

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
61 HIGH STREET, BOSTON, 99/21
LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code : HSB 98
LCNCC Acc No. 191.98
NGR : TF 3265 4374 3271
Planning Ref. : BO5/ 0192/ 97

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Report prepared for the James Totty Partnership (on behalf of
The Salvation Army Trustee Co.)
by A.M. Hardwick
5 November 1999

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Contents

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Location and description	2
3.0	Planning background	2
4.0	Archaeological and historical background	2
5.0	Methodology	4
6.0	Results	4
7.0	Conclusions	5
8.0	Bibliography	5

Illustrations

- Fig. 1** Location of site
- Fig. 2** Development plan showing areas monitored
- Fig. 3** Section 1
- Fig. 4** Section 2
- Fig. 5** Plan of N-S foundation trench, shop front
- Fig. 6** Plan of E-W foundation trench
- Fig. 7** Timber frame structure, south facing wall
- Fig. 8** Timber frame structure, first floor west wall

Appendices

- Appendix 1: List of archaeological contexts
- Appendix 2: Colour photographs
- Appendix 3: Post-Roman pottery archive by J Young
- Appendix 4: Archive of animal bone by DJ Rackham

Summary

- * An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for a rear extension to 61 High Street, Boston, a Grade II Listed Building.
- * Foundation trenches were carefully monitored and discoveries included postholes, pottery and medieval occupation layers. A timber frame structured first floor wall was additionally recorded.
- * It was concluded that the information derived from the watching brief contributes to the record of medieval domestic settlement in central Boston, particularly on the west side of the river Witham.

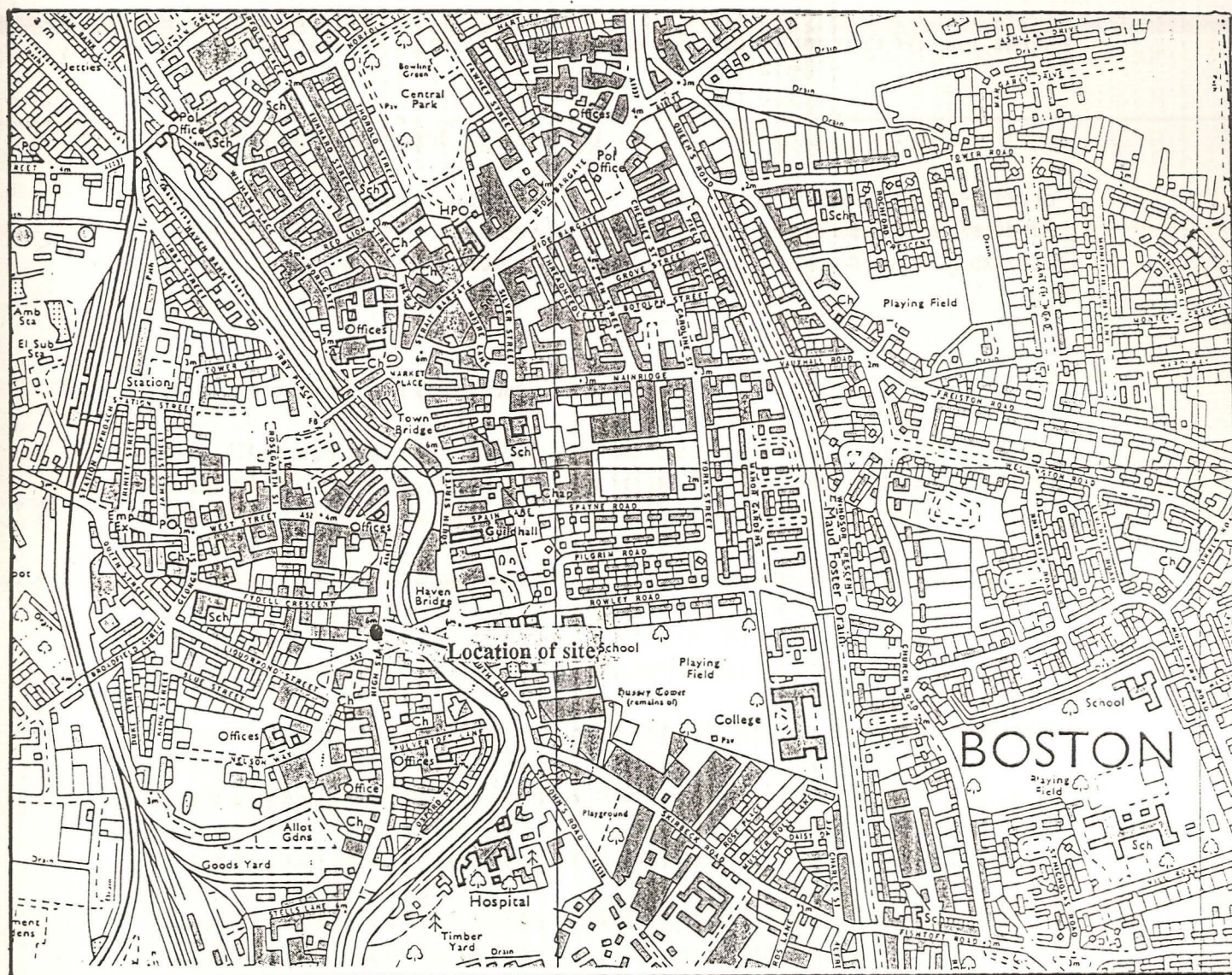


Fig. 1 Location of site scale 1:10 000

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the James Totty Partnership to fulfil a planning requirement issued by Boston Borough Council. This related to groundworks associated with the construction of a rear extension to 61 High Street, Boston, a Grade II Listed Building. Work was carried out in accordance with the archaeological project brief issued by the Community Archaeologist for Boston, dated April 1997. This report documents the results of the fieldwork undertaken initially in May 1999, with further visits required between June and September 1999.

2.0 Location and description

Boston is situated in the south Lincolnshire Fens. The town is approximately 7km from the north-west coast of the Wash and 45km southeast of Lincoln.

The site itself is in the centre of Boston on the west bank of the river Witham, and lies on land approx 5m O.D.

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted by Boston Borough Council for a rear extension to the Listed Building, subject to a condition requiring that an archaeological watching brief take place with regard to all groundworks. The brief was subsequently extended to include recording of exposed wall timbers.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Central Boston is located on elevated land bisected by the river Witham which flows south-east into the Wash. This has proved valuable over successive periods as a major trade route and as a water source for industrial activity. There is no record of prehistoric activity in the immediate area, beyond isolated finds, but there is the possibility of evidence being sealed beneath alluvial deposits. On-going work in this part of the Fens indicates widespread exploitation during the Roman period. This includes Romano-British sites at Foggerty's factory, Fishtoft, at Boston Grammar School and around St Leodegar's Church in Wyberton.

Boston developed as a town and port in the early 11th century, expanding considerably by the 13th century. It may have been a significant link between the major trade centre of Lincoln and markets as widespread as Norway, France and the Mediterranean. The medieval trade fairs of Boston were some of the most important fairs in England in the 13th century, and the port itself was second only to London.

Documentary evidence records little of the probable diversity of crafts and trades supported by the town, and archaeological evidence is still limited. To date very little work has been done on the west side of the river. Similarly, little is known of the medieval town plan. The development, at or close to the centre of the medieval settlement would potentially disturb important information relating to this and successive periods.

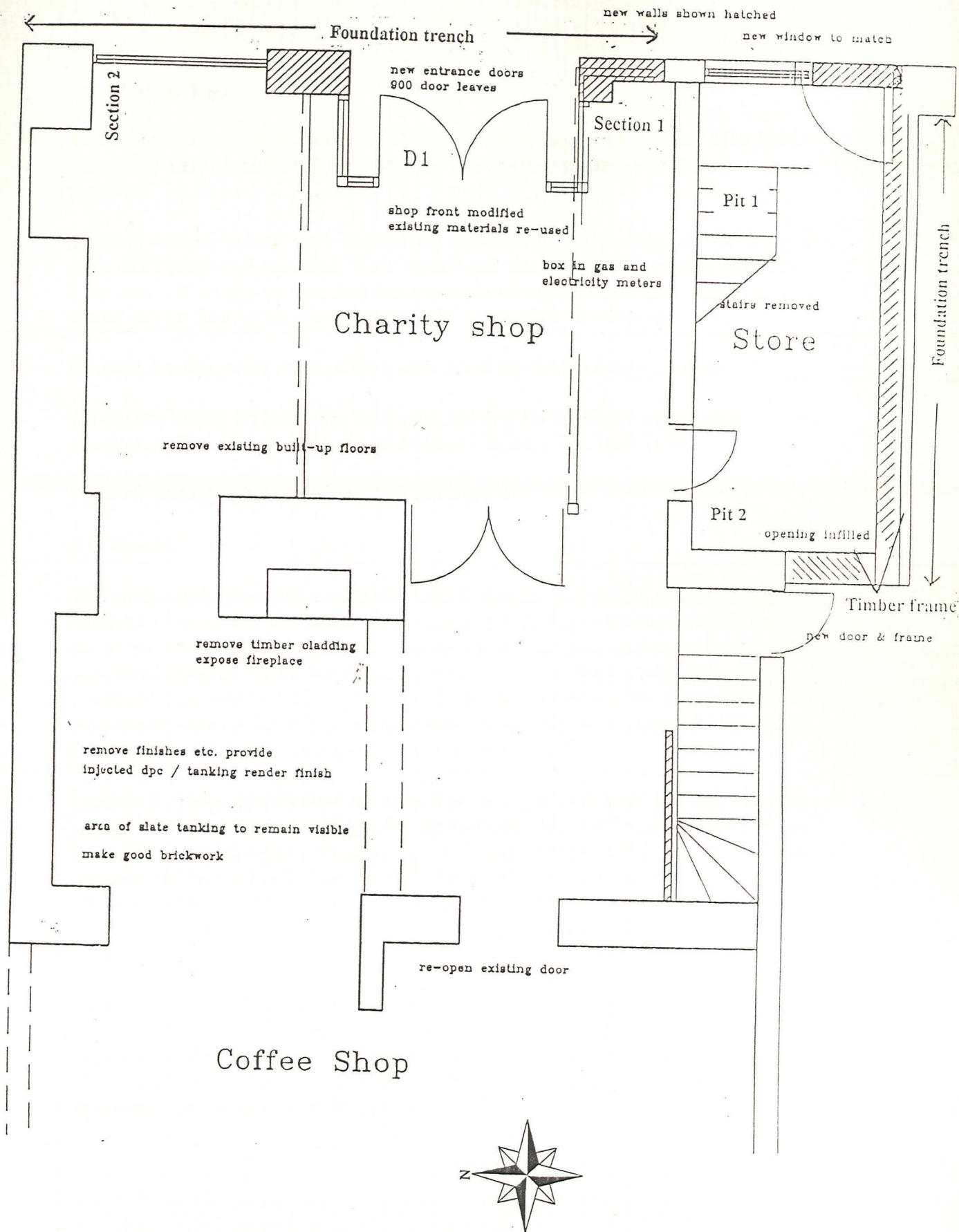


Fig. 2 Development plan showing areas monitored, and location of sections/ plans (Figs. 3 – 8).
Scale 1:100

5.0 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken initially over three days – 14, 17, 18th May 1999, with subsequent visits from June – September as further significant materials were exposed.

Plan and section surfaces were cleaned and inspected for archaeological evidence and areas of interest were recorded. Scale section and elevation drawings were made at 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate, and deposits were recorded on standard watching brief record sheets. Scale plans were drawn of the areas under development.

Detailed sketches were made of the timber joints revealed during demolition.

Artefactual dating evidence was recovered and sent for specialist examination. Samples of tile and brick from the foundation 120 were also recovered.

A colour photographic record was kept throughout.

6.0 Results

The north-south orientated construction trench for the new shop frontage revealed evidence of structures pre-dating the present building. Below the modern wall an earlier brick wall 106 was apparent. This appeared to be built on a stone footing 104 composed of ashlar blocks mortared together. Below this level a thick deposit of relatively clean sand/ silt 101 or 110 sealed dark organic-rich layers characteristic of occupation build up. Layer 109 in particular was interpreted as a possible disturbed floor surface. Medieval pottery was recovered at this level.

Possible posthole remains were discovered at the excavation limit. 111 and 113 were groups of stones interpreted as possible posthole settings, the former at least cutting layer 109. Decayed organic deposits 114, 115 suggested the remains of posts. Varied deposits 112 (occasionally charcoal-rich) 116 (dark, organic) supported the suggestion of urban build-up material. The thick greyish silty layers 117 and 118, also present in pits 1 and 2, contained further occupation evidence such as shell and medieval pot (118).

Examination of the foundation trench running east-west below the timber-framed wall revealed a brick wall foundation 120, one course deep, on a slightly different alignment to the standing building. An ashlar fragment was noted within this. 120 lay above a silty layer interpreted as 118, over 0.7m thick. Building disturbance dominated the eastern end of the trench.

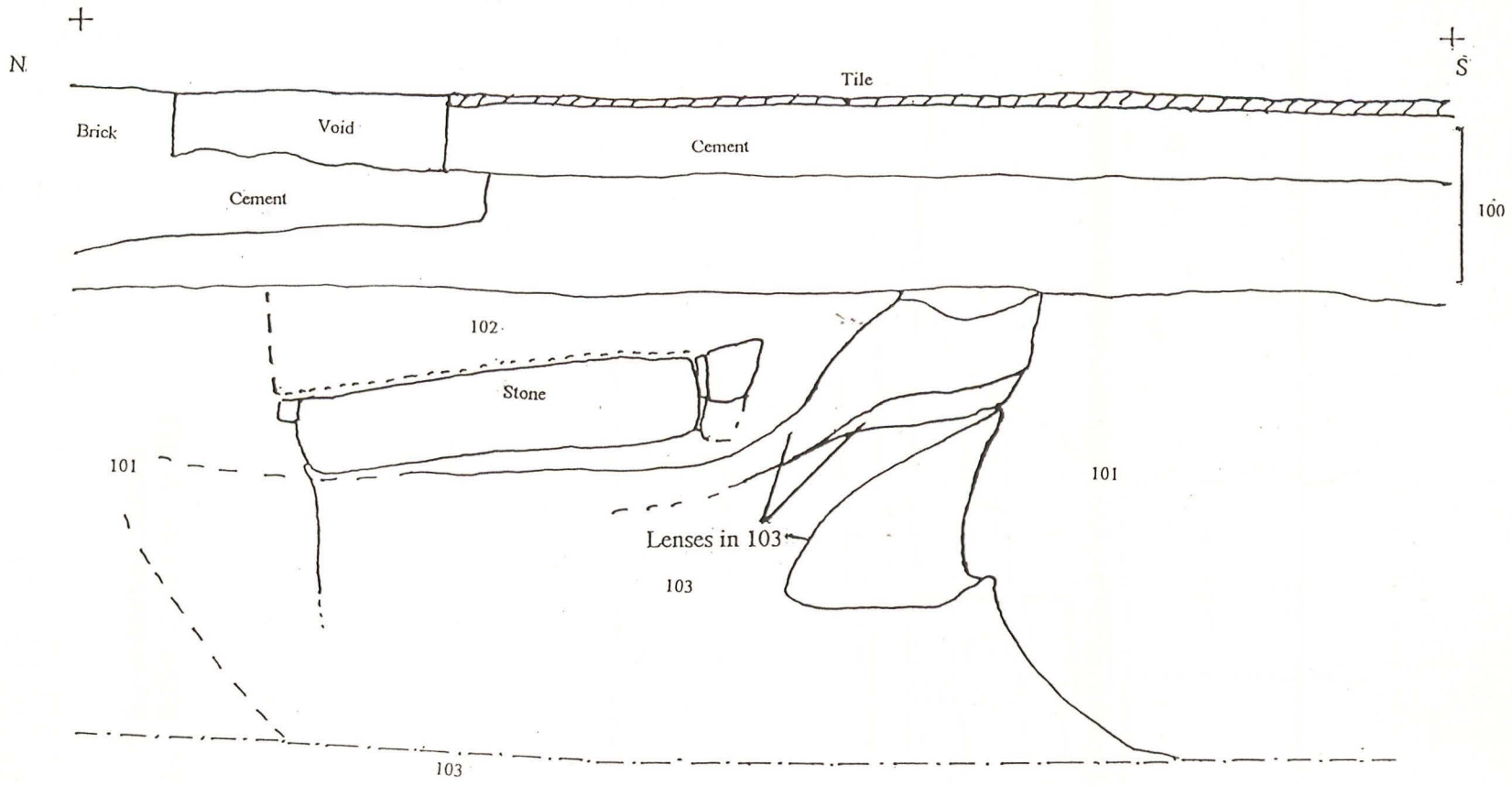


Fig. 3 Section 1, Scale 1:10
 (location indicated on Fig. 2)

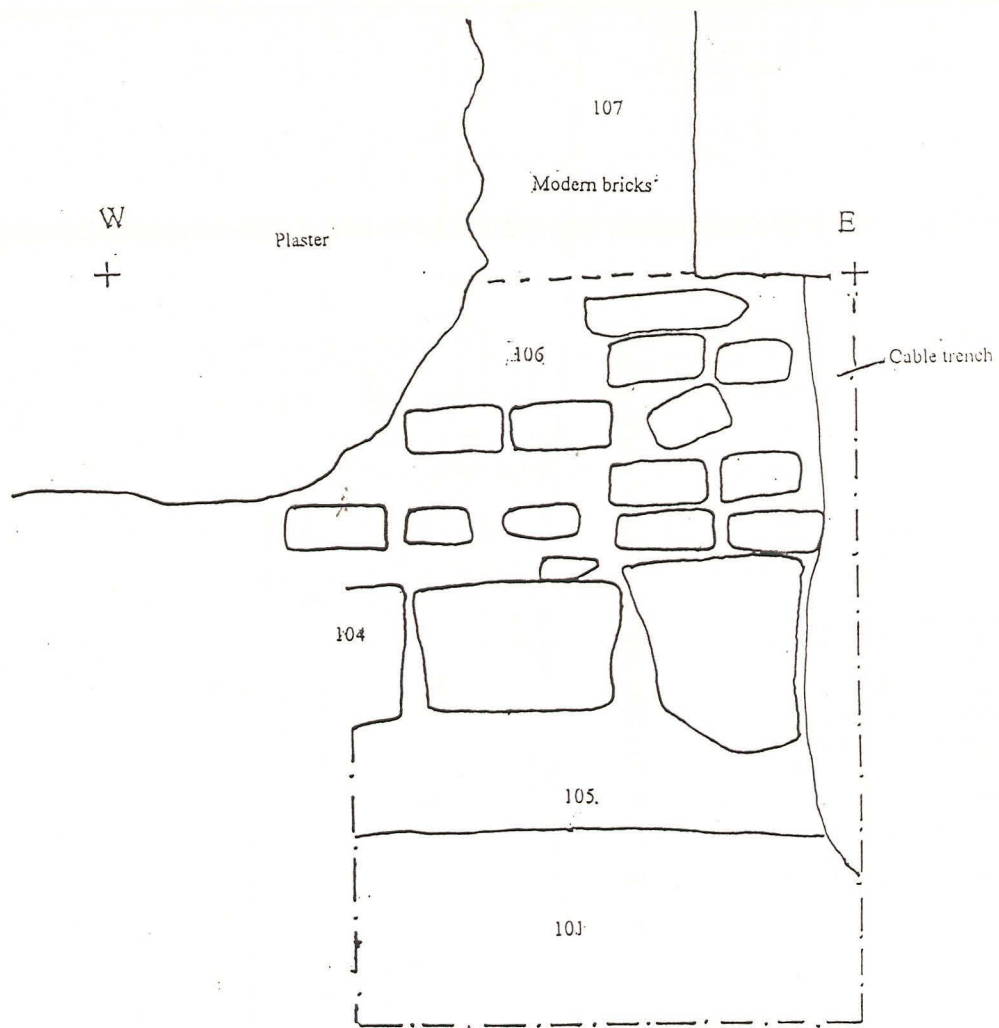


Fig. 4 Section 2, Scale 1:10
(location indicated on Fig. 2)

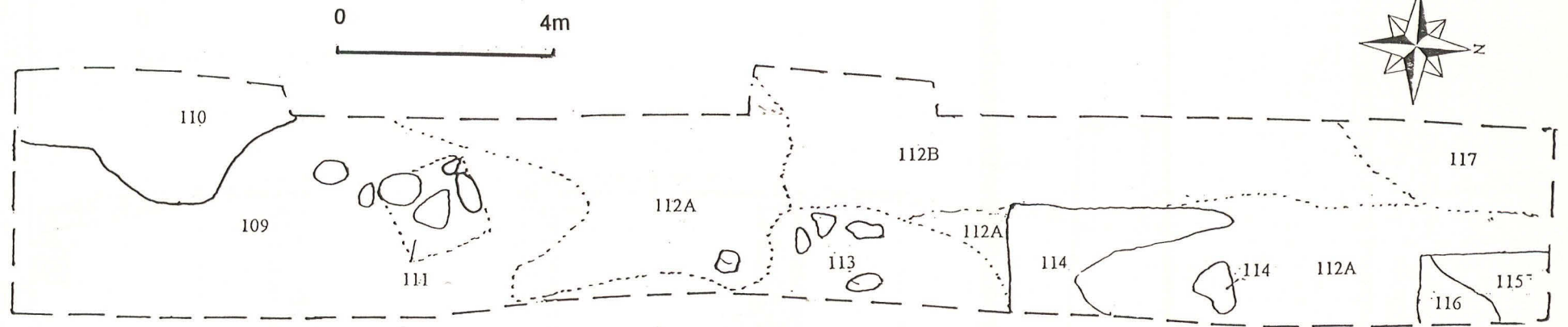


Fig. 5 Plan of foundation trench, shop front

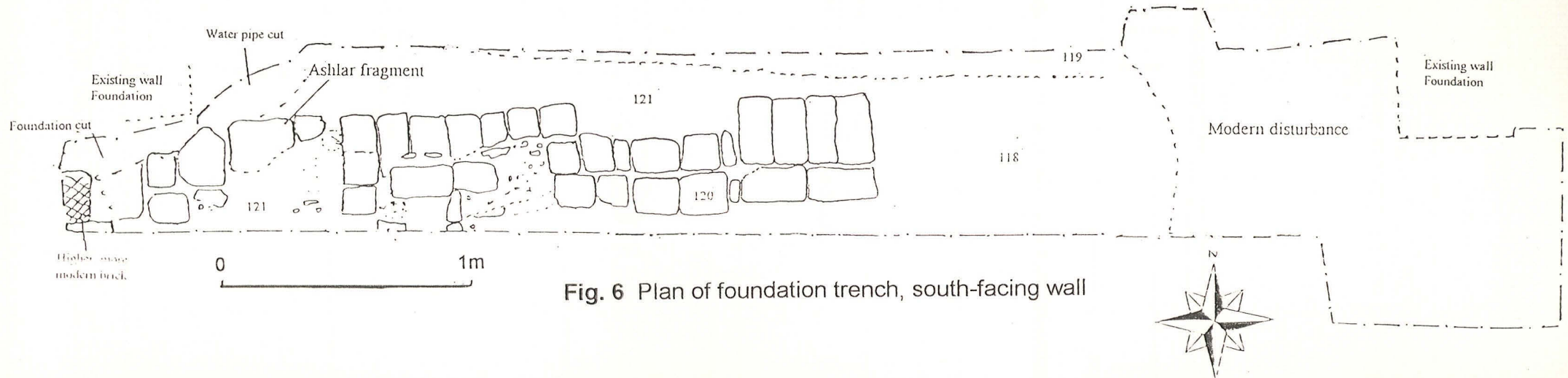
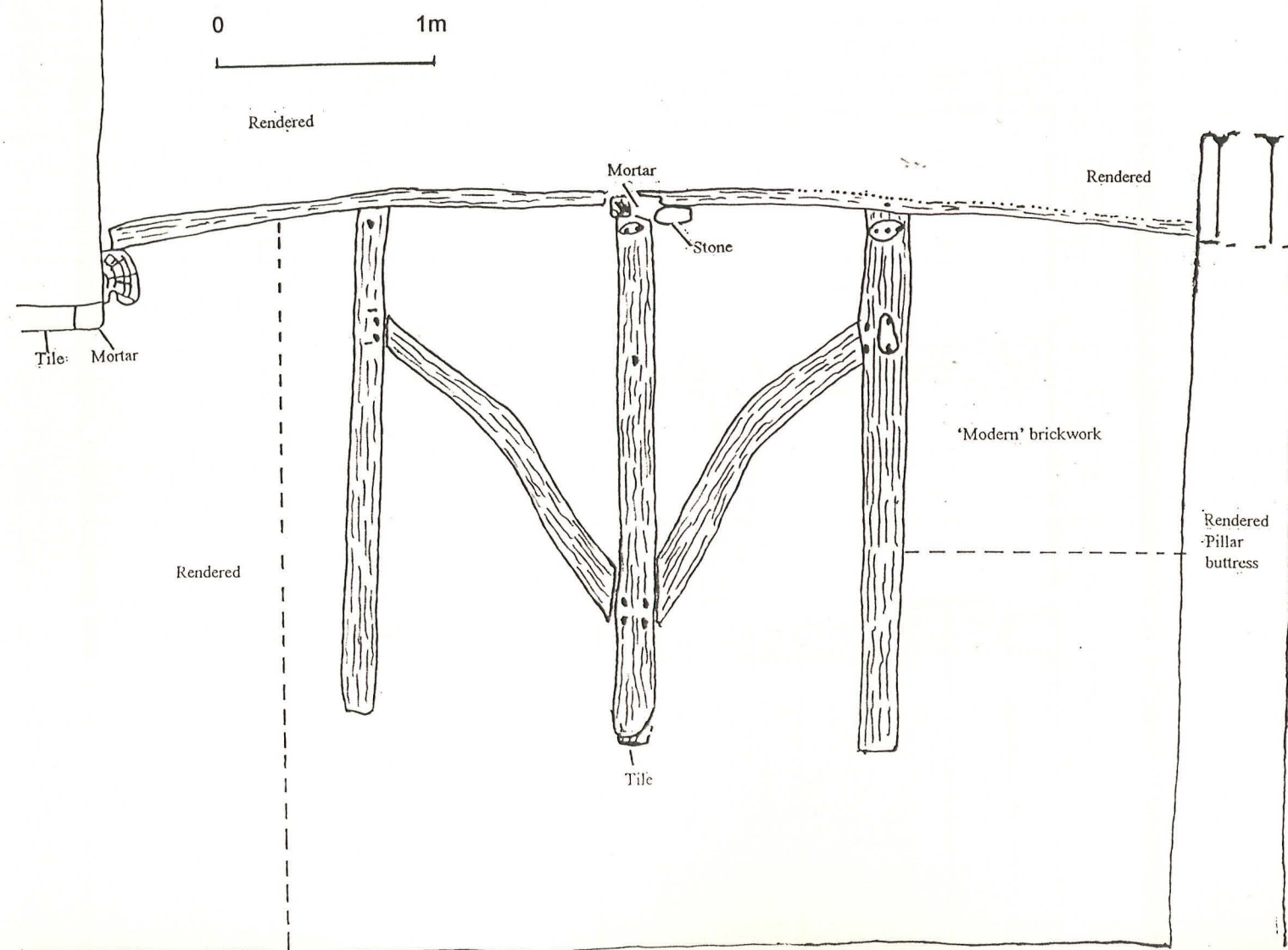


Fig. 6 Plan of foundation trench, south-facing wall

W

Fig. 7 Timber framing exposed in south-facing wall



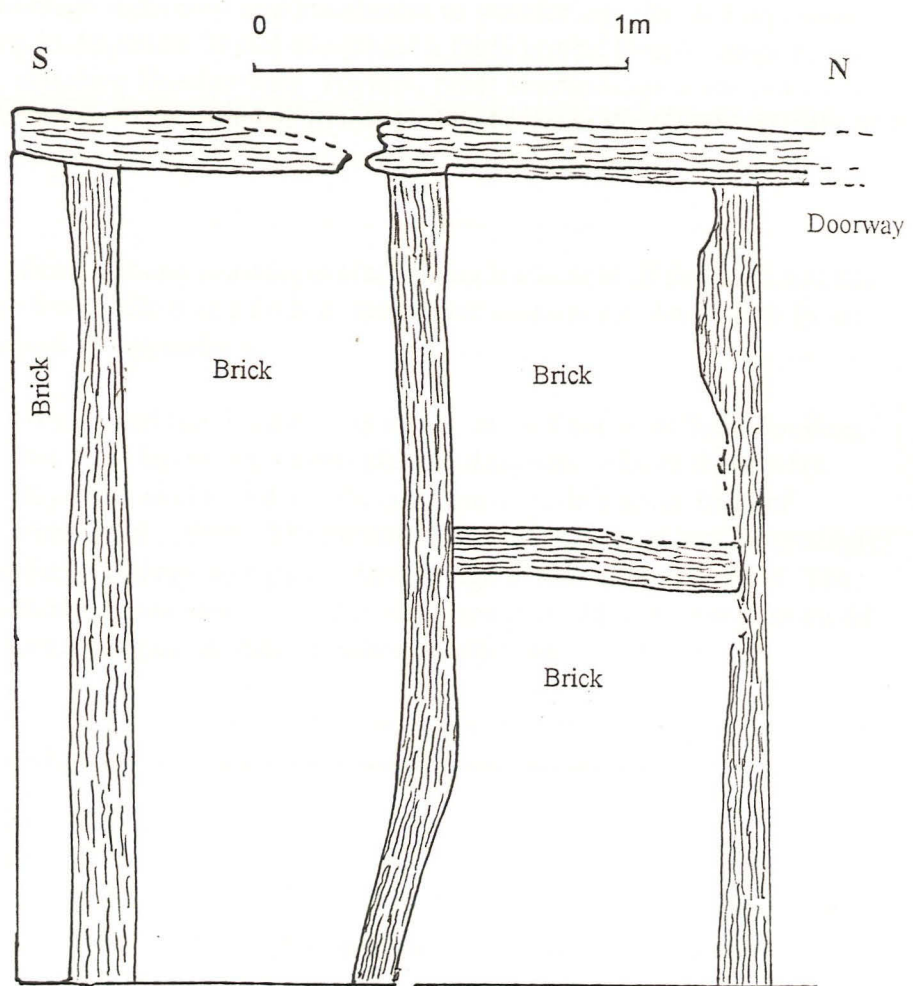


Fig. 8 Timber frame structure, first floor west wall

7.0 Conclusions

The evidence derived as a result of the current recording brief indicates that the present Grade II Listed Building overlies earlier post-medieval and medieval structural remains. In the current context, the remains are relatively poorly understood due to the fact that excavations associated with the development were limited and were not specifically designed to address an archaeological research agenda. Nevertheless, the brief identified a well preserved stratigraphy on the immediate west side of the river, including organic remains capable of preserving a range of environmental and other data (eg wood, leather, pollen, seeds etc). Environmental assessment was not, on this occasion, a requirement of the project brief.

The pottery assemblage recovered was insufficient to warrant any detailed reporting (see archive listing in Appendix 3) and comprised a fairly typical Boston range for the medieval period; including Humberware, Toynton type, Scarborough ware and local products. The earliest deposits sampled appear to date between the C13th - C15th, with later forms representing the C17th to possibly the earlier part of the present century.

Small quantities of animal bone were recovered during the course of the brief, but the numbers were too few to allow any form of qualitative assessment. An archive by DJ Rackham is presented in Appendix 4.

The lowest deposits exposed (thick clay/silt deposits) are indicative of local flooding, and it is possible that these layers seal earlier phases of activity. Above these were mixed occupation layers of medieval date which appear to reflect some form of domestic and/or commercial activity. The possible post holes suggest (not surprisingly) that there were timber dwellings occupying the frontage in the medieval period. The silty deposits that sealed the medieval occupation deposits could represent purposeful dumping and ground raising in advance of later development.

Prior to occupation of the site by the existing structure, there appears to have been at least one earlier brick phase, orientated on a slightly different alignment.

8.0 Bibliography

- | | | |
|-----------------|------|--|
| Harden, G | 1978 | <i>Medieval Boston and its Archaeological Implications</i>
(South Lincs. Archaeological Unit) |
| Palmer-Brown, C | 1996 | <i>Boston Grammar School: Archaeological Evaluation Report</i> (unpublished) |

Appendix 1 List of archaeological contexts

Context	Description
100	Modern building; structure and rubble
101	?Natural deposit of alluvial sand/silt
102	?Construction trench containing large stone/possible step
103	?North-south construction trench
104	Mortared stone footing
105	Crushed brick/tile filling construction trench for 104
106	Brick wall built on to stone footing 104
107	Modern brick wall built over 106
108	Context not allocated
109	Possible disturbed floor/urban deposits
110	Flood horizon
111	Possible post setting/stone packing
112	Deposit of grey coarse silt, in places containing abundant coal/ charcoal fragments
113	Stones forming possible post setting
114	Possible post remains
115	Part of possible post hole fill
116	Black gleyed silt containing fibrous organic remains
117	Layer of silt containing shell
118	Light green/grey clay-silt

Appendix 2 Colour photographs



P1. General view of south gable showing exposed timbers



P3. Close-up of timber joints in south gable



P2. Timbers exposed in south gable



P4. South end wall foundation trench,
looking west (120/121)



P5. Foundations exposed in north end
of east foundation trench (Ref. Fig. 4)



P6. South side of deposits exposed in east foundation trench,
looking west (Ref. Fig. 3)



P7. ?Pość hole packing/base 111



P8. Decayed organic deposits 115



P9. Deposits exposed in Pit 1, looking north



P10. Deposits exposed in Pit 2, looking south

Appendix 3 Post-Roman pottery archive by J Young

pottery codenames hsb98

<u>cname</u>	<u>full name</u>	<u>period</u>	<u>earliest date</u>	<u>latest date</u>
BL	Black-glazed wares	pmed	1500	1750
HUM	Humberware	med	1250	1500
HUM	Humberware	med	1250	1500
HUM	Humberware	med	1250	1500
HUM	Humberware	med	1250	1500
HUM	Humberware	med	1250	1500
HUMB	Humber Basin fabrics	med	1250	1500
HUMB	Humber Basin fabrics	med	1250	1500
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
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MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	med	1150	1350
MEDX	Non Local Medieval Fabric	med	1150	1350
SCAR	Scarborough ware	med	1150	1350
TOY	Toynton Medieval Ware	med	1250	1500
TOY	Toynton Medieval Ware	med	1250	1500

pottery archive hsb98

context	cname	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	description	date
101	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	Boston?	13/14th
109	HUM	drinking jug	1	1		BS		14-/15th
109	HUM	drinking jug	1	1		handle		14-/15th
109	HUM	drinking jug	1	1		handle		14-/15th
109	HUM	small jug	1	1		BS		14-/15th
109	HUM	drinking jug	1	1		handle		14-/15th
109	HUMB	jug	1	1	multi horiz grooves	BS	? HUM	13 to 15th
109	HUMB	jug	1	1		BS	? HUM;burnt glaze	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston;int soot	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug?	1	1		base	soot;? Boston	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	large jug	1	1	thumbd base	base	cu glaze;cracked in kiln;? Boston	14/15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1	applied vert fe strip	BS	? Boston	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston;burnt glaze	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	small baluster jug	1	1		base	splayed base;int very pocked glaze;? Boston	14/15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston	13 to 15th
109	MEDLOC	jug	2	1		BS	? Boston	13 to 15th
112	BL	?	1	1		base		17/18th
112	MEDLOC	small jug	1	1		BS	Boston?	13/14th
114	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	no glaze	13 to 15th
114	MEDX	jug	1	1		BS	spots of black glaze;? IMP;very fine micaceous fabric;dull oxid	13 to 15th
115/116	TOY	jug	1	1		BS	Boston?	13 to 15th
117	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS	very fine oxid/reduced fabric	13-15th
117	MEDLOC	?	1	1		BS	tiny frag;very fine bright orange fabric	13-15th
117	MEDLOC	jug	1	1		BS		13-15th
117	SCAR	jug	1	1		handle	rod handle;bright cu glaze int & ext	13/14th
117	TOY	jug	1	1		BS	? Boston	13-15th

dating archive hsb98

context	earliest horizon	latest horizon	date
101	MH5	EMOD	13 to 19th
105	MH5	PMH2	13 to 16th
109	MH7	MH9	14 to 15th
112	PMH7	PMH9	17 to 18th
114	MH5	MH9	13 to 15th
115/116	MH5	MH9	13 to 15th
117	MH5	MH7	13 to 14th
below post 3	PMH8	EMH	18 to 20th

tile archive hsb98

context	cname	fabric	frags	description	date
101	PNR		2	gritty white coal measure	13-19th
101	PNR	? Boston	1		13-15th
101	PNR	? Boston	1		13-15th
101	PNR		2		13-17th
105	PNR		1	brittle;semi-vitrified	13-16th
105	PNR		3	brittle;semi-vitrified	13-16th
109	PNR	? Boston	1	flat	13-15th
109	PNR	? Boston	1	flat	13-15th
114	PNR		1	small frag	13-15th
below post 3	PANT		1		18-20th

The Environmental Archaeology Consultancy

Archive catalogue of Animal Bone from 61 High Street, Boston

site	cont.	species	bone	no	side	fusion	zone	burial	gnawing	toothwear	measurement	path	comment	preservation
HSB98	109	BOS	HUM	1	R		0						PROXIMAL SHAFT	5
HSB98	109	BOS	MTT	1	L		1						SPLIT ANTERIOR PART PROXIMAL FACE	5
HSB98	109	BOS	PEI	1	L	PF	12						COMPLETE	5
HSB98	109	CSZ	LBF	1	F								SHAFT FRAGMENT	5
HSB98	109	CSZ	RIB	1	R				DG				PROX END-CHEWED	5
HSB98	109	CSZ	UNI	1	F								INDET	5
HSB98	109	CAD	MAX	1	L								GADID - PERIPHERAL DAMAGE	5
HSB98	109	OVCA	TIB	1	L	DF	567				SD-13 Bc-23.7 Dc-18.5		DISTAL HALF	5
HSB98	109	SSZ	RIB	1	F								SPLIT SHAFT FRAGMENT	5
HSB98	112	FISE	UNI	1	F								LARGE RAY/RIB FRAGMENT?	5
HSB98	112	SSZ	RIB	1	F								SHAFT FRAGMENT - 2 PIECES	5
HSB98	113	BOS	MAN	1	R		6						ANGLE OF JAW - 2 PIECES	4
HSB98	113	CSZ	LMV	1	L	CNAN	4	CH					CENTRUM AND PART TRANSVERSE PROCESS - CHOPPED DOWN MIDDLE	4
HSB98	113	CSZ	RIB	1	F								SHAFT FRAGMENT	4
HSB98	114	BOS	MTT	1	R	DN	34						DISTAL EPIPHYSIS	5
HSB98	114	GOOS	STN	1	F								LATERAL FRAGMENT - 3 PIECES	5