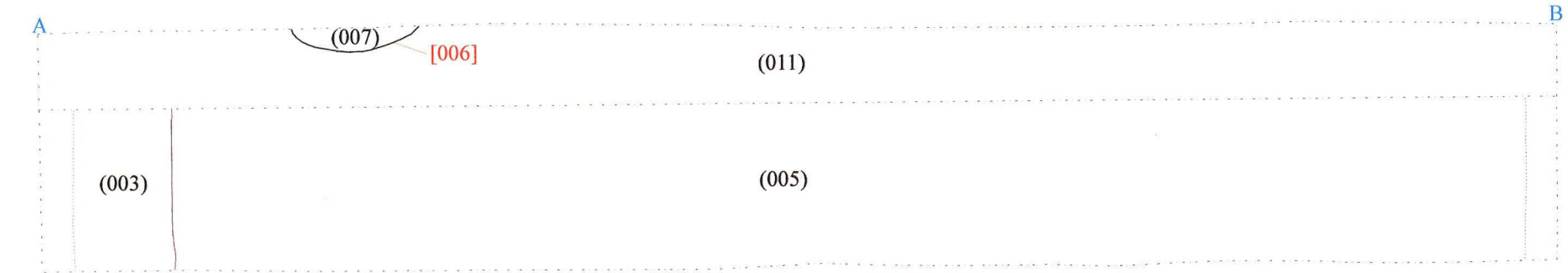
The trench was recorded in plan and in section at a scale of 1:50, with associated context information. A photographic record was maintained throughout the project, and selected prints have been reproduced in this report. The fieldwork was carried out by the author on Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th December 2004.

6.0 Results

The trench area was sealed by a garden soil of very dark brown-grey organic sand, 001, which was 0.3 to 0.5m deep. Towards the south end of the trench, this was cut by a 1.05m steep sided pit, 006: situated below the turf line of the former garden, and also directly below a tree trunk which was pulled out of the ground prior to machine excavation of the trench. The fill of the pit, 007 was a mixed deposit of topsoil-like dark brown and grey sand, with large quantities of modern brick and tile rubble. This feature was interpreted as a soakaway, a hypothesis confirmed by the large amounts of water running into the trench through this feature.

The topsoil sealed a mixed layer, 002, which was up to 0.7m deep and consisted of mixed greyish brown clayey sand, which was more clayey towards the base of the deposit. This layer was interpreted as a subsoil, with an element of imported material to raise the ground level – it was noted that there was a drop in the height of the modern ground surface of c.0.5m beyond the northern boundary of the development area. Context 002 may represent several episodes of deposition, but these have become largely indistinguishable due to mixing by root and worm action.

At the south end of the trench, sealed by 002, was a 0.2m deep layer of dirty yellow sand, 003, which lensed out 1.4m into the trench. This deposit appeared to represent a discrete, single event, possibly caused by a storm washing material down the valley slope. It rested on a compact desiccated peat layer, 004, up to 0.2m deep, which extended along the length of the trench. A radiocarbon dating sample was taken from this context, in order to fulfil the project brief for palaeoenvironmental assessment (Hambley, 2003): an archaeological environmental specialist was consulted, who determined that the deposits exposed did not merit a more extensive program of sampling (J. Rackham, *pers. comm.*). The results of the radiocarbon dating will be submitted as an addendum in due course.



Scale 1:50

Fig. 3: Evaluation trench plan and section (scale 1:50)

To the south of soakaway 006, 004 sealed two discrete lenses of pale yellow/white loose sand, 008 and 010, both representing single events of wind blown or colluvial deposition. A further lens of desiccated peat, 009, was observed below 008, possibly infilling a hollow in the underlying natural deposits.

Below 004, 008, 009, 010, a layer of mid grey sand was exposed along the length of the trench, 005. This defined the predicted prehistoric ground surface, sealed by later peat formation. A slot was excavated through this deposit along the entire length of the trench to a depth of approximately 0.3m. In places, this exposed an underlying orange/brown sand, 011. Both deposits were devoid of artefactual materials.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

The only archaeological deposits exposed in the evaluation trench were of early modern date, and relate to the construction of existing buildings in the vicinity of the site. The stratigraphic sequence exposed was largely typical for this area of the Witham Valley floodplain. A desiccated peat horizon was exposed, sealing an underlying prehistoric ground surface. Excavations at Washingborough Pumping Station, and at 81 Main Street, both to the east of the current site, suggest that this peat formation began towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC. The results of the radiocarbon sample will clarify whether this site fits into the same pattern. It is expected to conform, as the peat formation itself is associated with much wider environmental changes.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology chosen was appropriate to the development. It allowed a rapid assessment of the archaeological potential to be made, which is considered to be low. This suggests that development of the area will have little or no impact on the archaeological resource.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. S. Hewitt for this commission and for his cooperation during the fieldwork.

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 at Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive may be gained by quoting the global accession number 2004.266.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



Pl. 1: General view of the development area, looking north



Pl. 2: Post-excavation shot of the evaluation trench, showing the slot excavated through deposit 005. The overlying peat horizon is visible in section.

APPENDIX 2: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Very dark brownish grey organic sand – garden soil
002	Layer	Greyish brown clayey sand, occ. rubble fragments – mixed subsoil/ground make-up layer
003	Layer	Dirty yellow sand – possible hill wash representing single depositional event
004	Layer	Desiccated black peat horizon
005	Layer	Grey sand – possible former prehistoric ground surface formed by alluvial deposition from Witham
006	Cut	Vertically sided cut for modern soakaway. Contains 007
007	Fill	Dark brownish grey sand with abundant building rubble. Fill of 006
008	Layer	Lens of pale yellowish white blown sand/colluvium
009	Layer	Lens of black desiccated peat, infilling natural hollow
010	Layer	Lens of pale yellowish white blown sand/colluvium
011	Layer	Orange/grey sand. Natural deposit below 005