

54003 - Anglo Saxon

52843 - Medieval

5577

96/12

CHAPEL LANE, NORTHORPE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

LCCM Accession No.: 141.96

SK 8964 9710

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EL16861

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Report prepared by Colin Palmer-Brown of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) for
Andrew Hancock (planning Consultant) on behalf of Mr RW Dickinson

October 1996

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Summary

- * *An intrusive archaeological field evaluation took place on vacant land on the east side of Northorpe, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire*
- * *Archaeological deposits were exposed in four trenches: these included stone structures and earthwork remains which date to the medieval period. Residual pottery of late Saxon date was also recovered*
- * *It is concluded that a standard development (involving the use of strip footings and road construction trenches) would impact on important archaeological deposits and that further resource management may be required in order that a more detailed and comprehensive record is made in advance of and/or during preliminary construction*

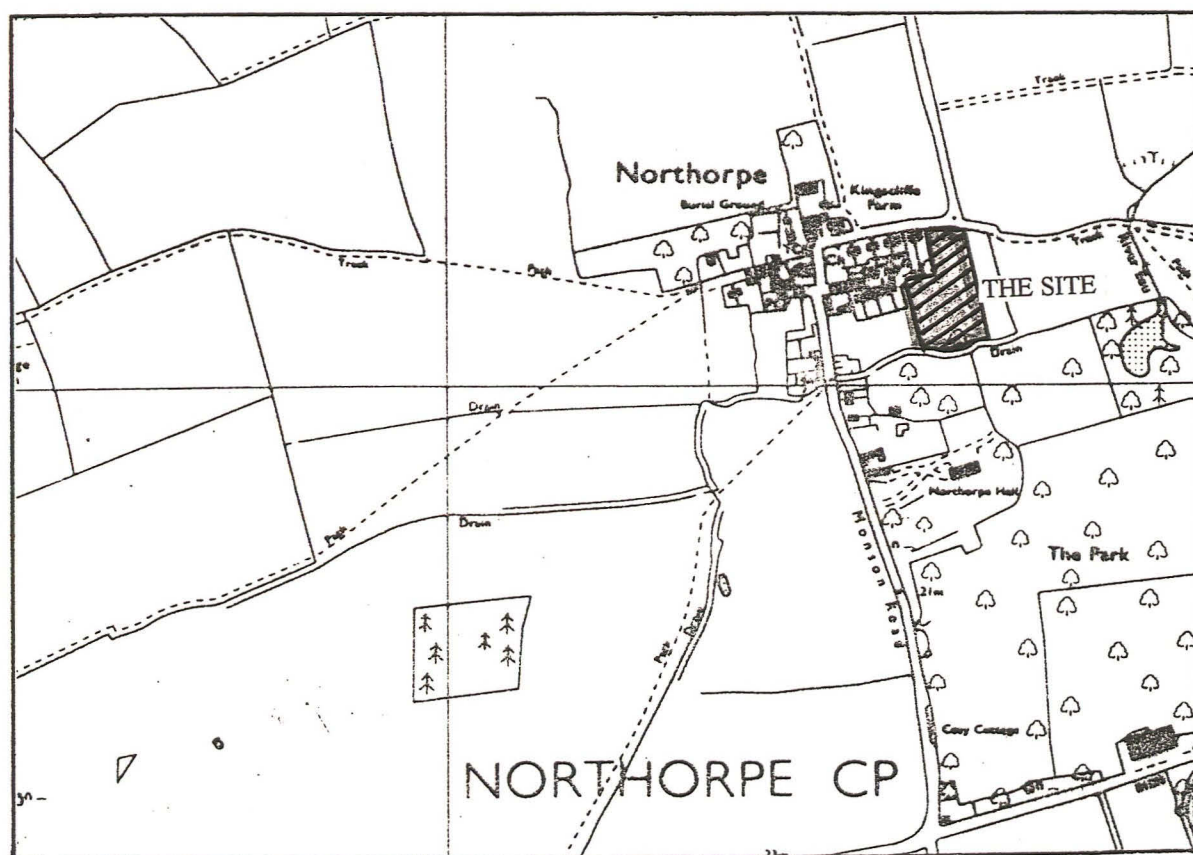


Fig. 1: 1:10,000 site location
(OS copyright reference AL 51521 A0001)

Fig. 2 Proposed housing and access layout, incorporating location of archaeological trenches and approximate survey of major earthworks
(based on a drawing supplied by A Hancock)



1.0 Introduction

A four-day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on an irregular unit of land on the east side of Northorpe, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Andrew Hancock (Planning Consultant), acting on behalf of his client, Mr RW Dickinson. The evaluation was carried out to fulfil a planning requirement issued by West Lindsey District Council.

The results of this report will assist the planning authority to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be posed by development and the requirement/non-requirement of further archaeological investigation in advance of or during development, assuming that planning permission will now be granted.

2.0 Location and description

Northorpe lies in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 10 km north-east of Gainsborough. The proposed development site, which measures approximately 1.3 hectares in area, is L-shaped in plan. It is defined by field hedges and property boundaries to the north and by a meandering drain (currently dry) to the south; the east and west boundaries are arbitrary. Access to the site is via Monson Road.

There is a significant drop in relief over the site from north to south (approximately 5m): south of the drain the land rises steeply again, suggesting the drain is a natural waterway. It connects with the River Eau approximately 200m east of the site.

Well-preserved earthworks dominate much of the site, which is currently used as grazing for sheep. The earthworks include ridge and furrow (to the east of a pronounced north-south holloway) and a raised platform which occupies much of the north-west area.

Outline planning consent is sought from West Lindsey District Council for low density residential development involving the construction of six detached dwellings with garages and associated infrastructure (Fig. 2). A decision on the application is awaiting the results of this field evaluation.

3.0 Archaeological background

The proposed development is located on the edge of the Shrunken Medieval Village (SMV) of Northorpe.

There are several entries for the village in the Domesday Survey of 1086, with land belonging to King William I, the Bishop of Bayeux and also St Peter's of Peterborough (Morris 1986).

The archaeological evidence for and background to Northorpe has been discussed in some detail by Everson (Everson 1991) following a survey of the extant and cropmark remains which proliferate on all sides of the modern village. Originally, there were two settlements, Northorpe and Southorpe (both sets of remains are now within the modern parish). Both villages appear to have had two foci, but there are no documentary records for the origins and development of either (*ibid.* 25). While Northorpe appears to have been partly abandoned in the medieval period, Southorpe was totally deserted. The reasons behind this total or partial abandonment are not entirely clear, though several possibilities have been suggested:

the effects of the Black Death (1348 - 9) - the arrival of the epidemic in West Lindsey had a dramatic and devastating effect

the conversion (from arable cultivation) to pasture for sheep and cattle

climatic deterioration

Despite the general level of detail attached to Everson's work, he did not include within his survey a plot of the extant village remains which are present on the site currently being evaluated.

Northorpe Church, which is dedicated to John The Baptist, is an impressive three-bay structure of Norman origin (Pevsner and Harris 1989). In the chancel, brass plates are dedicated to the Monson family (1638 and 1648) and the family name is further preserved by the modern north-south road which bisects the village.

4.0 The objectives of archaeological trenching

The Assistant Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire issued a brief requiring that four archaeological trenches should be excavated to determine the nature of the archaeology (its character, date, depth, state of preservation, extent and significance). The overall objective of this phase of work was to present the District Planning Authority with a set of data from which reasoned decisions may be taken regarding future management of the archaeological resource in the face of development.

5.0 Methodology

Each trench measured approximately 5m x 1.5m, though two areas (Trench 2 and Trench 3) were extended to take-in extant archaeological features (a depression on the south side of Trench 2 and a bank on the west side of Trench 3). Each of the four trenches were positioned within one of the (proposed) principal impact sites (Fig. 2)..

A JCB, fitted with a smooth ditching blade, removed all topsoil and overburden: to the top of the first significant natural or cultural horizon. The desired depths were achieved by removing graded spits under strict archaeological supervision. All further excavation was by hand.

During controlled excavation, archaeological contexts (eg layers, feature fills, pits, ditches) were described using standard context record sheets. All features were drawn in plan and in section at scale 1:20 and, when fully or partially excavated, were photographed in colour. Artefacts (pottery, animal bone and individual finds) were coded according to their stratigraphic contexts and were subsequently removed from the site for processing and specialist assessment/appraisal.

Excavation was carried out under the direction of the writer, assisted by three experienced field archaeologists, Wayne Livesey, Miles Ridsdale and Robert Schofield. On one occasion when the writer was absent, responsibility was handed to Mr SC Johnson.



General view of the site, looking south-east (Trench 2 is in the foreground)

6.0 Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was positioned on the north side of the site within the impact zone of one dwelling. It was orientated east-west and measured approximately 5m in length. It was immediately west of the holloway, with its east end over a bank which appeared to delineate a large platform; common to much of the north-west part of the site.

Archaeological deposits lay beneath up to 30cm of grey/brown humic silty topsoil, (100), which was removed mechanically. Below this, on the east side only, was up to 10cm of light grey/brown silty clay mixed with small limestone fragments, (102): this appeared to be material which had eroded from the top of the bank on the east of the trench. It sealed a ?subsoil (101) and the main core of the bank itself, (103). The latter measured 50cm+ in thickness and consisted of compact grey/brown silty clay mixed with limestone fragments.

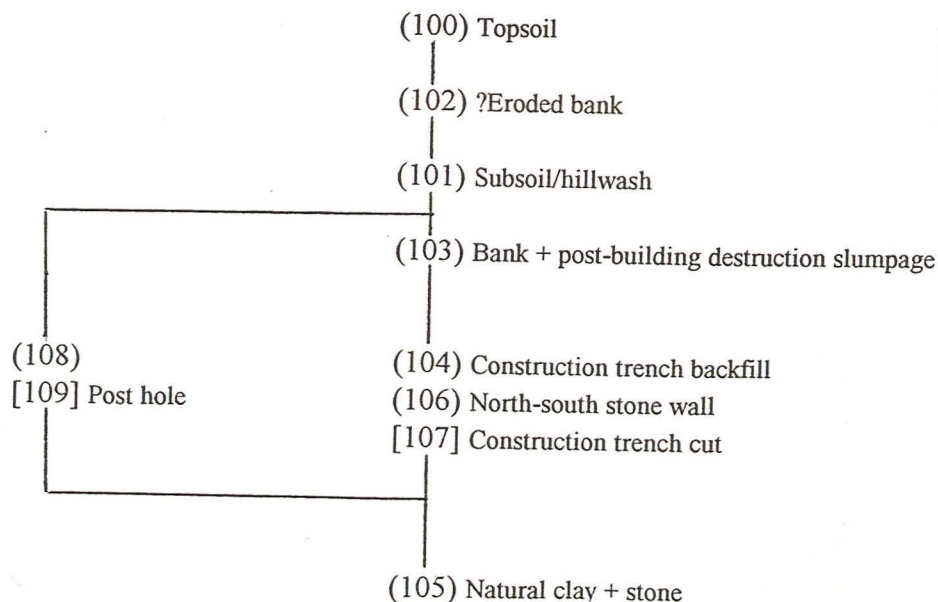
Under the west edge of the bank (?post-destruction slumpage), three courses of stonework forming part of a north-south wall, (106), were exposed. The wall was approximately 55cm in width and survived to a height of 25 - 30cm. It was made from roughly-dressed limestone blocks/chunks bonded with natural silty clay and it rested in a disproportionate foundation trench of some 2m width. The fill of the trench was only part-excavated but yielded domestic pottery sherds of late 12th/early 13th century (Appendix 11.1).

The small area investigated precluded detailed assessment, and a functional interpretation for the wall is not straightforward: it may have been a component part of a domestic or other building, but it is equally possible that it delineated the west side of the holloway; perhaps originally acting as a retaining feature.

Approximately 1.7m west of the above, close to the north section, was a shallow trapezoidal feature, [109]; interpreted as a backfilled post hole. the hole, which was filled with dark grey/brown silty clay, was 38cm deep. If the stone wall was actually a building component, it is possible the post hole was structurally related (?support), though the evidence for associating the two is slight.

All of the archaeological deposits/features sealed or were cut through light brown/yellow silty clay incorporating fragments of fossiliferous limestone, (105). This deposit was of natural origin: presumably glacial.

Stratigraphic matrix, Trench 1



Photographs, Trench 1



P1. General view, looking west



P2. Close-up of wall (106), looking west

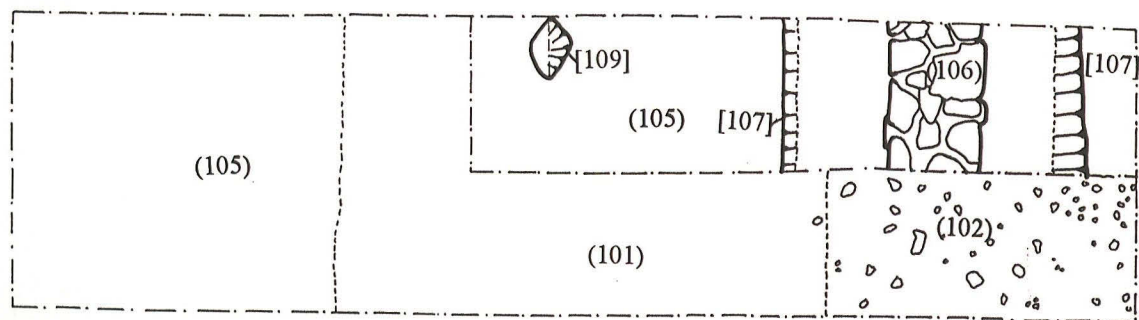
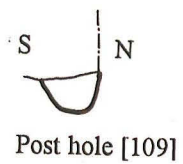
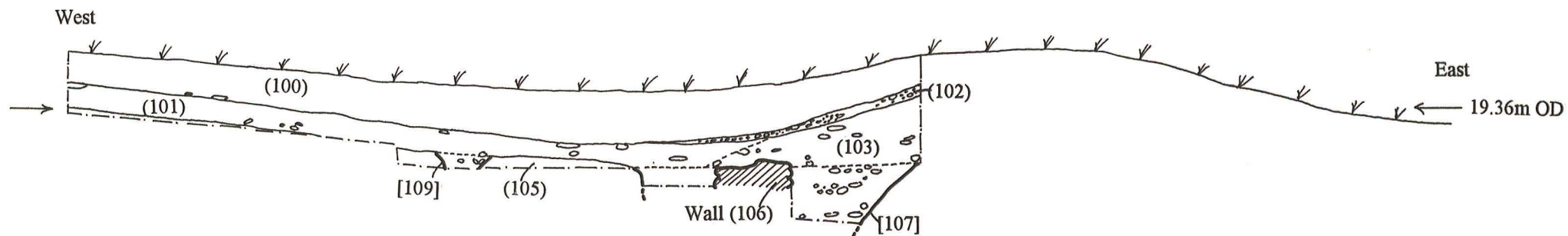


Fig. 3 Section and plan drawings, Trench 1

Scale = 1:40



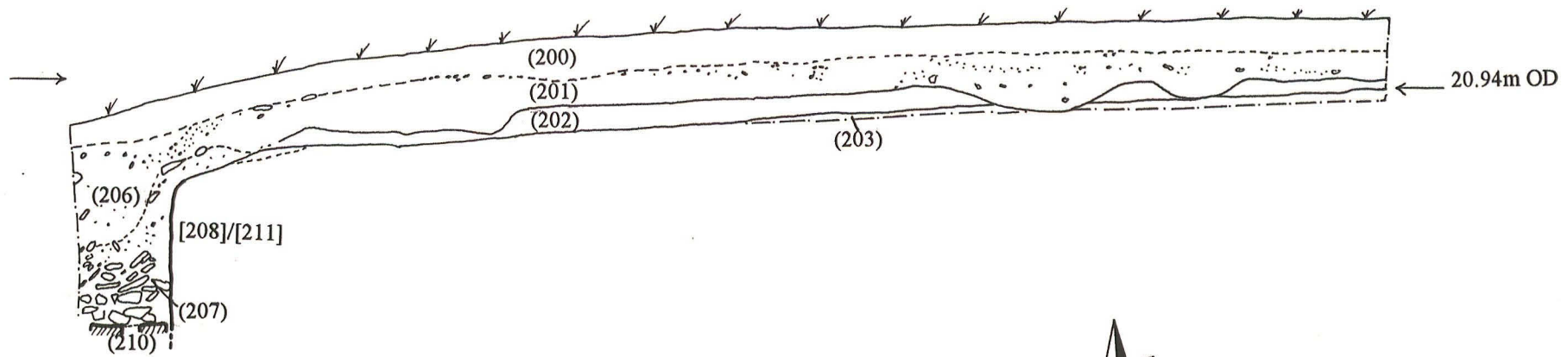
P1. Well (210) from above



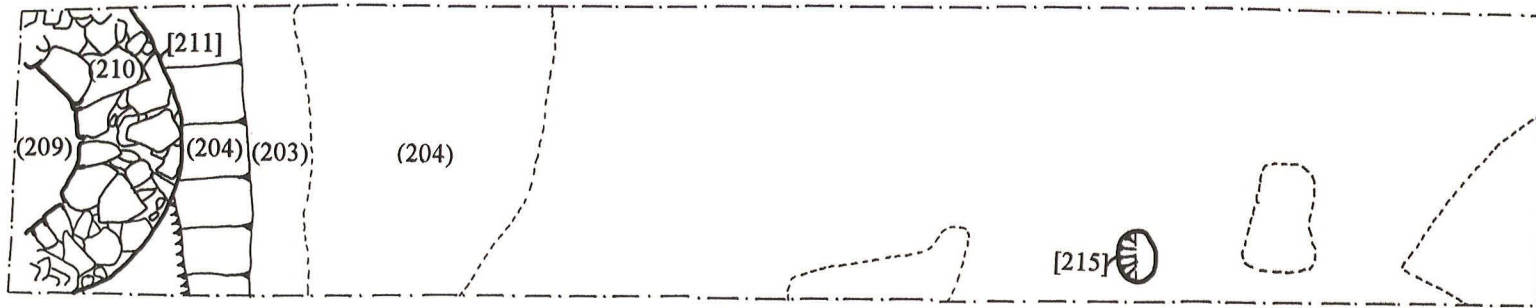
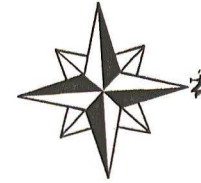
P2. General view, looking south



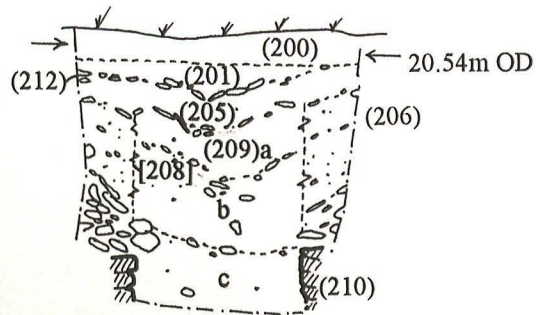
P3. Well (210), looking west



West section



Plan



South section

Scale = 1:40

Fig. 4 Section and plan drawings, Trench 2

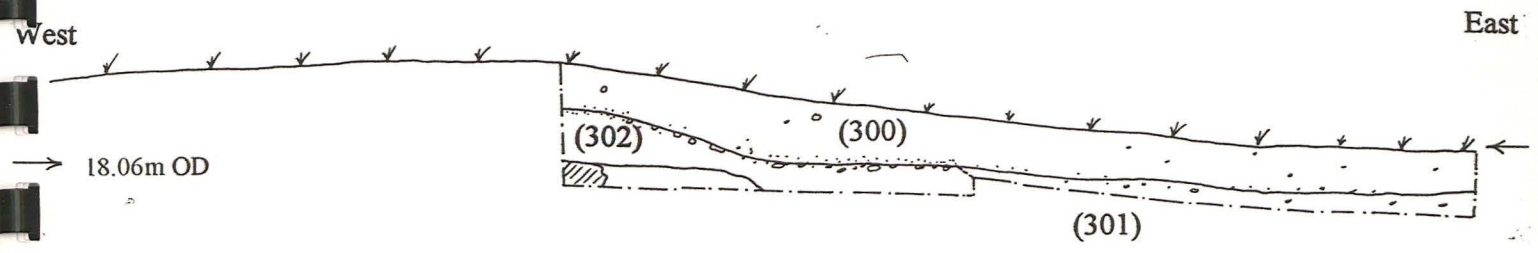
6.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

Trench 3, which measured approximately 5m in length, was nearer to the centre of the development: immediately adjacent to (on the north side of) the proposed east-west access. The west end of the trench was sited over the edge of a pronounced bank of uncertain function.

The topsoil, (300), was approximately 25cm in depth and consisted of mid/dark grey humic clay-silt. On the east side of the trench, it sealed a subsoil-type deposit of approximately 16cm depth which rested over the parent geology. However, on the west side, it sealed deposits associated with a soil bank which formed a rough horseshoe shape (with the bulk of Trench 3 lying within this). The bank, (302) had been raised using deposits of light yellow/orange clay mixed with limestone fragments and fossil shells (ie redeposited natural). It measured up to 46cm in thickness within the area investigated. No stratified pottery was recovered from Trench 3, but unstratified medieval sherds (local wares) were recovered during mechanical excavation.



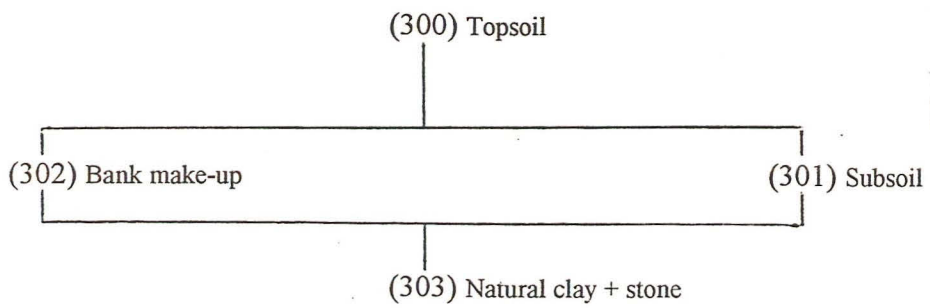
West end of Trench 3, incorporating section cut through bank (302), looking north



Scale = 1:40

Fig. 5 Section drawing, Trench 3

Stratigraphic matrix, Trench 3



6.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

The fourth evaluation trench was on the south side of the site within a potential house impact zone; close to the east-west drain and the foot of the valley. It was orientated east-west and measured approximately 5m in length.

The topsoil was exceptionally thick (up to 50cm) and one assumes this development can be explained in terms of erosion and hillwash from higher ground.

Only one archaeological feature was exposed: an east-west gully which was sectioned close to the south section, [402]. It extended the full length of the trench and was cut through natural deposits of clean silty clay which could also have been deposited as a result of cumulative downwash from higher ground; (405) and (406). The exposed north edge of the feature sloped regularly at an angle approximately 30° to the horizontal. It was filled with clean, cumulative silt/clay deposits, largely devoid of finds; (404), (401), (403). Its depth was in excess of 30cm. The feature was tenuously interpreted as a ditch or gully, most of which lay beyond the area investigated.

Only two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 4: both were extremely abraded and could not be dated (the fabric type associated with each sherd resembles ceramic material which was commonly used in almost every period between the Iron Age and the Saxon/medieval periods (Appendix 11.1).



General view, Trench 4, looking east

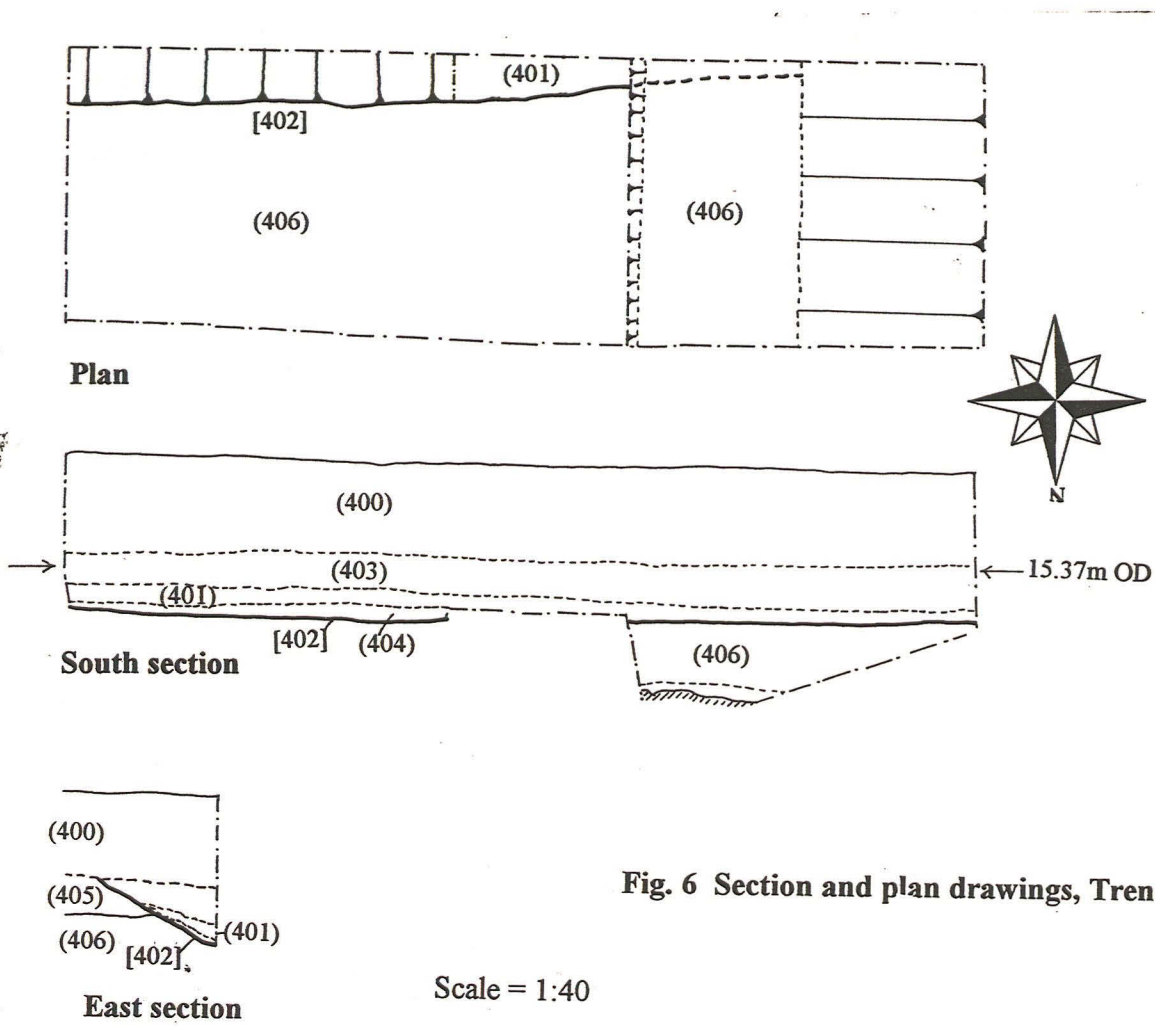


Fig. 6 Section and plan drawings, Trench 4

Stratigraphic matrix, Trench 4

- (400) Topsoil
- |
- (403) Fill
- |
- (401) Fill
- |
- (404) Fill
- |
- [402] Gully
- |
- (405) Natural clay
- (406) " "

7.0 Archaeo-environmental potential

The archaeo-environmental potential of the site (ie its potential to contain environmental remains) is considered to be low. The soils are extremely dry and it is unlikely therefore that deposits capable of preserving organic remains will be found anywhere within the defined development area.

Animal bone (and presumably other calcareous organic remains such as snail shell) survives moderately well, though was not recovered in quantity during evaluation. An archive is presented in Appendix 11.2).

8.0 Summary and conclusions

Clearly, the archaeological potential of the site is quite high. All four evaluation trenches, which were sited in accordance with the proposed development impact, contained archaeological remains which may be broadly dated between the 12th and 15th centuries (the date, possibly, when the site was abandoned). The occurrence of residual late Saxon pottery in Trench 1 (two sherds of Torksey fabric in the construction trench of the stone wall) suggests the site may contain stratified deposits of a similar date, though this has not been proved..

9.0 Mitigations

Any development on the site at Northorpe will, without doubt, effect archaeological deposits of some significance. There are well-defined and well-preserved medieval earthworks over wide areas, and these remains have not been surveyed and do not therefore complement the published work of Everson (Everson 1991). The evaluation has successfully sampled part of the shrunken medieval settlement of Northorpe: including stone structures and earth embankments. It is assumed that similar remains will be cut through by construction trenches associated with the six proposed dwellings and the east-west access road.

Two of the dwellings are to be sited east of the holloway in an area occupied by ridge and furrow. This area is of relatively low significance, though it may be advantageous if these remains were surveyed in advance of destruction.

The current national approach towards archaeology, within the parameters of development control (set-out in Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16), 1990), is that, where possible, **important archaeological deposits should be preserved *in situ***. Where preservation *in situ* is not possible, the planning authority can consider granting planning permission subject to further excavation and/or archaeological recording during development (a watching brief).

Clearly, it would be to the benefit of all parties if the archaeology could be left largely unaffected by development, although such a measure may not be possible on this occasion, given that the remains lie close to (or on) the modern ground surface.

It is understood that the site is within an area designated for housing development in the West Lindsey Local Plan and it is assumed (perhaps incorrectly) that those responsible for drawing up the plan were aware of the presence of the earthwork remains discussed in this text. It is not the role of PCA to unnecessarily obstruct development proposals, though it would be to the advantage of the archaeology if an earthwork survey of the extant remains were to take place in advance of development. This need not involve a lengthy and expensive presence.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to express sincere thanks to the commissioning client, Mr A Hancock, as well as to his client, Mr Dickinson. Thanks are also expressed to members of the site team (W Livesey, M Ridsdale, R Schofield and S Johnson) and to specialists who have contributed to this report: J Cowgill, DJ Rackham and J Young.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Post-Roman pottery archive by J Young

11.2 Faunal archive by DJ Rackham

11.3 Small finds descriptions by JM Cowgill

11.4 List of contexts

11.5 Site archive

11.6 References

11.1 Post-Roman pottery archive by J Young

POST-ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE: NOR96 WARE TYPES BY CONTEXT

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
TR2+	BEVO	1	JUG	? ID;BS;CU GLZE
TR2+	HUM	1	JUG/CISTERN	RIM & UHJ
TR2+	LFS	1	JAR	BS
TR2+	LSH	1	JAR	RIM;DROUL RIM EDGE
TR2+	MISC	1	STOPPER?	VERY FINE FABRIC;PRE FIRED HOLE; POST FIRED HOLES/SLOT;FE? WASTE
TR3+	HUM	1	?	SPL GLZE
TR3+	MEDLOC	1	JUG	BASE
TR3+	MEDLOC	1	JUG	STRAP HANDLE
100	HUM	1	JUG	BS;GLZE
100	MEDLOC	1	?	NO GLZE
100	MEDLOC	1	JUG	GLZE
102	MEDLOC	1	JUG	INT SPL GLZE
103	MEDLOC	1	JUG	CU GLZE
104	LEMS	1	?	BS
104	LEMS	1	COOKPOT	BS
104	LFS	1	JAR	BS
104	MEDLOC	1	JUG/PIT	CU SPL GLZE
104	MEDLOC	1	JUG/PIT	SPL GLZE
104	TORK	1	JAR	BS
104	TORK	1	JAR	RIM
206	MEDLOC	1	?	NO GLZE
206	MEDLOC	1	?	SOOT NO GLZE
206	MEDLOC	2	JUG	SMALL CUFF RIM;CU MOTTLE GLZE OVER WHITE SLIP;SOFT OXID FAB
206	NSP	1	JUG/PIT	BS
206	TORK	1	JAR	RIM
209	LFS	1	?	BS
209	MEDLOC	1	JUG	INC HORIZ LINES
209	R	1	-	GREY
400	CHARN	1	-	?? ID COULD BE IA
401	MISC	1	-	QUARTZ TEMPER;? DATE

POST-ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE: NOR96 HORIZON DATING

Context	Earliest horizon	Latest horizon	Probable horizon	Date range
100	MH7	MH9	-	14th or 15th
102	MH7	PMH2	-	14th to 16th
103	MH4	MH7	-	13th or 14th
104	MH3	MH4	-	late 12th to early 13th
206	MH4	MH5	-	early to late 13th

209	MH2	MH10	-	12th to 15th
400	IA	ASH2	-	Iron Age or Anglo-Saxon
400	IA	MED	-	Iron Age to medieval

ARCHIVE CATALOGUE OF ANIMAL BONES FOR NORTHORPE, NOR96

SITE	CON.	SPEC.	BONE	NO	SIDE	FUS	ZONES	TOOTH WEAR	COMMENTS
NOR96	100	CSZ	RIB	1	F				SHAFT FRAGMENT
NOR96	102	OVCA	MAND	1	L		678	K10	POST HORI AND VENTRAL ASC RAMUS
NOR96	104	BOS	UM	1	L				WELL WORN-STAGE 16
NOR96	104	OVCA	UM2	1	L			J13	
NOR96	104	OVCA	HUM	1	R		0		MIDSHAFT FRAGMENT
NOR96	104	SUS	MC3	1	L		1		PROXIMAL HALF
NOR96	104	BOS	SCP	1	L	DF	1		DISTAL FRAGMENT WITH TUBEROSITY
NOR96	104	OVCA	MTC	1	L		12		PROXIMAL THIRD
NOR96	104	EQU	MAND	1	F				POSTERIOR FRAGMENT- 3 PIECES
NOR96	104	SUS	UC	1	L				WELL WORN-MALE

11.3 Small finds descriptions by JM Cowgill

Finds catalogue for Northorpe (NO96)

By Jane Cowgill

October 1996

TR2 (+) <1> Stone Hone

Fragment of a large, almost square sectioned, hone stone (both ends broken). Made from a mica rich sandstone. Slight wear.

TR3 (+) <2> Stone Hone

Fragment of a large, almost square sectioned, hone stone (both ends broken). Made from a mica rich sandstone. Irregular wear pattern.

(104) <3> Iron - sheet fragment

(206) <4> Iron - pintle, complete

Small pintle from a window or some other small hinged opening.

Comments

None of the finds are dateable but the general impression gained from the material is that it is probably medieval or post-medieval in date. Material submitted as 'iron slag' is natural ironstone and has been discarded. In my opinion the iron objects do not warrant permanent storage in a museum. The sheet fragment could be discarded while the pintle should be added to a museum/school teaching collection. If however, they are to be retained they should be stored in silica gel and should be x-rayed to complete the archive.

11.4 List of Contexts

Trench 1

Context	Classification
100	Greyish-brown humic silty topsoil, 0.36m
101	Below 100: 16 - 20cm of lighter grey/brown silty clay with small limestone fragments; ?wash deposit, accumulated hill was from higher ground
102	Only on east side of trench (in area of bank); c. 10cm of grey/brown silty clay mixed with frequent limestone fragments, very compact; ?erosion from top of bank
103	Thick wedge of material below 102, east end of trench; compact grey/brown silty clay containing occasional limestone fragments; main core of bank
104	Construction trench backfill associated with stone wall 106; compact grey/brown silty clay containing moderate quantity of limestone fragments; not fully excavated but medieval pottery sherds recovered
105	Extensive layer of natural light brown/yellow silty clay, incorporating chunks and fragments of limestone; ?glacial
106	North-south stone wall footing, c. 55cm in width; x3 courses surviving to height of 25 - 30cm, apparently over rubble foundation; appeared to pre-date bank but relationship could be due to post-destruction slumpage
107	Cut of foundation trench for wall 106; not fully exposed, but ?unnecessarily wide (2m)
108	Fill of small ?post hole c. 1.7m west of stone wall 106; dark grey-brown silty clay
109	Cut of post hole; in plan, trapezoidal; edges = vertical, depth 38cm

Trench 2

200	Mid grey-brown humic silty topsoil horizon; depth = 20cm
201	20 - 30cm of material similar to above but not penetrated by roots; same as 200 or underlying subsoil/wash

- 202 Subsoil deposit of clean yellow/brown clay-silt, occasional small limestone frags., occasional charcoal flecks; depth = c. 16cm
- 203 Natural stratum beneath archaeology; orange/yellow clay, occasional limestone fragments, traces of iron-panning
- 204 Natural stratum beneath 203, recorded in well sides; yellow/orange clay, frequent fossilised shells and limestone fragments; depth not recorded
- 205 Below 212, above 213; deposit of mid-brown sandy silt, occasional small limestone fragments and charcoal flecks; c. 14cm thick
- 206 Upper backfill of robbed well; moderately compact light to mid-brown sandy silt mixed with moderate quantity of small limestone fragments; occasional bone and pottery
- 207 Lower backfill of robbed well; dense limestone rubble, 50 - 60cm in depth, mixed with brown silty soil; various sizes of stone present up to 25cm x 6cm; presumably discarded waste
- 208 Cut of vertical trench associated with the robbing of the stone-lined well
- 209 Pre-robbing backfill of well (ie abandonment horizon(s)); quite soft sticky sandy silt; moderate quantity of medium-sized limestones; actually an accumulation of silt-based deposits
- 210 Well structure; arc of circular-plan, well-laid flat limestones, faced on inside; x4 courses exposed but continuing in depth; upper section robbed
- 211 Vertically-sided construction trench cut for well 210
- 212 Horizon of small/medium-sized limestones lying in depression over top of backfilled well shaft
- 213 Shallow deposit comprising small/medium-sized limestones over hollow caused by well shaft
- 214 Fill of post hole, north-east side of trench; mid-grey/brown sandy silt, some charcoal flecks
- 215 Cut of oval-shaped post hole, only 6cm in depth - truncated

Trench 3

- 300 Topsoil horizon (25cm) of mid/dark grey humic clay-silt
- 301 Subsoil horizon (depth c. 16cm) of yellow/brown clay-silt containing limestone fragments, occasional bone fragments
- 302 Bank make-up deposit comprising light yellow/orange clay mixed with limestone fragments and fossils (ie redeposited natural): up to 46cm in thickness
- 303 Natural deposit of light yellow/brown clay intermingled with fossiliferous limestone and individual fossils

Trench 4

- 400 Layer. Topsoil /hillwash
- 401 Secondary backfill of east-west gully. Has fragments of charcoal and daub within.
- 402 East/west cut running the length of south section. Fairly uneven north side with a slightly bowled bottom.
- 403 Fill of the above. Lighter in colour than 400 and 401 may be due to organics.
- 404 Fill. Thin context lining bottom of 402. Probably as a result of weathering to the open cut, very slightly more silt than 406.
- 405 Weathered natural layer.
- 406 Layer. Natural standing water deposit of clay . 406a is a thin layer of even finer clay over natural still reduced and green in colour.

11.5 Site archive

A detailed site archive consisting of the paper and physical element is currently being prepared. This will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln within six months following project completion. A summary of material contained in the archive is presented thus:-

x1 A4 file containing context record sheets

x3 composite 1:20 site drawings

x2 colour print films

x1 post-Roman pottery archive

x1 animal bone archive

x1 box of artefacts

x1 interim/developers report

miscellaneous notes and correspondence.

Following submission, the site archived may be accessed at Lincoln City and County Museum by quoting the global accession number (141.96).

11.6 References

Everson, P 1991 *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire* (RCHME)

Morris, J (Gen. Editor), 1986 *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire*

Pevsner, N and Harris, J, 1988 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*