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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

LAND SOUTH-EAST OF HALTON
ROAD, ASHBY BY PARTNEY

LINCOLNSHIRE



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

Site Code: ABP 96
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HALTON ROAD, ASHBY BY PARTNEY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

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1.0 Non-Technical Summary

A planning application was submitted to East Lindsey District Council which sought consent for the construction of a single large detached dwelling on land south-east of Halton Road, Ashby 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 number of archaeological features dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Some of the features relate to a cultural landscape which has been part-plotted from aerial photographs (extant earthworks), though none of those examined as part of the present study were visible above ground.

2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place between January 8th and January 17th, 1996, on the site of a private housing development (Fig. 1 and 2). The works were commissioned by Mr C Nicholls of Total Accountancy (Grimsby).

Data forming 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, and there are large areas of ridge and furrow on land to the north, south and west.

A watching brief which was undertaken on land immediately north-east of the present development exposed linear ditches (of at least two phases). Stratified pottery was recovered from only one of these, though the general ceramic assemblage recovered suggested occupation during the C12th/C13th. During the present investigation, medieval pottery was recovered from two features, which suggests occupation between the C11th and mid-C14th. Material from other features indicates activity (primarily rubbish deposition) between the middle/late C16th and the mid-C18th.

The site central national grid reference is TF 4278 6657.

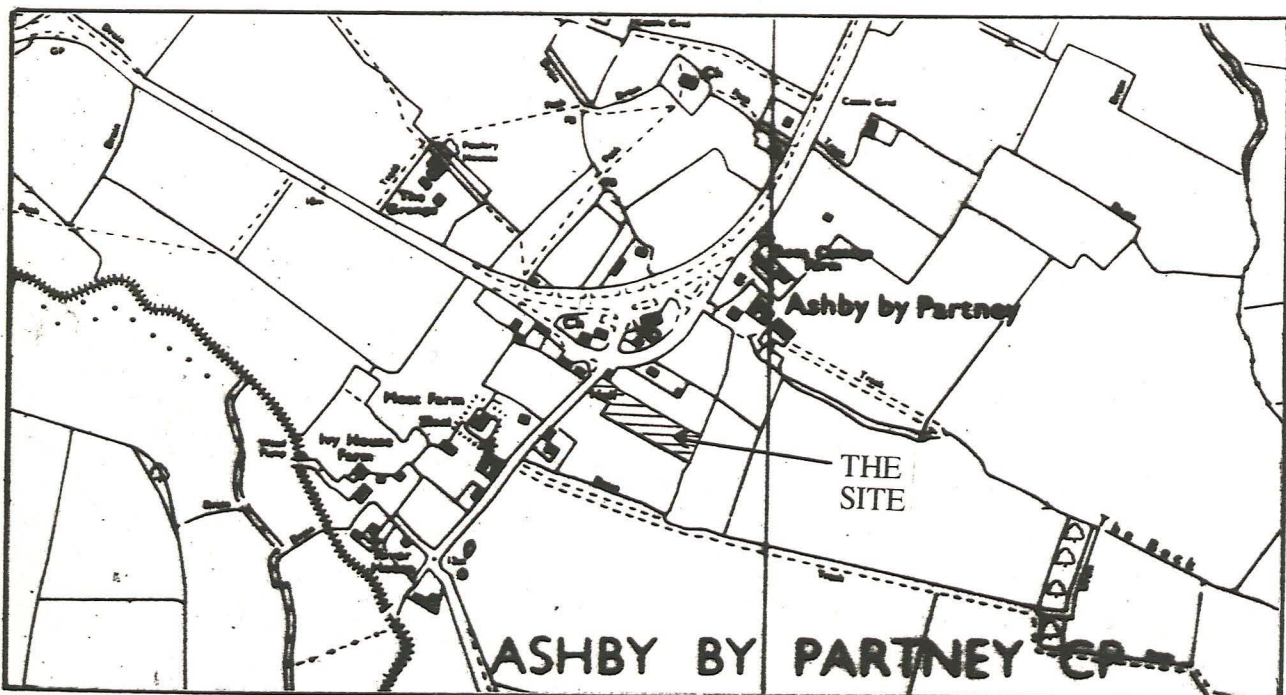
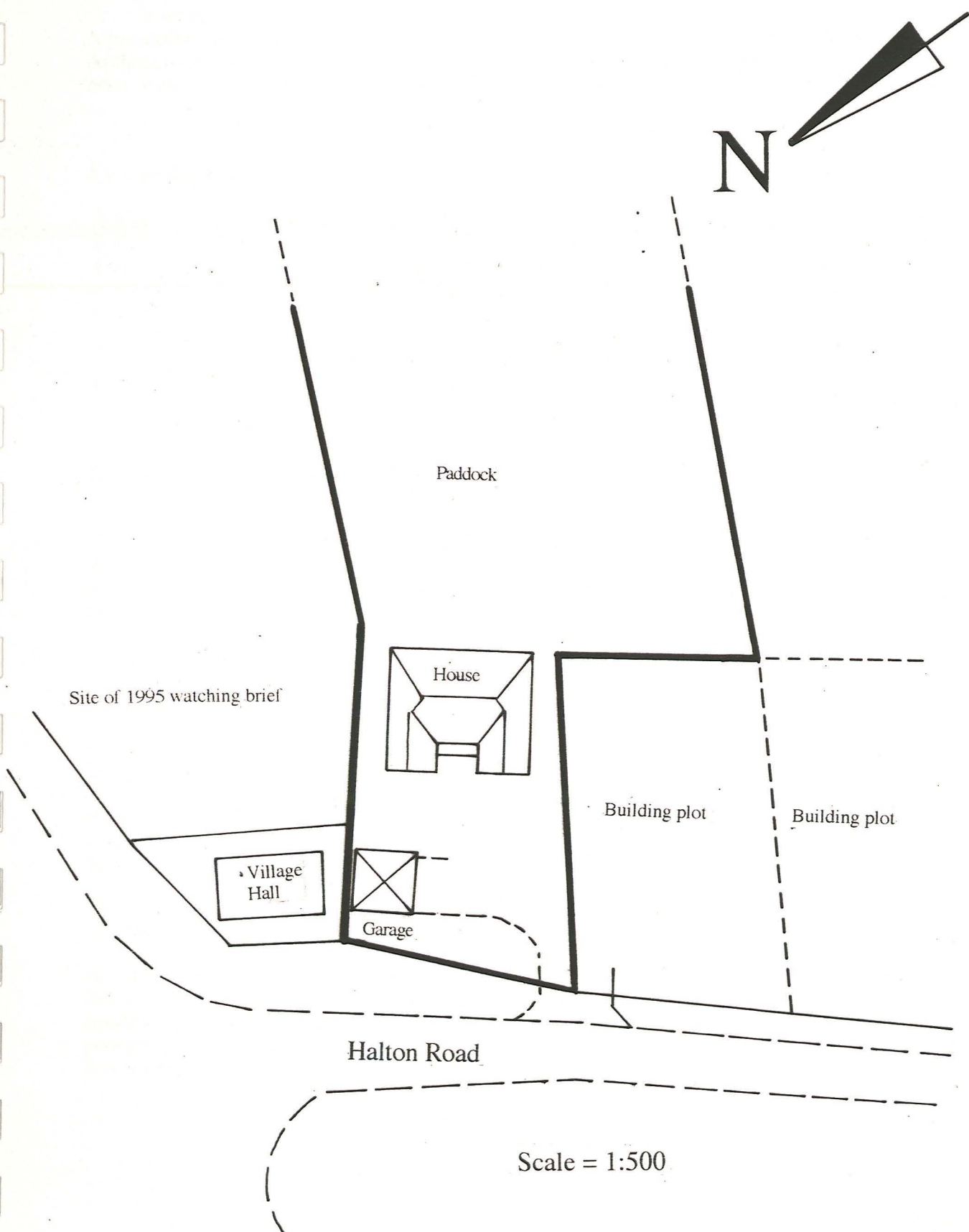


Fig. 1 1:10, 000 site location

Fig. 2 Development location plan



3.0 Planning background

Mr G Nicholls applied for full planning permission to construct a single detached dwelling on a vacant strip of land situated to the south-east of Halton Road (Application S/006/1011/95). Planning permission was granted, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief. The planning condition may be read as follows:-

"No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; outlining the scope of the archaeological requirement, was issued by the County Archaeological Officer (November 1995) and a project specification, based on the requirements of the brief, was submitted by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) on November 28th, 1995.

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

The recent RCHM(E) National Mapping Programme incorporates data relevant to the present watching brief: 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 Sites and Monuments Record (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 50m south-west. The moat house associated with the latter belonged to Sir Christopher Wray (1524 - 92).

Earlier evidence of occupation has been recorded in the form of surface artefact scatters: Roman pottery was recovered from fields less than 150m south of the development.

Ashby by Partney was included in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Morris 1986), so it is possible that continued field work in the parish will produce evidence on the origins of the Saxon (or earlier) settlement.

The existing parish church, St Helen's, which is of red brick construction, dates from as late as 1841 (Pevsner and Harris 1988).

A watching brief, undertaken two months earlier on a site immediately north-east of the present development, exposed a series of linear ditches; thought possibly to have been property boundaries. Stratified pottery from one of the ditches suggested occupation during the C12th/C13th. It was not possible to physically associate archaeological features between the two sites of investigation, though it is becoming clearer that occupation in the medieval period took place between the C11th and C14th.

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.

7.0 Methodology

A vegetation layer and c. 25cm of topsoil was stripped in advance of trenching. The foundation footprint was marked-out and trenches were then excavated, usually to depths between 0.9m and 1.0m. All of the construction trenches were monitored, as was a pit for a septic tank, which was excavated to a depth c. 2.7m below the modern ground surface.

The bases and sides of construction trenches were intermittently cleaned and inspected for intrusive archaeological features. Detailed records were entered on standard watching brief record sheets, and a general narrative was entered on a separate A4 sheet..

Stratified and unstratified artefacts were collected and subsequently processed before being 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 C Palmer-Brown.

Following the completion of the field work, all finds were washed and/or processed, and were presented to J Young and J Mann at the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit for appraisal and spot-dating. A site archive was then prepared.

8.0 Results

Beneath a grass vegetation layer lay up to 50cm of dark brown, humic, sandy clay, (01). This was a combination of topsoil and subsoil: the interface between horizons was not always clear.

This topsoil/subsoil sealed 10 - 15cm of yellowish-brown (virtually stone-free) sandy clay, which merged with an underlying drift of red or grey chalky boulder clay. It was from the top of the yellow-brown clay that a number of archaeological features were identified.

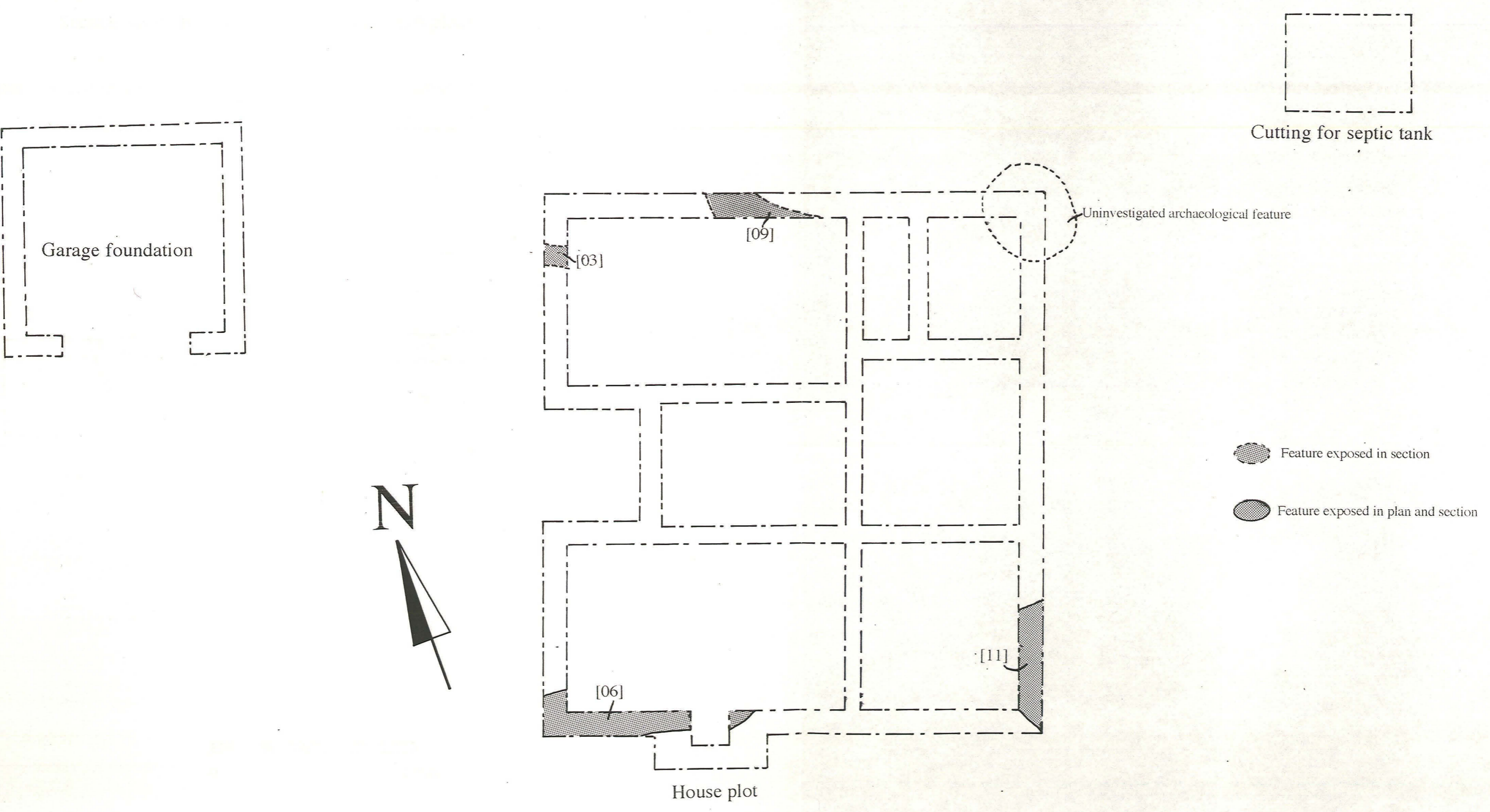
8.1 The house foundation (Fig.³s and 4)

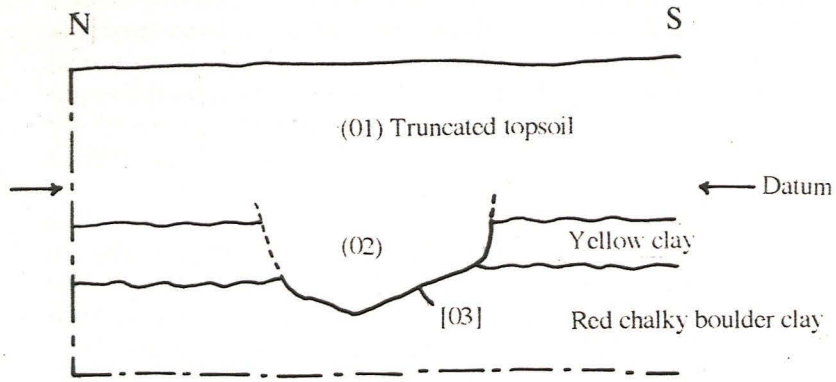
At least five substantial earth-cut archaeological features were exposed within the trenches associated with the foundation itself, though one feature (in the east corner of the plot) could not be investigated for lack of time.

A ?small feature was exposed in the north corner of the plot, [03]. Two ?early medieval pottery sherds were recovered when digging commenced on the north side of the west construction trench, and cleaning of the trench sides revealed a feature orientated broadly east-west. Its sides were slightly irregular and its depth was greater in the east section (up to 25cm) than it was in the west. It was filled with dark/mid-brown sandy clay which resembled the top/subsoil and contained pottery sherds which have been dated between the early C13th and mid-C14th.

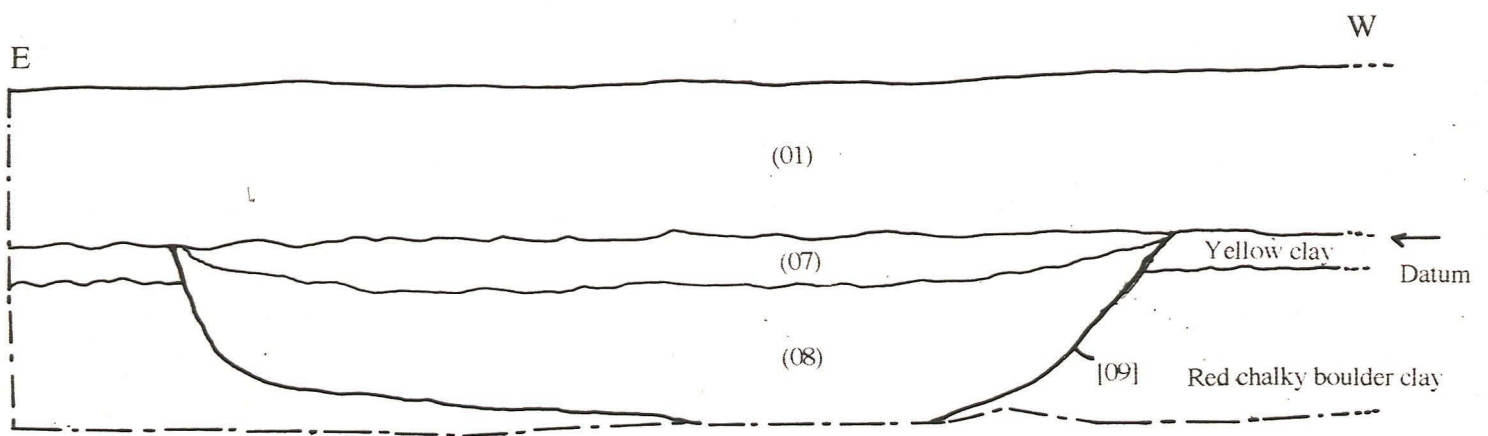
A second feature, [09], was exposed in the centre of the north wall construction trench. Its true form was difficult to assess within the narrow limits available, though it had sloping sides which broke to a wide, shallow, and almost flat, base (Fig. 4). Its lower fill (08) consisted of 35+cm of mid-brown sandy clay, intermingled with pebbles and chalk. Above this was a c. 10cm capping of cleaner yellow/brown sandy clay (07). A single sherd of pottery, which came from the lower fill has been dated, broadly, between the early C11th and the mid-C14th.

Fig. 3 1:100 building foundation plan, incorporating location of archaeological features





Section across feature [03] (location on 1:100 plan)



Section across feature [09] (location on 1:100 plan)



A large, probably linear, feature [06] was exposed in the extreme west corner of the plot. It appeared to be orientated east-west; with its east end possibly being a rounded terminal. Its depth was not established as its base was lower than the building construction trenches. Its sides were quite steep and well-defined, and it was filled with two distinct soils: the lower fill (05) consisted of greyish-brown sandy clay mixed with chalk fragments, animal bone, pottery sherds and charcoal flecks; the upper fill comprised up to 30cm of pinkish-brown sandy clay containing pottery sherds, chalk and tile fragments. Pottery recovered from the feature indicates a date range between the middle or later C16th and the mid-C18th.

In the south corner of the plot, another large feature was exposed [11]. This was better-defined than the other features on the site as, in this area, there were localised deposits of natural sandy gravel which contrasted against the dark backfill of what was assumed to have been a pit. There was limited time available to record this feature, though it was possible to clean, define and plot its location, as well as take photographs and recover finds. The upper fill of the feature (which measured more than 3.3m north-south) was exposed in section: it consisted of c. 13cm of grey/black, charcoal-stained, friable soil. Below this was 40cm+ of greenish-brown silty clay mixed with stones, pottery sherds, animal bones and other human waste. The suggested date for these finds is later C17th to mid-C18th.

There was a fifth substantial feature in the west corner of the plot (where an area of dark disturbance contrasted against a background of, otherwise sterile, natural clay), though there was insufficient time for this to be investigated in advance of concrete pouring (the house plot was excavated in advance of other areas).

8.2 The garage foundation

The garage foundation trenches were excavated to a depth c. 80cm lower than the modern ground surface. No archaeological features were exposed.

8.3 The soakaway pit

The soakaway pit, which was located approximately 6.0m east of the house foundation, measured 3.0m x 2.5m in plan and was excavated to a depth approximately 2.7m below the modern ground surface. As the excavation of this pit was undertaken un-supervised, it was not possible to examine post-glacial/cultural deposits in detail. A casual inspection of the trench sides suggested the area was devoid of cultural deposits (excluding the topsoil).

9.0 Summary and conclusions

The watching brief results suggest that the site of development was occupied during the early/high medieval period (ie possibly from as early as the C11th through to the mid-C14th) and again (?of lesser significance) in the late/post-medieval period.

Under the constraints of the watching brief, it has not been possible to provide a detailed assessment of the archaeology. The 'window of operation' on both sites has simply been too small, and it is considered unlikely that similar watching brief operations on adjacent sites will lead to a greater understanding of what could be an important archaeological site. Curatorial archaeologists may wish to bear these points in mind, should further development take place in adjacent areas, which are currently on sale.

10.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning client, Mr C Nicholls (Total Accountancy). Thanks also to Jane Young and Jenny Mann (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit) for their appraisal of the medieval and post-medieval finds recovered during the brief.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Colour photographs

11.2 Site Archive

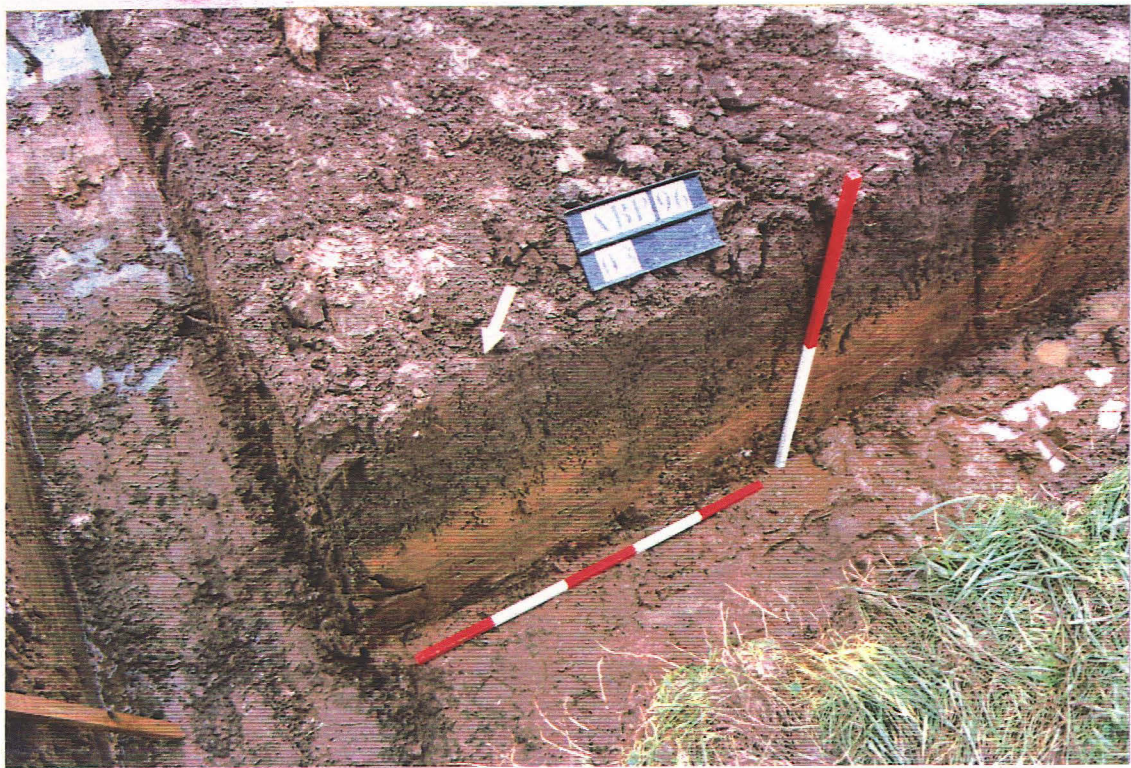
11.3 List of contexts

11.4 Relevant extracts from the County Sites and Monuments Record

11.5 References

11.6 Archive records on the ceramic finds assemblage (CLAU)

11.1 Colour Photographs



P1. Feature [03], exposed in east face of north-west wall construction trench



P2. Feature [06] seen in plan; in south-west corner of building plot, looking north-west



P3. Feature [11] in south-east corner of building plot, looking north-east



P4. Septic tank cutting, looking south

11.2 Site Archives

The basic site archive comprises the following elements:

x7 record sheets

x2 colour print films

x1 composite site drawing (incorporating site location, plan of archaeological remains and feature sections)

x5 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

- (01) Up to 0.5m of dark brown sandy clay containing occasional small stones: combination of both top and sub-soil.
- (02) Dark/mid-brown sandy clay mixed with chalk fragments, occasional pottery sherds. Fill of feature seen on north side of west construction trench, [03].
- [03] Cut filled with the above soil matrix; feature with irregular sides, orientated broadly east-west
- (04) Upper fill of feature [06]: pinkish-brown sandy clay mixed with small chalk, pottery and tile fragments
- (05) Lower fill of feature [06]: 30cm+ of greyish-brown sandy clay mixed with chalk, pottery and bone fragments
- [06] Large pit-like feature seen in sides and base of S/W construction trenches; edge in west construction trench = steep; less pronounced in south wall construction trench
- (07) Upper fill/capping in top of feature [09]. 12cm of yellow/brown sandy clay
- (08) Lower fill of feature [09]: 36cm+ of mid-brown sandy clay, occasional small pebbles, chalk etc.
- [09] Wide, shallow feature in centre of north wall construction trench. Depth = 60cm+
- (10) Fill(s) of large pit [11]: upper fill = 13cm of dark grey/black friable, charcoal-stained soil; lower fill = 40cm+ of greenish-brown silty clay containing occasional stones, frequent pottery and animal bone; fill = relatively loose
- [11] Cut of substantial pit in south-east corner of plot

11.4 Information derived 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*

Palmer-Brown, C 1985 *Archaeological Watching Brief Report: Halton Road, Ashby by Partney*
(unpublished developer report)

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

Straw, A 1969 *Lincolnshire Soils*

Appendix 11.6

POST-ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE: ABP96 WARE TYPES BY CONTEXT

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
U/S	TB	3	BOWL	17/18TH
02	LSLOC	1	JAR	BS;FABRIC INCLUDES SHELL + QUARTZ ;??? LSH
02	LSW2	1	JAR	? ID
02	MEDLOC	1	JUG?	BASE;FABRIC INCLUDES SUBROUND QUARTZ + FE +OCC CA + OCC FLINT
02	UNGS	1	COOK;GLOBULAR?	HANDMADE;? EMED ;FABRIC INCLUDES FLINT
02	UNGS	1	JAR	BASE
04	TB	1	?	-
04	TB	1	?	INT & EXT GLZE
04	TB	1	BOWL	BASE
05	TB	1	?	BS
05	TB	1	BOWL	BS
05	TB	1	BOWL	RIM
05	TB	2	JAR/JUG	BASE
05	UNGS	1	JAR?	BS
08	UNGS	1	JAR?	BS
10	TB	1	-	-
10	SLIP	1	DISH	NICE;ORANGE FABRIC;WHITE SLIP ;TRAILED AND JEWELLED DEC IN BROWN YELLOW & TAN;LOCAL?

DATING

Context	Earliest horizon	Latest horizon	Date
02	MH4	MH6	EARLY 13TH TO MID 14TH
04	PMH3	PMH8	MID/LATE 16TH TO MID 18TH
05	PMH5	PMH8	MID17TH TO MID 18TH
08	ASH12	MH6	EARLY 11TH TO MID 14TH
10	PMH7	PMH8	LATE 17TH TO MID 18TH

ASHBY BY PARTNEY (ABP96): BULK MATERIAL ARCHIVE LIST

Context	Type	Count	Comments
10	CTPB	1	PMED;M17-E18;1670-1700