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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

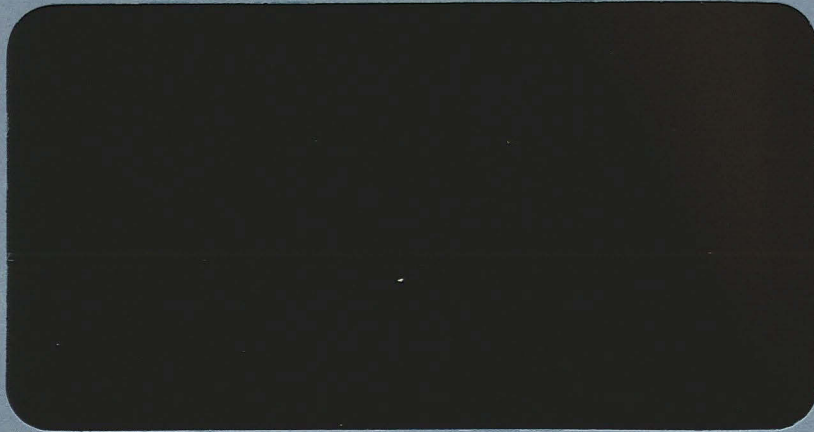
**LAND SOUTH-EAST OF HALTON ROAD,  
ASHBY BY PARTNEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**LCCM Accession No.: 58.96**

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**LAND SOUTH-EAST OF HALTON  
ROAD, ASHBY BY PARTNEY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

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BY

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## 1.0 Non-technical summary

*A third archaeological watching brief was conducted on land south-east of Halton Road, Ashby by Partney during the construction of a single detached dwelling. A range of earth-cut features were exposed during groundworks which have been dated between the 13th and 17th centuries. Inevitably, the work will complement projects which have been carried out on plots 1 and 2, though it has not been possible within the remit of the project brief to add significantly to the results obtained during previous watching briefs.*

## 2.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on behalf of Mr and Mrs Gunson during house construction on Plot 4, Halton Road, Ashby by Partney (Fig. 1). The works were commissioned to fulfil a planning requirement issued by East Lindsey District Council and followed similar investigations on two sites c. 20m north-east of the present development. Several phases of archaeological activity were exposed during the brief, and the main thrust of occupation appears to have taken place during the medieval period.

The site central national grid reference is SK 4280 6642.

HTF

## 3.0 Planning background

Mr and Mrs Gunson received full planning consent to construct a large detached dwelling subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during preliminary construction and service trenching. An archaeological project brief was not issued by the Archaeology Section at Lincolnshire County Council, though a verbal brief indicated that the project should be undertaken to the standards outlined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists:

"An archaeological watching brief is defined as a formal programme of observation and recording conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specific area or site on land or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive." (IFA 1994)

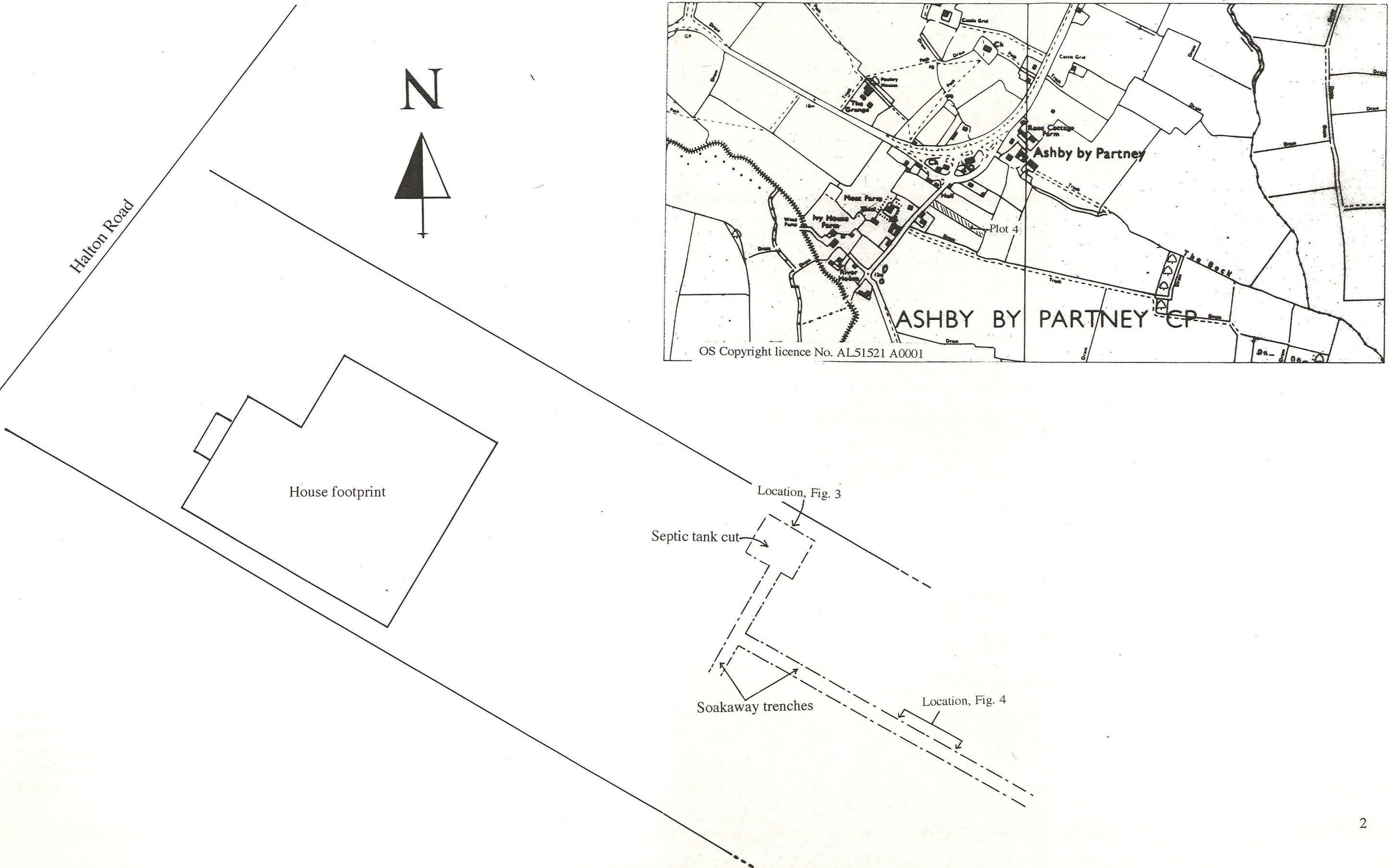
## 4.0 Geology and topography

The village lies in East Lindsey approximately 12km west of Skegness, 2km east of Spilsby. It lies on the dip slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds at an altitude approximately 15.0m OD.

The base geology is chalk, though this is overlain with drift deposits of chalky boulder clay which produces brown earth and brown calcareous soils (Straw 1969).



Fig. 1 Site location at scales 1:10,000 and 1:200  
(incorporating location of Fig.'s 3 and 4)





The site of development lies within a relatively flat environment, with only slight, localised, topographical variation.

## **5.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The recent watching brief projects carried out on the east side of Halton Road constitute the only formal intrusive archaeological investigations to have been carried out in Ashby by Partney. The briefs on Plots 1 and 2 have demonstrated phases of occupation during the medieval period (possibly from as early as the 11th century). On both of these sites, a series of linear ditches were exposed and were interpreted as property boundaries. Direct evidence of buildings has not been recorded, though this could be due to the fact that there has been no deep excavation on the immediate road frontage.

The RCHM(E) Mapping Programme has recorded cropmarks and earthworks to the south of the present development, and there is evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation to the north, south and west. There are two moated sites in the parish: one of these sites (Manor Farm) is only 50m from the present development, on the west side of Halton Road; the other is c. 0.5km to the north. The occurrence of a moated site so far north of the existing settlement has been taken as evidence of village shrinkage.

A relative date for the foundation of Ashby by Partney is not known, though there are entries for the settlement in the Domesday Book of 1086. The earlier history must rely almost solely on archaeology.

## **6.0 Aims**

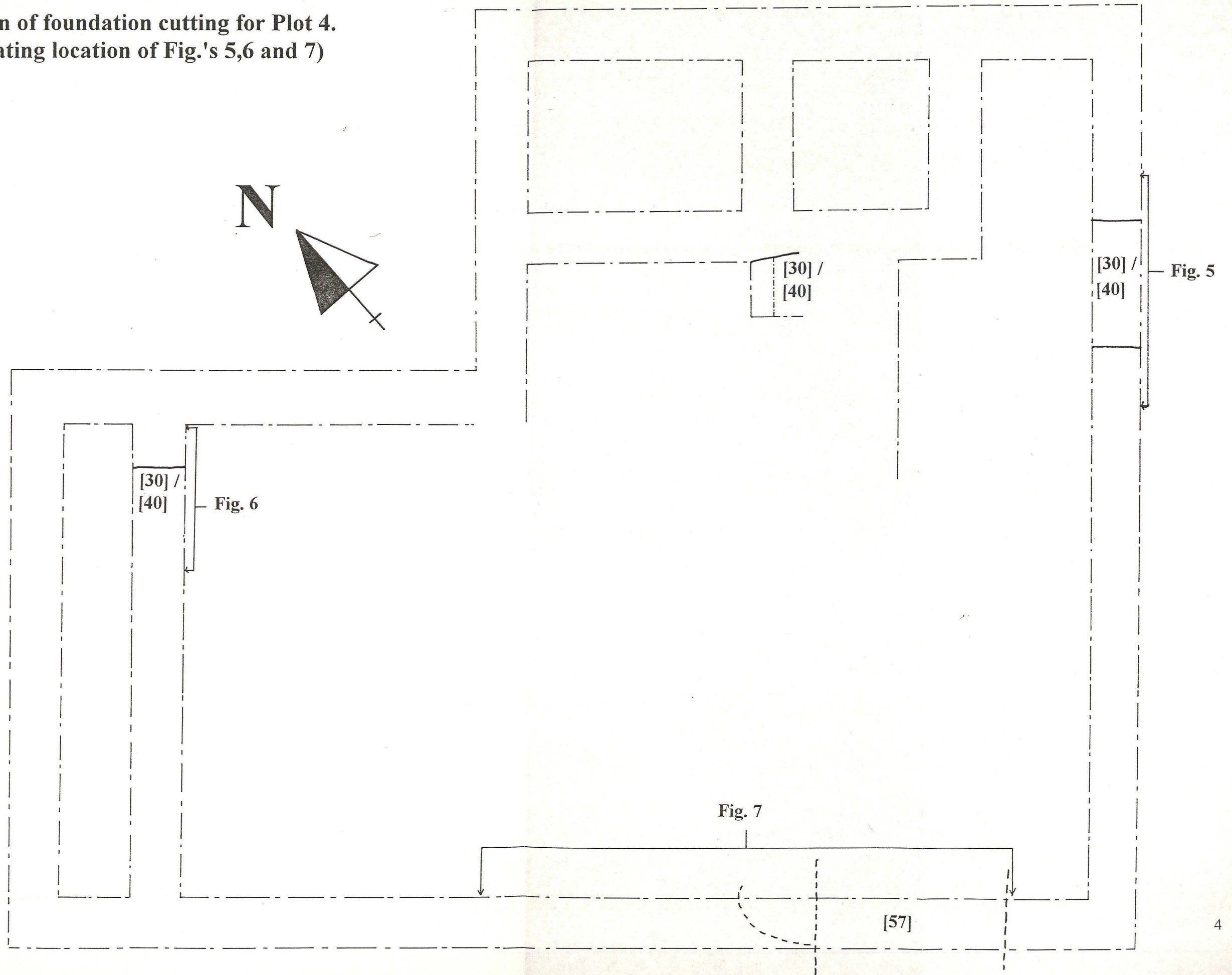
The objective of the watching brief was to ensure that any archaeological, artefactual or ecofactual remains exposed or disturbed as a result of the groundworks were recorded to the standards expected by the Archaeology Section at Lincolnshire County Council; resulting in a detailed site report and comprehensive archive.

## **7.0 Methods**

The site was inspected on three separate occasions in April 1996 during the excavation of foundation, sewage and drainage trenches. In each of these trenches, the bases and sides of cut surfaces were scanned and intermittently cleaned and examined for evidence of archaeological intrusion.

A full written account was entered on standard watching brief record sheets and archaeological features were drawn at scale 1:20 (usually in section). The features were photographed and then excavated for finds retrieval (ie dating and functional evidence). Recording and excavation was undertaken by C Palmer-Brown and S Timms.

Fig. 2: 1:50 plan of foundation cutting for Plot 4.  
(incorporating location of Fig.'s 5,6 and 7)





## 8.0 Results

Topsoil stripping was not monitored, though the associated spoil heap was inspected retrospectively for artefacts. Trenching was carried out in two major stages: first, the septic tank and drainage trenches, followed by construction trenching for the dwelling. This sequence will form the order of description.

### 8.1 The septic tank and soakaway trenches (Fig.'s 1, 3 and 4)

Deep excavation commenced with the digging of a square septic tank trench approximately 15.0m east of the main house plot. This was excavated to approximately 2.5m below the top of the modern ground surface, though the operation was paused at approximately 1.3m to allow archaeological inspection and recording.

#### Ditch 06

A backfilled V-shaped ditch, orientated north-west to south-east was exposed in two of the section faces, [06]. It measured approximately 1.8m in width and 0.9m in depth and was sealed beneath the topsoil. Its lower bulk fill, [05], was a light grey silty clay which contained a small quantity of medieval pottery (dating somewhere between the mid-14th and early 15th centuries). Subsequent fills contained pottery dating between the mid-16th century and the 17th centuries. On its south-east side, the ditch was cut through natural boulder clay, though its east face was cut through a much dirtier horizon which was possibly cultural.

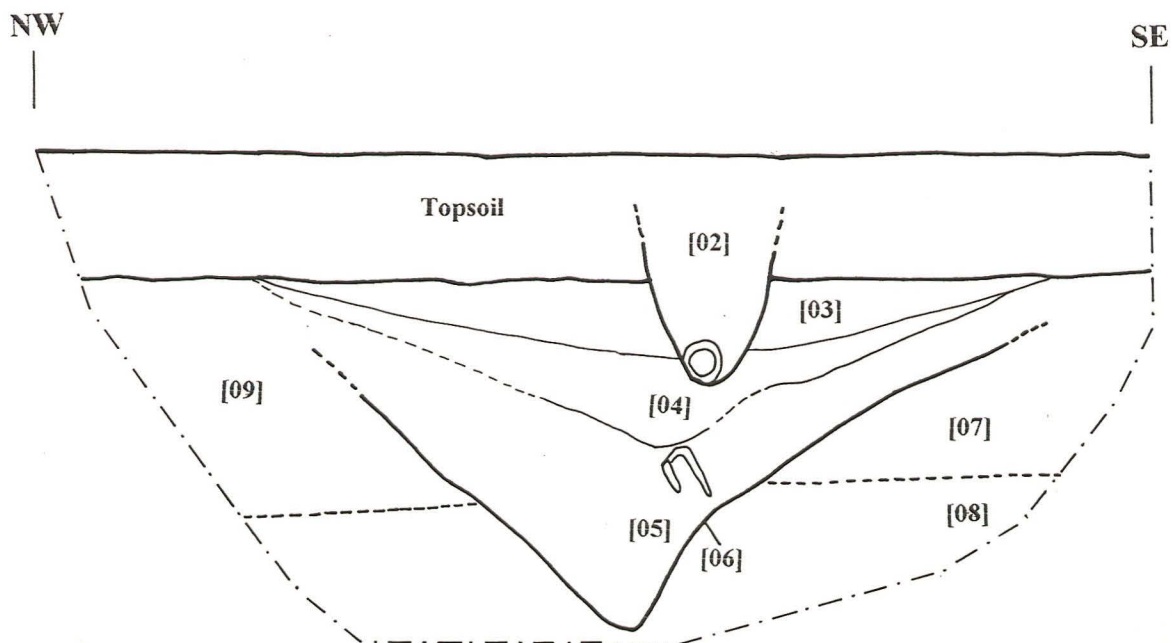


Fig. 3: Section of Feature [06] (scale 1:20)

### Gullies [12] and [15]

A series of drainage and soakaway trenches were excavated to the south and south-east of the septic tank cut; chiefly to redirect waters draining from the property roof and surround. They were excavated to a depth approximately 0.8m beneath the modern ground surface.

In a trench orientated north-west to south-east, at least two linear gullies were exposed, [12] and [15] (there was some evidence of further gullies but insufficient time to investigate). These features were excavated through an extensive natural deposit of clean yellow silty clay and were sealed beneath the topsoil/subsoil and a spread of material derived from the features themselves. The most north-westerly gully, [12], measured approximately 1.0m in width and 0.35m in depth, but was progressively shallowing and narrowing towards the south. It was filled with stiff clay which was heavily stained with charcoal, [11], but was otherwise devoid of cultural or other inclusions.

Gully [15] was 1.7m south-east of the above. It was wider in plan and it terminated fractionally short of the south section face. Its fill was identical to the material filling gully [12], though the upper void was capped with a wedge of natural yellow silty clay.



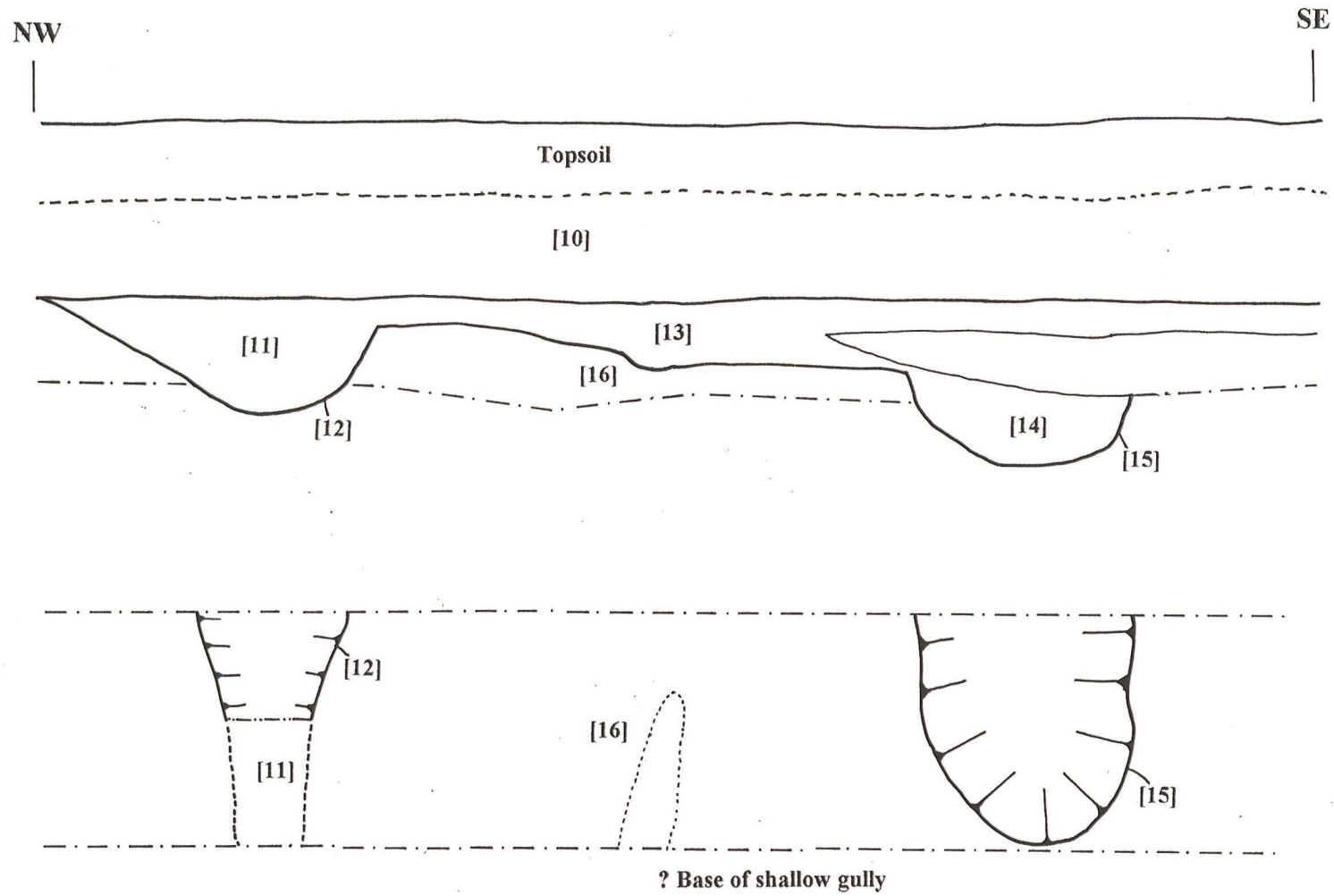


Fig. 4: Plan and Section of Features [12] and [15] (scale 1:20)

## 8.2 The house foundation (Fig.'s 2, 5, 6 and 7)

### Ditch [30]/[40]

A re-cut linear feature was exposed in three separate locations within the building plot, orientated broadly east-west. The excavator believed that in all three locations, the same feature was evident.

The most complete profile was obtained on the south-west side of the building plot (Fig. 5). In its later form (ie ditch [30]), the ditch was a broad U-shape with a flat, undulating base. It measured up to 3.0m in width, 70cm in depth and was filled with a complex of primary and secondary fills. Pottery recovered from these fills suggests a date range between the mid-16th and early 17th centuries, placing the ditch firmly in the early post-medieval period. Pottery recovered from its predecessor, ditch [40], has been dated between the mid-14th and early 15th centuries, though the sample of sherds recovered was small. Of the latter ditch, most of its truncated profile was beneath the base of the foundation trench

### Features exposed in the south-west wall construction trench

A complex of inter-cutting earth-cut features was exposed in the south-west construction trench. The latest of these, [57], was a large, regular and flat-bottomed feature with steep sides. It measured 2.1m in length and its depth was 0.7m. Lining its base on the north-west side was a dense layer of charcoal, [56]; above which were secondary backfills which filled the bulk void. No datable finds were recovered from the feature, though the quantity of charcoal in its base would suggest an industrial function.

The south-east edge of the above cut through the north-west side of a pit-like feature, [62], which measured c. 0.6m in depth. It had a lower fill of wet, sticky, silty clay which was devoid of finds. Its upper bulk fill, [60], also contained no dating evidence and the function of the pit was not determined.

The south-east edge of pit [62] was heavily truncated by a steep-sided and flat-bottomed pit, [59]. It was filled with dirty sandy clay which contained pottery sherds dating between the mid-14th century and the early 15th centuries.

No other archaeological features were exposed during the brief.



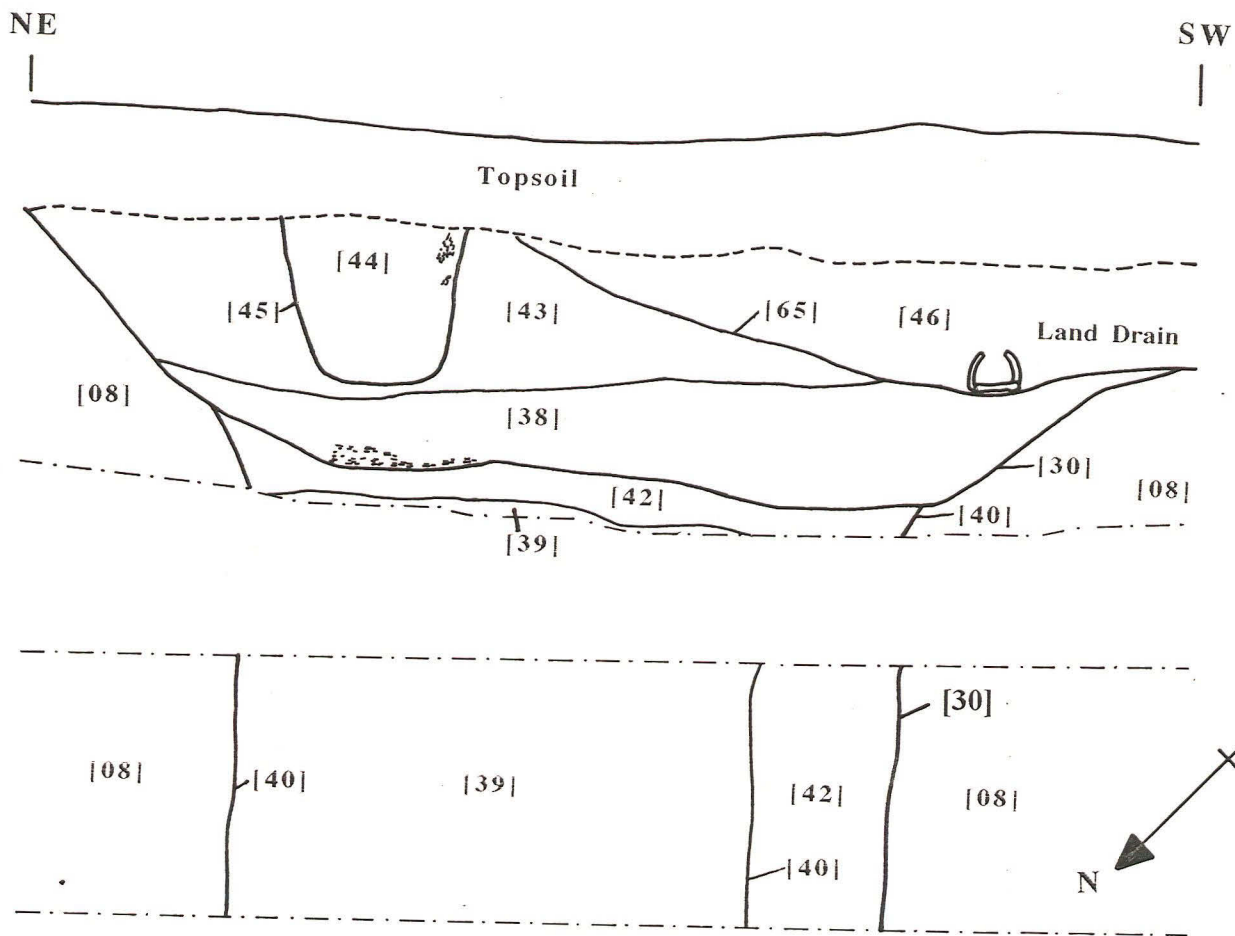


Fig. 5: Plan and Section of Features [30], [40] and [45] (scale 1:20)

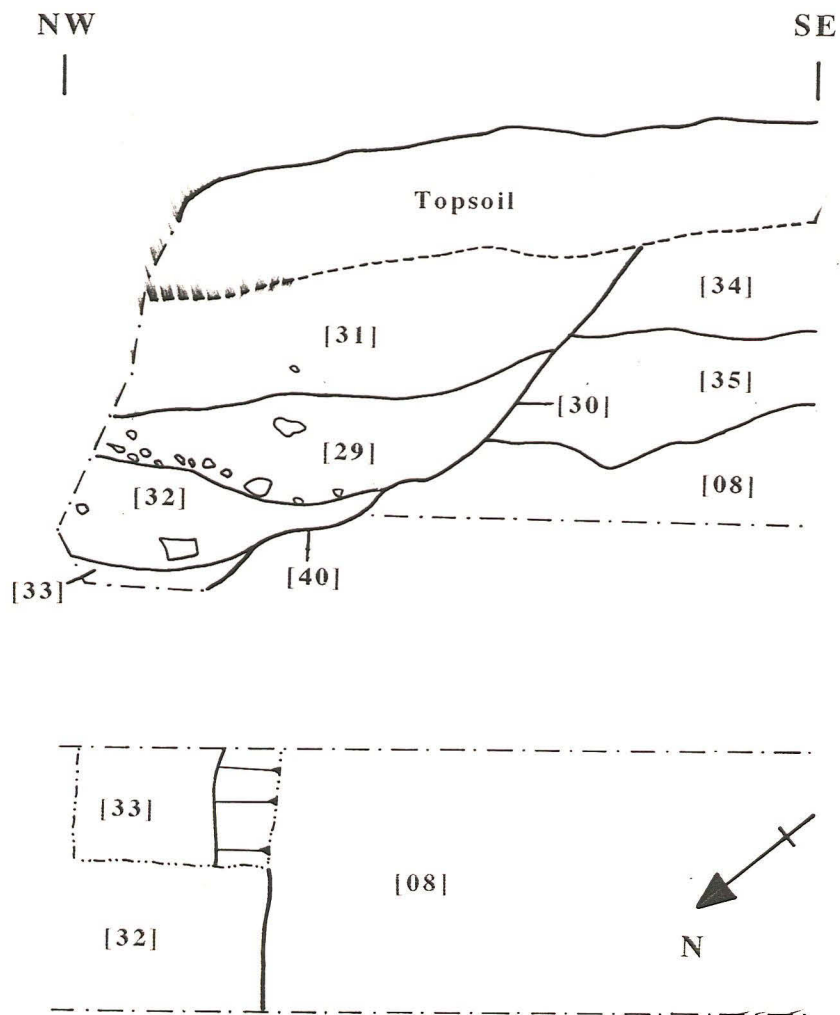


Fig. 6: Plan and Section of Feature [40] (scale 1:20)



NW

SE

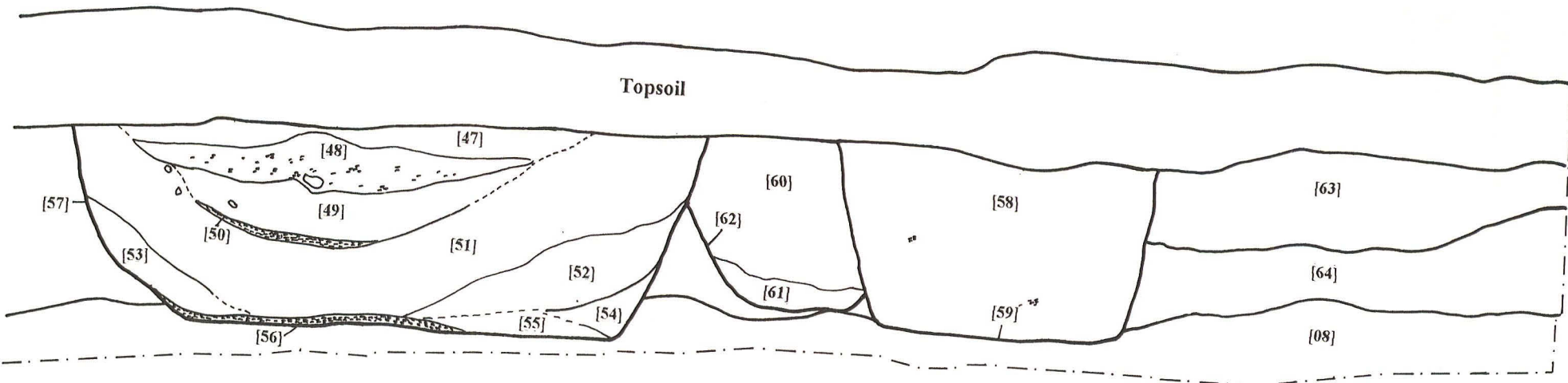


Fig. 7: Section of Features [57], [59] and [62] (scale 1:20)

## **9.0 Summary and conclusions**

The watching brief has resulted in the exposure and recording of a series of earth-cut pits and ditches which suggest occupation during the high medieval and post-medieval periods. The ditches, it is assumed, represent property and/or field boundaries, though the occurrence of pits and other (possibly industrial) features would imply direct occupation on the site; perhaps concentrated on the frontage.

The work complements the previous projects at Plots 1 and 2, which indicated occupation from as early as the 11th century. However, the watching brief offers few opportunities to assess the archaeology in detail and one inevitably fears that an opportunity has been missed to examine a densely-occupied site which, presumably, has undergone successive phases of shrinkage and expansion. Had it been possible to have undertaken a geophysical survey, for example, then a wider context for the material thus far exposed may have been possible.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

Sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning clients, Mr and Mrs Gunson and to Jane Young (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit) for producing the pottery archive.



appendix 11.0

## **11.0 Appendices**

**11.1 Colour photographs**

**11.2 Site archive**

**11.3 List of contexts**

**11.4 Relevant entries from the County Sites and Monuments Record**

**11.5 References**



Appendix 11.1



Photo. 1 General view of house foundation plot during trenching, looking north-west



Photo. 2 Section through ditch [06] in septic tank cut, looking north-east



Photo. 3 Gullies [12] and [15] in soakaway cutting, looking east





Photo. 4 Section through ditch [30]/[40] in north-west corner of house foundation trench, looking south-east



Photo. 5 Section through ?industrial feature [57] in house south-west construction trench, looking north-east



Photo. 6 Section through features [59] and [62] in house south-west construction trench, looking north-east



## 11.2 Site archive

The site archive, which will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, comprises the following elements:

- x 27 record sheets
- x2 colour print films
- x 8 1:20 drawing sheets
- x 1 (composite) bag of artefacts
- Misc. notes and correspondence
- x1 copy of this report



### Appendix 11.3 Context Classification List

Context	Description
[01]	Modern topsoil supporting grass vegetation (septic tank cut)
[02]	Modern land drain and trench cut through backfill of med. ditch [06] (septic tank cut)
[03]	Upper backfill of ditch [06]: ?topsoil slumped over top of backfilled void (septic tank cut)
[04]	Fill within ditch [06]: below [03], over [05] (septic tank cut)
[05]	Lower bulk fill of ditch [06] (septic tank cut)
[06]	Cut of medieval drainage ditch/property boundary: orientated N/W to S/E (septic tank cut)
[07]	Yellow/brown natural clay on S/E side of ditch [06] (septic tank cut)
[08]	Natural chalky boulder clay below [07] (septic tank cut)
[09]	Thick deposit (up to 60cm) of grey/brown soft silty sand on N/W side of (and cut by) ditch [06]: probably archaeological but not clarified (septic tank cut)
[10]	Thick deposit (up to 50cm) of topsoil/subsoil: interface unclear, but variation at c. 20cm from top of modern ground surface (soakaway trench)
[11]	Charcoal-stained clay fill of shallow ditch/gully [12] (soakaway trench)
[12]	Cut of shallow ditch/gully; orientated SSW to EEN and rapidly shallowing towards SSW; close to terminal (soakaway trench)
[13]	Dense deposit of dark, charcoal-stained clay situated around (and merging with) the fills of gullies [12] and [15]. Wash deposit, probably originating from [12] and [15] (soakaway trench)
[14]	Charcoal-stained clay fill of shallow ditch/gully [15]. Upper backfill/capping = wedge of clean yellow silty clay; possibly dumped to level the surface (soakaway trench)
[15]	Ditch/gully similar to (and on same alignment as) feature [12]. Terminal located within cutting (soakaway trench)
[16]	Extensive deposit of clean yellow silty clay; natural, and identical to (redeposited) capping in top of ditch [15] (soakaway trench)
[17]	Fill of small pit seen in N/E face of south-west foundation trench. ?modern
[18]	Cut of above; small bowl-shaped pit
[19]	Localised layer of firm light yellow/brown clay seen in south-west foundation trench.
[20]	Deep narrow trench containing modern drain pipe; seen in both section faces of south-west foundation trench
[21]	Subsoil layer below topsoil; house foundation trenches: up to 40cm of grey/brown

silty clay

- [22] Bulk fill of large earth-cut feature seen in both section faces of S/W house foundation trench. Contained medieval pottery sherds
- [23] Cut containing the above; flat-based, 55cm deep, steep sides. Function not clear
- [24] Fill of truncated feature cut by N/W edge of [23]; sticky silty clay; very clean and devoid of cultural inclusions
- [25] Cut containing the above fill; steep north-west side, flat base
- [26] Clean natural yellow sandy clay (house foundation area)
- [27] Fill of small pit; N/W side of S/W foundation trench; dark fill with occasional charcoal + chalk pebbles. No finds
- [28] Cut containing the above; steep profile, possibly post hole
- [29] Fill of post-med./mod. ditch orientated N/W to S/E; filled with dark brown/grey silty clay; uppermost fill identical to topsoil
- [30] Cut containing the above; ditch orientated N/W to S/E; perpendicular to road. Seen in N/W corner of foundation plot
- [31] Upper fill of feature [30], exposed in inner south-westernmost foundation trench (ie layer within ditch [30]). No finds
- [32] Fill within predecessor to ditch [30]; fills upper remaining section of ditch [40], and cut through by ditch [30]; overlies [33].
- [33] Fill of ditch [40]; below [32]; no finds
- [34] Subsoil code (same as [21]); cut through by ditch [30].
- [35] Layer of mixed grey/yellow/orange silty clay cut through by ditch [30] in inner south-westernmost foundation trench; below [34]
- [36] Upper fill of ?ditch [30]; exposed in internal construction trench, north-central area. No finds
- [37] Below [36]; fill comprising mid-brown silty clay; no finds
- [38] Below [37] and same as [29]
- [39] Below [38]/[29]; lower fill of ditch [30] (in internal construction trench, north-central area)
- [40] Cut of ditch orientated broadly east-west: direct predecessor to ditch [30]
- [41] Basal fill to ditch [40]; green/grey silty clay containing frequent pottery, bone, charcoal and other cultural inclusions. Slight organic content ?indicative of standing water
- [42] Truncated fill of ditch [40]; seen on north side of east wall construction trench; sherds of med. pottery
- [43] Fill of ditch [30]; seen on north side of east wall construction trench; no finds
- [44] Fill of ?modern pit [45]



- [45] Cut, small pit on north side of east wall construction trench; cut through [43], fill of ditch [30]
- [46] Backfill of modern land drainage trench (cut through top of ditch [30])
- [47] Upper fill of feature [57]; no finds
- [48] Below [47]; contained much charcoal + one frag. of ?burnt daub
- [49] Below [48]; but identical fill to [47]
- [50] Thin lens of charcoal-stained soil below [49]
- [51] Below [50], in feature [57]; fill
- [52] Below [51]; S/E side of feature [57]; no finds
- [53] Below [51]; N/W side of feature [57]; no finds
- [54] Same as [35], S/E side of feature [57]
- [55] Same as [52], S/E side of feature [57]
- [56] 20cm spread of dense charcoal in base of feature [57]
- [57] Large, flat-bottomed pit-like feature with steep side: ?industrial function
- [58] Fill of post-med. pit to S/E of [57]
- [59] Cut containing the above; steep sides, flat base
- [60] Upper bulk fill of pit [62]; no finds
- [61] Lower fill of pit [62]; very clean, no finds
- [62] Cut of pit which is cut by (and earlier than) features [57] and [59]
- [63] Subsoil horizon; same as [21]

#### 11.4 Relevant entries from the County Sites and Monuments Record

Ref.	Description	NGR
T	Roman pottery scatter	SK 428652
U	Medieval pottery scatter; found in field adjacent to church in 1963	SK 426668
AF	Moat House, Sir Christopher Wray (1524 - 92); possessed a castellation mansion surrounded by a moat. Present house = early 19th century farmhouse	SK 42616642
AG	Homestead moat + other earthworks seen on aerial photographs; earthworks probably constitute village shrinkage	SK 42756705

#### 11.5 References

IFA 1994, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

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

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

Palmer-Brown, CPH 1995 *Land off Halton Road, Ashby by Partney (Plot 1)*  
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Palmer-Brown, CPH 1995 *Land off Halton Road, Ashby by Partney (Plot 2)*  
unpublished developer report

Straw, A 1969 *Lincolnshire Soils*