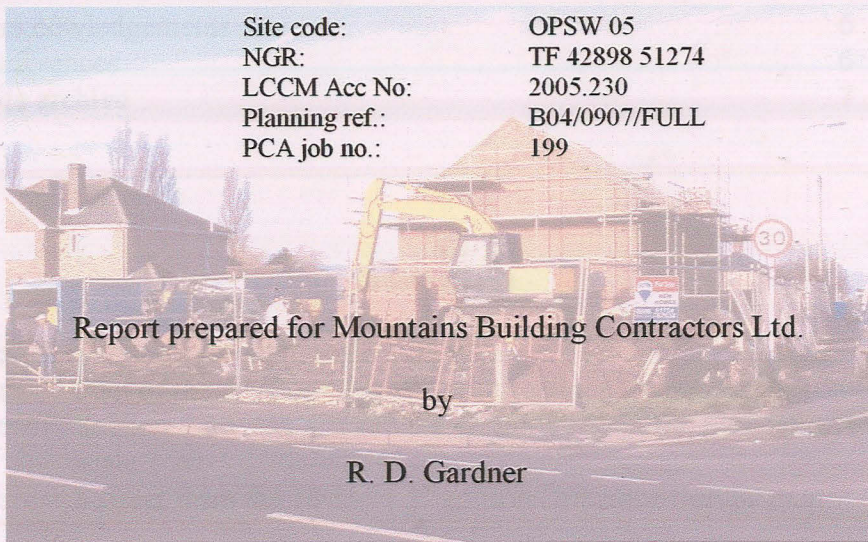


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M6/2

**LAND OFF MAIN ROAD/TOOLEY LANE,
WRANGLE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**



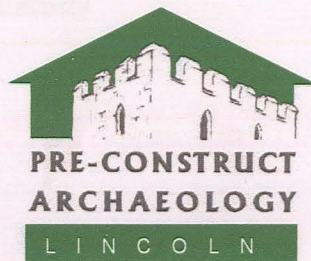
Site code:	OPSW 05
NGR:	TF 42898 51274
LCCM Acc No:	2005.230
Planning ref.:	B04/0907/FULL
PCA job no.:	199

Report prepared for Mountains Building Contractors Ltd.

by

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January 2006



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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a residential development at the junction of Main Road and Tooley Lane, Wrangle, Lincolnshire.
- The development site lies to the east of the early medieval village, within an area repeatedly subject to marine inundation.
- The groundworks exposed only modern material overlying waterborne deposits, probably the result of these inundations: no archaeological material was exposed at the depths penetrated.

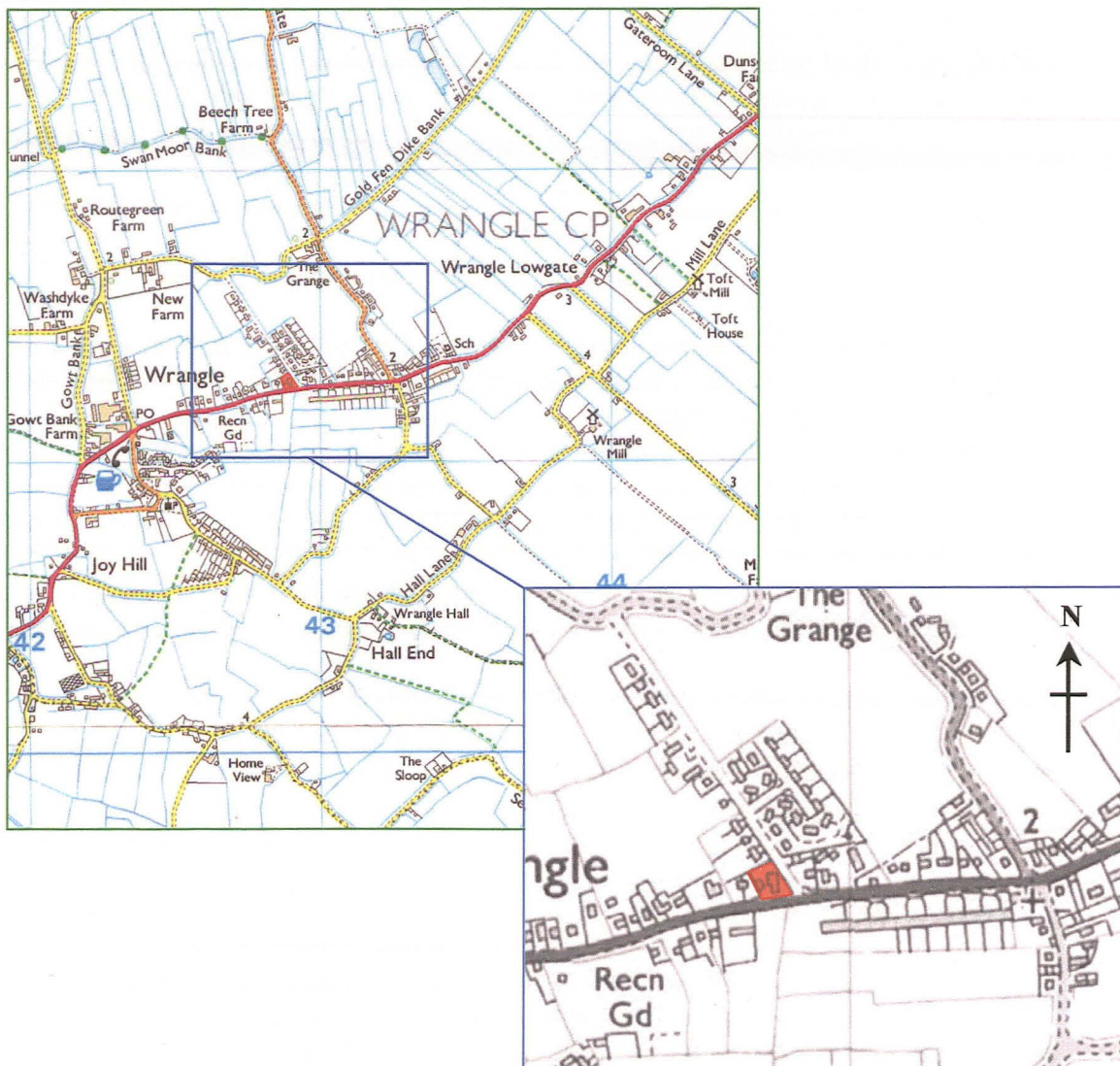


Figure 1: General site location map at scale 1:25 000, with an extract at 1:10 000. The development site is marked in red. (OS copyright licence no. AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Mountains Building Contractors Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a residential development at the junction of Main Road and Tooley Lane, Wrangle.

These works were undertaken to fulfil the objectives of a formal project brief issued by the Boston Planning Archaeologist, and a project specification prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). This approach is consistent with the recommendations of *'Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice'* (LCC, 1998), *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 are to be deposited with the commissioning body, Lincolnshire County Council and the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire. 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 and 2)

The village of Wrangle is in the Lincolnshire Fens, within the administrative district of Boston Borough, approximately 12.5km north-east of Boston and 3.5km inland of the modern coastline. It lies on the A52, a road which runs along the coast from Boston to Skegness, and whose route traces the pre-industrial coastline, linking a series of coastal villages: it has been suggested that the A52 follows the course of a medieval road that is shown on the 14th century Gough map (Platts 1985). Similarly to the adjacent villages of Friskney and Wainfleet, Wrangle lies on slightly higher ground behind a strip of levelled saltern debris, Wrangle Tofts, and an area of reclaimed land to the south-east, which has increased in width throughout its history.

The development site lies towards the north-eastern end of the village, on the south side of the junction of Tooley Lane with the A52. Both sides of Tooley Lane are occupied by 20th century houses, as is this section of the A52. The eastern side of the development site itself was previously occupied by a petrol station, while the western side was under rough grass.

The drift geology at Wrangle, and for a wide area along the adjacent coastline, comprises Terrington Beds younger salt marsh and tidal creek deposits, mainly silt and clay. To the north-east of Wrangle is the southern end of a line of Older Storm Beach Deposits, extending past Friskney and Wainfleet to Skegness: for much of its length, the seaward side of this deposit consists of levelled saltern mounds (Wrangle Tofts). The underlying solid geology is Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay of the Ancholme Group (British Geological Survey, 1996).

Central National Grid Reference: TF 42898 51274.

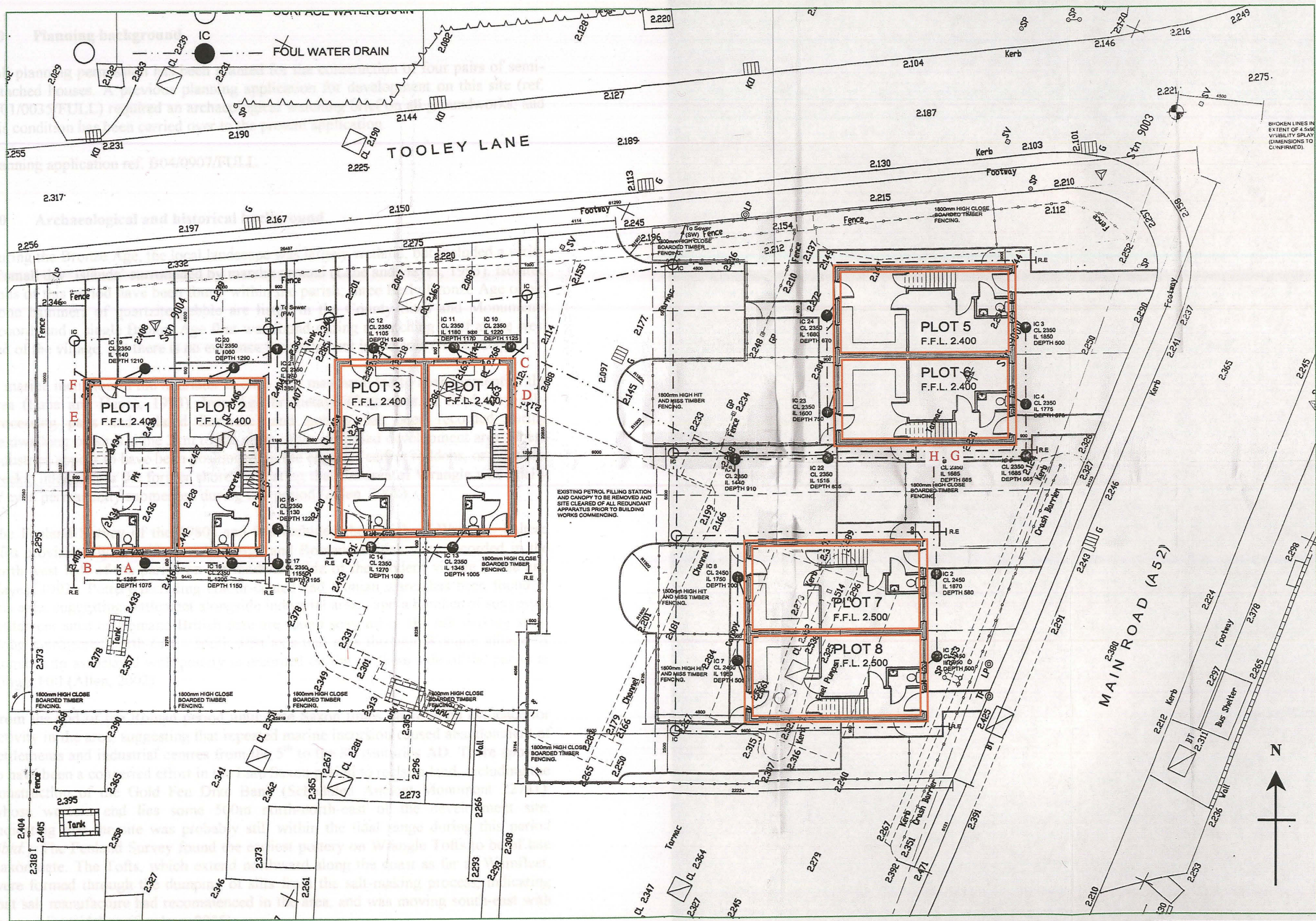


Figure 2: Plan of the development site at scale 1:200. The foundation trenches watched are shown in orange, and the location of drawn sections in red. Plan supplied by developer.

3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission has been granted for the construction of four pairs of semi-detached houses. A previous planning application for development on this site (ref. B/01/0035/FULL) required an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks, and this condition has been carried over to the present application.

Planning application ref. B04/0907/FULL.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

During the Bronze Age, the local landscape was largely wetland, but included a series of small dry 'islands' surrounded by marshy ground (Lane and Hayes, 1993). Isolated finds of this period have been found within the parish; three Early Bronze Age ovoid stone hammers of quartzite pebble are listed in the County Sites and Monuments Record, and a single Bronze Age flint was found during a watching brief at the west end of the village, but there is no evidence for settlement in the area (Allen, 2002).

A marine incursion in the mid/late Bronze Age may have led to abandonment of the area (Lane and Hayes, 1993). Iron Age briquetage (fragments of fired clay salt-processing pans and related furniture) and pottery has been recorded during fieldwalking on sites some 2km to the north of the proposed development area. These industries appear to have been positioned on the edges of earlier roddons, or saltwater creeks, inland from the former shore, indicating that the area of Wrangle was tidally or even permanently submerged during this period (Allen, 2002).

The Fenland Survey of the 1980s and 90s included the parish of Wrangle. Saltern sites provisionally identified as Iron Age and Romano-British were recorded in the north-west half of the parish on the landward side of the modern village (Lane and Hayes, 1993). Pottery including colour-coated and Samian wares has been found in this area, suggesting settlement alongside industrial areas, and a number of suggested settlement sites of Romano-British date are found seaward of the salt-making sites, along a projected north-east – south-west axis that runs through Wrangle village. A Roman kiln associated with pottery is recorded on the northern side of the parish at King's Hill (Allen, 2002).

From the end of the Roman period until Late Saxon times, there is no evidence for activity in the area, suggesting that repeated marine incursion caused abandonment of settlements and industrial centres from the 5th to the 8th centuries AD. There appears to have been a concerted effort in the Late Saxon period to reclaim land, including the construction of the Gold Fen Dike Bank (Scheduled Ancient Monument 22741), whose western end lies some 500m north-north-east of the development site, indicating that the site was probably still within the tidal range during this period (*ibid.*). The Fenland Survey found the earliest pottery on Wrangle Tofts to be of late Saxon date. The Tofts, which extend northward along the coast as far as Wainfleet, were formed through the dumping of silts from the salt-making process, indicating that salt manufacture had recommenced in the area, and was moving south-east with the receding tideline (Gardner, 2005).

The place-name 'Wrangle' is believed to be of Anglo-Saxon origin, from the Old English *wrengel*, meaning 'a crooked place', that may perhaps also refer to a winding stream (Cameron 1998), but the area was still only marginally habitable. At the compilation of the Domesday Survey in AD 1086, Wrangle was not an estate in its own right, but consisted entirely of sokeland: land in the jurisdiction of, but not adjacent to, another manor. The greater part of Wrangle was sokeland of Count Alan's manor of Drayton, and is recorded as having enough land to occupy five plough-teams, but only being worked by seven families with one plough-team between them. A smaller area was sokeland of Guy de Craon's manor of Swarby, and is recorded as '*waste on account of the sea flooding*' (Williams and Martin, 1992).

Wrangle became an estate in its own right in the 11th-12th century, and was governed from a motte-and-bailey castle, now known as King's Hill, on the north side of the parish (SAM 22742). The earliest datable masonry in the village church (St. Mary and St. Nicholas) is also of this period (Pevsner and Harris, 1989).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows Wrangle in the late 19th century to have been a scattered settlement, with a small nucleus around the church, and individual buildings or small groups widely spaced across the parish. Tooley Lane is labelled with its name, but there is no development near the current development site, which is shown as a small field. The course of the Boston-Skegness road has been much altered.

A geophysical survey was carried out in 1998 on an area of land between the old village centre and the present development site, followed in 2001 by an archaeological evaluation. This produced tenuous evidence of Romano-British salt manufacture in the form of fragments of fired clay with a high salt content, associated with Romano-British pottery, in a single pit. A series of ditches on the same site were dated to the late 10th-early 11th century: pottery and environmental material indicated the presence of a settlement in the vicinity (Allen, 2002).

5.0 Methodology

All structures on the site were demolished before the commencement of the watching brief, and topsoil was removed on the northern part of the site, occupied by house plots 1-4. The watching brief began on 3rd October 2005, with the excavation of the foundation trenches of these plots, using a tracked 360° excavator employing a range of buckets, all with either a flat blade or a flat-sided tooth-plate where possible. These trenches varied from 0.7m to 1.1m in width, and in depth from 0.6m to 1.10m. The groundworks were frequently interrupted by the presence of buried services and the danger of ground contamination by petroleum products. The excavation of the first four house plots was completed on the following day.

The foundation trenches of house plots 5-8 were excavated on 13th December 2005. The asphalt forecourt of the previous petrol station had been stripped off, but the ground level had not otherwise been reduced. Ground conditions in these trenches required the use of a toothed bucket in some areas.

Where potential archaeological deposits were observed, the trench sections were

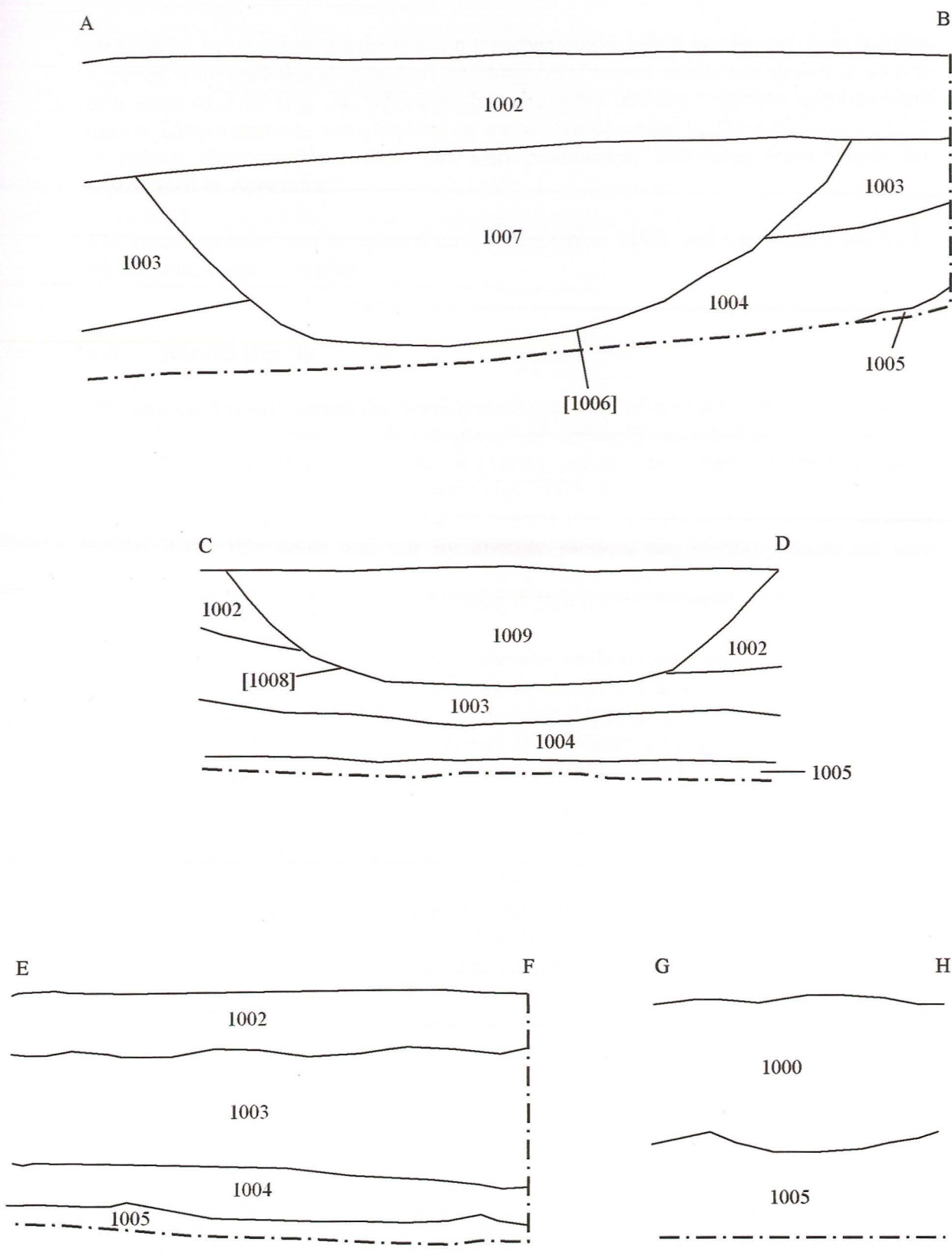


Figure 3: Section drawings and sample sections at scale 1:20. Drawings are located on the main site plan, figure 2.

cleaned by hand; all of the foundation trenches could safely be entered. Any features exposed were recorded on standard watching brief record sheets and drawn in section at a scale of 1:20 (fig. 3); where no features were observed, sample sections were drawn. Drawn sections were located on a site plan provided by the developer (fig. 2). A colour photographic record was also maintained, selections from which are reproduced in Appendix 1.

The watching brief was completed on 13th December 2005, and was carried out by L. M. Hamilton and the author.

6.0 Results (fig. 3)

The natural deposits across the development site were of silty alluvial clay, varying in colour from orange-brown to bluish-grey, and variously recorded as 1003, 1004 and 1005. The natural clay was cut by pit [1006], which was exposed in the north-west corner of house plot 1/2: its fill, silty clay 1005, contained glass bottles and other modern refuse. Pit [1006] was sealed by subsoil 1002, a greyish-brown silty clay layer 0.20m deep; this layer was cut by another modern pit, [1009], whose fill also contained modern refuse including old tyres. The northern side of the site, in which both these house plots lay, was sealed with 0.20m depth of topsoil, 1001.

The overburden on the southern side of the site, sealing house plots 5/6 and 7/8, could not be divided into topsoil and subsoil: it comprised a single, very mixed layer (context no. 1000) up to 0.56m deep, containing deposits of rubble, sand, glass bottles and recently discarded tyres, and appears to represent a modern levelling layer. No potential archaeological features were observed on this side of the site.

7.0 Discussion and conclusions

No traces of medieval or post-medieval activity were observed between the laying down of the alluvial silty clays observed at the base of the foundation trenches and the deposition of industrial-period and later refuse and made ground. The development site appears to have lain well outside the medieval village, since archaeological work on the east side of Wrangle recreation ground exposed only field boundaries which were interpreted as having been close to the settlement (Allen, 2002). If medieval remains had ever been present in the development area, they would have been relatively ephemeral, such as the surface earthworks deriving from open-field strip ploughing (ridge-and-furrow), and would in any case have been obliterated by this later activity.

Although the alluvial deposits observed were of natural origin, they should not be thought of as lying below any potential archaeological deposits, but as representing the most recent marine inundation of Wrangle. It is entirely possible that Romano-British remains were present in the development area, but sealed by these deposits to a much greater depth than was reached by the groundworks: salt-making sites of this period were found in the sides and bases of deep modern drains at depths of more than 2m below modern ground level when field-walking on Orby Marsh (Gardner, 2005).

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology employed was sufficient for the requirements of the archaeological record, demonstrating that no deposits of archaeological significance were present at the depths affected by the current groundworks.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mountains Building Contractors for this commission, and for their co-operation during the watching brief.

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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 City & County Museum within six months from the completion of the project: access to the archive may be gained by quoting the LCCM accession number, 2005.230.

Appendix 1: Colour plates

Plate 1 (right): General shot of the site during excavation of the foundation trenches on the south side of the site, looking north-west from the far side of the A52.



Plate 2 (left): Excavation of foundation trenches in house plot 1/2, looking east. The varicoloured natural silty clay deposits can be seen in the base of the trench.

Plate 3 (right): Section of the foundation trench in house plot 1/2, showing subsoil 002 overlying the natural clay.

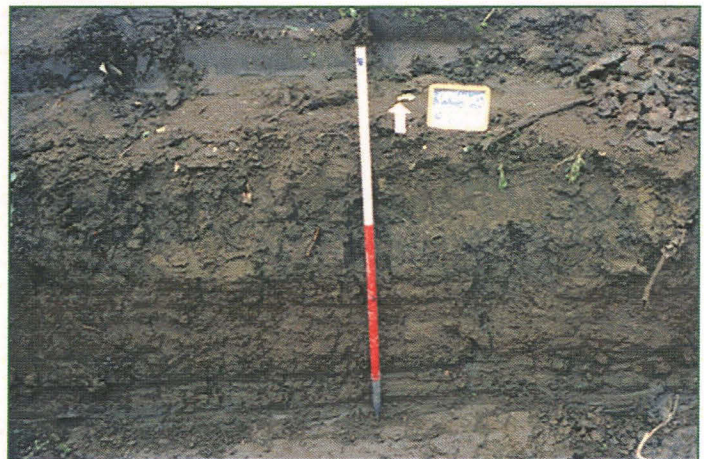


Plate 4 (left): The completed foundation trench of house plot 7/8, looking west, showing the depth of the modern levelling layer 1000.

Appendix 2: List of contexts

- 1000** Modern overburden
- 1001** Topsoil, removed before commencement of watching brief
- 1002** Mid greyish-brown silty clay subsoil
- 1003** Mid orange-brown silty clay – natural deposit
- 1004** Mid brown silty clay – natural deposit
- 1005** Mid bluish-grey silty clay – natural deposit at base of trenches
- 1006** Modern pit
- 1007** Fill of modern pit [1006], below subsoil 1002, containing glass bottles
- 1008** Modern pit, cutting subsoil 1002
- 1009** Fill of modern pit [1008], containing dumped tyres