

99/15

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF CABLE TRENCHES,  
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,  
HOLBEACH,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(ASH 99)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF CABLE TRENCHES,  
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,  
HOLBEACH,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(ASH 99)**

Work Undertaken For  
All Saints Church  
Churchwardens

September 1999

Report Compiled by  
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons) AIFA

National Grid Reference: TF 3590 2481  
City and County Museum Accession No: 40.99

A.P.S. Report No. 99/99

*Archaeological Project Services is an IFA Registered Archaeological  
Organisation (Number 21)*

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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a cable trench through the churchyard of All Saints' church, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.*

*The church dates from AD 1340 and replaced an earlier church referred to in AD 1177. The north porch of the church is believed to have once been the gatehouse to Moulton Castle, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.*

*This investigation uncovered an undated brick structure, possibly the base of a tomb-chest, and a linear feature which may mark the position of a 19<sup>th</sup> century path. Pottery recovered from the site was mainly of 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century types although earlier sherds were retrieved.*

## 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 within a specified area, ..., where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed,'* (IFA 1997).

### 2.2 Planning Background

On the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February 1999 a watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a cable trench through the churchyard of All Saints' Church, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. The work was carried out in accordance with a Faculty issued by the Lincoln Diocesan Advisory Committee. The archaeological recording was commissioned by the Churchwardens and carried out by

Archaeological Project Services.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Holbeach is situated 11km east of Spalding and 20km south of Boston, in the civil parish of Holbeach, South Holland District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

All Saints' parish church is located at the centre of the village at National Grid Reference TF 3590 2481 (Fig.2). The new cable trenches have been inserted to the north of the church (Fig. 3).

The local topography describes a linear band of high ground aligned east-west along the High Street. The crest of this bank is at a height of c. 4m OD, dropping away to the south and north of this line.

The village is located on soils of the Romney Series, generally coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous soils developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium (generally sandy silt, sand and clay) which in turn overlie a solid geology of Upper Jurassic clays (BGS 1992).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and is referred to variably as *Holebech, Holeben, Holobech* and *Holobec*, derived from the Old English and meaning 'hollow or deep brook' (Ekwall 1974, 244). At the time of the Domesday Survey the land belonged to the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon and contained over a hundred acres of meadow.

The first record of a church at Holbeach is in 1177 AD (Macdonald 1890, 19). However, much of the present church dates largely

from 1340 when the Bishop of Lincoln promised to rebuild the chancel after obtaining the advowson (patronage) in 1332 (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 383).

The north porch of the church is cited as being the gatehouse of the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century Moulton Castle (Foster 1891). However, ecclesiastics of the medieval period would not normally allow military architecture associating with a church. Moreover, Foster suggests that the porch may have come from the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (All Saints' Hospital) believed to have stood near the Chequers Inn Hotel, almost opposite the church on the north side of the High Street.

A free grammar school was established at Holbeach during the reign of Edward II (1327-1377) and probably formed part of the church (Cope-Faulkner 1997, 3).

The church is a listed Grade 1 building under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1971 (DoE 1988, 35).

### 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, determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Trenches for the new electricity cable were excavated by machine to depths required by the development. Portions of the exposed sections were cleaned and examined by hand. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and

sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

Finds recovered from the deposits identified in the watching brief were examined and a date was assigned where possible. Records of the deposits and features recognised during the evaluation were also examined. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. Phasing was assigned based on artefact dating and the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A stratigraphic matrix of all identified deposits was produced.

### 5. RESULTS

No distinct phasing was identified. Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Located at the east end of the churchyard was a brick structure (007). Measuring 0.74m by 0.26m in extent, this structure of laid bricks extended beyond the width of the trench (Fig. 4, Section 3: Plate 2).

Sealing the brick structure, and present in the remaining trenches, was a subsoil of yellowish brown silt (005), visible for a depth of 0.25m (Fig. 4, All sections). This deposit represents a disturbed horizon formed by the excavation of graves within the churchyard.

Cutting through the subsoil was a possible linear feature (006). This feature was visible for a length of 1.56m and was deeper than the limits of the cable trench (Fig. 4, Section 1). Three fills were recorded within this feature. The lowest was a mid brown silt (004) overlain by light yellow decayed mortar (002) and sealed by mid brown silt (003). Pottery of 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date was retrieved from the uppermost fill.

Sealing all deposits was a topsoil of dark blackish brown silt (001), up to 0.3m thick, which contained 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and redeposited earlier artefacts (Appendix 2).

## 6. DISCUSSION

The earliest deposit encountered was a brick structure. The function of this structure is unknown but may be the brick foundation of a tomb-chest.

A possible linear feature was also recorded, the function of which was also unknown. However, a depiction of All Saints' church dating from 1836 shows a path across the churchyard in the same position as the linear feature (Latham *et al.*, 1995, 78)

Finds include a range of 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, with a single sherd of Toynton type pottery of between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century and a 17<sup>th</sup> century Midlands Yellow sherd. Two clay pipe stems were also retrieved and are dateable to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks at All Saints' church, Holbeach, because archaeological remains associated with the churchyard may be revealed.

A brick structure, possibly a base to a tomb-chest, and a linear feature, perhaps marking the position of a 19th century path, were the only features revealed during this investigation.

A small collection of finds were retrieved and comprised 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery as well as late medieval or post-medieval examples. Conditions are thought to

generally unsuitable for the survival of environmental indicators (seeds, wood, snails *etc.*), other than through charring.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr R.B. Robinson who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of the Churchwardens of All Saints' Church. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was kindly provided by Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council. David Start permitted examination of the relevant files maintained by the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
Supervisor: Fiona Walker  
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley  
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

DoE Department of the Environment

HTL Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

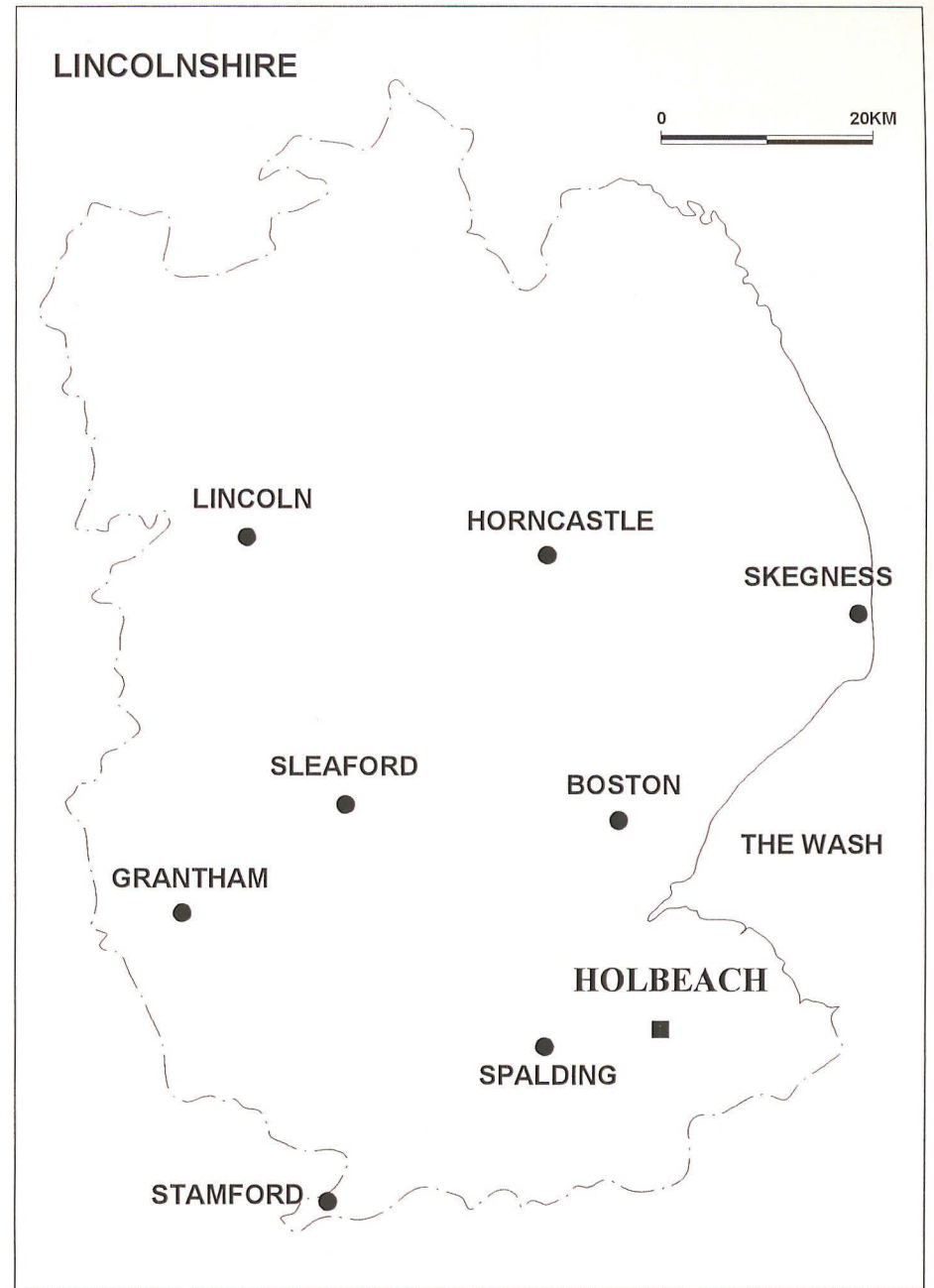
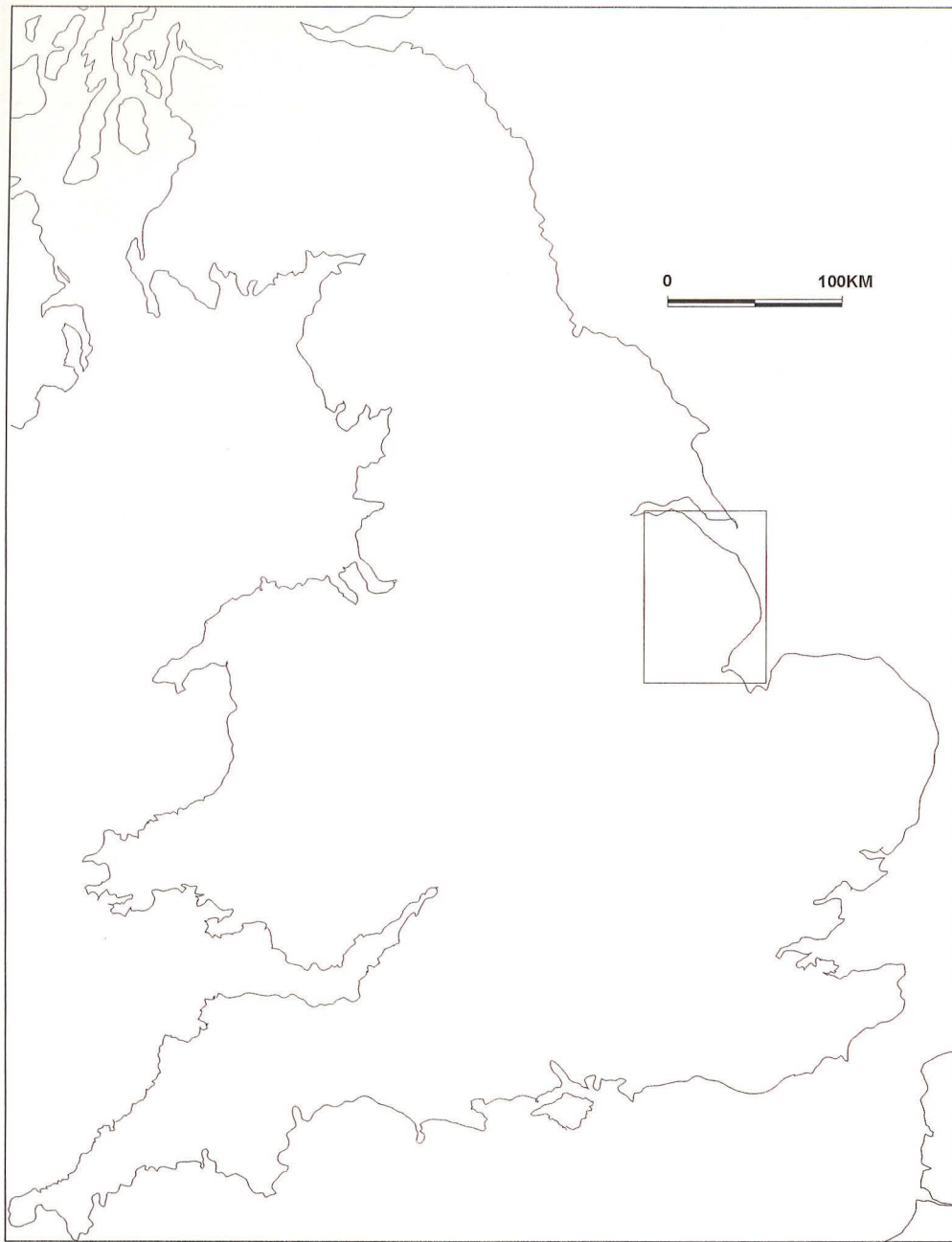


Figure 1 - General location plan

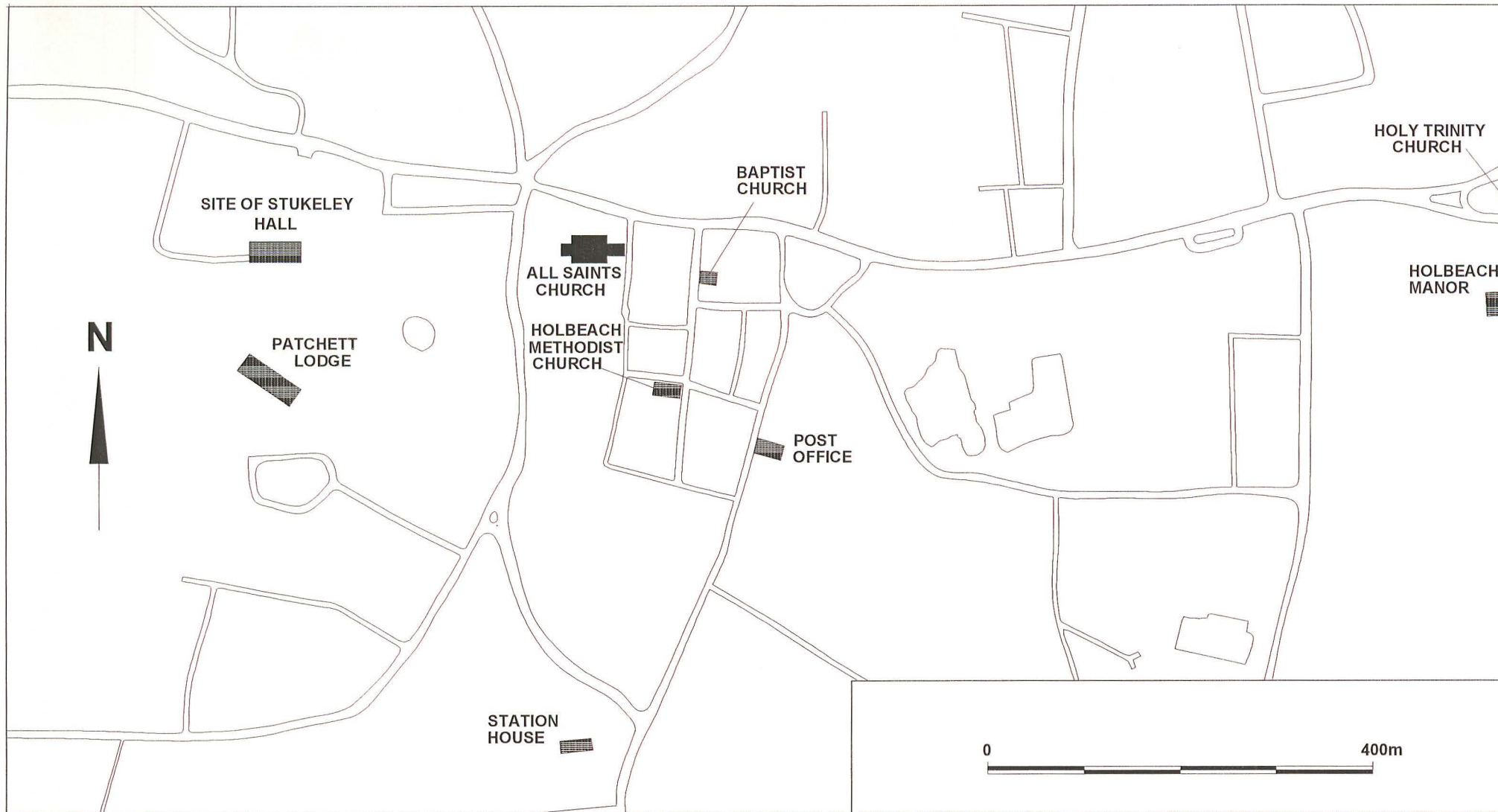


Figure 2 - Site Location

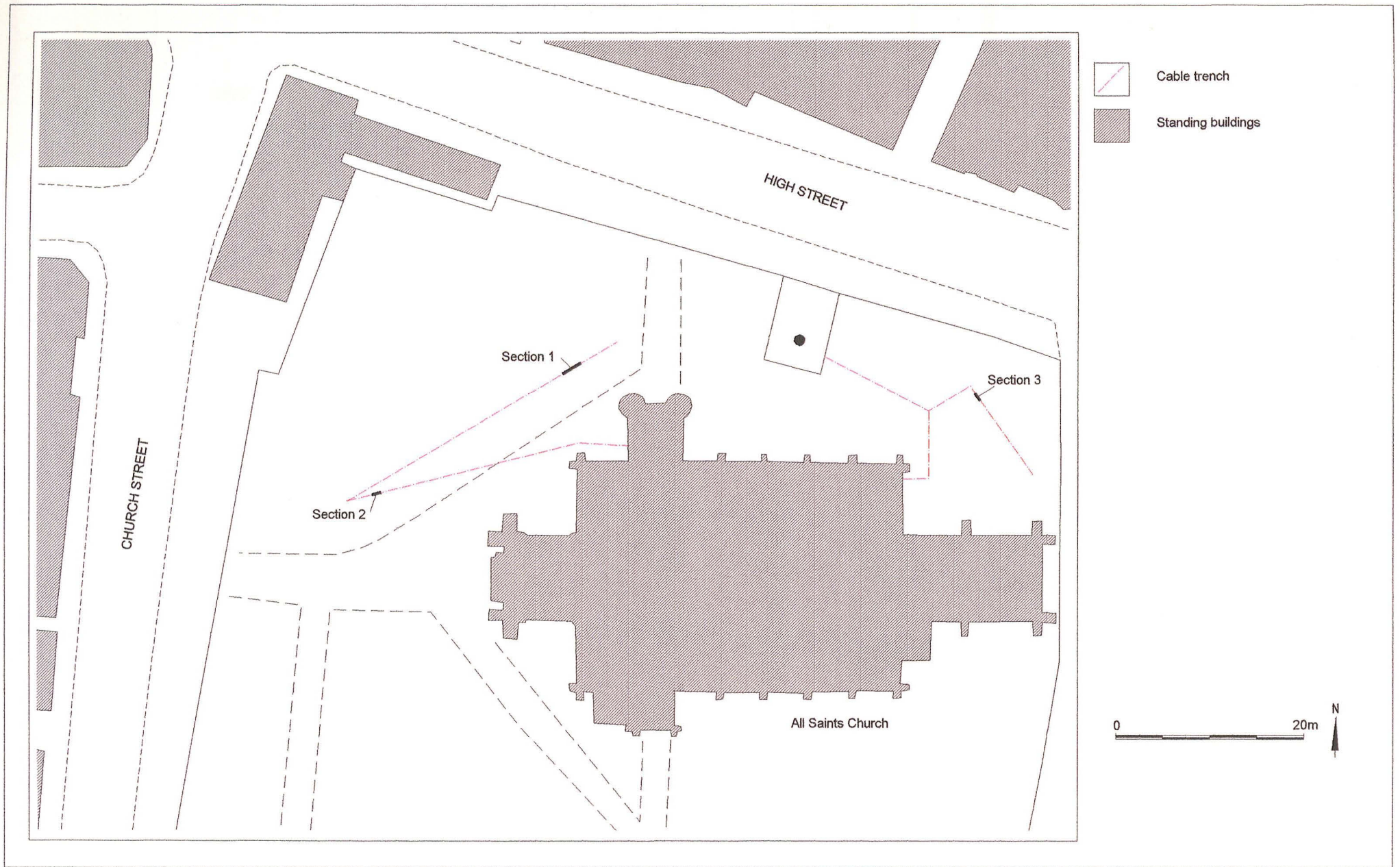


Figure 3 - All Saints Church, showing positions of cable trenches

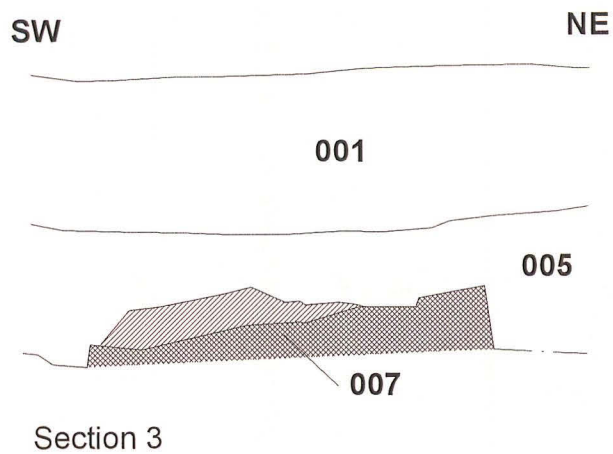
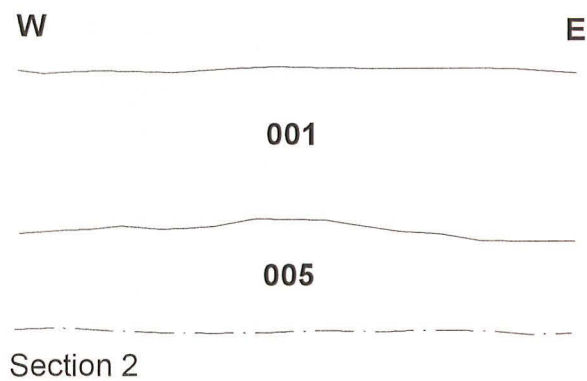
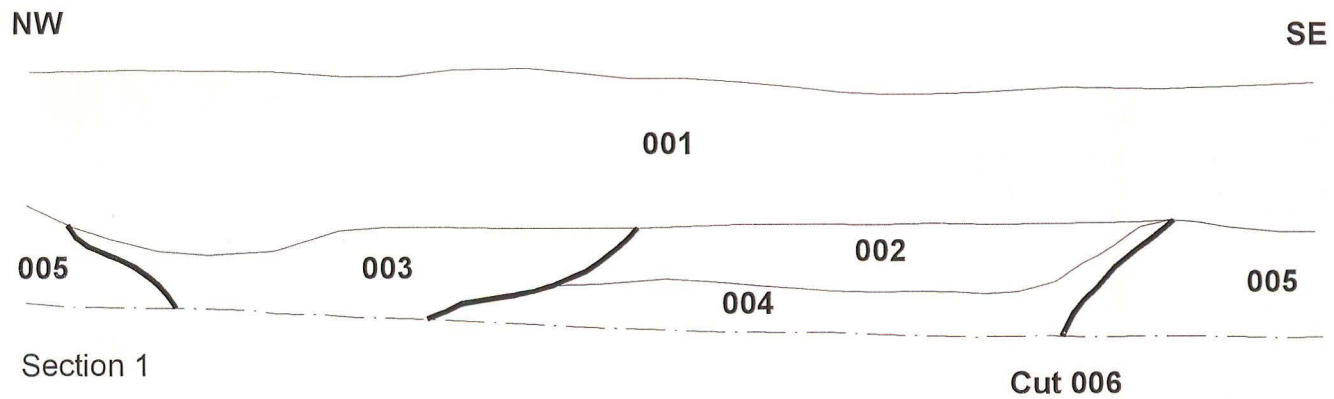


Figure 4 - Sections 1, 2 and 3



Plate 1 - Section 1, looking north



Plate 2 - Section 3, showing the brick structure (007),  
looking northwest

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Firm dark blackish brown organic silt, 0.29m thick	Topsoil
002	Friable light yellow decayed mortar	Fill of 006
003	Firm mid brown silt	Fill of 006
004	Firm mid brown silt, slightly yellowish hue	Fill of 006
005	Firm light to mid yellowish brown silt	Subsoil
006	?Linear cut, 1.56m wide, depth and length unknown	Indeterminate feature
007	Brick and mortar structure, 0.74m x 0.26m extent	Foundation structure?

## Appendix 2

### THE FINDS

*Hilary Healey MPhil and Gary Taylor MA*

#### Provenance

Most of the material was recovered from the topsoil (001), with a single item retrieved from the fill of an indeterminate feature (003).

Most of the artefacts are likely to be products of kilns in Staffordshire in the Midlands, though there is a fragment from Nottingham. The oldest pottery sherd is more local and was made in kilns at Toynton All Saints or the vicinity, approximately 37km to the north. It is probable that the clay pipes were made in the Holbeach region.

#### Range

The range of material is detailed in the table.

Only pottery and clay pipe was recovered. No other artefacts or environmental remains were retrieved.

Context	Description	Date
001	2 x salt glazed stoneware, 1 Nottingham 2 x blue and white transfer printed tableware 3x underglaze blue printed tableware 2x blue painted shell-edged tableware 3x white glazed tablewares 1x creamware 4x brown glazed table/earthenwares 1x black glazed earthenware 1x ?Midlands Yellow ware, overfired 1x Toynton All Saints-type ware jug 2x clay pipe stems	19 <sup>th</sup> century 19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century 19 <sup>th</sup> century 19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century 19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century 18 <sup>th</sup> - early 19 <sup>th</sup> century 18 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century 18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century 17 <sup>th</sup> century 14 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> century
003	1 x black glazed tableware	19 <sup>th</sup> - early 20 <sup>th</sup> century

Shell-edged plates were introduced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in pearl and cream wares (Hume 1991, 116). However, the examples recovered are 19<sup>th</sup> century versions in plain white tablewares.

#### Condition

All of the material is in good condition and presents no long-term storage problems. Storage of the archive is by material class.

#### Documentation

Late post-medieval artefact assemblages, including groups from Holbeach, of similar nature to the present collection have previously been reported on. Several previous archaeological interventions in Holbeach have been undertaken and reported, including immediately north of the church on High Street (Dymond 1998) and Park Road (Herbert 1999).

#### Potential

The assemblage has limited potential.

#### References

Dymond, M., 1998 *Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief at 27-29 High Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire (HLH98)*, unpublished APS Report No. 85/98

Herbert, N., 1999 *Archaeological Evaluation on land at 4 Park Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire (HPR99)*,



unpublished APS Report No. 33/99

Hume, I. N., 1991 *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* (Vintage Books)

## Appendix 3

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

7	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
3	Drawing sheets
1	Bag of finds
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds 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

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 40.99

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: ASH 99

The site code has been changed to HSC99 by Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

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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## Appendix 4

### GLOSSARY

<b>Context</b>	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 interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Fill</b>	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.