

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 19, HIGH STREET,
NETTLEHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHING REPORT

NGR: TF 0069 7521
WLDC Planning Ref.: 126128
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Site Code: NHSE 10
PCA Job Ref: 10-717

Prepared for

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by

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Summary

An intrusive archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the rear of No. 19, High Street, Nettleham, to inform the planning process associated with the proposed construction of a house and garage.

The site is directly adjacent to the medieval manor of Nettleham, which was originally a royal manor and was later owned by the Bishop of Lincoln; the manor may have had a Saxon forerunner. The manor site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with well-preserved earthworks.

One evaluation trench was excavated in the proposed development area. No archaeological features were encountered in the trench; a small number of Saxon and Saxo-Norman potsherds were retrieved, but these were associated with post-medieval or modern material in every case. No evidence was found to suggest that the proposed development site had been the focus of any activity associated with the manor.

It is concluded that the site has low archaeological potential, and that further archaeological intervention is not required in advance of or during construction.

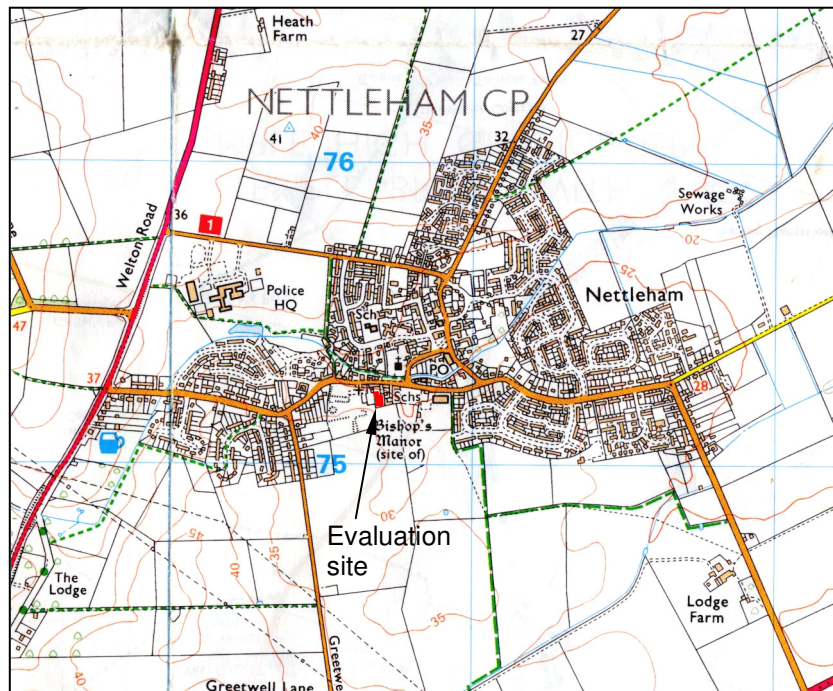


Figure 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000. The evaluation site is marked in red. (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.)

1.0 Introduction

Mr. Stephen Roberts commissioned Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation to support an application for planning permission made to West Lindsey District Council for the construction of a dwelling to the rear of the present No. 19, High Street, Nettleham (Application 126128).

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1-3)

Nettleham is a large village, situated approximately 4.5km to the north-east of Lincoln in the administrative district of West Lindsey. The evaluation site is on the south side of the High Street, which is aligned roughly west-to-east, close to the southern edge of the village. At its western end, it curves around an irregular pasture field to its south, which contains earthworks known as Bishop's Manor or Old Bishop's Palace. Many of the dwellings along the High Street are small, stone-built houses and cottages, with dates ranging from the 16th to the early 19th centuries; several, including No. 19, are Listed Buildings (NPC, 2011). This area lies at the centre of the Nettleham Conservation Area.

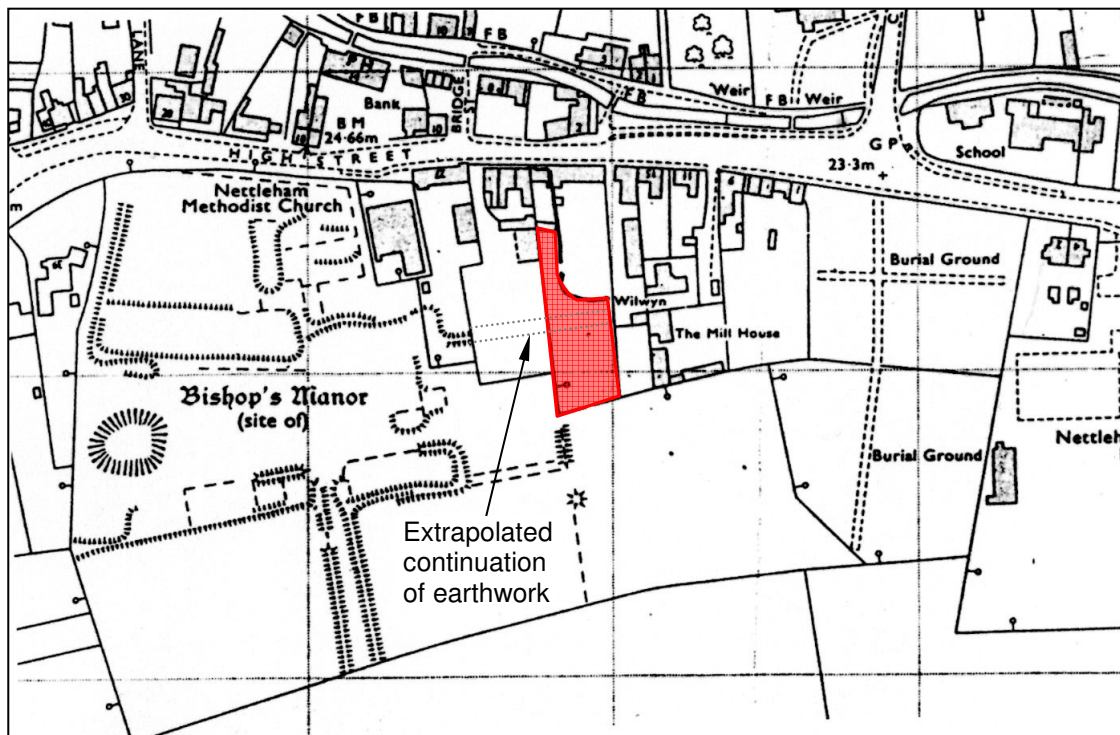


Figure 2: Location plan of the site (marked in red) at scale 1:2500.
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The existing property at No. 19 High Street is a 17th century house with minor 18th and 19th century additions (NPC, 2011). The building itself lies approximately 65m east of the Bishop's Manor field, separated from it by several further house plots that have possibly encroached on the manor site, and by Nettleham Methodist Chapel, which is known to stand on it. However, the south end of the house plot, which extends about 80m south of the street frontage, beyond the intervening properties, directly adjoins the manor field (fig. 2).

The evaluation site is within the back garden of No. 19, approximately 50m behind the street frontage. In accordance with the agreed project specification, the trench was positioned to intercept the extrapolated course of a visible earthwork on the Bishop's Manor site, which is apparently truncated by the boundary of the adjoining property to the west (fig. 2), while avoiding established trees and a partially buried dry stone wall which formed a terrace below the upwards slope of the garden to the south (fig. 3, plates 1 and 2).

The central National Grid Reference of the site is TF 0069 7521.

3.0 Geology and topography

The proposed development site lies on or very close to a change in the solid geology, with limestone of the Lincolnshire Limestone Formation to the north-west and Rutland Formation mudstone and sandstone to the south-east. No drift geology is recorded in the area (BGS, 1999).

The site lies at approximately 26m above Ordnance Datum, and slopes northwards towards Nettleham Beck, which meanders through the village from north-east to south-west, passing close to the north side of the High Street in the vicinity of the site.

4.0 Planning background

An outline planning application to construct a single storey dwelling and garage within the rear garden of No. 19 High Street was refused in July 2010, partly on grounds of there being insufficient archaeological evaluation to review the potential impact of the development on buried archaeological remains, particularly with reference to the site's vicinity to the Bishop's Manor Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Following further consultation, an initial evaluation strategy was suggested by the West Lindsey District Council Archaeological Advisor, combining an assessment of the archaeological background of the site with a walk-over study and a geophysical survey (Tann, 2010). The site proved to be unsuitable for geophysical survey, and a substitute programme of evaluation trenching was adopted as an alternative.

The proposed strategy is in keeping with Planning Policy Statement 5, Policy HE6 which states that where an application includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to undertake a field evaluation where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest (PPS5, HE6.1).

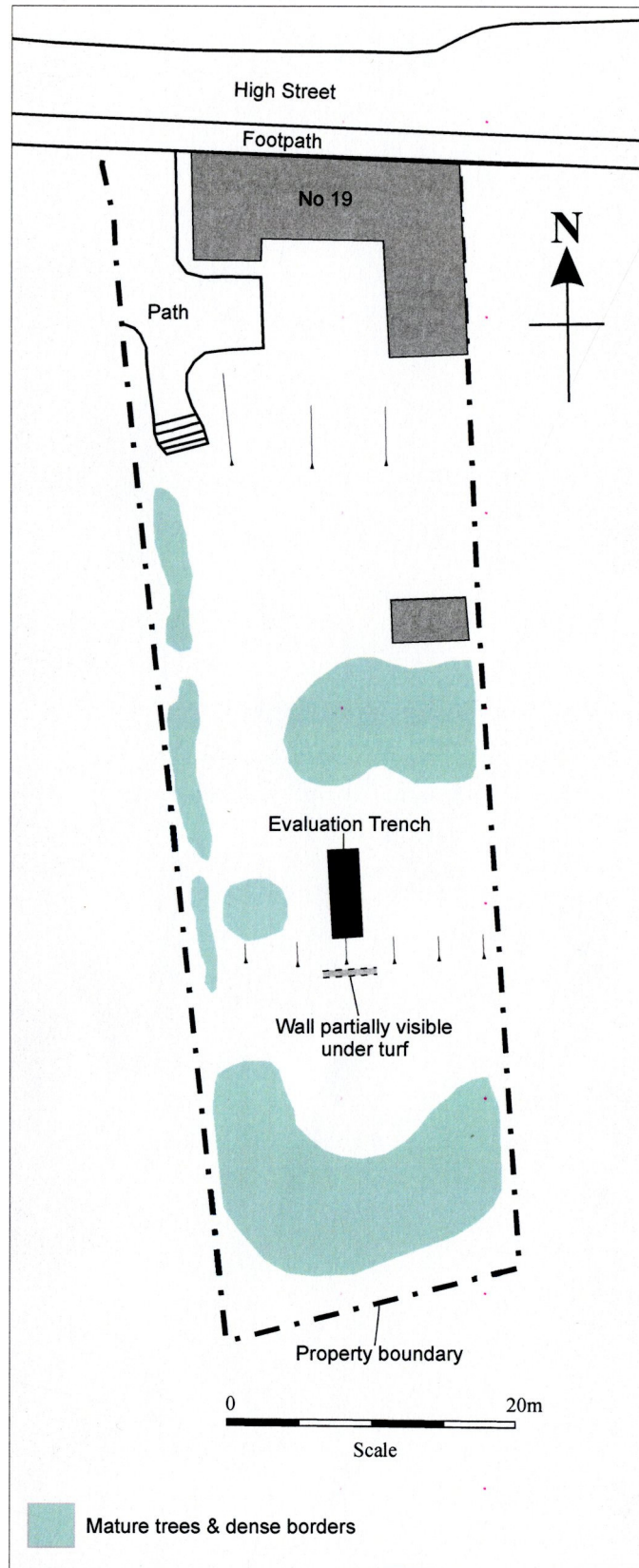


Figure 3: Plan of the proposed development site at scale 1:500, showing the location of the evaluation trench and the extant garden features that constrained its positioning.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

The village lies close to two Roman roads: Ermine Street, 2.9km to the west, and the Roman coast road, c.1.6km to the south, now the A158. There is good archaeological evidence that the locality was of some importance in the Roman period, including an inscription apparently derived from a temple enclosure (Allen, 2002).

Finds of Saxon date are relatively common within the village environs, although the most significant finds were made in the vicinity of the Lincolnshire Police HQ, to the north-west of the modern village (*ibid.*).

The place-name Nettleham is of Old English derivation and means 'the homestead or estate where nettles grow'. Prior to the widespread use of fertilisers, the presence of nettles indicated a concentration of phosphates in the soil, suggesting that the area that they grew in was formerly a site of human settlement (Cameron, 1998).

The first manor of Nettleham may have been built at the beginning of the 11th century by the Earl of Mercia, Eadric Streona. After he died, the manor fell to his great-nephew, Earl Godwin, who passed it on to his daughter, Edward the Confessor's wife, Queen Edith (Taylor, 1999). A Saxon hearth, and other remains including 8th to 11th century loom weights and 12th century pottery, were found on the site in 1935 (Heritage Gateway).

At the time of the Domesday Survey of AD 1086, Nettleham consisted of one principal manor, which belonged to the king; an uncertain second manor, and a small portion of outlying land administered by Gilbert de Ghent's manor of Cherry Willingham. The king's manor had a total population of 41 taxable households and a large area of arable land; no other kind of land use is recorded, nor are any assets, such as a church or a mill. Gilbert de Ghent's land was also arable; no permanent inhabitants are recorded. Odo the Crossbowman seems also to have had a manor in Nettleham, but it is referred to only in an entry for a small amount of land in Dunholme parish, which was administered by his manor of Nettleham: the assessment of the manor itself was never made or has been lost (Williams and Martin, 1992, pp.886, 920, 946).

The manor was granted to the Bishop of Lincoln by Henry I in 1101. It served the bishops as an administrative and residential base, as well as a manorial holding, and appears to have been complementary to the Bishop's Palace at Stow Park. A licence was granted to Bishop Henry Burghersh in 1336 to crenellate 'his manor of Nettleham' and surround it with a stone wall. The manor house was attacked and damaged during the Lincolnshire Rising in 1536, but continued in use for a further four or five decades. Licence for its demolition, on the grounds of its having been deserted and not habitable for at least sixty years, was granted to Bishop Williams in 1630. In 1647, Parliamentary commissioners recorded that the chapel and 'great parts' of the other buildings on the site had been demolished, and by 1777, no recognisable buildings remained. The manor site contains an extensive complex of earthworks (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 22749) (Heritage Gateway).

In October 1959, an archaeological excavation was conducted by the Ministry of Works on part of the Bishop's Palace site. Roman pottery was recovered in small quantities across the excavated area, dating from the late 2nd to the 4th century, indicating some form of occupation in the vicinity although no structures were reliably dated to this period. Fragments of early Saxon pottery were found, but the earliest

building remains – a substantial stone wall foundation and post-holes – were dated to the Saxo-Norman period. The excavators concluded that there had probably been an early Saxon settlement on or near to the site, with clearance of medieval structures after the 14th century in order to cultivate the excavated part of the site (Tann, 2010).

A geophysical survey of two areas of the earthwork site was conducted by National Environment Assessment Service for the Environment Agency in 2008. This examined an area to the north-west, beside the road, and a larger area to the south-east, to the south of the High Street properties. The latter extended to within c.30m of the proposed development site, but the closest identified archaeological anomalies were c.50m away. The report suggested that the site was originally larger than indicated by the surviving earthworks; that in the past it extended to the south and east (*ibid.*).

Nettleham parish church, dedicated to All Saints, is situated approximately 100m to the north-east of the site. The earliest elements of the present building are of 13th century construction (Pevsner and Harris, 1990).

6.0 Methodology

Before the evaluation commenced, the turf was removed from the trench footprint (plate 1). The trench was 6m long and 1.6m wide.

The trench was excavated by hand, removing deposits in stratigraphic order until the natural geology was reached. Topsoil was removed across the whole of the trench, and lower deposits were then excavated in half-section (fig. 4).

The trench was drawn in plan and section at a scale of 1:50 (fig. 4); the drawings were supplemented by a colour photographic record, a selection from which is reproduced in Appendix 1. All deposits observed were recorded on standard PCAS record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept. Finds, where recovered, were stored in labelled finds bags prior to their removal to the offices of PCAS for initial processing. The single bulk environmental sample was sent to Anita Radini, University of Leicester Archaeological Services for processing and analysis (appendix 5).

Following fieldwork completion, a small finds assemblage was washed and processed at the PCAS office using conventional methods; after which pottery and ceramic building material recovered from the site was submitted to Deborah Sawday for identification, while the small corpus of animal bone was submitted to Jennifer Wood (appendices 3 and 4).

The fieldwork was carried out by Julian Sleaf and Simon Savage, and took place between the 9th and 11th of February 2011. Weather conditions were unfavourable, with rain and poor light during most of the site work.

7.0 Results (fig. 4)

The trench was sealed by deposit 100, a layer of modern garden soil up to 0.24m deep, which produced modern pottery, brick and tile as well as one fragment of roof tile identified as medieval (appendix 3). Topsoil 100 overlay 101, a layer of light greyish-brown sandy clay with frequent limestone fragments, which may have been a naturally deposited former ground surface or a deliberately deposited levelling layer

associated with the landscaping of the garden. Pottery retrieved from this layer comprised eight modern sherds and two dating to the Saxo-Norman period, suggesting that the latter interpretation was more likely and the earlier sherds were residual. Fragments of brick and roof tile were also retrieved: the majority were post-medieval or modern, but one fragment of tile identified as medieval was retrieved (appendix 3). Animal bone retrieved from both layers included three fragments that appeared to have been butchered, and was interpreted as being post-medieval or modern in date, due to the size of the bones (appendix 4).

At the south end of the trench, layer 101 sealed 102, a deposit of mid-greenish-brown silty clay, whose appearance suggested an organic component, possibly cess. Deposit 102 lay within a downward slope at the end of the trench, but the area exposed was too small to ascertain whether it was a fill in a cut feature or a deposit levelling up or naturally accumulating in a hollow (plates 2 and 3). One sherd of early Saxon pottery and two sherds of late Saxon pottery were retrieved from this material, along with a very small fragment of modern pottery (appendix 3). This last may have been intrusive, but animal bone retrieved from deposit 102 was also identified as likely to be post-medieval or modern (appendix 4). An archaeobotanical analysis of a bulk soil sample taken from deposit 102 assessed it as a natural deposit with a great deal of modern root disturbance (appendix 5).

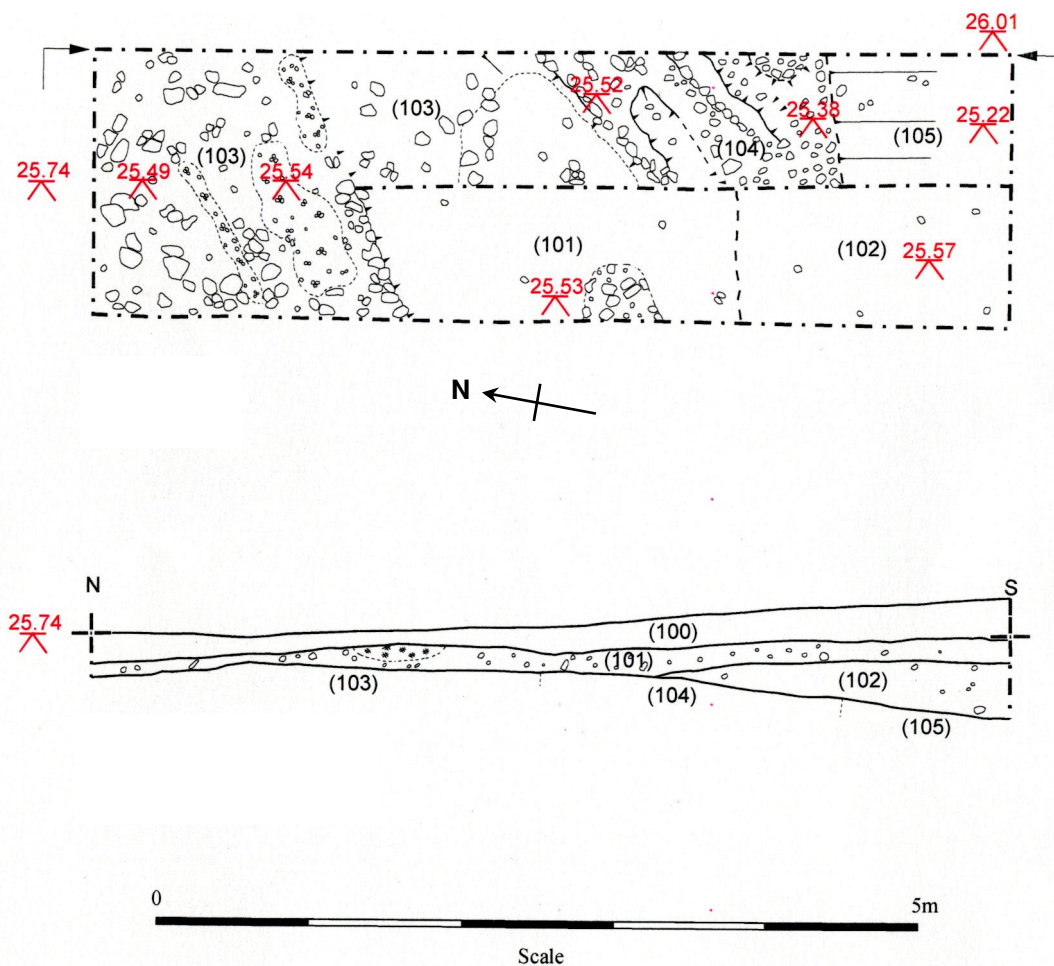


Figure 4: Plan of the evaluation trench with a drawing of the west-facing section, at scale 1:50. Datum heights are shown in red.

A variety of natural deposits were exposed at the base of the trench, which sloped downwards to the south. At the northern end, layer 103 consisted of limestone fragments and patches of pea-gravel in a matrix of mid-greyish-brown sandy silt, and partially overlay layer 104, comprising limestone fragments in a matrix of light yellowish-brown sandy silt, which was exposed towards the centre of the trench (plate 2). The lowest-lying southern end exposed deposit 105, a mid-orange-brown silty sand (plate 3).

8.0 Discussion and conclusion

The evaluation trench encountered nothing that could confidently be identified as an archaeological feature: deposit 102, whose appearance on excavation had suggested considerable archaeological potential, proved on archaeobotanical analysis to be natural in origin. None of the deposits observed suggested the former presence of an east-west running linear earthwork, and the gradient of the south end of the trench, in which deposit 102 had collected, was far too shallow to be interpreted as a ditch associated with such an earthwork.

Small amounts of pottery pre-dating or shortly following the Norman Conquest were retrieved from two stratified contexts, and another, unstratified, sherd was also retrieved, while potentially medieval tile was retrieved from one stratified context and the topsoil. Perhaps surprisingly, given its proximity to a medieval manor, no medieval pottery was retrieved from the trench. The pottery finds are of some significance, bearing in mind that previous excavations to the south, on part of the manor site itself, also produced early Saxon pottery and evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation, but their association with post-medieval material here indicates that none were in the place where they were originally deposited. The condition of the Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery indicates that it did not arrive on the site by agricultural processes, such as the spreading of manure that had been mixed with domestic refuse in a midden, but probably originated from a domestic refuse pit in the immediate neighbourhood: there is no indication of whether it is associated with the manor itself or with the village (appendix 3).

The very low level of archaeologically significant material encountered during the evaluation indicates that the activity associated with the medieval manor did not extend to this site. It seems most plausible that the raised linear earthwork whose extrapolated course was intercepted by the evaluation trench would actually have run no further than the western property boundary, forming a corner with the north-south running earthwork which lies to the south of and on the line of that boundary (fig. 2). It is unlikely that structural or earthwork archaeological remains will be endangered by development here.

9.0 Effectiveness of methodology

An intrusive evaluation appears to have been the only viable method for gathering information about the site on this occasion, as geophysical survey was very unlikely to produce informative results due to the physical constraints of the site.

10.0 Project archive

The project archive, currently in the custody of PCAS, will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln, by June 2011. It may be consulted there by citing the global

accession number, 2010.162.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Mr. Stephen Roberts for this commission. Thanks are also due to Ms. Alex Thornton, Archaeological Advisor to West Lindsey District Council, for her advice during the evaluation.

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