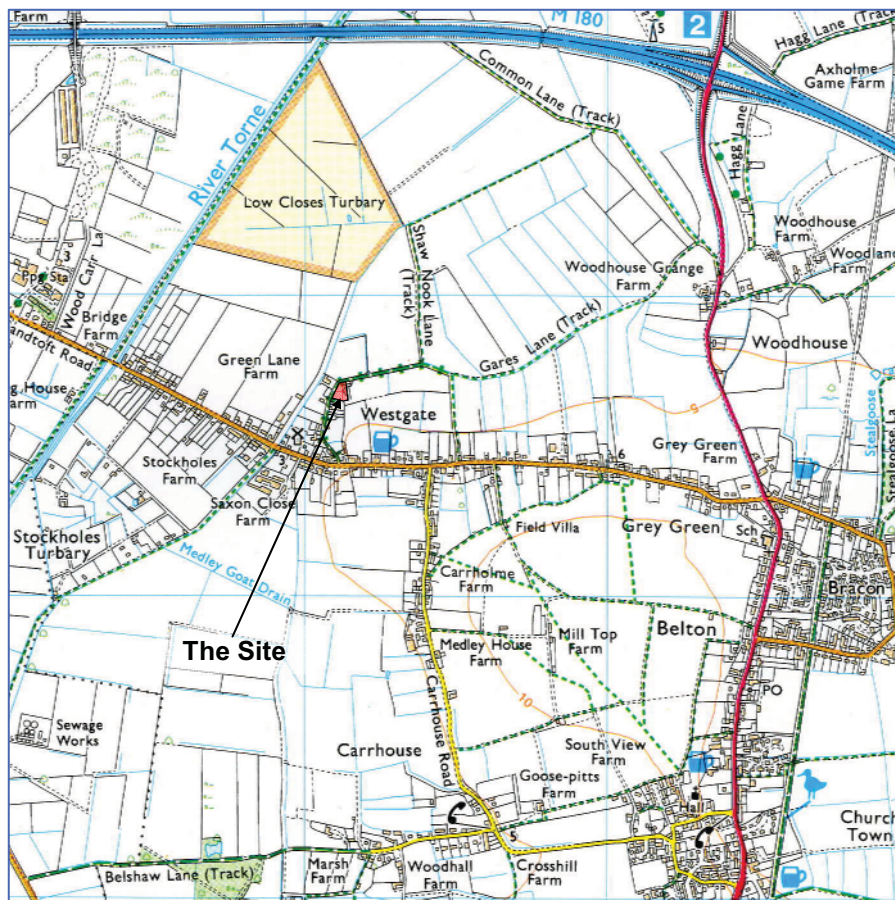


## Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of new extensions at The Old White Farmhouse, Green Lane, Westgate, Belton, North Lincolnshire.
- The site lies close to the site of five burials of 15<sup>th</sup> century date, which are believed to be associated with an otherwise unknown chapel.
- The watching brief failed to identify any significant archaeological deposits, other than the foundations of the adjacent farmhouse and the remnants of a brick boundary wall, also associated with the farmhouse.



**Figure 1:** Site location at scale 1:25,000

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Mr Steve Green to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for two extensions to The Old White Farmhouse, Green Lane, Belton, North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The site monitoring, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Field Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IFA 1999), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2007).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within six months of the completion of the report.

## 2.0 Site location and description

- 2.1 The hamlet of Westgate is situated in the parish of Belton, approximately 1.5km to the west of the village. The Old White Farmhouse is to the north of the hamlet, off Green Lane, which curves around the western and northern boundaries of the site. The site centres on NGR SE 7712 0769, and lies on fairly flat ground at a height of approximately 4m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises drift deposits of Older Blown Sand, overlying a solid geology of Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey 1969).

## 3.0 Planning background

- 3.1 Full planning permission has been granted for extensions to the existing dwelling and a detached double garage (Planning Reference PA/2007/0068). This permission has been granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during all associated groundworks.

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 The Archaeology Data Service records a number of find spots of worked flint implements within 1km of the site, attesting to a limited degree of activity in this period.
- 4.2 There is no evidence of Romano-British activity in the area. Belton appears in the Domesday Book however, suggesting at least a late Saxon origin for the settlement. At this time, the principal landowner in the parish was Geoffrey of la Guerche (Morgan and Thorne 1986). The place name may originally have come from the Old English meaning '*farm/settlement near a beacon or funeral pyre*'. An alternative hypothesis is that the *Bel-* element of the place name may also mean 'island' or 'glade'. (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/ins/epncurrent/php/detailpop.php?placeno=10720>).
- 4.3 Belton is a dispersed settlement consisting of a series of hamlets. Westgate, in which the site is situated, largely comprises a group of late Georgian farms and a tower mill (Pevsner and Harris 2002). Previous building works on a property adjacent to the current site disturbed four adult burials, with a fifth burial being recovered during subsequent archaeological work. The fifth body was radiocarbon dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and points to the presence of an otherwise unknown medieval chapel (A Williams letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The groundworks involved the machine excavation of foundation trenches for the new extensions (0.7m wide and 0.7m deep), as well as limited ground reduction in the area of the extensions to the south of the existing building to accommodate underfloor heating. A proposed double garage was replaced by a car port built on timber posts, as a nearby tree with a protection order meant that no groundworks would be possible. Due to this, no monitoring was required for the car port. Excavation was carried out using a 360° tracked mini digger fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket. The groundworks were monitored by Phil Chavasse on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007.
- 5.2 During excavation, all exposed plan and section surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned, in order to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Context information was recorded for each individual deposit on standard watching brief record sheets, and sample sections of the stratigraphic sequence were completed at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.3 A photographic record (in monochrome and colour slide) was maintained throughout the watching brief, including general site shots and photographs of the sequence of deposits with appropriate scales and a north arrow.

## 6.0 Results

- 6.1 The uppermost layer exposed was a 0.3m deep topsoil layer of dark brown/grey sandy silt, 100, which directly overlay the natural geology, 101, an orange/brown fine sand.
- 6.2 Along the south side of the existing farmhouse, excavations exposed a steep sided construction cut for the farmhouse wall, 102, which was 0.8m wide. The depth of the cut was unknown as it extended beyond the limit of excavation. The construction cut was backfilled with a deposit of dark brown silty sand, 105. The trench also exposed the footings of the existing farmhouse wall, 103, which were 0.7m deep below the existing ground surface, and comprised seven courses of brickwork and a single course of tile, bonded with a fine yellow/brown mortar. No dating evidence was recovered from the foundation trench.
- 6.3 On the north side of the existing building, the groundworks exposed the foundation courses of a former brick boundary wall that broadly followed the line of Green Lane. At its east end it was tied into the farmhouse wall, and was constructed of the same brick type, suggesting they are contemporary.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

- 7.1 The watching brief failed to identify any more human remains, or any evidence of the postulated medieval chapel within the site. The complete lack of medieval finds or features from the site makes it unlikely that the medieval burial area identified nearby ever extended into this site. However, the shallow stratigraphy (topsoil overlying natural) may suggest that there has been some truncation of the deposits, perhaps during an episode of ground levelling associated with the construction of the existing farm house.
- 7.2 The archaeological evidence exposed by the watching brief could be related to the existing farmhouse. This comprised a foundation trench for the footings of the existing building, which was no doubt necessary due to the soft sand, and a former boundary wall following the line of Green Lane.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

- 8.1 The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It demonstrated that the development has had a negligible impact on the archaeological resource.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Mr Steve Green for this commission. Thanks also go to the groundworkers for their cooperation during the fieldwork.

## **10.0 References**

Allen M., 2007, *Specification for an archaeological watching brief: The Old White Farmhouse, Green Lane, Westgate, Belton, North Lincolnshire*, Allen Archaeological Associates

British Geological Survey, 1969. *Doncaster. England and Wales Sheet 88. Drift Edition. One Inch Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

I.F.A. 1999, *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*. Reading, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Pevsner N., & Harris J., 2002, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire, second edition*, Penguin, London

## **11.0 Site archive**

- 11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within six months, where it will be stored under the Museum Site Code BLCM.



## Appendix 1: Colour Plates



**Plate 1:** Foundation trenches excavated to the south of the existing farm house. Looking north-east



**Plate 2:** Foundation trench [102] exposed in plan. Looking east-north-east.



**Plate 3:** Former boundary wall exposed during groundworks on the north side of the existing farm house. Looking south-south-east.



**Plate 4:** Foundation trenches excavated to the north of the existing farm house after removal of the brick boundary wall. Looking east-north-east.

**Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts**

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
100	Layer	Dark grey/brown sandy silt	Topsoil
101	Layer	Orange/brown fine sand	Natural
102	Cut	Steep sided linear cut running WSW – ENE. Contains 103, 105	Foundation trench for farm house wall
103	Wall	Brick footings, 0.7m deep, stepped out twice. Bonded with fine yellow/brown mortar. Single course of unbonded brick at base	Footings of existing farm house
104	Wall	Curvilinear brick wall, aligned SW – NE, 3 courses deep, bonded with fine yellow/brown mortar.	Former brick boundary wall
105	Fill	Dark brown silty sand	Backfill of foundation trench 102