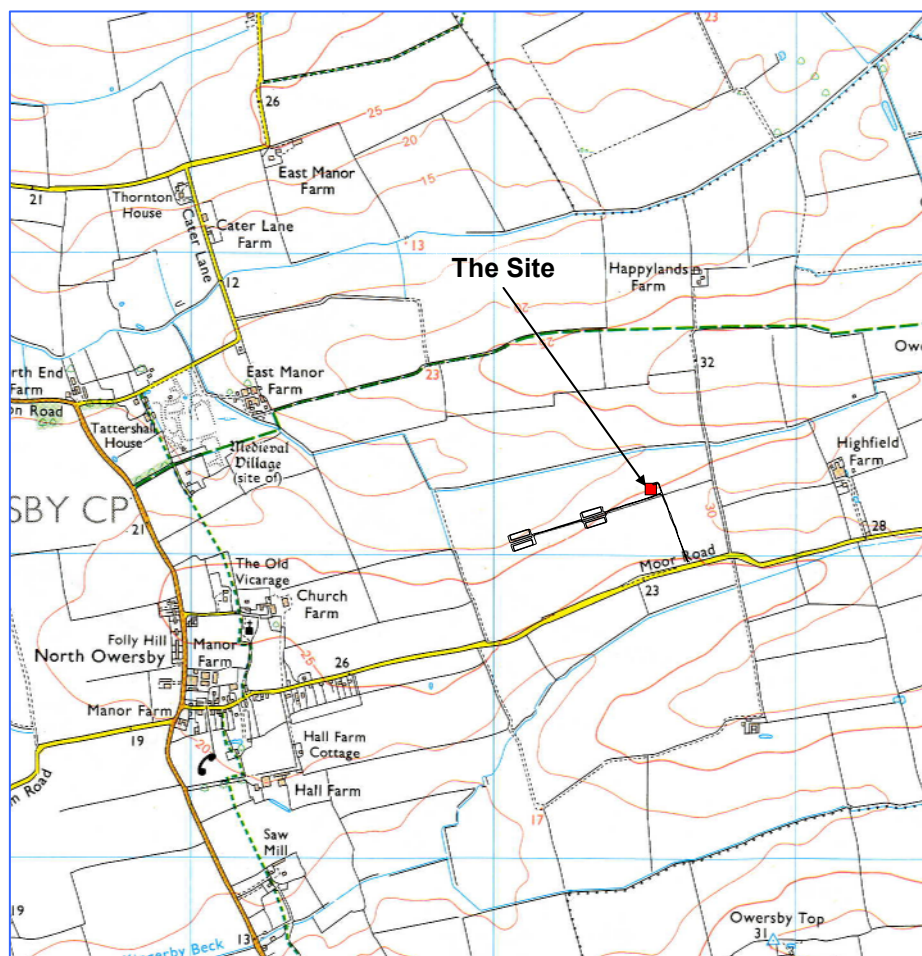


## Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a new implement store on land off Moor Road, North Owersby, Lincolnshire.
- Cropmarks and finds in the area suggest Romano-British settlement activity nearby. In the medieval period there were six Domesday Manors in the parish that developed into small hamlets. These were largely abandoned as a result of the Black Death in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. A previous watching brief during the construction of an access and new chicken sheds failed to identify any archaeological deposits.
- No archaeological features were observed during the groundworks, and no archaeological artefacts were recovered.



**Figure 1:** Site location in red, also showing the recently constructed access road and chicken sheds at scale 1:25,000 (© Crown Copyright 2000. All rights reserved. License Number 100047330)

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by John Bowler (Agriculture) Ltd. on behalf of their client, Mr Paul Leonard to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for an implement store on land off Moor Road, North Owersby, 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), the local guidelines set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC 1998), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2006).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln, within six months of completion of the project, and will be accessible under the LCC Museum Accession Number 2007.150.

## 2.0 Site location and description

- 2.1 North Owersby is in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 25km north-north-east of central Lincoln and 7.5km north-west of Market Rasen. The site is located 1.5m to the east of the village on the north side of Moor Road. The site centres on NGR TF 0720 9510.
- 2.2 A new access road has been built running north-north-westwards from Moor Road up a steep incline for c.150m, before levelling off and turning west-south-westwards to access newly constructed chicken sheds. The site lies just to the north of the turn in the access road, where the ground begins to slope downwards to the north. The site lies at a height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.3 The underlying geology is of the Jurassic Ancholme Clay Group (British Geological Survey 1982). At the time of the fieldwork, the ground coverage was short grass.

## 3.0 Planning background

- 3.1 Full planning permission was granted for the construction of a new implement store (Planning Reference 120226). This was subject to an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks by a suitably competent archaeologist.

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 Records held at the Historical Environment Record at Lincolnshire County Council (hereafter HER) show that known prehistoric activity in the surrounding area is limited to the recovery of a single fragment of polished stone axe from the north of the village of North Owersby (HER ref.53435).
- 4.2 Evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity is more abundant. A scatter of Roman pottery and possible kiln debris was recorded approximately 0.7km to the north-east in 1944 (HER ref. 53430). Cropmarks of a possible Romano-British settlement have been identified by aerial photography further to the north (HER ref. 53711), and a Roman lead statuette and four Roman coins were discovered during a metal detector rally to the north and north-west of the development area (HER refs. 54432, 54476, 54480).
- 4.3 Owersby is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, from the Old Norse meaning 'Avarr's farm/settlement' (Cameron 1998). At this time the parish was not divided into the two

settlements of North and South Owersby, but was shared between six major landowners; the Bishop of Bayeux, the Bishop of Lincoln, Roger of Poitou, William of Percy, Norman of Arcy and Siward the Priest. The lands of the Bishop of Lincoln, William of Percy and Siward the Priest each included a mill, while William of Percy also counted a church with a priest among his possessions (Morgan and Thorne 1986).

- 4.4 The six Domesday Manors served as nuclei for settlement along the line of the road between Kirkby and South Kelsey. In 1219, the settlement is referred to as '*Long Ouresbi*', suggesting a straggling, polyfocal settlement (Cameron 1998). In the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century however, the parish is said to have been almost totally depopulated by the Black Death (Everson et.al. 1991). North Owersby and South Owersby are likely to have begun as the seats of two of these manors. The earthwork remains of the deserted medieval village of Cauthorpe (NGR TF 057 958) can be found c.1.8km west-north-west of the development, to the north of North Owersby. A settlement was documented here in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, but only six houses were documented in 1563. Earthworks of another of the medieval manors at Thornton-le-Moor were destroyed in 1964 (TF 050 962). Fieldwalking of the site recovered pottery from the Middle Saxon period to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At Beasthorpe (TF 048 967), further to the north-west, a settlement was documented in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but only a single house existed in 1563 (Everson 1991).
- 4.5 The parish was subject to a series of Enclosure Acts between 1634 and 1694, leading to further population decline (*ibid.*) and resulting in the current landscape of open agricultural land.
- 4.6 A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of the new access road and four chicken sheds on the same site as the current application. No archaeological finds or features were identified during this phase of work, although for the most part, the groundworks failed to penetrate the ploughsoil and underlying subsoil that may mask underlying archaeological deposits (Chavasse & Clay 2007).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 Groundworks entailed the machine excavation of a series of 1m by 1m by 1m deep foundation piles around the perimeter of the building.
- 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 context record sheets. A photographic record was maintained throughout the watching brief, including general site shots and photographs of the sequence of deposits with appropriate scales and a north arrow. The groundworks were monitored by Phil Chavasse on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007.

## 6.0 Results

- 6.1 The stratigraphic sequence was uniform throughout the twelve holes excavated, comprising a 0.25m deep ploughsoil horizon, overlying a natural geology of compact grey clay that extended beyond the limit of excavation. A ceramic land drain was exposed at the base of the pit at the north-east corner of the building, running north-west to south-east.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

- 7.1 As in the previous phase of works on the site, no archaeological features or artefacts of significance were exposed during the watching brief. The groundworks for this building were

somewhat deeper, penetrating below the plough zone, and seem to confirm the limited archaeological potential of the site suggested by the previous watching brief.

## **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 John Bowler (Agriculture) Limited for this commission, and Phil Chavassee for carrying out the fieldwork.

## **10.0 References**

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## **11.0 Site archive**

- 11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to North East Lincolnshire Museum Service within six months, where it will be stored under the accession number 2007.150.

## Appendix 1: Colour Plates



**Plate 1:** The development area, looking east-north-east.



**Plate 2:** Working shot at the east end of the site, looking north-east.



**Plate 3:** Pit at the north-east corner of the new building with a land drain in the base. Looking east-north-east.

**Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty clay with rare small angular flint fragments. Ploughsoil
02	Layer	Mid-light orange brown clayey sand. Natural drift geology.