

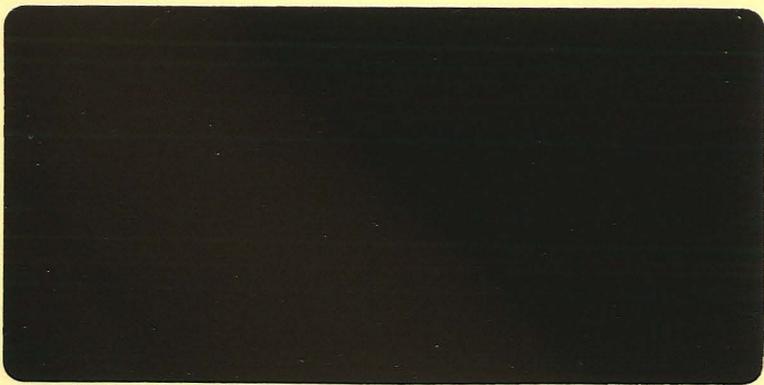
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT THE HUSSEY TOWER,
SKIRBECK ROAD,
BOSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BHT 05)**



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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acknowledgment and 2/2/00 jao

Quality Control
Land at Hussey Tower, Boston

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
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BOSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BHT 05)**

**Work Undertaken For
The Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire**

January 2006

Report Compiled by
Steve Williams BA (Hons) PIFA

National Grid Reference: TF 3308 4357
City and County Museum Accession No: 2005.255

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES



APS Report No. 181/05

Quality Control
Land at Hussey Tower, Boston

Project Coordinator	Steve Malone
Supervisor	Steve Williams
Illustration	Steve Williams
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Steve Williams

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
Steve Malone <i>SM Malone</i>	<i>TL</i> Tom Lane
Date: <i>7-2-06</i>	Date: <i>7-2-06</i>

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during the removal and replacement of hard surfaces and edging boards at the Hussey Tower, Skirbeck Road, Boston, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the removal of the current pathway and the excavation of small trenches to accommodate concrete kerbing to the outer edges of the pathway.

Archaeological activity, from the Romano-British period through to the Post Medieval period, has been recorded in the vicinity of the area investigated. The Tower itself is all that remains of a major Medieval manorial establishment.

The watching brief revealed an undated wall foundation, perhaps from a former building associated with the tower, and modern deposits. No other archaeological features were observed.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits maybe disturbed or destroyed.*” (IFA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned by The Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new pathway at the Hussey Tower, Skirbeck Road, Boston, Lincolnshire. A formal specification for

the archaeological works was not required, but the methodology was discussed with the local curatorial archaeologist and English Heritage. The program of archaeological works was carried out in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council and IFA guidelines. The watching brief was carried out between the 24th and the 25th of November 2005.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Boston is situated 45km to the south-east of Lincoln and approximately 7km from the Wash, in the Fenland of south Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Hussey Tower lies approximately 100m north of Skirbeck Road (Fig. 2).

Situated at a height of *c.* 4mOD, on the east bank of the Witham, the investigation area is located approximately 700m south-east of the centre of Boston, and centred on National Grid Reference TF 3308 4357. The area is bounded to the immediate north by the Grammar School, to the west by a new housing development, and to the east by the sports fields of Boston College; the southern boundary of the site fronts onto the Skirbeck Road (Fig. 2). The scheme of works covers an area of approximately 170m² (Fig. 3).

Local soils are of the Tanvats Association, typically alluvial gley soils (Hodges et al. 1984, 319), and the Wisbech Association, calcareous alluvial gley soils developed on marine alluvium. Beneath this marine alluvium is glacial drift that was deposited in a geological basin between the Lincolnshire Wolds and the East Anglian Heights (Harden 1978, 5). These glacial deposits in turn overlie a solid geology of Jurassic clays.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Boston lies within an area containing archaeology ranging from the Prehistoric to the Post-medieval periods.

The Prehistoric period is poorly represented within the immediate area, although a Neolithic flint axe was recovered approximately 300m to the south-east of the site.

The Romano-British period is better represented; unstratified pottery and coins were discovered just 20m south of the tower, while stratified occupation deposits have been found at the Grammar School to the immediate north (Rayner 2001).

Saxon pottery and two sunken features or *grubenhausen* were recorded 1km east of the site during an archaeological excavation (Palmer-Brown 1996).

To the immediate west evidence of settlement activity spanning the 12th-19th centuries was previously identified in excavations by APS. This included the large mid 12th century boundary/sewer ditch known as the 'Barditch'. Artefact evidence suggesting possible high class occupation was recovered along with cellars, walls, surfaces, cess and refuse pits of the 14th-15th century and evidence of 18th-19th century commercial activity (Rayner 2001).

The Hussey Tower was constructed around 1450-60, built for the then recorder of Boston, Richard Benyngton. It was known as Benyngton Tower in 1564 (Thompson 1856, 243). Ralph Lord Cromwell, the owner of Tattershall Castle, was a close associate of Benyngton and is believed to have influenced the design. The Tower was once part of a larger house and evidence for at least one extra wing can be seen on the eastern elevation of the tower.

Other buildings are mentioned within the estate of the manor. These included a gatehouse, brew house and mill house, although their locations are unknown (Thompson 1856, 243). The current name for the tower originates from the Hussey family who became resident during the early 16th century. Lord John Hussey was

executed in 1537 and the estate passed to the Crown, and was subsequently granted to Boston Borough. The buildings belonging to the Tower gradually fell into decline, and were demolished between the 16th-18th centuries. Cartographic evidence in the form of a mid 18th century map shows only the Tower standing (Moulis 1996).

During the 18th century Hussey Hall was built to the immediate west of the current pathway from the Tower to the Skirbeck Road, and is shown on an engraving (Thompson, 1856). The remains of this building have been located via excavation 100m to the southwest of the Tower.

3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

The area monitored was stripped using a mini mechanical digger. The kerb edging trenches for the new pathway were also excavated by machine, but were subsequently hand excavated when archaeological deposits were encountered (Fig. 3). Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:100 and 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis two phases were identified:

Phase 1	Undated deposits
Phase 2	Modern deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Undated deposits

Context (004) was a soft, mid brown, silty clay that contained occasional mortar fragments and charcoal flecks. It measured approximately 3.40m north-south and 0.40m in width, and is interpreted as a levelling deposit for Context (003). Context (003) represented a wall footing, and consisted of irregularly shaped, undressed limestone blocks and brick fragments. Bonding (003) and overlying (004) in places was context (005), a light brown, sandy, mortar, which contained occasional rounded stones (Fig. 4).

Phase 2 Modern deposits

Two contexts represented this phase. A loose, dark brown, silty, sandy clay (001), which was 0.10m in thickness, extended around the area of the Tower. It represented topsoil that had recently been disturbed, as it contained frequent modern rubbish such as plastic bags and tin cans. Abutting this context was (002), a gravel path.

6. DISCUSSION

The Phase 1 wall foundation (003), which was situated within the immediate southwestern corner of the investigation area, may be evidence of a building associated with the Hussey Tower (Fig. 3). No dating evidence was retrieved from this feature, although in situ bricks would appear to be of 15th-century type and hand made. The feature could be related to the east-west wall foundation discovered just 4m to the west during an evaluation at South End in 2001 (Rayner 2001). Another similar wall foundation was seen approximately 25m to the south and on a north-south alignment during a watching brief in 1996 (Moulis 1996).

The remaining contexts, both modern, (001) and (002) represent a topsoil, disturbed through recent gardening practices and the modern path/access leading from the Skirbeck Road up to and around the Tower. An unstratified brick fragment of late medieval date was recovered from the topsoil (001).

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations were conducted during relaying of a pathway on land adjacent to the Hussey Tower, Skirbeck Road, Boston, Lincolnshire. This was because the site is a Scheduled Monument and falls within an area of known archaeological activity dating from the Romano-British, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. It was deemed possible that archaeological deposits could be disturbed during the groundworks to be carried out.

The watching brief recorded undated and modern deposits. The wall may be associated with the Tower, and possibly also with the similar feature previously discovered 4m to the west of the investigation area, and dated to the 15th century.

The modern deposits derived from recent landscaping/gardening activities across the site.

Thompson, P. 1856, *History and Antiquities of Boston*, London.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wished to acknowledge the assistance of Penny Ward and The Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire for commissioning the work and post excavation. The work was coordinated by Steve Malone who edited this report along with Tom Lane.

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone
Site Supervisor: Steve Williams
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Steve Williams
Post-excavation analysis: Steve Williams

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harden, G., 1978 *Medieval Boston and its Archaeological Implications*.

Hodge, C.A.H., Burton, R.G., Corbett, W.M., Evans, R and Seale, R.S., 1984, *Soils and their Use in Eastern England, Soil Survey of England and Wales 13*

IFA, 1999, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Moulis, C. 1996, *Archaeological Watching Brief on Land South of Hussey Tower, Boston, Lincolnshire*. Report No: **56/96**.

Palmer-Brown, C., 1996, *Boston Grammar School Archaeological Evaluation report*, unpublished PCA report

Rayner, T. 2001, *Archaeological Evaluation of Land at South End, Skirbeck Road, Boston, Lincolnshire*. Report No: **153/01**

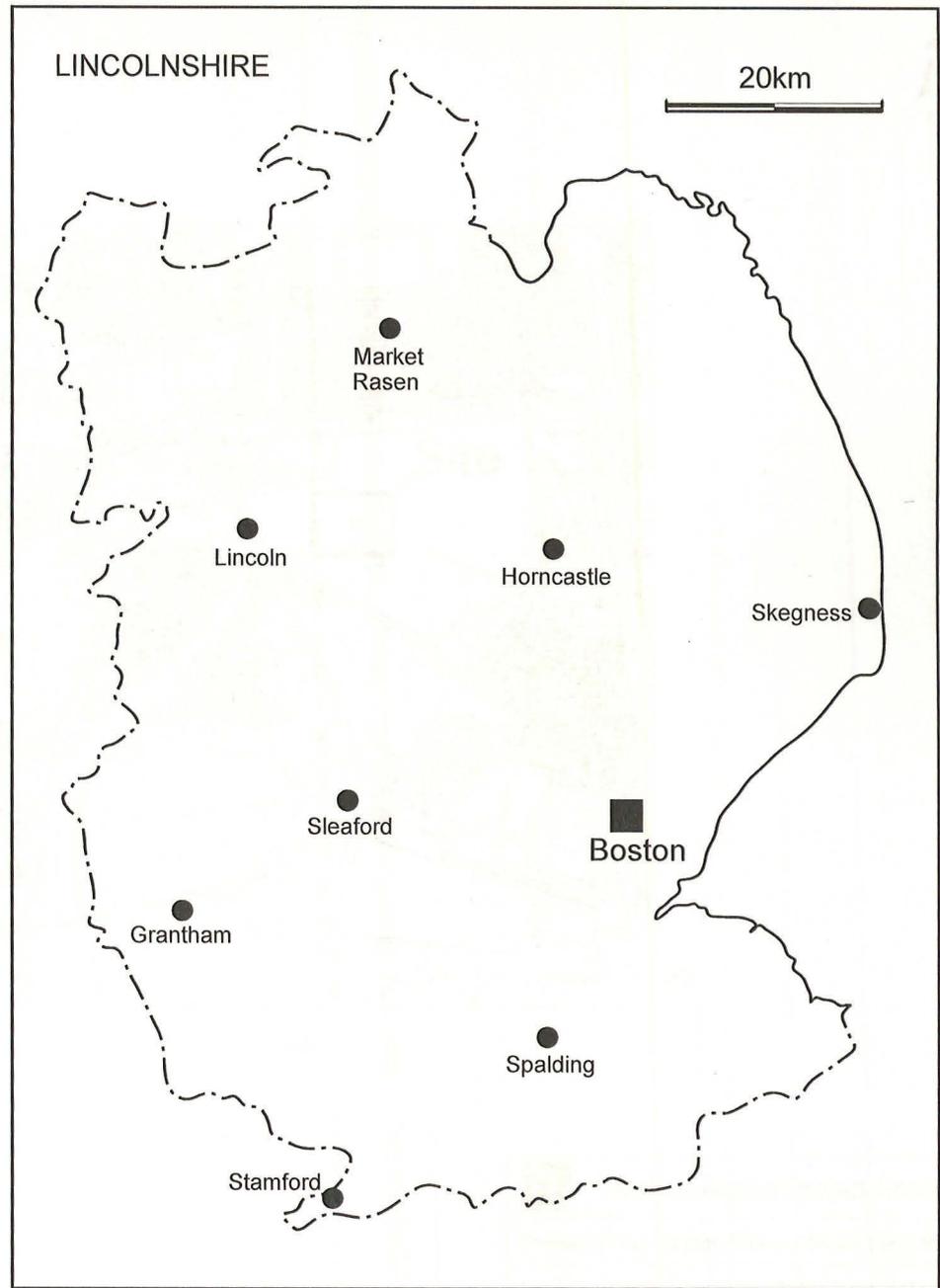
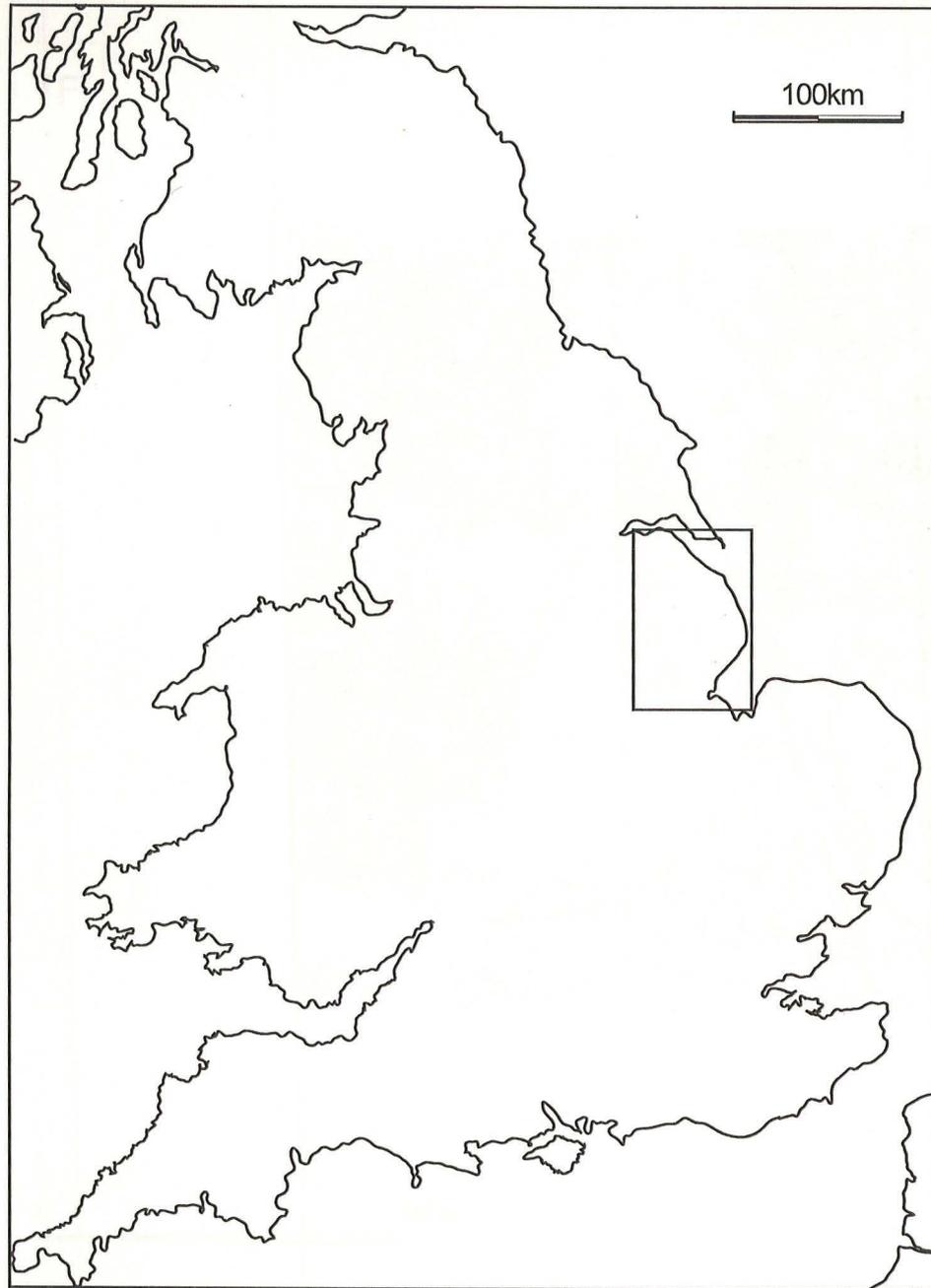
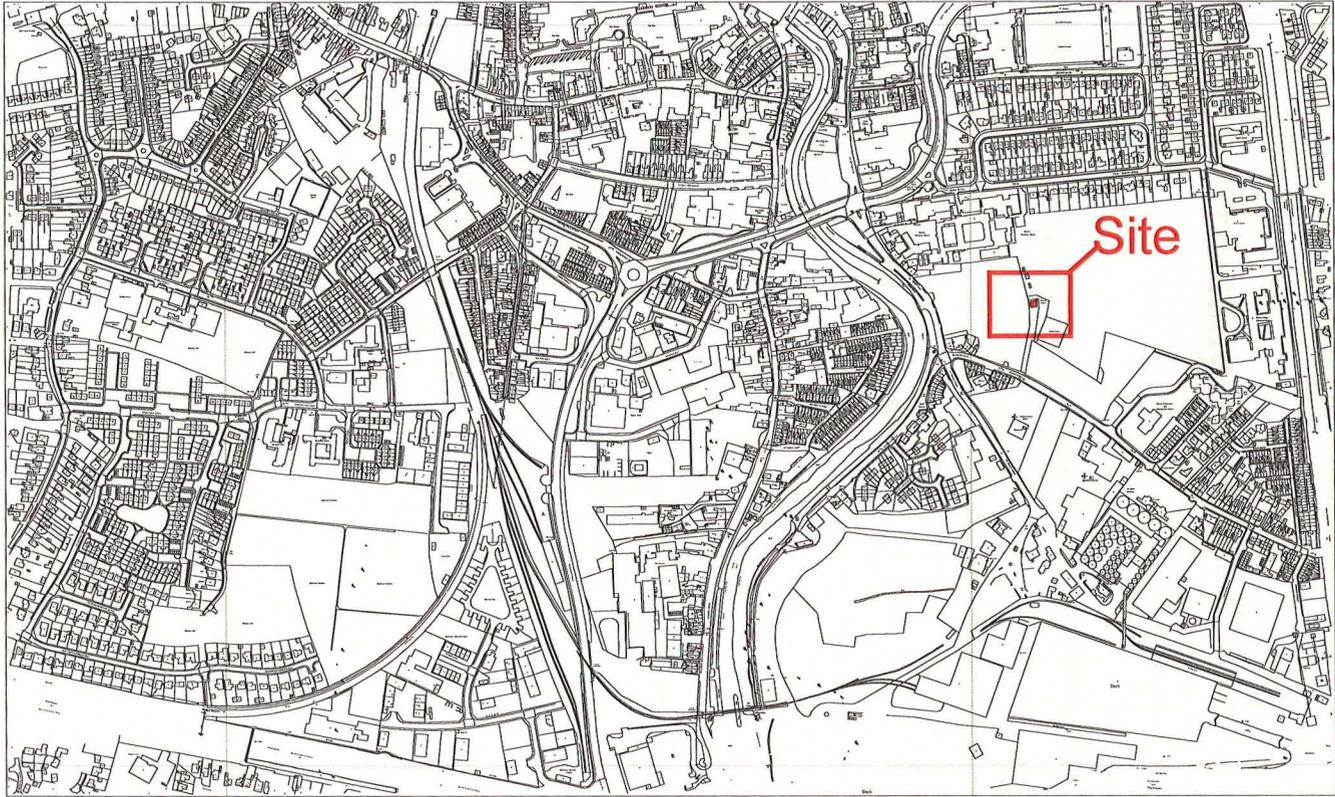


Figure 1: General Location Plan

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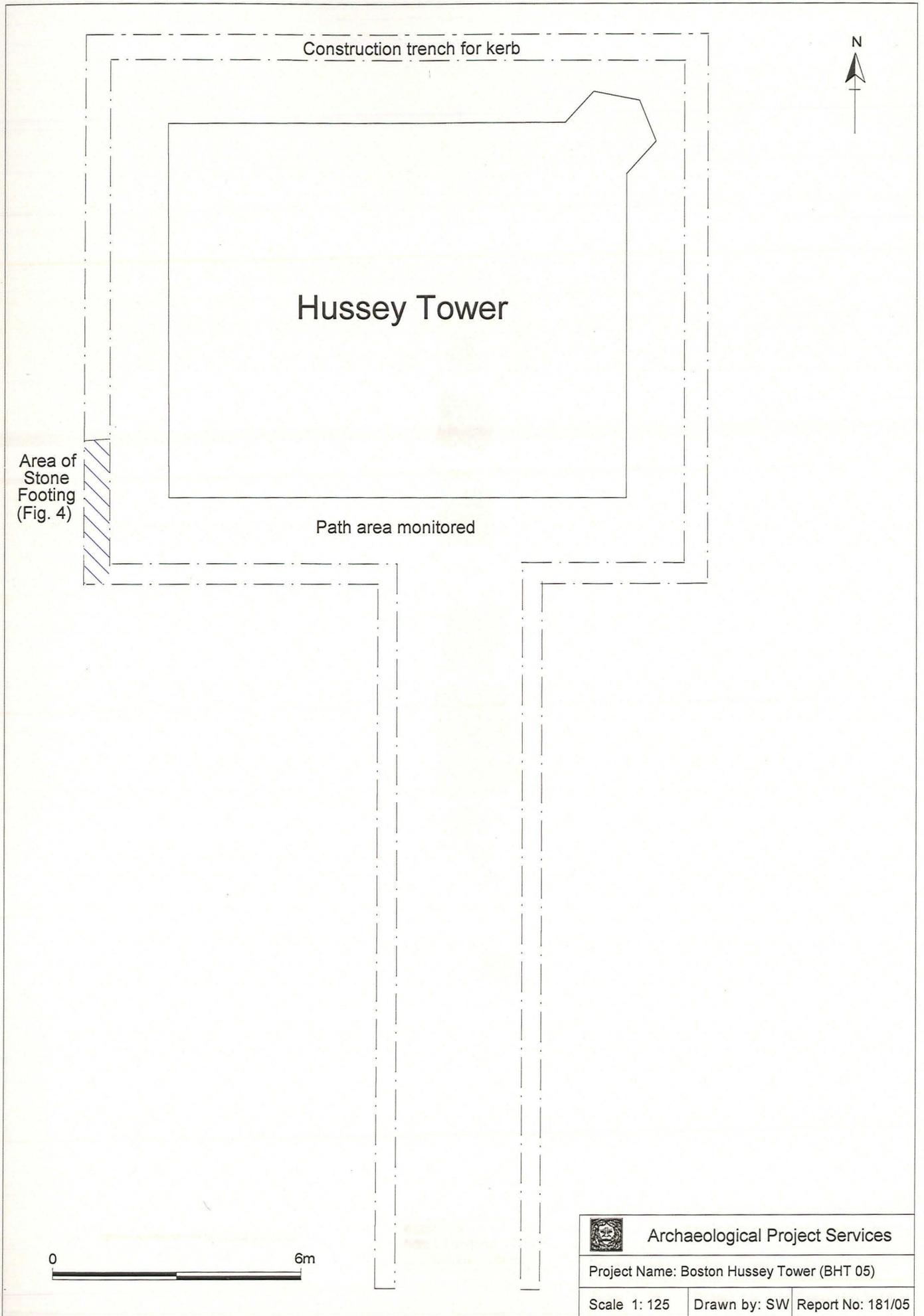
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Scale 1:10 000	Drawn by: SW Report No: 181/05

Figure 2 Site location



Construction trench for kerb



Hussey Tower

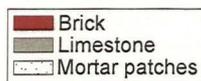
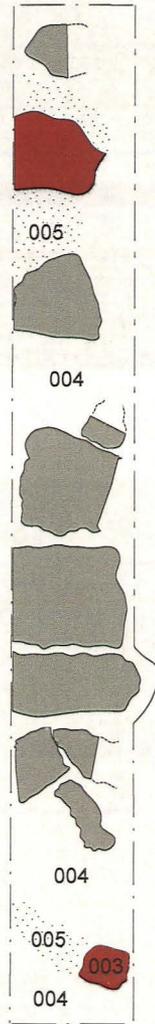
Area of Stone Footing (Fig. 4)

Path area monitored



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Scale 1: 125	Drawn by: SW	Report No: 181/05

Figure 3 Area monitored



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Boston Hussey Tower (BHT 05)

Scale 1: 25

Drawn by: SW

Report No:181/05

Figure 4 Plan of wall footing (003)



Plate 1 Tower looking north



Plate 2 S/W corner showing location of Context (003)



Plate 3 Context (003) looking north

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft dark brown silty, sandy, clay, extending around Hussey Tower, 0.10m in thickness with frequent modern rubbish including tin cans and plastic bags.	Disturbed Topsoil.
002	Loose light/mid brown Pea Gravel measuring 170sqm.	Modern path.
003	Irregular, undressed Limestone blocks and brick fragments, approximately 0.30m x 0.40m in size and forming a wall footing 3.40m long, 0.40m wide.	Wall footing.
004	A soft, mid brown, silty clay which contained occasional mortar fragments and charcoal flecks. It measured approximately 3.40m north-south and 0.40m wide.	Levelling layer for (003).
005	A light brown sandy mortar containing occasional rounded stones and dispersed between Context (003).	Mortar bonding for (003).

Appendix 2

THE FINDS by Gary Taylor

A brick weighing 695g was retrieved. No other artefacts or faunal remains were recovered.

Provenance

The material was recovered from topsoil (001).

It is probable that the brick was made locally in Boston.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the table.

Table 1: Artefacts

Context	Material	Description	No.	Wt (g)	Context Date
001	Ceramic building material	Handmade brick, 121mm wide, 48mm thick, abraded	1	695	Late medieval

Bricks used in late 15th century Hussey Tower are generally 120mm wide by 65mm thick (Taylor 2001). This present find is markedly thinner and previous investigations adjacent to Hussey Tower recovered other bricks thinner than those in the standing building. Associations between the bricks from those earlier investigations with dated pottery suggested the thinner bricks dated between the late 12th-late 14th centuries (ibid.). It seems likely that the present find is probably from the same late medieval date range.

Condition

The material is in good condition and presents no long-term storage problems. Archive storage of the collection is by material class.

Documentation

There have been previous archaeological investigations at Boston, including in close proximity to the current site, that are the subjects of reports. Additionally, there has been reported study of the archaeological and historical evidence for the town and its vicinity. Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the files of the Boston Planning Archaeologist and the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Potential

The single artefact is of limited local potential but supports previous discoveries in the area that indicate the probability of brick buildings at the site prior to the construction of Hussey Tower in mid-late 15th century.

The dearth of artefacts from the investigations would tend to suggest that archaeological deposits known to be present in the area were minimally disturbed by the development, or were of a nature that did not involve artefact deposition.

References

Taylor, G., 2001 'The Ceramic Building Material, in T. Rayner, *Archaeological Evaluation of land at South End, Skirbeck Road, Boston, Lincolnshire (BSEC01)*, unpublished Archaeological Project Services report no. 153/01

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500 - 2250 BC.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the Prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

5	-	Context records
1	-	Photographic record sheet
3	-	Plan sheets
0	-	Section sheet
1	-	Stratigraphic matrix
1	-	Bag of finds

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

Lincolnshire City and County Museum Accession Number: 2005.255

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BHT 05

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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