

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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33 HIGH STREET, WELBOURN  
LINCOLNSHIRE



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

Site Code: HSW 95  
CCM Accession Number: 79.95

# 33 HIGH STREET, WELBOURN

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

CHRYsalis HOMES

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## 1.0 Non-Technical Summary

An application was submitted to North Kesteven District Council to construct three private dwellings on the west side of the High Street, Welbourn. Permission was granted, subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief to take place during ground reduction.

A recording brief, lasting two and a half days, was undertaken which identified archaeological deposits of moderate interest. The site appears to have been occupied during the early medieval and subsequent periods. A range of features, incorporating pits, a backfilled fish pond and linear trenches, were investigated though were not usually dated.

It is regretted that, due to a misunderstanding in advance of this commission, the area occupied by one of the three new dwellings (Plot 1) was not monitored.

## 2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place in June 1995 on the site of a development adjacent to 33 High Street, Welbourn (Fig. 1). The works were commissioned by Chrysalis Homes and were centred on a project specification submitted to the Client and the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven.

Information held at the County Sites and Monuments Record suggested that the archaeological potential of the site was moderately high, influenced largely by its position within the medieval settlement.

Prior to this watching brief taking place, a similar project on the east side of the High Street exposed ground-raising deposits in association with early medieval pottery.

The information derived from the present investigation will be integrated within the County Sites and Monuments Record and may influence future cultural resource management decisions in this part of Welbourn.

Fig. 1 Site location (with relevant entries from the Sites & Monuments Record)

2

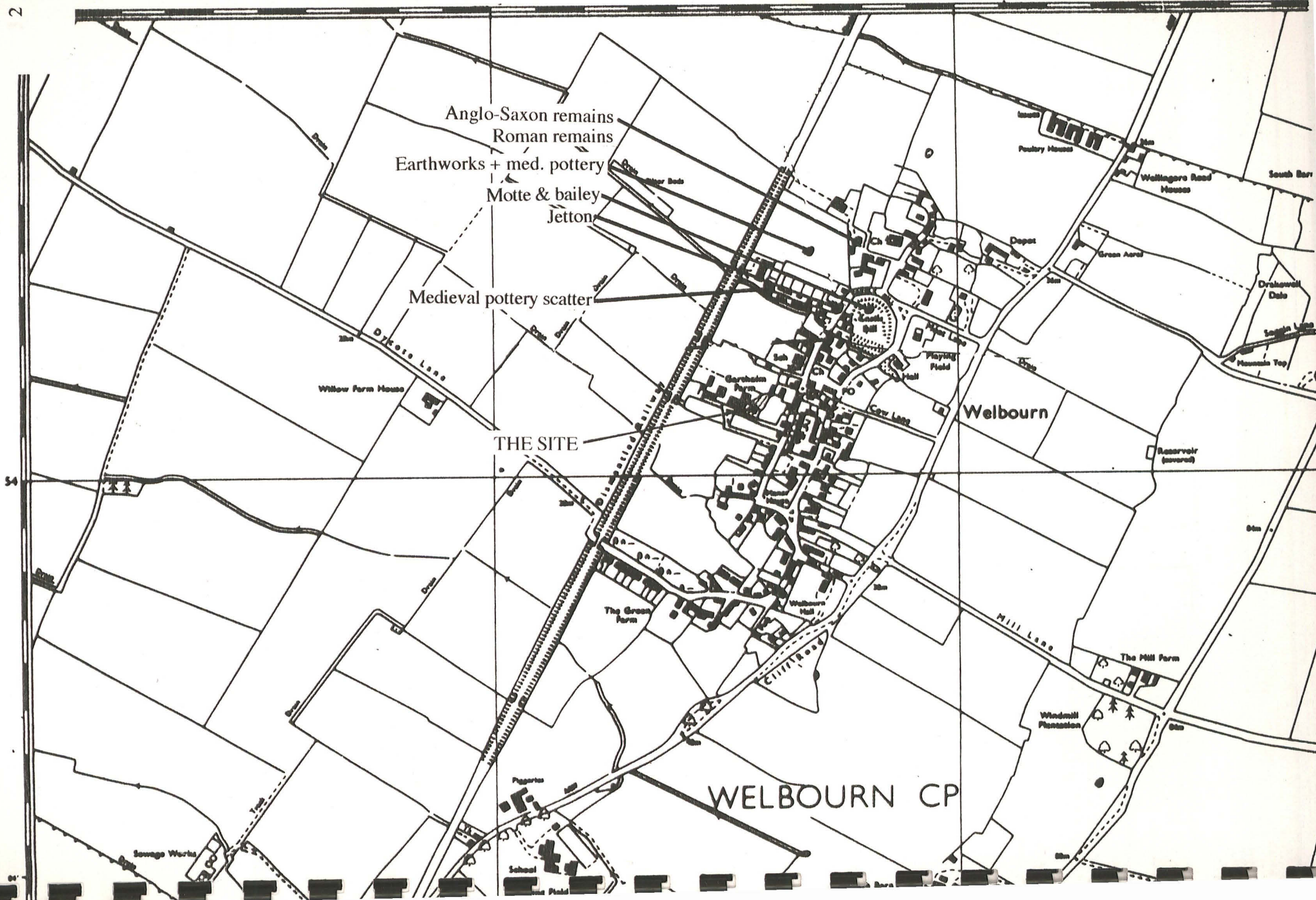
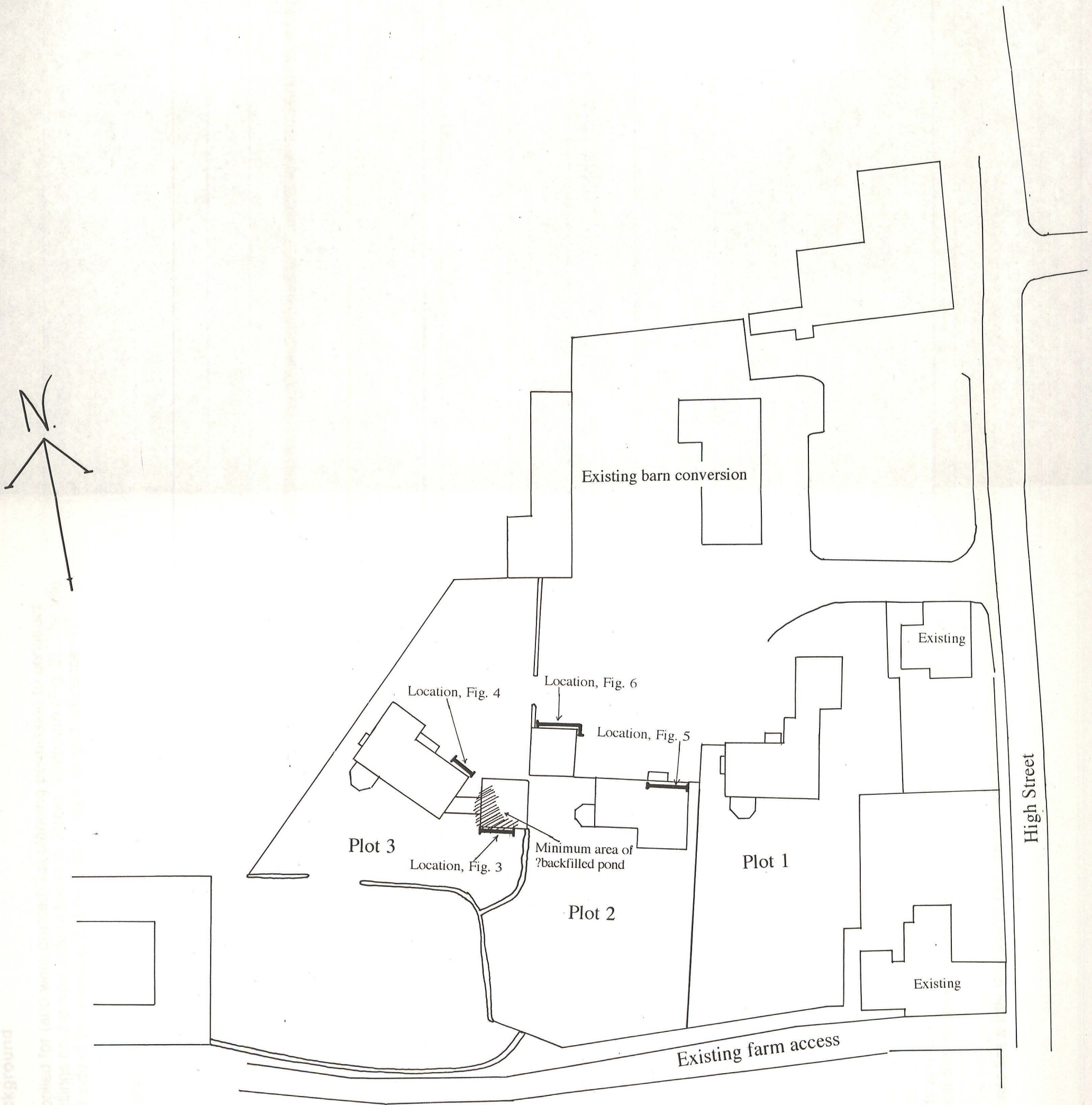


Fig. 2 Location of foundation footprints and areas of archaeological significance recorded during ground reduction  
(based on a drawing by BP Williams)

Scale = 1:500



3.0 Planning background  
 Chrysalis Homes applied for (and was granted) planning permission to demolish  
 three existing dwellings (1, 2 & 3) on the south-west side of the site (see  
 00580, 0541/0)

The demolition of the  
 three existing dwellings  
 are part of the City of  
 Wokingham's High Street  
 cultural park.

The development is a

### 3.0 Planning background

Chrysalis Homes applied for (and were granted) full planning permission to construct three executive dwellings on the west side of the High Street, Welbourn (Fig. 2). The site is on the south-west side of the village and is centred on national grid reference ~~TF~~ SK 396600 354150.

The planning application number is 72/719/1994.

Planning permission was granted, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief. A project brief, outlining the scope of the archaeological requirement, was issued by the Community Archaeologist in December, 1994, and a project specification was prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) in May 1995.

### 4.0 Geology and topography

Welbourn lies mid-way between Lincoln and Grantham on the west side of the Lincoln Cliff on land approximately 35.0m above modern sea level. The dominant geological formation comprises Lincolnshire (Jurassic) limestone, intermittently overlain with drift deposits of clay. The modern settlement connects with Wellingore to the north and Leadenham to the south by way of the A 607. The closest major water course is the River Brant, which lies some 3.5km to the west.

The site is slightly uneven and the land slopes gradually in a westerly direction.

### 5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Welbourn is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086; the medieval name, *Wellebrune*, translates 'stream fed by a spring' (Mills, 1993).

Archaeological discoveries indicate that a settlement existed in the area of the modern settlement prior to the Norman Conquest: in the early part of the present century, Anglo-Saxon grave goods were discovered (cruciform and annular brooches, sleeve-clasps), though detailed records were not made when the finds were discovered (Leahy, 1993).

A motte and bailey castle, described as a large ringwork of moderate strength (Pevsner and Harris, 1989), is referred to only once in documentary sources; in the mid-C12th, when stone defences were being ordered.

The parish church, St Chad, although much restored in 1884, probably dates from the later C13th (Pevsner and Harris, 1989).

There has been little systematic archaeological research within the village and parish, the majority of finds being chance discoveries. However, records of these finds, which are held at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, and by Heritage Lincolnshire, Heckington, suggest that localised occupation took place during most of the major cultural periods.

The development site lies a little less than 3.0km west of the Roman road, Ermine Street.

Roman remains have been recorded as find scatters north of the development area, though a context for these remains is not clear (surface remains of this period have been found within or close to many of the modern settlements sited along the limestone cliff edge south of Lincoln, though the information has not been quantified by way of systematic field research).

## 6.0 Aims

The principal aims of the watching brief were to ensure that any archaeological features or artefactual remains exposed or retrieved during groundworks were recorded and interpreted to standards accepted by the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven. A project Specification, based on these objectives, was jointly agreed between Pre-Construct Archaeology, the Community Archaeologist and the Client.

## 7.0 Methodology

As the Client wished to undertake all soil stripping and excavation in one continuous operation, a permanent presence was maintained during ground clearance and trenching. Mechanical excavation was undertaken using a JCB with back actor, fitted with 60 - 80cm wide trenching buckets.

The house occupying plot 1 was nearing completion at the time of the watching brief, and no archaeological observation/recording took place in this area. The areas to be occupied by plots 2 and 3 were first cleared of vegetation and upper topsoil and the foundation lines were marked out with builders chalk. Thereafter, trenches were excavated to between 70cm and 90cm in depth. In areas where the geology had been altered (by archaeological or natural means), trenches were deepened; sometimes by hand-excavation, sometimes by machine (below).

During site visits, a written account was prepared on standard watching brief report forms. Archaeological features, where exposed, were excavated to varying levels; depending on the amount of time available. Features were drawn in section and (where possible) in plan at scale 1:20, and artefacts recovered from discreet stratigraphic horizons were coded according to their contexts. A photographic archive was maintained throughout.

Following completion of the field project, artefacts from the site were processed and submitted for specialist appraisal (Appendix 6).

All recording and excavation was undertaken by the writer.

## 8.0 Results

Archaeological features were exposed and recorded within both of the areas monitored. In Plot 2, a concentration of pit-like features were cut-through by the north wall foundation trench and three possible wall trenches were exposed in the base of one of the garage trenches. In plot 3, a very large disturbance (possibly a backfilled pond) was exposed in garage foundation trenches and a ?lime-filled depression was recorded on the east side of the north wall construction trench. The construction trenches associated with Plot 3 were excavated first and this will form the order of presentation.



## 8.1 Plot 3

### 8.1.1 The ?backfilled pond [007] (Fig. 3)

Mechanical excavation commenced with the digging of the south wall garage foundation. A trench measuring approximately 60cm in width was excavated to c.65cm, exposing a natural surface of stiff clay, [002]. Approximately 1.5m west of the point of origin (a north-south stone boundary wall) the edge of a large disturbance, [007], was exposed. A corresponding edge was exposed on the north side of the west construction trench and the JCB driver was instructed to remove the fill of the disturbance, with a view to reaching a more solid base. The base of the feature was not actually exposed and excavation ceased at a depth approximately 1.7m below the top of the (truncated) topsoil.

The archaeological effort was focused on the garage south wall construction trench as in this area the east edge of the large disturbance could be examined, as could as a representative section of its fill (Fig. 3).

The east edge of the void sloped at c. 45°, except where interrupted by a slight ledge approximately 1.1m below the top of the cut. Four broad categories of fill were recorded, which may be broken down as follows:-

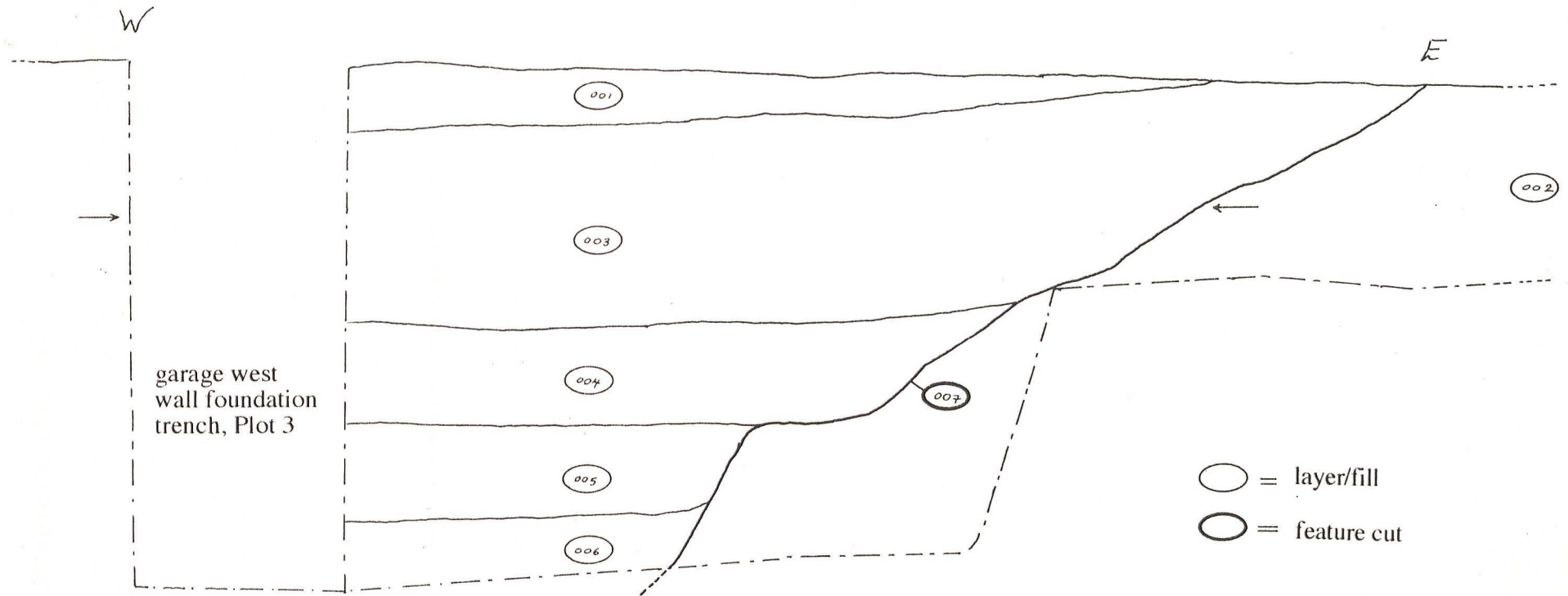
- [003]: upper backfill; c. 65cm of light brown/grey silty clay; small stone lenses - secondary/purposeful backfill
- [004]: similar to the above, except more compact and containing occasional black (organic) patches (c. 30cm thickness)
- [005]: sticky blue/grey clay containing black (organic) lenses (wood fragments + other semi-decomposed vegetation/peat), frequent snail shells. An accumulation between an interface of standing water and dry environment (ie water level)
- [006]: 20cm + of clean, stiff, stone-free blue/grey clay; a standing water deposit, the base of which was not reached.

No primary dating material was recovered in association with the above, though a large pottery sherd from a C16th/C17th vessel was found in the upper backfill horizon [003].

The north face of the garage south wall construction trench was drawn (Fig. 3) and the limit of the disturbance was recorded in the west wall construction trench (Fig. 2). It is suggested the feature was a fish pond. The date of its foundation was not determined.

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Fig. 3 East-west section through ?backfilled pond [007]  
(location of section on Fig. 2)



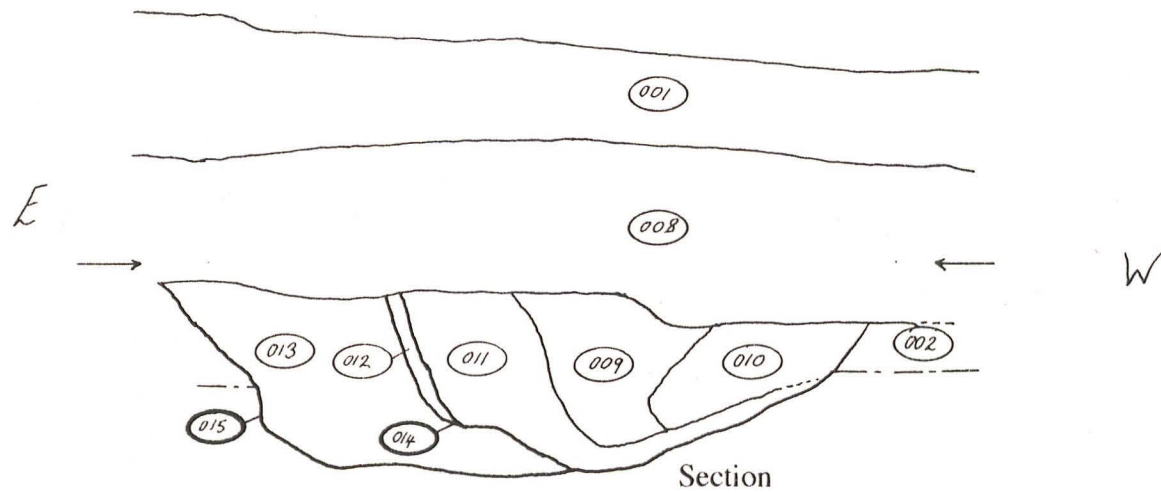
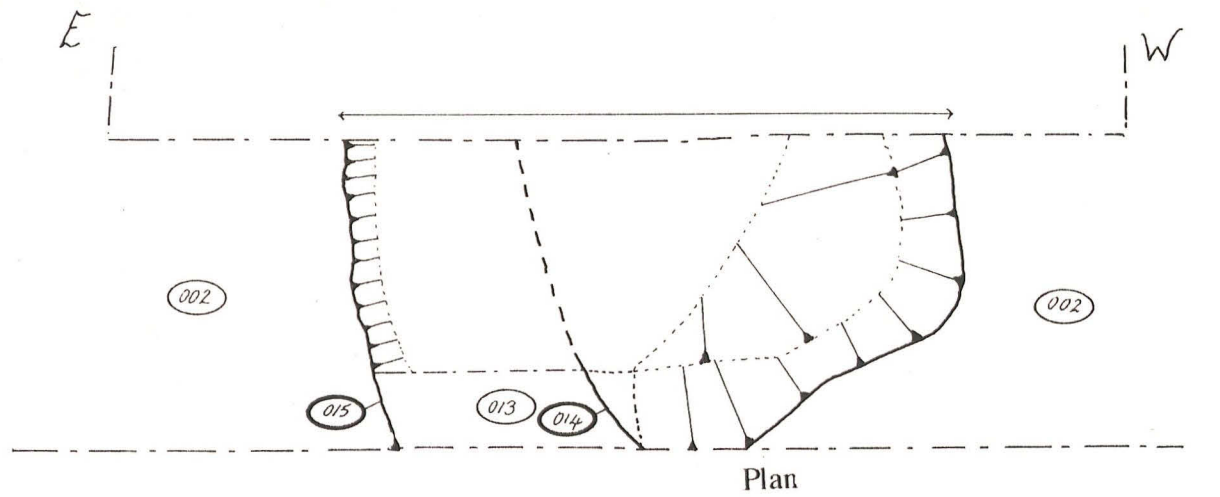
### 8.1.2 Feature [014]/[015] (Fig. 4)

A distinct area of dark soil and degraded limestone was exposed on the east side of the north wall foundation trench. Cleaning of the trench sides and base revealed a sub-circular depression, [014], which contained a dense wedge of compact lime against its east side and base, [011]. Above the lime, in the centre of the void, was a deposit of grey/black ashy silty clay, [009], which contained a large number of crushed snail shells: this appeared to be sandwiched between the lime deposit and a bank of gritty clay, [010], which rested against the west side of the depression.

The feature measured approximately 50cm in depth and was sealed beneath a thick layer of compact light brown sandy clay, [008]; possibly a ground-raising deposit. A wedge of clean yellow/grey silty sand, [013], which appeared to be cut by the east edge of the depression, may have been the fill of an earlier feature, [015], or could have been deposited to reduce the size of a functionally similar feature.

The occurrence of a substantial deposit of lime within the above (ie [011]) could imply that the structure(s) was part of a lime kiln - where raw lime was heated and broken down before being used as mortar. However, the evidence was not clear and it has not been possible to suggest a date for the structure, which was devoid of finds.

Fig. 4 Plan and section of features exposed in west wall construction trench, Plot 3  
(location on Fig. 2)



○ = layer/fill  
○ = feature cut

## 8.2 Plot 2

### 8.2.1 Features exposed in the north wall construction trench (Fig. 5)

A cluster of earth-cut features was exposed in the north and south faces of the north wall construction trench associated with the house to Plot 2. The north face was thoroughly cleaned and the lower fills of some features were excavated by hand.

The most substantial feature was a deeply-cut pit, [018], which measured more than 1.0m in depth. Its east side was almost vertical, its west side less pronounced. The level from which it was excavated was not clear, though it had been dug through more than 1.0m of solid clay, [024]. It is suggested, therefore, that the pit was a small quarry, used to extract clay. There were no associated finds.

The east edge of the above cut through the west side of a shallower, broadly flat-bottomed feature, [020]. This measured more than 50cm in depth and was backfilled with lenses of redeposited natural soil, [019]. Its functional status was unclear, but a single sherd of pottery recovered from its upper fill dates within the Saxo-Norman (early medieval) period.

A third, smaller, pit was exposed immediately east of the above, [022]. No finds were recovered from its backfill and its relationship with feature [020] was not clear.

The relationship between these pits and a thick deposit of greenish-brown sandy clay, [016], was unclear. The layer was exposed over much of the development area (coded [008] in Plot 3) immediately beneath the topsoil. It measured up to 40cm in thickness and was loosely interpreted as a ground-raising deposit; perhaps an attempt to level the ground surface, which slopes naturally towards the west.

In the east wall foundation trench, a distinct horizon of large soft limestone rubble was exposed, [023], which appeared to be sealed by the above. It is possible the limestone related to a demolished structure, the site of which will have lain closer to the frontage (ie beneath the area now occupied by Plot 1).

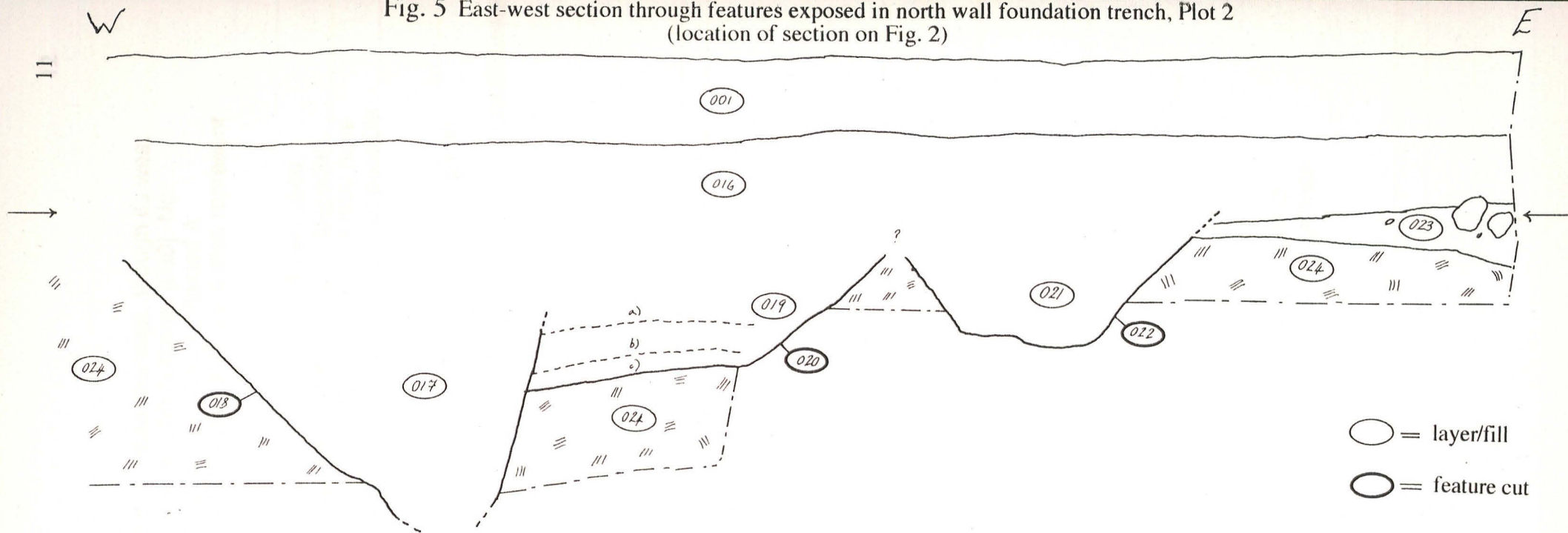
### 8.2.2 Features in the garage north wall construction trench (Fig. 6)

Some very rapid excavation and recording took place in advance of concrete pouring after several features were exposed in the base of the north wall construction trench associated with the garage to Plot 2. Although it was possible to make a plan of the remains, there was insufficient time available to allow one of the section faces to be drawn.

The trench was excavated to a depth approximately 80cm below the top of the truncated topsoil. This exposed a clean natural horizon of soft orange silty sand, [028], into which were cut a series of linear features.

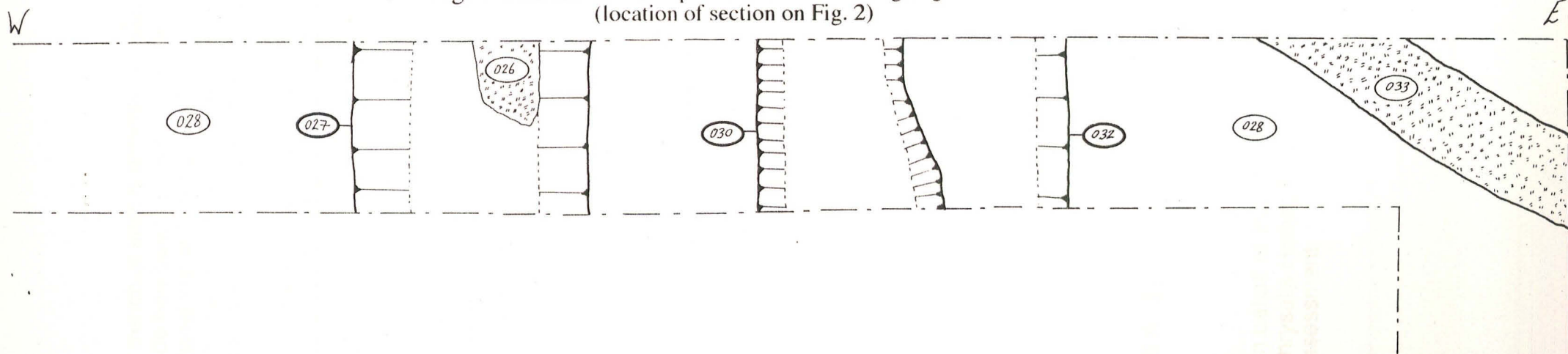
In the central area, aligned north-south, were two shallow, parallel trenches, [027] and [032]. The more westerly trench, [027], measured approximately 84cm in width. Its fill resembled an overlying horizon, [016], but contained a number of small stone fragments. In the base of the trench was a thin localised area of degraded limestone/mortar, [026]: possibly the remains of a robbed wall footing.

Fig. 5 East-west section through features exposed in north wall foundation trench, Plot 2  
(location of section on Fig. 2)



Scale = 1:20

Fig. 6 Plan of features exposed in north wall of garage to Plot 2  
(location of section on Fig. 2)



Scale = 1:20

A trench of similar dimension, [032], was exposed c. 1.1m further east, though its west side had been removed by a later, deeper trench of unknown purpose, [030]. No stone/mortar fragments were seen in its base, though its fill, [031], contained a considerable density of degraded mortar/limestone fragments and could also represent the backfill of a robbed (possibly contemporary) wall trench.

On the east side of the foundation trench, a further possible wall base was exposed, aligned north-west to south-east, [033]. This was a narrow, compact, line of degraded limestone/mortar which rested in a shallow trench, little over 10cm in depth. It may have been the base of a narrow wall (or perhaps a foundation pad) though it was not possible to investigate in detail.

No dating evidence was found in association with any of the above features, though an unstratified sherd of Saxo-Norman pottery was recovered from the spoil heap.

## 9.0 Summary and conclusions

The watching brief has confirmed that occupation was taking place on and around the development site during the medieval period, though only one sherd of Saxo-Norman pottery was recovered *in situ*. The occurrence of pits and pit-like features in Plot 2 could imply the proximity of buildings, though it is unfortunate that the area occupied by Plot 1 (closer to the frontage) was not monitored as part of the watching brief due to a misunderstanding at planning.

## 10.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to Chrysalis Homes for commissioning the works. Thanks also to Jane Young for finds assessment.

## 11.0 Appendices

11.1 List of contexts

11.2 Colour photographs

11.3 Site Archive

11.4 References

11.5 Relevant entries extracted from the Sites and Monuments Record

11.6 Pottery archive record (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit)



## 11.1 List of contexts (classification only)

Context	Area	Classification
[001]	All over	Topsoil horizon (truncated in places). Dark brown crumbly silty clay-loam; small stone inclusion + charcoal, fibrous roots.
[002]	All over	General context given to natural sub-strata. Silt, silty clay or sandy silt over limestone brash mixed with stiff yellow/grey clay.
[003]	Plot 3	Upper (secondary fill of ?backfilled pond [007]: light brown/grey silty clay (iron-pan mottles caused by leaching). Contained lenses of small stone fragments; contained 1 large sherd of C16th/C17th pottery.
[004]	Plot 3	Horizon below [003] in feature [007]: similar to [003] but more compact/stiff, and containing occasional black (organic) patches.
[005]	Plot 3	Horizon below [004] in feature [007]: sticky blue/grey clay containing black organic lenses (these contained wood fragments + semi-decomposed vegetation (peat), small + large snail shells). No dating evidence. Represents an accumulation between interface of standing water and dry environment (ie water level).
[006]	Plot 3	Horizon below [005] in feature [007]: clean, stiff, stone-free, blue/grey clay; standing water deposit, of which base was not reached. Some organic inclusion.
[007]	Plot 3	Very large and deep disturbance on the west side of the site. Contained [003 - [006]; general location recorded on developer plans, as well as one section drawing. Profile examined showed irregular 45° slope, steepening ?close to base.
[008]	Plot 3	c. 45cm of compact, light brown, sandy clay (green tinge) below topsoil. Contained stone lenses, fibrous roots and small pebbles. ?Make-up horizon.
[009]	Plot 3	Grey/black ?ashy silty clay; many crushed snail shells. Upper fill of feature [014]
[010]	Plot 3	Greenish yellow-brown gritty clay; heavily iron-panned. In feature [014].
[011]	Plot 3	Compact, though crumbly, white/yellow ?degraded limestone/lime. ?Product of ?kiln.
[012]	Plot 3	Dark grey silty sand: ?Leaching interface between [014]/[015]
[013]	Plot 3	Clean mixed yellow/grey silty sand (less silt than [012]. ?Fill of earlier feature cut by [014]
[014]	Plot 3	Cut, later feature than [013]. ?Part of lime kiln. Irregular bowl-shaped depression (plan and section drawn).
[015]	Plot 3	Cut of feature pre-dating [014].
[016]	Plot 2	Layer beneath topsoil (same as [008] in plot 3): light greenish-brown, sandy clay with moderate/low stone inclusion - seen over entire plot, average depth 40cm.

- [017] Plot 2 Fill of very large pit; identical to (and merging with) [016] but containing a moderate % of small clay lumps in backfill.
- [018] Plot 2 Deep pit containing [017]: East edge very steep, west edge less pronounced. Dug through more than 70cm dense natural clay. ?Clay pit.
- [019] Plot 2 Composite of 3 fills in feature [020] (see drawing):  
 a) upper fill: indistinguishable from [016]  
 b) light grey/brown (yellow mottles) silty clay  
 c) clean, pale, brown/yellow gritty silt  
 Upper fill contained 1 sherd Saxo-Norman pottery.
- [020] Plot 2 Broadly flat-bottomed feature, truncated on west side by ?clay pit [018].
- [021] Plot 2 Fill of pit [022]: indistinguishable from [016]; no finds.
- [022] Plot 2 Pit cut; function not determined.
- [023] Plot 2 Layer of degraded limestone chunks set in matrix of yellow/brown gritty clay. Drawn where seen in north wall foundation but more extensive in east wall foundation (insufficient time available to draw both faces). ??Stone building demolition horizon.
- [024] Plot 2 Natural stiff grey clay
- [025] Plot 2 Fill of shallow north-south ? robber trench; very similar to [016], but containing moderate % stone flecks.
- [026] Plot 2 Localised deposit of degraded limestone/mortar in base of robber trench; ?remains of robbed wall.
- [027] Plot 2 Shallow, straight-sided, north-south trench in garage area of plot 2 (contained [025] and [026]).
- [028] Plot 2 Natural bright orange silty sand (garage area)
- [029] Plot 2 Fill of N-S slot-like feature [030]: very similar to [016] but containing lumps of redeposited natural clay and sand. Depth = c. 40cm.
- [030] Plot 2 Cut for the above; straight west side; irregular east side.
- [031] Plot 2 Fill of straight-sided, shallow ?robber trench (truncated by [030]). Depth = 15cm +; fill similar to [016] but containing frequent degraded limestone fragments.
- [032] Plot 2 Cut for the above. Of similar depth, form and orientation as [027] and possibly contemporary.
- [033] Plot 2 Very compact ?degraded limestone/mortar (grey/white); in shallow trench, c. 10cm deep. ?Lowest level of narrow, robbed, wall.

## 11.2 Colour photographs



Photo. 1 Deposits in ?backfilled pond, south-west corner of garage trench, Plot 3, looking north-east



Photo. 2 Feature [014]/[015], fully excavated, looking south-west (note ?lime deposit in centre of feature)



Photo. 3 Pits exposed in north wall foundation trench, looking north-east



Photo. 4 Features exposed in garage north wall construction trench, Plot 2, looking west

### 11.3 Site Archives

The basic site archive comprises the following:

x4 daily log record sheets

x1 colour print film, x1 colour slide film

x3 developer plans

x1 composite drawing sheet (1:20)

x1 bag of finds (pottery)

Misc. notes and correspondence

Primary records are currently with Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), though the paper and physical archive will be deposited with the City and County Museum within 1 year of completion of this report, together with a more comprehensive archive list.

### 11.4 References

Leahy, K 1993 in Vince, A (Ed.) *Pre-Viking Lindsey*, 41

Mills, A D 1993, *English Place-Names*, 350

Pevsner N & Harris J, 1989 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, 284

11.5 Information derived from the Sites and Monuments Record held at the City and County Museum, Lincoln

CCM ref.	SGR	Description
B	SK 966544	Medieval pottery scatter (ploughed 1960).
G	SK 968545	Anglo-Saxon remains found at Welbourn, according to Baldwin Brown in "The Arts in Early England" Vol. V. No details given.
H	SK 968545	<i>OS Records</i> . Archaeology Review, Vol. III (Roman remains).
I	SK 973533	Romano-British pottery (C4th AD); burnt building remains
L	SK 97635305	Burial with bronze penannular brooch with coiled terminals
S	c. SK 9654	Undated foundations found at Welbourn Place
W	SK 96755435	German Jetton, late C16th
AD	SK 96695448	Medieval bank and ditch earthworks; scatter of C13th and C14th pottery
AE	SK 96805432	Medieval motte & bailey (remains). A fortified mansion; wide moat + 2 parallel trenches. Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 116)
AF	c. SK 9654	<i>OS Records</i> . Hamlet of Sapperton in Welbourn Parish. Little Manor House said to have been at side of Lincoln to Grantham road.

11.6 HSW95 ARCHIVE: WARE TYPES BY CONTEXT NUMBER

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
+ NEAR 007	LMLOC	2	JAR/PIP	SV;INT DEP
+ PLOT 2	BL	1	JAR/JUG	16/17TH;VITR
+ PLOT 2	HLKT	1	JAR	? ID
+ PLOT 2	LKT	1	JAR	? ID
003	BL	1	JAR/JUG	16/17TH;VITR
019	SLST	1	JAR/BOWL	RIM

Identification of the two late Saxon sherds is not certain. The fabrics seem ok but there is not enough of the vessel to characterise the production. The two blackware sherds (BL) appear to be of an early type probably no later than the mid 17th century. The SLST rim is of the type found in late 12th to mid 13th century deposits at Baston in the south of the county.