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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Land to North of 19 Church Lane, Cherry
Willingham, Lincs.**

NGR: TF 0320-7136 03192 72359
Site Code: CWCL 04
LCNCC Museum Accn Code: 2004.94
WLDC Planning Application No.: M03/P/1507

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report prepared for Quality Homes (Lincoln) Ltd

by G. Tann

**LAS Report No. 788
December 2004**

Conservation
Services
14 JAN 2005
Highways & Planning
Directorate

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EXCAVATION: L19875

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Land to North of 19 Church Lane, Cherry Willingham, Lincs. Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new house identified no significant archaeological features and three sherds of medieval pottery. The sandy soil had been disturbed by numerous tree root systems.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in March 2004 by Quality Homes (Lincoln) Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new house and integral double garage between Nos. 17 and 19 Church Lane, Cherry Willingham, Lincs. (Figs. 1 and 2). The watching brief was required by the local planning authority to fulfil a condition on the planning permission.

Groundworks for the foundation trenches and soakaway were monitored by Geoff Tann on May 24th 2004. The new property will use an existing drainage arrangement recently installed at No. 19.

The Development Site

Cherry Willingham village is 8km east of Lincoln, and 1km north of the River Witham. The site lies 40m south of the parish church, on the east side of Church Lane and opposite the Vicarage. The church is on locally high ground, at 24.4m OD, with the site at about 20m OD near the top of a gradual slope from the river. The site had previously formed part of the garden of No. 19, with a small garage.

Archaeological Background

Prehistoric and Roman finds have been reported from Cherry Willingham village, including a Roman settlement site close to the Fiskerton parish boundary. The church site is thought to have been artificially enhanced as a defensive location.

The settlement of Cherry Willingham is mentioned in the *Domesday Survey* of 1086 and its origins lie in the Anglo-Saxon period. Fieldwalking east of the church in 1977 produced Saxon pottery, and an archaeological excavation was conducted about 40m east of the churchyard in June 1980. This showed the land to lie at the periphery of the Saxon and medieval settlement, with pottery ranging in date from sixth to ninth centuries. Features excavated included a ninth century sunken hut and an iron-smelting furnace (Field 1981, 70).

A complex of probably medieval fishponds has been recorded to the east and south-east of the 1980 excavation area, with earthworks extending to about 10m east of the present development plot

(Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, 89). The fishponds are thought to form part of the manorial complex, and with the close position of the church, the development site was suspected to lie within the manorial complex or at the core of the late Saxon settlement.

The Watching Brief (Figs. 3 and 4)

Excavation was by JCB with a 0.6m wide, untoothed bucket. Context numbers were assigned by LAS for recording purposes, and these are used, in bold, in the text. Trees had been felled, a new site entrance and wall erected and some topsoil had been stripped from the western side of the development site before monitoring began (Pl. 1). The surface was inspected for features and artefacts; one sherd of pottery was found in topsoil near the northern boundary, and slight concentrations of limestone pieces were suspected to represent the remains of a removed west-east boundary wall. Soil and sand excavated from the foundations was spread across land behind the new house, raising and levelling the ground surface (Pl. 2).

Topsoil **1** was a dark grey/brown compact silt loam, up to 0.35m thick. It covered a dark brown silt subsoil **2**, about 0.15m thick at the northern side of the house, increasing to 0.65m thick towards the south east. Medieval pottery sherds **3** and **4** were from this material but were not seen *in situ*.

Below the silt was a white sand layer **7**, between 0.2m and 0.3m thick. This layer produced no finds, and was interpreted as a leached version of the underlying yellow sand **8**. The thickness of the yellow sand was not determined, but was at least 0.4m thick. The sands were thought to be naturally laid deposits (Pl. 3).

Although the base of the dark brown silt **2** was very uneven, only one probable feature could be identified on the site. Feature **5** contained white sand mixed with dark brown silt and organic silty soil **6**; it was 0.9m wide but could only be identified in one wall foundation trench (Pl. 4). The rounded base was cut into yellow sand 1m below the stripped ground surface, but it was not possible to see from which level it had been cut. No sherds were found within it.

All other variations in the described layers were thought to be the result of tree roots having mixed material. The density of roots across the site was particularly high.

Conclusion

No features or artefacts were found during the watching brief that would support the theory that the site lay within a manorial complex or in the settlement core. The three pottery sherds are probably the result of manuring of fields beside the settlement.

The topsoil across the site was not especially thick, but overlay a dark brown silt which appeared to be very similar. This layer was up to 0.6m thick, thinnest near the front of the new house site where orange/yellow sand was 0.8m below the turf surface. A zone of white sand between the layers

orange/yellow sand was 0.8m below the turf surface. A zone of white sand between the layers represented leaching. There was no reason to suspect the thick silt to be imported onto the site by human agency, although there may have been some soil movement related to construction of the removed garage and vehicular access which might explain the thinner deposits at the centre of the development plot.

It has been suggested that the church site to the north has been artificially enhanced. This watching brief recorded thick deposits of silts and sands, with no clay or rock exposed in the groundworks. A natural area of raised ground around the present church site may have collected wind-blown sands and silts from the Witham valley, including soils which may have been derived from peats. The date of such accretion is difficult to guess; although it might be prehistoric, the earliest finds from this watching brief were of late twelfth-fourteenth century date. There remains a slight possibility that Saxon or earlier horizons are buried below this 1m minimum depth of material.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful for the co-operation received from the contractors. The pottery was identified by Jane Young. Illustrations were prepared by Doug Young, and the report was collated and produced by Naomi Field.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
20th December 2004

References

- Cameron, K. 1998 *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names*.
- Everson, P., Taylor, C.C., and Dunn, C.J. 1991 *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire*.
- Field, F.N. 1981 "Cherry Willingham" in A.J. White (ed) 'Archaeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside, 1980' *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 16.
- Foster, C.W. and Longley, T. 1924 *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*. Lincoln Record Society 19.

Archive Summary

Correspondence
Developer's plans and annotated copies
Field notes and sketch sections
Photographs: LAS colour print film no. 04/74/00-8
Archaeological finds: pottery
Specialist archive list: pottery

APPENDIX 1

Pottery Archive CWCL04

Jane Young

context	cname	sub fabric	full name	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
01	LSWA		Lincoln Glazed ware Fabric A	jug/jar	1	17	base	glaze spots	late 12th to 14th
03	BOUA	A/C	Bourne-type Fabrics A, B and C	bowl/jar	1	10	BS	leached;? ID	late 12th to 14th
04	POTTG		Potterhanworth Glazed ware	jug	1	31	BS	thick all over pocked glaze;? ID	14th to 15th

THE FIGURES

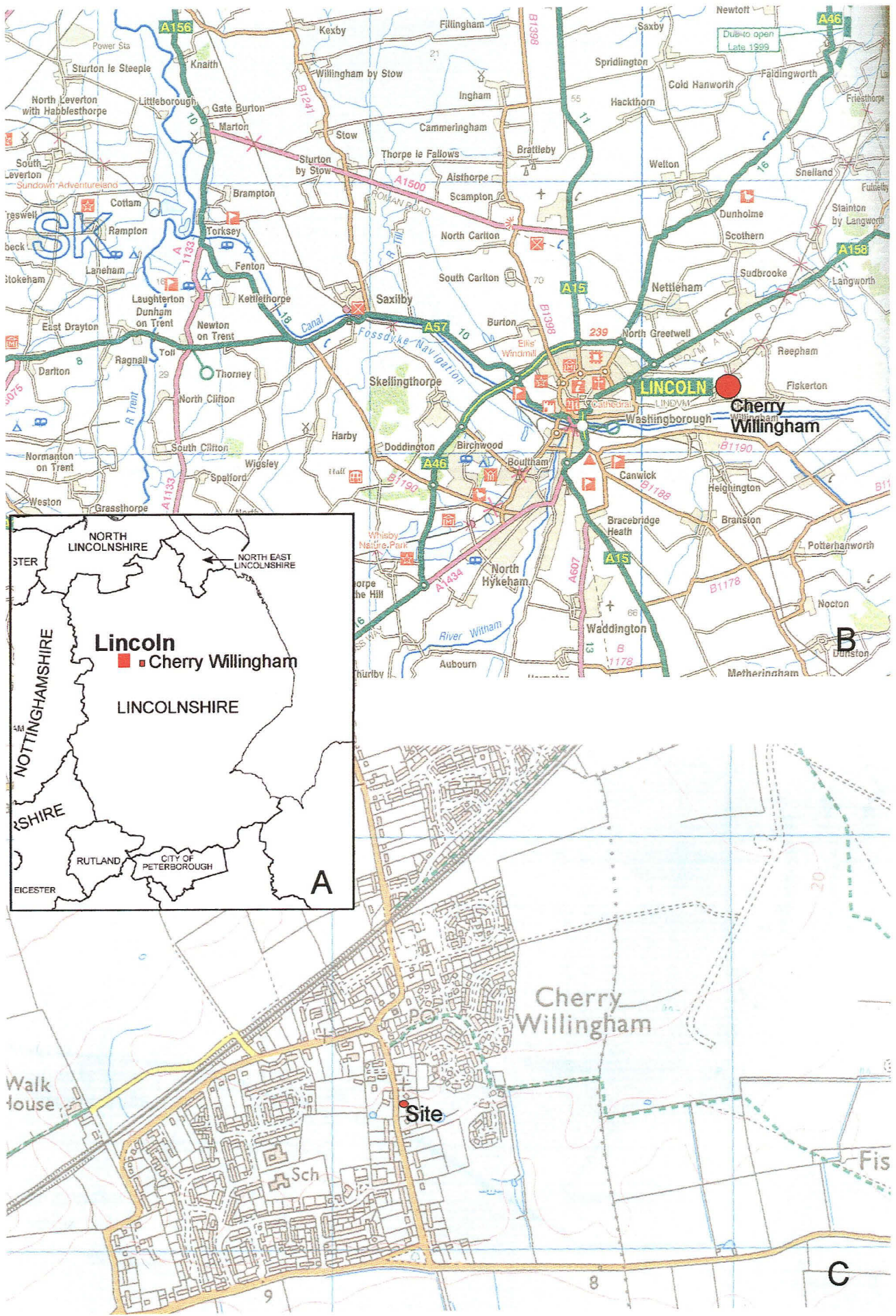


Fig. 1. Location of Cherry Willingham (c based on the 2000 1 : 25000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map Sheet 272 Crown copyright, reproduced, at enlarged scale, with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS licence no. AL 100002165).

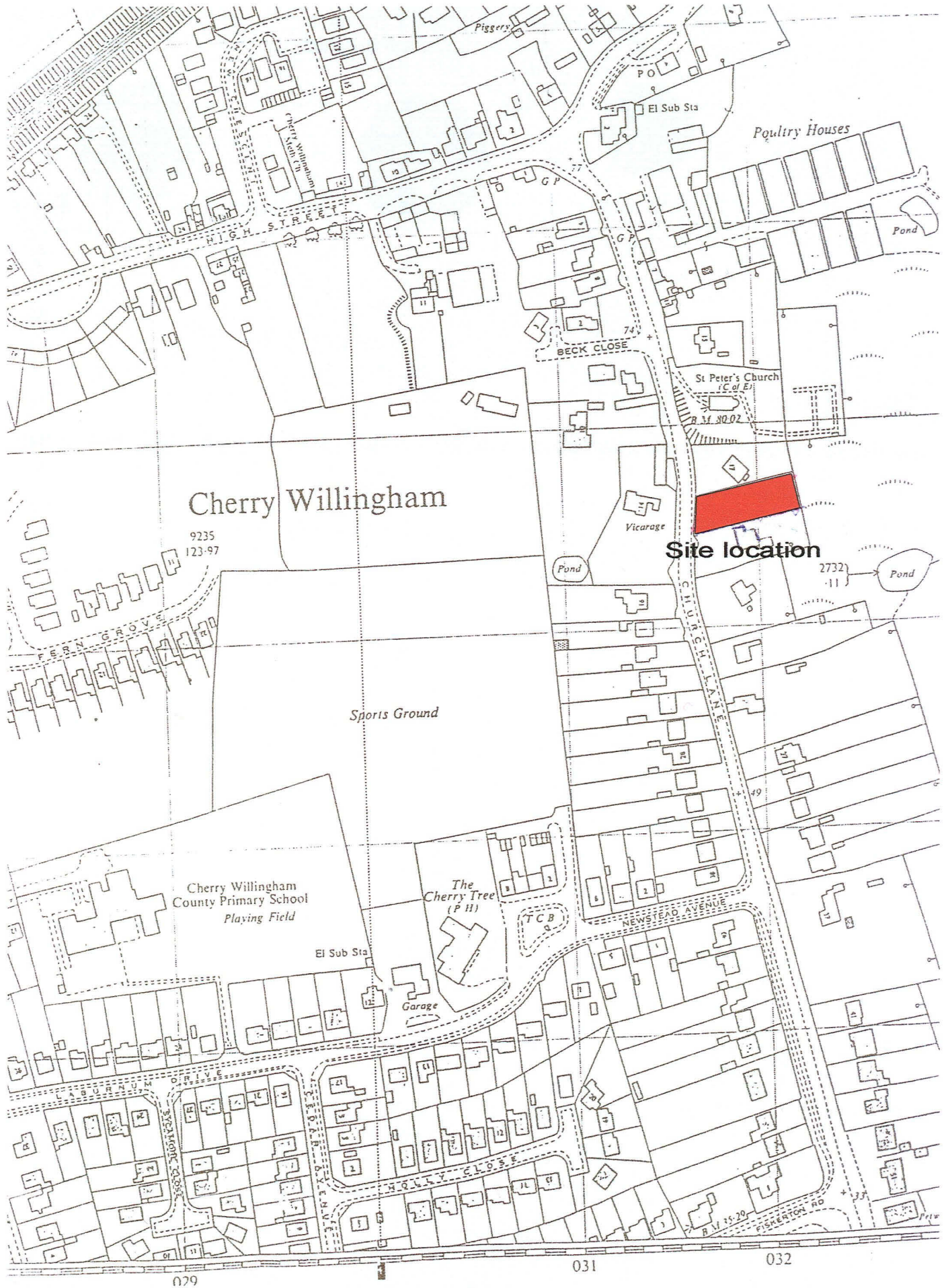


Fig. 2. Location of the monitored development (based on a 1: 2,500 Ordnance Survey map supplied by the client. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS licence no. AL 100002165

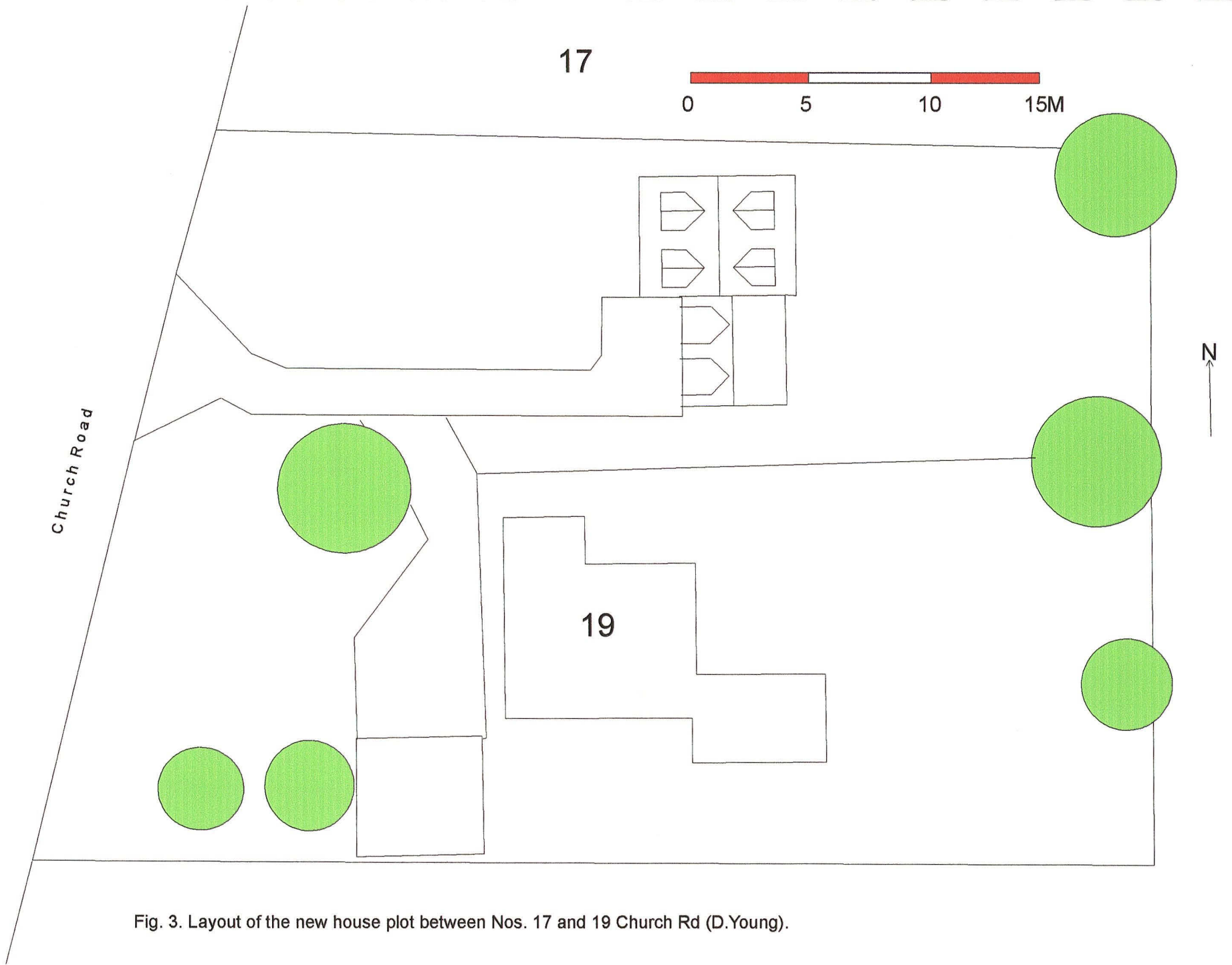


Fig. 3. Layout of the new house plot between Nos. 17 and 19 Church Rd (D.Young).

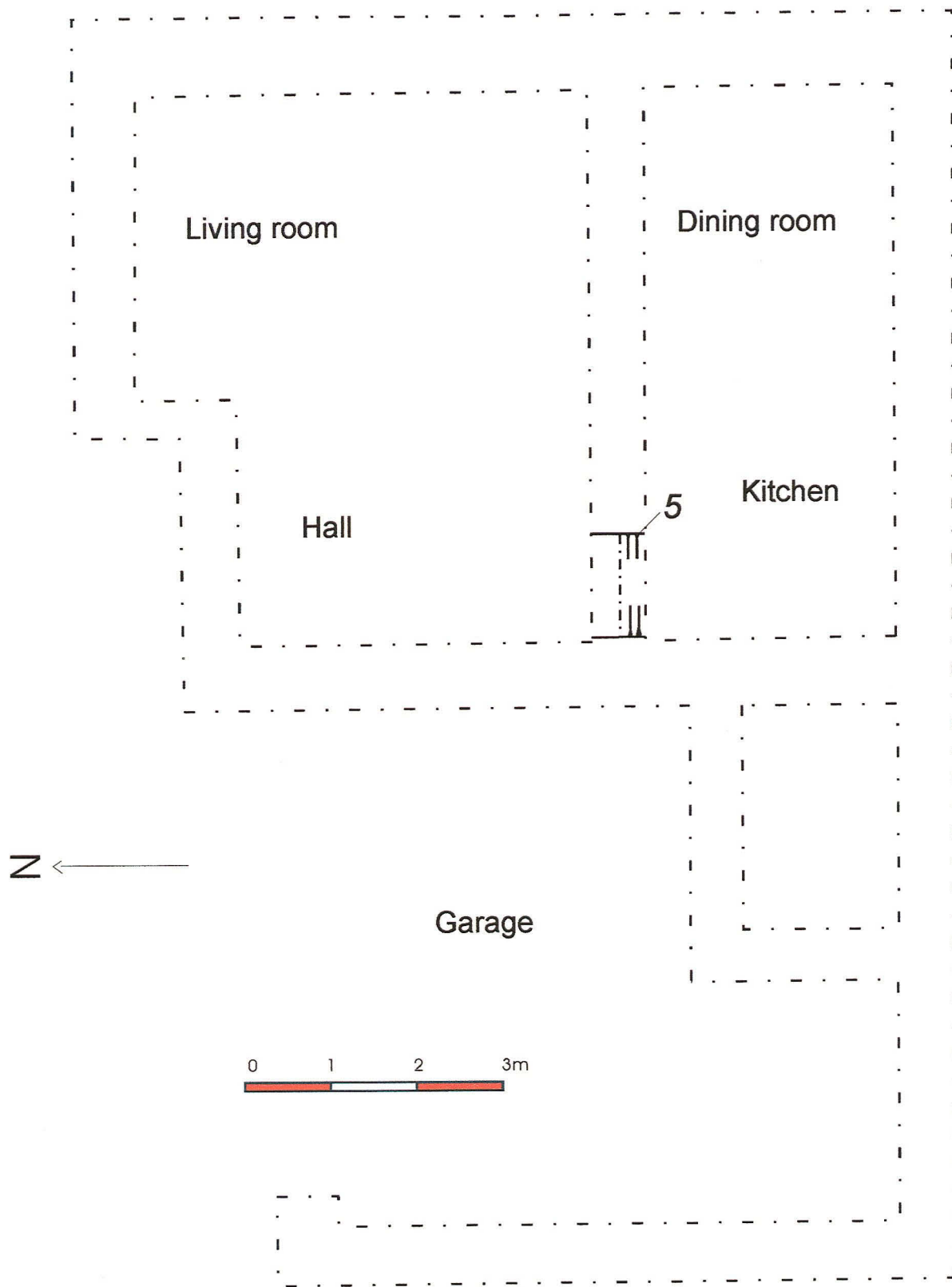


Fig. 4. Plan of the monitored house and garage foundation trenches, showing the position of the undated feature 5 (Young, after Tann).

THE PLATES



Pl. 1. The development site, after clearance of trees and partial topsoil stripping (looking west towards Church Lane from the eastern boundary).



Pl. 2. Eastern end of the development site after levelling with excavated soil and sand (looking SE).



Pl. 3. Layers visible at the NW corner of the foundation trenches for the new houses.



Pl. 4. A thin ridge of yellow sand (centre foreground) beside the southern foundation trench (right) marked the edge of a small undated feature **5**, with a mixed lower fill of sand and brown soil **6**. Looking NE.