

EU 6989

SU 5211 1613

43234 mod.

95/12

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

LAND OFF HALTON ROAD, ASHBY BY
PARTNEY

LINCOLNSHIRE

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

Site Code: ABP 95
CCM Accession Number: 187.95

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section 1/12/95
12 Friars Lane
LINCOLN LN2 5AL
TEL. 0522 575292 FAX: 0522 530724

ASHBY BY PARTNEY, LINCOLNSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

MR A HUNT

BY

COLIN PALMER-BROWN

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)
DRAYTON HOUSE COTTAGE
59 HIGH STREET
EAGLE
LINCOLN LN6 9DG

PHONE & FAX 01522 868953

© Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
November 1995

CONTENTS

1.0	Non-Technical Summary	1
2.0	Introduction	1
3.0	Planning Background	3
4.0	Geology and Topography	3
5.0	Archaeological and Historical Background	3
6.0	Aims	3
7.0	Methodology	5
8.0	Results	5
	8.1 Gully [13]	
	8.2 Ditch [18]	
	8.3 Ditch [16]	
	8.4 Ditch [17]	
9.0	Summary and conclusions	8
10.0	Acknowledgements	8
11.0	Appendices	9
	11.1 Colour Photographs	
	11.2 Site archive	
	11.3 List of contexts	
	11.4 Relevant entries extracted from the County Sites and Monuments Record	
	11.5 References	

1.0 Non-Technical Summary

A planning application was submitted to East Lindsey District Council which sought permission for the construction of a single detached dwelling on land south of Halton Road, Ahsby by Partney (Fig. 1). A condition requiring that a programme of archaeological observation and recording be undertaken during earth-removal was issued by the planning authority.

A three-day recording brief identified a series of ditches and other features dating to the high medieval period (C12th/C13th). The features are presumed to be part of a cultural landscape which is known from aerial photographs.

2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place between November 8th - 10th, 1995 on the site of a housing development (Fig.'s 1 and 2). The works were commissioned by Mr A Hunt.

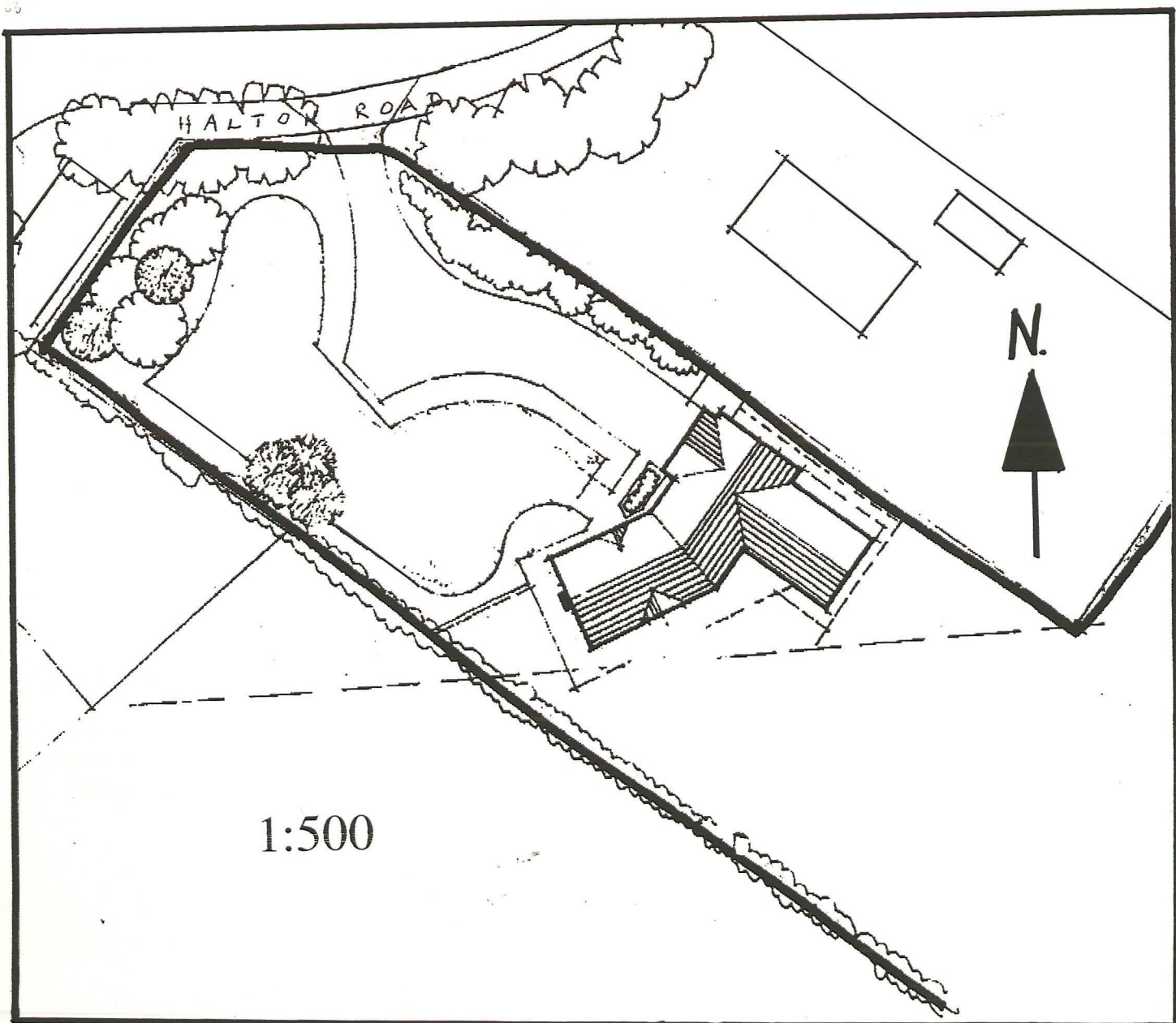
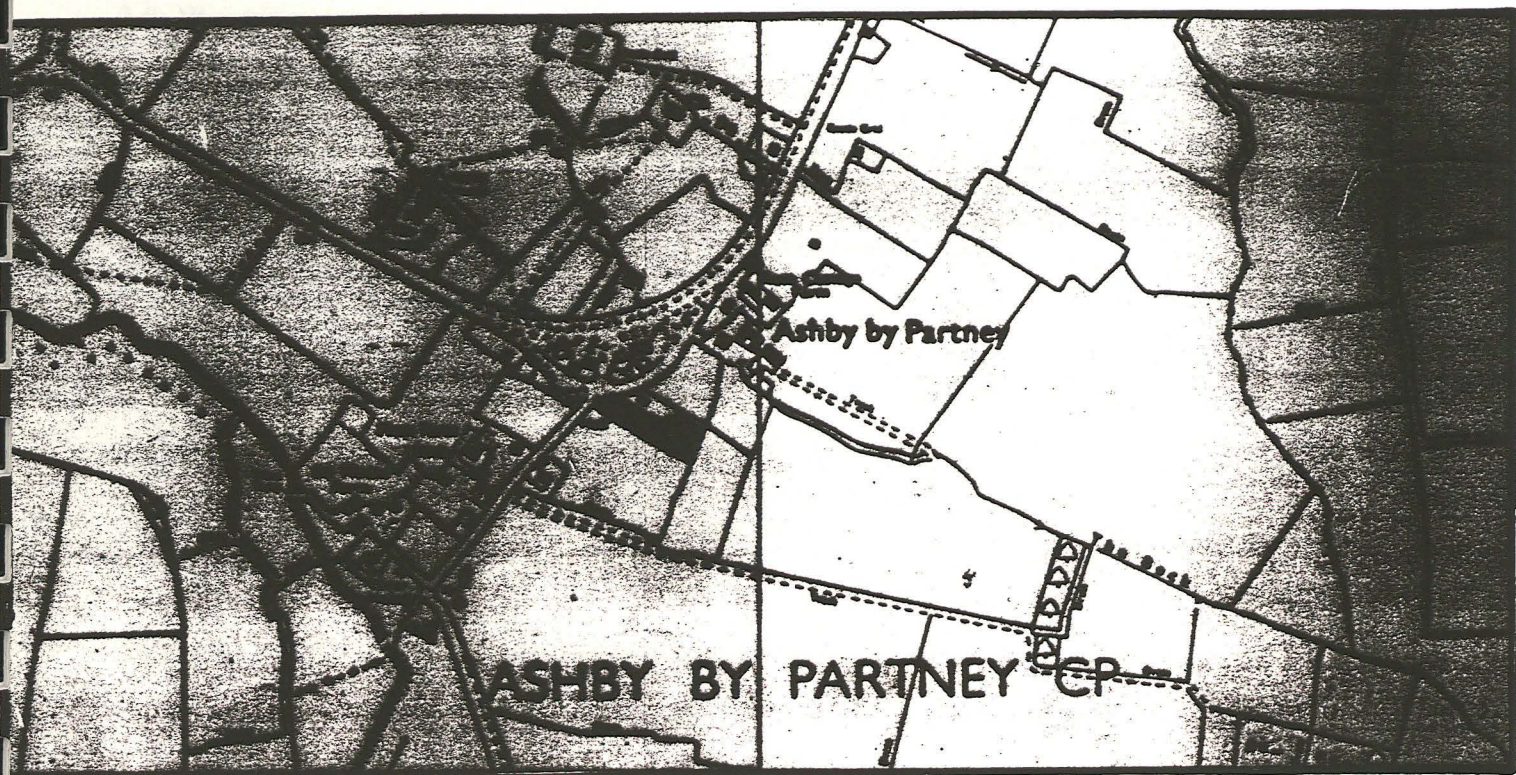
Data entered as part of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) suggested the archaeological potential of the site was moderately high: with the greatest appraised potential being for the medieval period. There are cropmarks and earthworks immediately south of the development area, and there are large areas of ridge and furrow on land to the north, south and west.

Traces of four linear ditches (of at least two phases) were identified and plotted within builders construction trenches. Stratified pottery was recovered from one ditch only, though the ceramic assemblage suggests occupation during the C12th/C13th. A small quantity of later medieval pottery sherds were recovered from one discreet area.

The site central national grid reference is SK 4275 6640.

TF

Fig. 1 1:10,000 site location map and 1:500 ground plan of dwelling



3.0 Planning background

Mr and Mrs A Hunt applied for full planning permission to construct a single detached dwelling on a vacant area of land situated to the south of Halton Road (Fig. 1). Planning permission was granted, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief. A project brief, outlining the scope of the archaeological requirement, was not issued on this occasion, though the level of the requirement was discussed and agreed between the Client, the County Archaeological Officer and Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). A standard watching brief has now taken place.

4.0 Geology and topography

Ashby by Partney lies in the District of East Lindsey, c. 12km west of Skegness, 2km east of Spilsby. It is sited on the dip slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds at a height approximately 15m OD. To the west, the land rises and to the east it falls, passing through the middle marsh and out marsh to Skegness. The settlement is served by a small beck, which connects with the River Steeping which exits at Wainfleet Harbour.

The solid geology consists of chalk, though this is overlain with drift deposits of boulder clay, producing brown earth and brown calcareous soils (Straw 1969).

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

There have been no formal, intrusive, archaeological investigations in Ashby by Partney, though the recent RCHM(E) Mapping Programme incorporates data relevant to the present watching brief: as noted above, there are cropmarks and earthworks immediately south of the development, and there are areas of ridge and furrow to the north, south and west. This information is incorporated as part of the County SMR.

There are two moated sites in the parish: one c. 0.5km north of the present development (moat and other earthworks seen on aerial photographs); the other site lies much closer, approximately 65m south-west of the development. Of the latter, the moat house belonged to Sir Christopher Wray (1524 - 92).

The occurrence of a moated site so far north of the existing settlement has been taken as evidence of village shrinkage.

Earlier evidence of occupation has occurred as surface scatters: Roman pottery was recovered from fields less than 150m south of the development.

There is very little published data available from which to assess the site. Ashby by Partney was recorded as a Domesday settlement in 1086 (Morris 1986), so it is likely that continued field work in the parish will produce evidence on the origins of the Saxon settlement. The existing parish church, St Helen's, which is of red brick construction, dates from as late as 1841 (Pevsner and Harris 1988).

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 County Archaeological Officer.

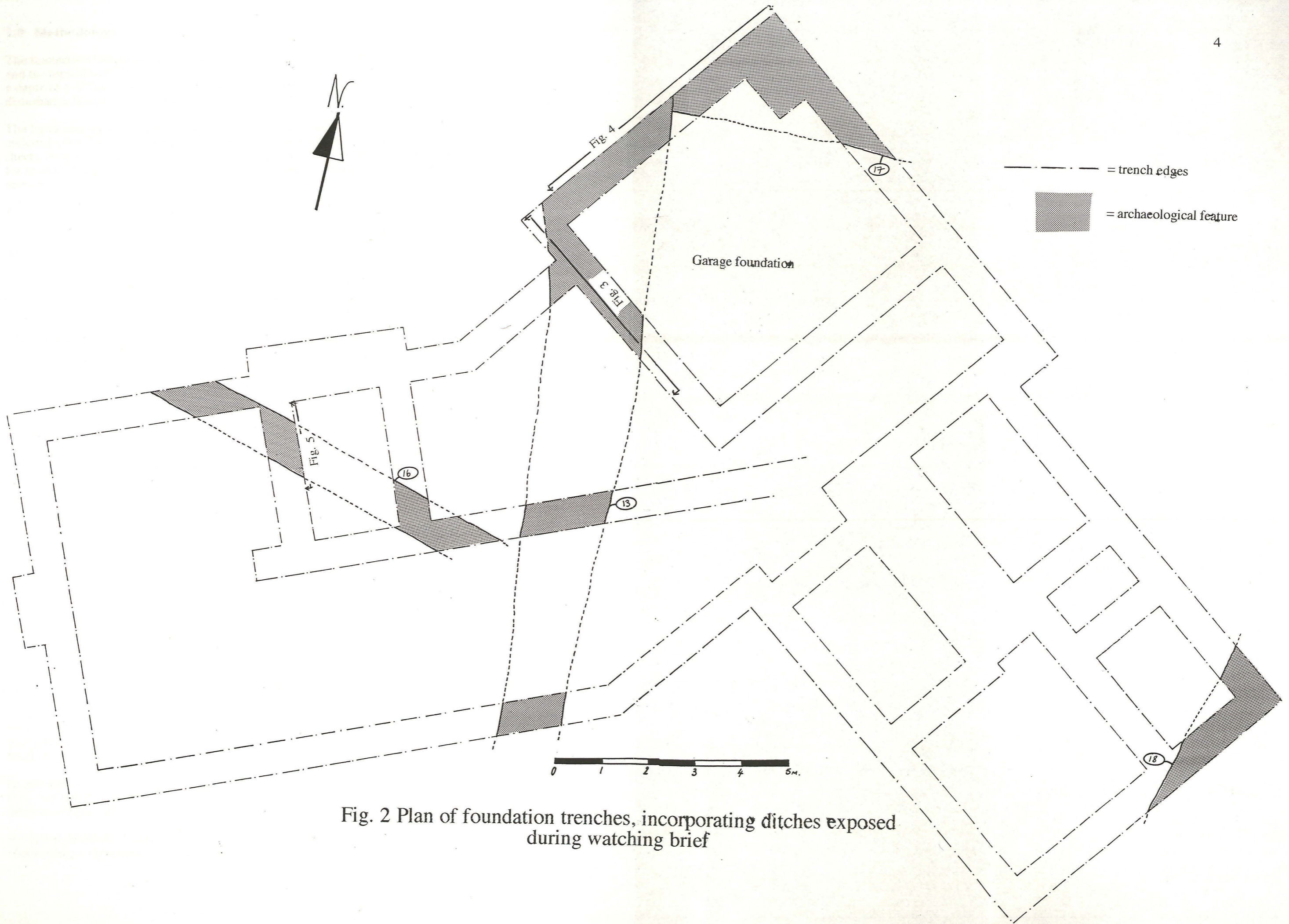


Fig. 2 Plan of foundation trenches, incorporating ditches exposed during watching brief

7.0 Methodology

The foundation footprint was marked-out in advance of construction trenching. A vegetation layer and the topsoil was also stripped in advance. The foundation trenches were then excavated, usually to a depth of c. 0.7m: where 'softer ground' (usually archaeological features) was encountered, or disturbance from trees, the depths were increased accordingly.

The bases and sides of construction trenches were intermittently cleaned and inspected for intrusive archaeological features. A written account was maintained on standard watching brief daily log sheets. Artefacts (stratified and unstratified) were collected and subsequently processed and submitted for specialist appraisal. Colour photographs were taken and features were planned and/or drawn in section at scale 1:20.

Recording and excavation was undertaken by Robert Schofield.

8.0 Results

Some trenching took place in advance of archaeological monitoring. The client was informed that such action constituted a violation of the planning condition and the County Archaeological Officer was informed of this development.

The courses of at least four linear ditches/gullies were plotted within the foundation area: traces of other features were also identified, though were not always interpreted.

The basic vertical stratigraphy on the site may be summarised thus:

[6]: c. 25cm or less of (truncated topsoil); grey/brown sandy silt, no evidence of recent ploughing (many fibrous roots).

[7]: fawn/brown clay-silt containing small stone fragments and occasional sherds of pottery. Depth varied between 25cm and 50cm. Possible soil creep horizon sealing top of archaeological features. Two bags of pottery from different areas of the site have been dated to the C12th/C13th; a third bag containing only later medieval wares may represent contamination.

[8]: mid-brown chalky boulder clay containing occasional fragments of flint; late glacial drift.

8.1 Gully [13] (Fig. 3, Fig. 4)

Traces of a wide, shallow, north-south, ditch-like feature were exposed in the central part of the building plot. Its width on the south side of the site measured approximately 1.3m, though on the north side (where the interface between ditch and surrounding deposits was difficult to define) it exceeded 2.5m (note; the width in Fig.'s 3 and 4 is greater than this, though the sections drawn were oblique). Its depth measured between 40cm - 70cm, and its sides were extremely slight, rendering the interpretation 'gully' more appropriate than 'ditch'.

Slight traces of two post/stake holes were exposed in two section faces (Fig.'s 3 and 4); with these lying in the base of the gully, east of its central line. One possible interpretation for the gully is that it was a property boundary, the line of which may have been reinforced with the use of internal fencing, possibly for stock control. No stratified finds were recovered from the fill of the ditch.

In one section (on the west side of the garage foundation) the ditch, and a contemporary post hole, [11], had cut through the south side of a steep-sided, and earlier, feature, [19]. An interpretation of this was not possible and no finds were recovered from its fill.

An east-west ditch, [17], was truncated on the north side of the plot by ditch [13]: the direct relationship is indicated in Fig. 4 and can be seen in photographs 2 and 4

Fig. 3 Section through features in garage west wall foundation
(location on Fig. 2)

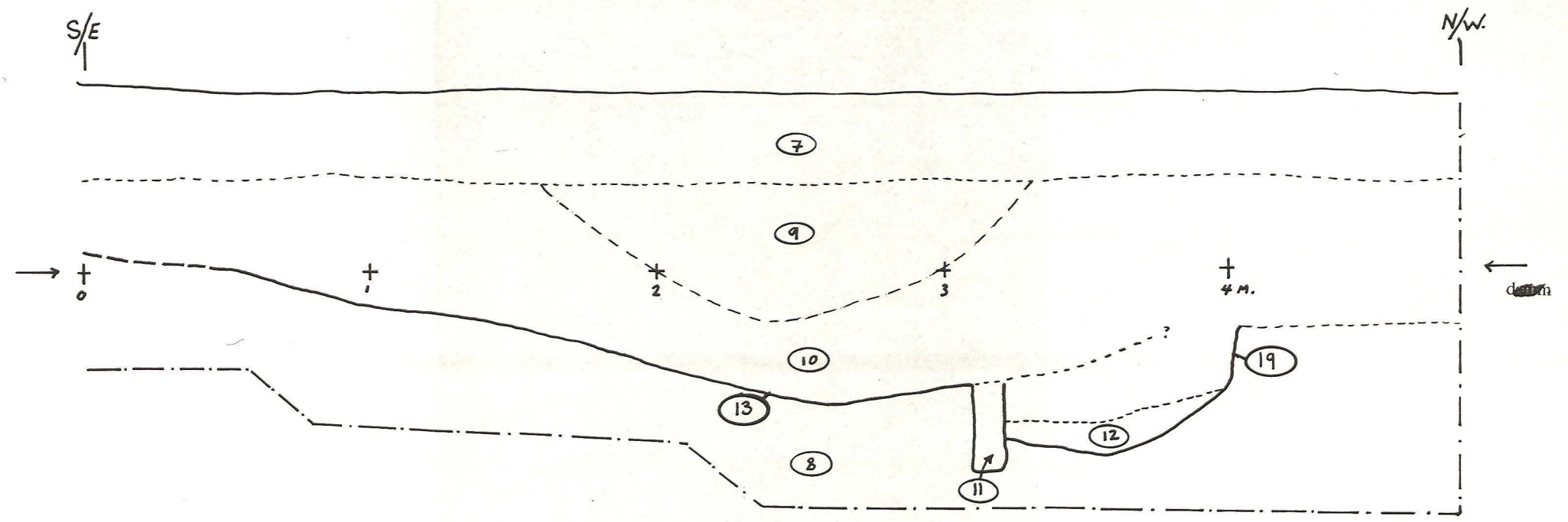
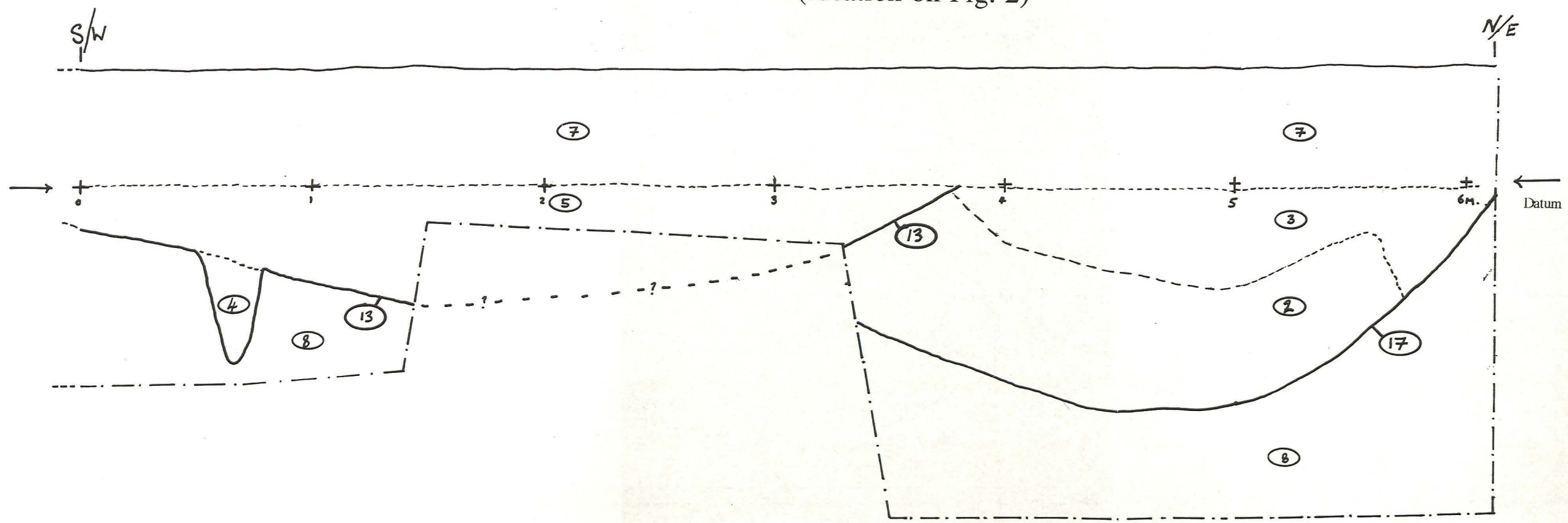


Fig. 4 Section through features in garage north wall foundation
(location on Fig. 2)



8.2 Ditch [18]

The west edge of a north-south ditch (parallel, and possibly contemporary, with ditch [13]) was exposed in construction trenches on the extreme east side of the development (Fig. 2). There is little information available on this feature, most of which lay east of the trenched area. It was filled with a largely homogenous reddish-brown clay, mixed with frequent chalk fragments and occasional flecks of charcoal.

8.3 Ditch [16] (Fig. 5)

A third, very straight-sided and regular, ditch, orientated east-west, was exposed in construction trenches on the north-west side of the site. It measured approximately 1.0m in width and was traced for a total distance of 8.0m (it was not identified on the south and south-east sides of the site, where its course was projected). In profile, the ditch was a rounded V-shape, with sides angled at approximately 45° . It was filled with brown/yellow silty clay, which contained a few sherds of pottery of C12th/C13th date.

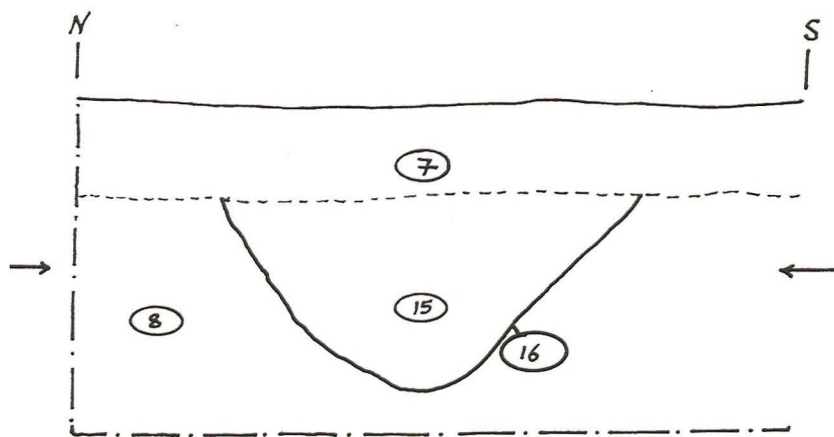


Fig. 5 Oblique section through ditch [16]

8.4 Ditch [17] (Fig. 4)

As noted above (Section 8.1), ditch [13] cut through the south edge of an earlier, east-west, ditch. This was not exactly parallel with the other east-west ditch (ditch [16]) though it may be the two were broadly contemporary. The north edge of ditch [17] was beyond the area investigated, though its width was estimated at c. 2.5m. Its recorded depth was just under 1.0m. There was no dating evidence.

9.0 Summary and conclusions.

The watching brief results suggest that the site of development was occupied by linear ditches in the C12th/C13th. These ditches may have been property boundaries relating to a more extensive medieval settlement; aspects of which have been mapped from aerial photographs.

It is understood that further development may take place on vacant plots to the west of the present site. It is suggested, therefore, that a geophysical survey could help to locate and contextualise further ditches which may be exposed as a result of development.

10.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning client, Mr A Hunt. Thanks also to Jane Young (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit) for her appraisal of the medieval pottery recovered.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Colour photographs

11.2 Site Archive

11.3 List of contexts

11.4 Relevant extracts from the County Sites and Monuments Record

11.5 References

Appendix 11.1: Colour Photographs



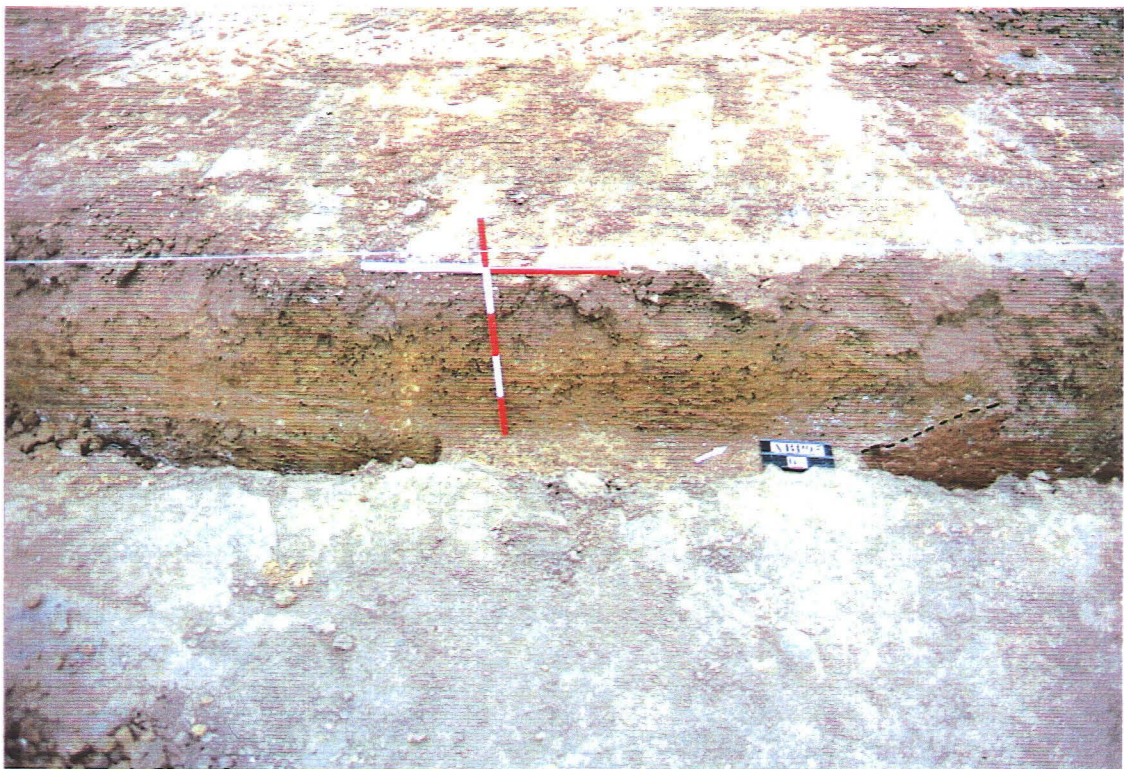
P1. General view of trenched plot following concrete pouring, looking north-west



P2. North-west garage foundation trench showing ditch [17] (red fill) cut by ditch [13] (yellow fill, left side of frame), looking west



P3. Longitudinal section through ditch [13], as exposed in south-west garage foundation, looking west



P4. Close-up of where ditch [13] (yellow fill) cut through ditch [17] (red fill) in garage north-west foundation, looking north-west

11.2 Site Archives

The basic site archive comprises the following elements:

x4 record sheets

x1 colour print film

x5 site drawings

x4 bags of finds

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 detailed archive list.

11.3 List of contexts used

- [1] Fill of ditch [18] (in east construction trenches); orientated north-south. Filled with reddish-brown clay, mixed with frequent chalk fragments, occasional charcoal and flint fragments. Edges of ditch poorly-defined.
- [2] Lower fill of ditch [17], extreme north side of construction trenches. Reddish silty clay with chalk inclusion
- [3] Upper fill of ditch [17]: mixed silty clay containing frequent chalk inclusion, occasional flecks of charcoal.
- [4] Post/stake hole seen in base of ditch [13]
- [5] Bulk fill of ditch [13]: mixed silty clay containing chalk inclusion, occasional flecks of charcoal. Interface difficult to determine.
- [6] Topsoil: c. 25cm of grey/brown sandy silt containing frequent small roots, with little evidence of recent ploughing. Upper topsoil stripped prior to field work.
- [7] Subsoil layer beneath [6]: fawnish-brown clay-silt, occasional small stone fragments.
- [8] Mid-brown chalky boulder clay beneath [7]: natural Pleistocene deposit.
- [9] Context given to fill of ditch [13], where exposed in garage south wall construction trench: light brown/yellow silty clay; virtually stone-free.
- [10] Lower fill of ditch [13]: below [9] in garage south wall construction trench.
- [11] ?Second post hole in base of ditch [13]: seen in section, west side of ditch
- [12] Thin deposit of mixed brown/orange silt, lumps of blue clay lining base of feature [19]. Cut by ditch [13] and by post hole [11].
- [13] Ditch orientated north-south; seen in four construction trenches on east/central side of plot. Wide, shallow cut; difficult to clarify in places; two post holes seen in base.
- [14] Large, flat piece of limestone seen on west side of building plot in area of doorway. Stone laid flat on top of [7]. Poss. post pad, but examined in isolation.

- [15] Fill of ditch orientated N/W - S/E (ditch [16]). Brown/yellow silty clay, chalk inclusion.
- [16] Cut of ditch orientated N/W - S/E, west side of plot (fill = [15]).
- [17] Cut of ditch orientated east-west, extreme north side of plot, part-beyond area investigated. This ditch cut by (ie earlier than) [13]. Filled with [2]/[3].
- [18] Cut of north-south ditch; west edge of which seen in extreme east construction trenches. Filled with [1].
- [19] Cut of feature exposed in west garage foundation trench. Earlier than ditch [13].

11.4 Information extracted from the County Sites and Monuments record (SMR)

Ref.	Description	NGR
T	Roman pottery	428 652
U	Medieval pottery found in field next to church, 1963.	426 668
AF	Moat house, Sir Christopher Wray (1524 - 92) Possessed a castellated mansion surrounded by a moat on this site. Present house = early C19th farmhouse.	4261 6642
AG	Homestead moat + other earthworks seen on aerial photographs. earthworks probably constitute village shrinkage.	4275 6705

RCHM(E) aerial photographic plot

Cropmarks/earthworks immediately to south of development site: linear east-west land division/ridge and furrow/field systems. Considerable ridge and furrow to north, south and west of development site.

11.5 References

Morris, J (ed) 1986 *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire*

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

Straw, A 1969 *Lincolnshire Soils*