

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

25 WITHAM PLACE, BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
25 WITHAM PLACE, BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code: WPB00
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Acc. No.: 2000.156

Report prepared for Terry Sykes Design & Build
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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for an extension to 25 Witham Place, Boston, Lincolnshire
- It was demonstrated that the site occupies reclaimed land; the area had previously been the location of a curve in the course of the River Witham, which was in-filled when the watercourse was straightened in 1826.
- Medieval sculpture discovered in the garden of the neighbouring property is likely to have been imported, coming up the river as ballast in one of the many ships using the Haven in the 19th century.

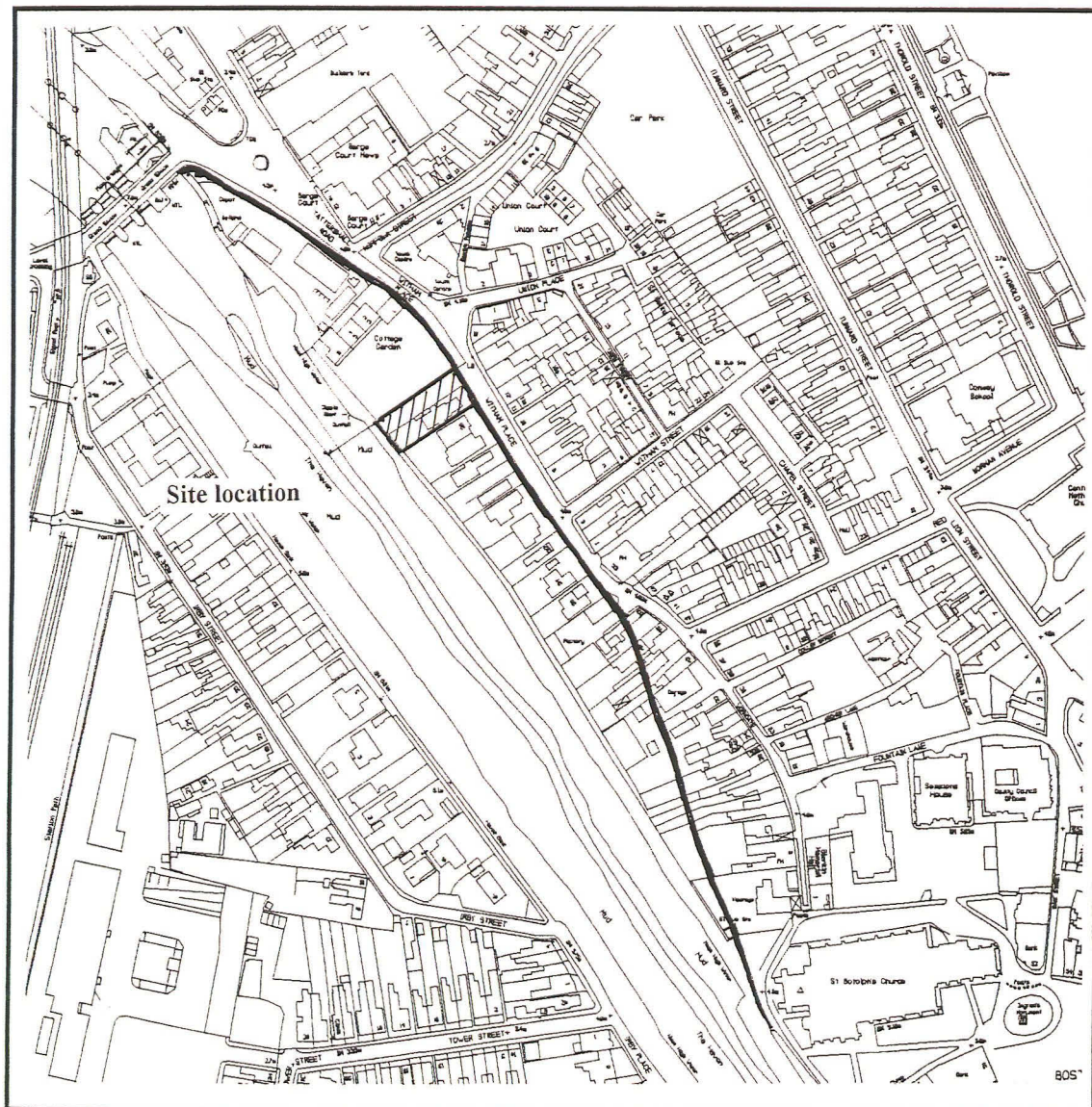


Figure 1: Site location at a scale of 1: 2,500. The dark line indicates the area of salt marsh reclaimed from the River Witham
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1.0 Introduction

Terry Sykes Design and Build, on behalf of Mr R.A. Isaac, commissioned Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) to undertake an archaeological watching brief to fulfil a planning requirement associated with the construction of an extension to an existing house at 25 Witham Place, Boston, Lincolnshire.

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Lincolnshire County Council publication *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998); national guidelines produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists were also adhered to (IFA, 1994). Additionally, both documents were central to the structuring and content of this report.

The archive for this report will be held at the Lincoln City and County Museum.

2.0 Location and description

Boston lies in the silt fens of southern Lincolnshire, approximately 7km from the north-west coast of the Wash. It is situated approximately 45 km south-east of Lincoln and 37 km east of Grantham.

The development site is situated near the centre of the town (fig. 1); it is located toward the northern end of Witham Place, c. 300m north-west of St Botolph's Church, and comprises a sub-rectangular unit of land, extending to approximately 325m².

Prior to development, the site was utilised as a garden for the existing house, which is situated immediately to the south; the River Witham forms the western boundary and Witham Place defines the eastern extent of the plot (fig. 2a). The ground surface lies at c. 5m OD, but consists of a number of slight, terraced steps, the product of landscaping.

The River Witham is tidal in this locality and near-surface deposits are often composed of laminated alluvial silts. Local soils comprise Tanvats Association alluvial gleys and Wisbech Association Calcareous alluvial gleys, which have developed in marine alluvium (Hodge, et al., 1984). These sediments provide a mantle to glacial drift deposits, which extend across the depression of the Fen Basin, from the Lincolnshire Wolds to the East Anglian Heights. The underlying solid geology is Jurassic clay.

Central National Grid Reference: TF 3250 4443.

3.0 Planning background

Boston Borough Council granted planning permission for the construction of an extension to the existing dwelling and associated garage (Planning Ref. B/00/0083), subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during the programme of ground-works.

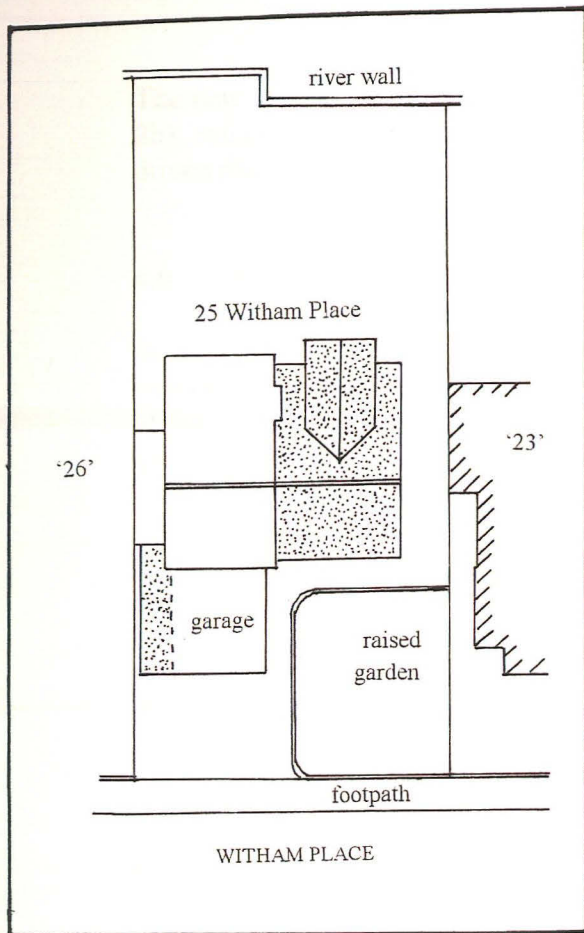
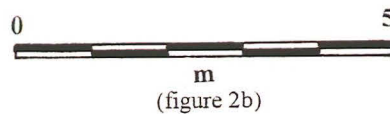
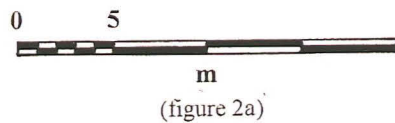


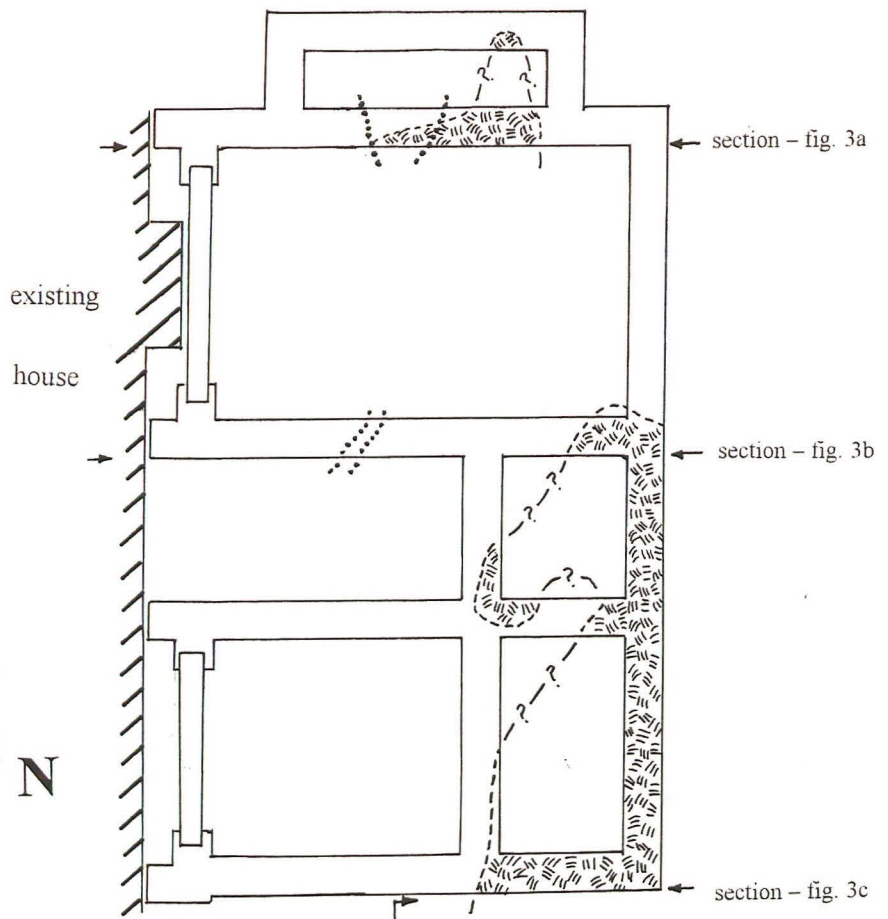
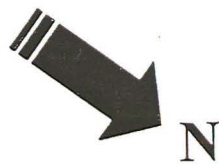


Figure 2a (inset): General site plan – the area of the extension is shown stippled.

Figure 2b: Plan of the strip trenches excavated for the foundations of the extension to 25 Witham Place. The two narrow strips, parallel and adjacent to the existing house, signify beams that bridge the gap between sections of intrusive foundation. The plan also shows the approximate spatial distribution of deposits (101)a and (102).



KEY:
 area of (101)a
 edges of (102)



The new structure was to be erected upon foundations set in continuous trenches (fig. 2b), which were to be supplemented and supported by a series of cylindrical piles driven through the base of the afore-mentioned trenches.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

In its present form, Boston is a town of medieval origin. However, archaeological work in advance of development has demonstrated that there was periodic occupation of the area in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. An absence of Iron Age and Early Saxon material has been attributed to higher sea levels resulting in an inundation and submergence of the land surface at these times (Harden, 1978).

Romano-British artefactual material has been recovered from a number of places in the locality. Within the town, Roman coins were found in Allington Gardens and adjacent to Hussey's Tower; contemporary pottery has been retrieved from land near St John's Hospital, Woad Farm Primary School and the Fogarty factory, Fishtoft (Brown, 1993). A Roman presence has also been detected on the periphery of the town, at Skirbeck, Wyberton, Kirton and Hubbert's Bridge (Harden, 1978). The first stratified Romano-British remains in Boston were recovered from the Grammar School during excavations in advance of the erection of a new music and arts block (Palmer-Brown, 1996a). A relatively thick deposit of silt contained sherds of domestic greyware and Nene Valley ware of the 3rd/4th centuries AD, as well as large quantities of fairly amorphous fragments of fired clay. It has been suggested that the latter indicate industrial activity, probably relating to salt extraction from seawater, but this interpretation remains equivocal.

Two Middle Saxon *grubenhäuser* were discovered on land off Church Road, during a watching brief undertaken in 1995 (Palmer-Brown, 1996b). No associated features were detected, possibly suggesting that these structures were not a component of a permanent settlement, but were seasonally occupied.

Late Saxon structures were unearthed on land off Whitehouse Lane, Fishtoft (Palmer-Brown, 1997). The remains indicated that these features were elements of a settlement that appeared to be occupied on a permanent basis between the later-9th and mid-10th centuries AD. While the total extent of this community was not established, archaeological deposits appear to indicate that it was totally abandoned following destruction by fire.

Following the Norman Conquest, the fees of Skirbeck and Wyberton were given to Alan Rufus, Earl of Richmond in 1071. He instituted a series of fairs, which stimulated trade and led to the establishment of a port on the eastern bank of the Witham to facilitate such commercial activity (Owen, 1984); this marked the genesis of Boston. It has been suggested that the outfall of the Witham had only become concentrated in this area for a short time, possibly as late as the 10th century, making the prior establishment of a harbour impossible (Harden, 1978).

Some time in the 12th century, possibly between 1140 and 1160, a c. 1200m long earthwork, called the Barditch, was constructed to define the area of the town to the east of the Witham (Owen, 1984). At the northern end it branched off the Deppol, in

the marshes at the top end of Wormgate, rejoining the river via St John's Gowt, at the junction of South End and Skirbeck Road, to the south. Although this boundary had an internal bank, it is not known whether its purpose was primarily defensive or merely for drainage (Harden, 1978). Thompson (1856) raised the possibility that there was a defensive wall running along the bank. He cites an edict of Edward I, made in 1285 on behalf of the Earl of Richmond, allowing the imposition of a toll for one year on produce sold in the town, in order to repair the walls.

The port at Boston developed rapidly, and during the high medieval period, was second only to London, with respect to the volume of trade handled. Wool was the principal export, much having been produced by the numerous religious establishments in the county (Lambert & Walker, 1930). Until 1297 it arrived via Lincoln, which was the Wool Staple (i.e. the place controlling the export of this product), but the Staple was transferred to the town and port after this date. The town became phenomenally wealthy during the 13th and 14th centuries, but went into decline after this time. It was also toward the beginning of the 15th century that it became common to contract the port's name from St Botolph's Town to Boston (Wright, 1994).

The commercial success of the port was reflected in the cosmopolitan composition of the inhabitants of the town, with merchants from Bruges, Douai, Rouen, Caen, Ypres, Ostend, Calais, Arras and Köln settling in the town (Thompson, 1856). Traders from the Baltic states of the Hanseatic League were particularly prominent in the community, having established their own steelyard (a guildhall and fortified warehouse) and a dock by the 14th century (Lambert & Walker, 1930). These foreign merchants had a strong relationship with the Franciscan friary, possibly because many of the friars in that establishment are thought to have been of German origin. (Chandler, 1993). The Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites also established friaries within the town.

Much of the property in the town passed to Henry VIII at the Reformation; in addition to ecclesiastical property, there were the holdings of the Knights of St John who had the patronage of St Botolph's Church and a hospital on Skirbeck Road, and the property of Lord Hussey - executed for failing to defeat the rebels who instituted the Lincolnshire Rising of 1536 (Wright, 1994). These lands then passed to the Duke of Suffolk, who in turn proposed to the leading townsmen that they form a corporation and buy them from him. Selling the plate and jewels of the larger incorporated guilds raised money for the transfer and charter, and Boston Corporation was officially inaugurated on the 1 June 1545, based in St Mary's Guildhall.

Following the decline in trade, which began in the mid-14th century, the town entered a period of relative stagnation and isolation lasting until the late 18th century (Thompson, 1856). It was at this time that a comprehensive programme of drainage and reclamation of the surrounding fens was initiated. The first significant phase in this scheme was the construction of the Grand Sluice, less than 150m upstream from the present development site at Witham Place. This structure allowed some control over tidal influxes up the river, thus enabling the hinterland to be drained and enclosed.

Initially, the 8,900 ha of Holland Fen were transformed from rough pasture into rich agricultural land (Wright, 1994). Subsequently, during the early 19th century and largely as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, it became financially viable to drain additional fenland and the 16,200 ha of East, West and Wildmore Fens were brought into cultivation. All of this new land was especially productive and the port at Boston became the centre through which the agricultural produce passed. Consequently, wharves, warehouses and granaries were erected to facilitate this new business; Boston became a conduit for food destined for the developing manufacturing centres, and thus could be considered the larder, and facilitator, of the Industrial Revolution.

5.0 Methodology

One experienced field archaeologist undertook the watching brief over a period of two days, on 12th and 13th June 2000.

The fieldwork entailed observation during the all ground-works associated with the development. This equated to the cleaning by hand of all exposed surfaces, followed by a thorough inspection; all archaeological deposits identified by this process were subjected to limited excavation, in order to assess their nature, dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each layer upon standard watching brief context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings, in both plan and section, compliment these accounts.

Due to constraints imposed by existing buildings and boundaries, it was not possible to access the site with earth-moving machinery, and consequently excavation of the trenches was undertaken by hand. These trenches for the strip foundations were generally c. 0.5m wide and c. 0.6m deep (fig. 2b).

Artefactual remains recovered from the site were washed and processed prior to their submission to researchers specialising in the examination of archaeological materials. The results of these investigations have been included as independent appendices to this report, and the general conclusions of such accounts have been integrated into the main text.

6.0 Results

The area directly affected by the groundworks was relatively small, measuring c. 14m east-west by c. 8m north-south. Subsequent analysis of documentary and cartographic sources indicates that all deposits on the site could be deemed 'archaeological', in as much as they have been placed in their current position by human agency (see 7.0, below).

The topsoil, (100), was either poorly developed or heavily truncated, only being evident as an intermittent deposit of humic sandy silt, which never exceeded 0.08m in depth. Its distribution probably reflected the layout of the 'sunken garden' that had occupied this area of the site until recently.

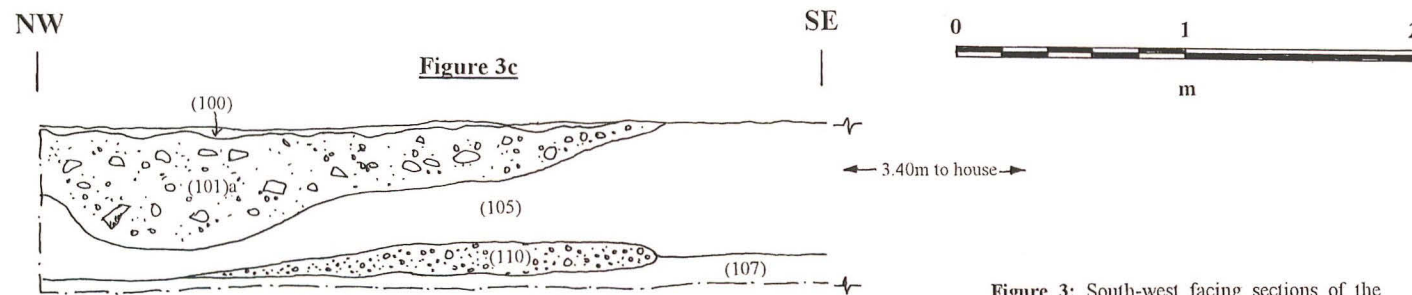
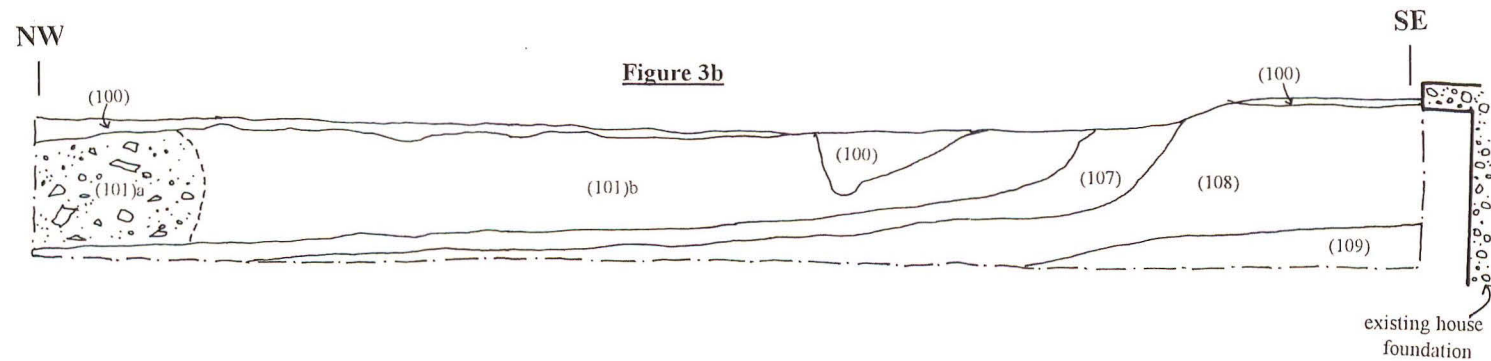
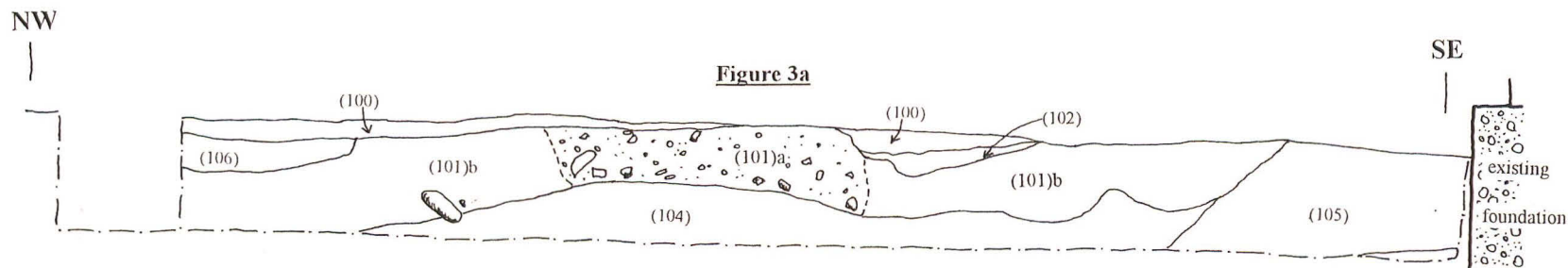


Figure 3: South-west facing sections of the strip trenches excavated for the foundations of the extension to 25 Witham Place. The location of each section is marked on figure 2b.

The majority of the deposits encountered were internally homogenous and varied from each other merely in terms of colour or relative proportions of sand and silt – (104)-(109). Examination of the sections suggested that this material had been deposited from the southern edge of the site, progressing northwards as the ground surface was raised.

A small number of contexts that contained artefactual materials were detected, but no discrete archaeological features were identified:

(101) - This deposit filled an irregularly shaped void in the north-eastern corner of the development, with another smaller area exposed at the western edge of the building footprint (fig. 2b). This layer was up to c. 0.4m deep and primarily consisted of a mid-brown sandy silty clay. Examination indicated that (101) could, somewhat arbitrarily, be sub-divided into two units, dependent upon spatial variations in the quantity of rubble it contained. (101)b incorporated c. 5% coarse components, while in (101)a, the proportion was much higher, rubble representing c. 40% of the deposit (fig. 3a-c).

The rubble appears to be a demolition residue, but is probably derived from a structure or structures of more than one phase or date; complete and re-useable materials appear to have been salvaged prior to deposition, and as consequence the majority of the debris was comprised of broken brick and tile. All the brick examined was handmade, unfrosted and in a red ceramic – one relatively complete example was 225 mm long by 115 mm wide by 50 mm deep (other broken examples were 120 mm wide by 50 mm deep, 100 mm by 60-70 mm¹, and 105 mm by 60 mm). Additionally, a single example of a handmade, pentagonal coping brick was recovered, indicating that some of the material was derived from a boundary wall rather than a building. Other coarse components of (101)a included broken red ceramic pantiles and quarry tiles (c. 35 mm deep), broken roof slates, flint nodules, chalk and sandstone blocks, water-worn quartzite cobbles, and a variety of complete shells (including oyster, cockle and mussel).

A small quantity of pottery was also recovered from (101)a, which appears to represent a fairly homogenous assemblage of 18th to 19th century date (Appendix 12.2). One sherd lay slightly outside this date range, belonging to the 17th to 18th centuries, but as it was very abraded, it is likely to be residual.

(110) - This was a deposit of creamy-yellow lime mortar, c. 2.05m wide and c. 0.11m thick at the centre, which was partially exposed in the most easterly foundation trench (fig. 3c). Much of the parent limestone had been reduced to sand or grit, but c. 30-40% maintained its coherence as pebble sized coarse components; occasional flecks of coal and charcoal were also visible within the deposit.

One fragment of nibbed tile was recovered from this deposit, which interestingly is of a type manufactured in the 13th century. This raises the possibility that there are *in-situ* medieval deposits toward the eastern edge of 25 Witham Place. However, this piece of tile was retrieved from a mere c. 0.55m below the ground level of the 'sunken' garden, which, due to raised nature of the land on the western side of

¹ The brick was very irregular and the depth varied across the length.

Witham Place, is still situated above the natural ground surface as represented by the road. Consequently, the tile is more likely to be redeposited, and derived from a similar source to the rubble within (101)a.

7.0 Discussion and conclusions

Originally Witham Place was the name given in the late 18th to early 19th centuries to the "row of handsome and pleasantly-situated houses" (Thompson, 1856: 211) located at the northern end of Wormgate, and was not the name of the road itself. For a considerable period of time Wormgate was also called Deppol or Deep-pool Gate², after a deep pit or pool located at its northern end; the latter name certainly appears in documents written as late as the first quarter of the 16th century. The name Wormgate may be an adaptation of Wymegate, *Wyme* being the name applied to the Witham in the 13th century; hence it is possibly an appellation given in recognition of the river forming the western boundary of the road for much of its course.

Properties fronting onto the river along Deppol Gate appear, with the church of St Botolph's, to be among the earliest elements of the medieval settlement that became Boston (Owen, 1984). These appear to have been constructed within plots of fairly regular size, implying that this area of the town, the Richmond Fee, featured some degree of deliberate planning. These large, long parcels of land were referred to as 'vici', the frontages being occupied by the 'curia' or residence of the grantees that had received the land from the Earls of Richmond. By 1160 these plots were already being sub-divided into smaller compartments for multiple landholders.

The Barditch entered the river at the northern end of Witham Place by means of the Deppol-gowt, which was constructed in 1569 following an order of the Corporation. This directed that:

"a clove [gowt] should be set at Wormgate End, against the great pit there, at the cost of the Borough" (quoted in Thompson, 1856: 211).

The course of this gowt is defined by the southern edge of Union Place (fig. 5). The northern area of land enclosed by the Barditch was variously called the Broad Marsh, Common Marsh or Great Marsh, an area of grazing extending to 6.5 ha (Harden, 1978). To the north of this area lay the plot called Limekiln Pasture or Harrison's Marsh, which was sold to the Commissioners of Navigation in the 18th century for the erection of the Grand Sluice.

Prior to the Reformation, a number of religious establishments held much of the land adjoining Wormgate, but none of it contained formal ecclesiastical buildings – all of the priories were located to the south of St Botolph's Church. The Priory of Bridlington owned a cottage and garth, while Durham Priory possessed a building called Trinity Hall, with an adjacent range of ancillary buildings, and the Priory of Stainfield held seven cottages called the 'Wool-winders Houses'. Malton Priory, Barlings Abbey and Whitby Abbey also held lands in this neighbourhood (Harden, 1978). The largest holding was that of Fountains Abbey, but this appears to have been concentrated toward the southern end of Wormgate, in the area now traversed by the road that takes its name, Fountain Lane; the abbey owned a public house called The Sword, fifteen tenements, a cottage surrounded by 2.5 ha of pasture and other sundry

² Alternative spellings in given in Thompson (1856) include Depul, Depol, Dipple and De Pul.

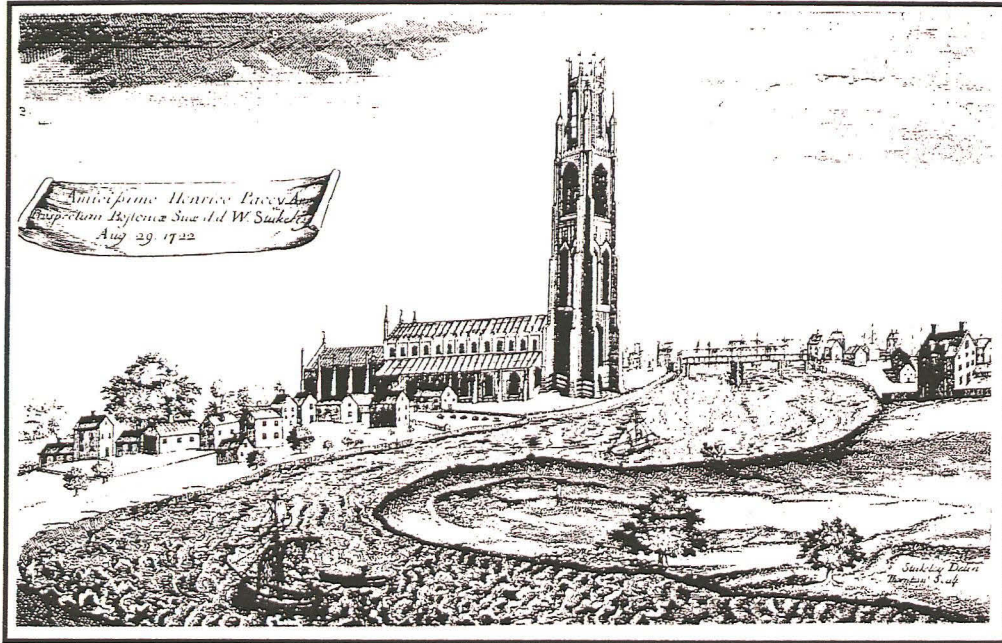


Figure 4: The northern area of Boston as depicted by the antiquarian William Stukeley, in 1722. The river is entering Boston from the north-west, its natural course prior to the construction of the Grand Sluice and the subsequent canalisation. The site at Witham Place is located in the same area as the two small trees below the houses at the left hand edge of the picture (source: Chandler, 1993).

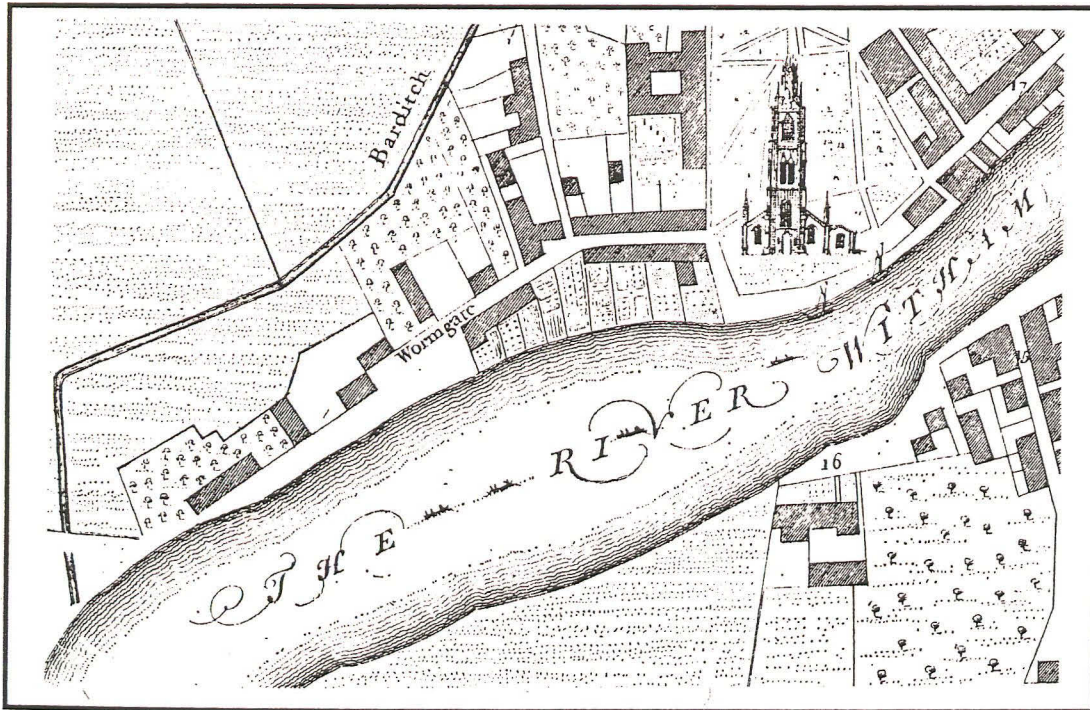


Figure 5: The northern area of Boston as surveyed by Robert Hall in 1741 - north is at the left hand side of the map. This is the first detail map of Boston, and shows the properties along Wormgate, which runs right up to the river at its northern end. The deppol-gowt, the northern arm of the Barditch running up to the River Witham, was situated in the area now occupied by the southern side of Union Place; consequently, 25 Witham Place lies on the riverside approximately opposite the northern end of the most northerly building (source: Molyneux & Wright, 1974).

lands. Bordering this holding were five houses and land belonging to Kyme Monastery (Thompson, 1856). Fountains Abbey also held two mills situated on the edge of the Depol³, which were possibly powered by tidal forces entering this embayment (Owen, 1984). Another mill, owned by St Mary's Abbey, York, was also located in this zone of the town. One or more of these religious institutions is likely to have owned the area now referred to as Witham Place.

The reason that these ecclesiastical holdings became so concentrated in one area of the town is not apparent (Harden, 1978), but many of them are likely to have had a frontage onto the river. If such plots had an associated quay, it would allow these religious establishments to share in the substantial profits generated by the waterborne trade between Lincoln and the wider world (Owen, 1984). Indications of such trafficking are provided by 16th and 17th century records, which indicate that the Wormgate area contained many public houses and lodgings for waggoners and boatmen entering the town from the north (fig. 4); in this case, it is only necessary to question whether land use had changed significantly since the Reformation.

There was a significant growth in the town's population following the reclamation of the Holland Fen. Initially, additional houses were constructed along the existing streets of medieval origin. This space had been filled by the very end of the 18th century, and new streets were laid out in three areas, of which, the development situated to the north of the town was centred on, and surrounded, Witham Place and Witham Green (Wright, 1994). The late Georgian houses constructed on Witham Place are quite large and were evidently built for relatively prosperous members of the middle classes (fig. 6); numbers 1-3 form a three-storey terrace typical of the period. This assertion is borne out by reference to the known occupations of the residents (after White, 1856) (table 1).

The construction of two large drains, Maud Foster's Drain finished c. 1569, and the North Forty-Foot Drain completed c. 1720, created significant economic problems for the areas of the town fronting onto the Witham. While the daily tides imported large quantities of sediment, the outfall of the river was so reduced that it could no longer scour the channel clean and the Haven, the stretch bracketed by the town, silted up to the extent that only small ships could now reach the quays. The only solution was to divert the river into a purpose built canal above the town and erect a sluice at the junction with the original channel. An Act of Parliament to enable this scheme was obtained in 1762, and the sluice was constructed between 1764 and 1766; one of its four arches was a lock enabling boats to travel inland from the harbour (Thompson, 1856). Between 1764 and 1788 a programme of works was enacted, which resulted in creation of lengths of canal or the improvement of the existing river that allowed water borne traffic to pass between Lincoln and Boston.

A further Act of Parliament was obtained in 1812, in order to improve the town harbour (the Haven) between the Grand Sluice and Maud Foster's Gowt. Quays and buildings that projected into the river were to be removed and the channel was to be straightened and narrowed to increase the force of water passing through it; this would enable it to more effectively scour silts from the channel. Sir John Rennie, who

³ Mentioned in a charter of 1248 - "Confirmation by the King to Fountains Abbey of a message in Boston given to it by Warner Engayne, lying next the road to the river, and also a close called Deppol, with two mills on it. ... Cal. Chart. R., i.336" (quoted in Owen, 1984: 44 - Appendix 2.)

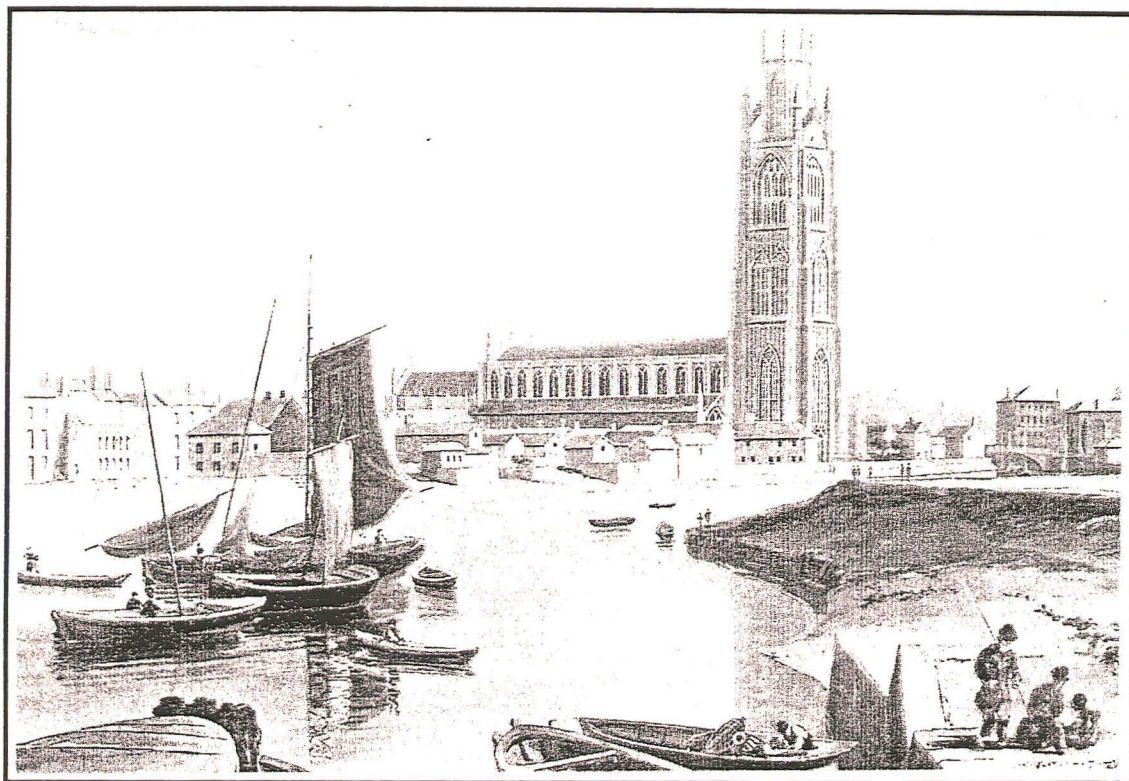


Figure 6: A print published on 1 July 1822, showing the old bend in the river four years before it was removed in line with the scheme of works designed by the engineer John Rennie. The Georgian houses at the left hand edge of the picture are those on Witham Place, with the salt marshes that became the western side of the road lying between the houses and the boats (source: Wright, 1994).

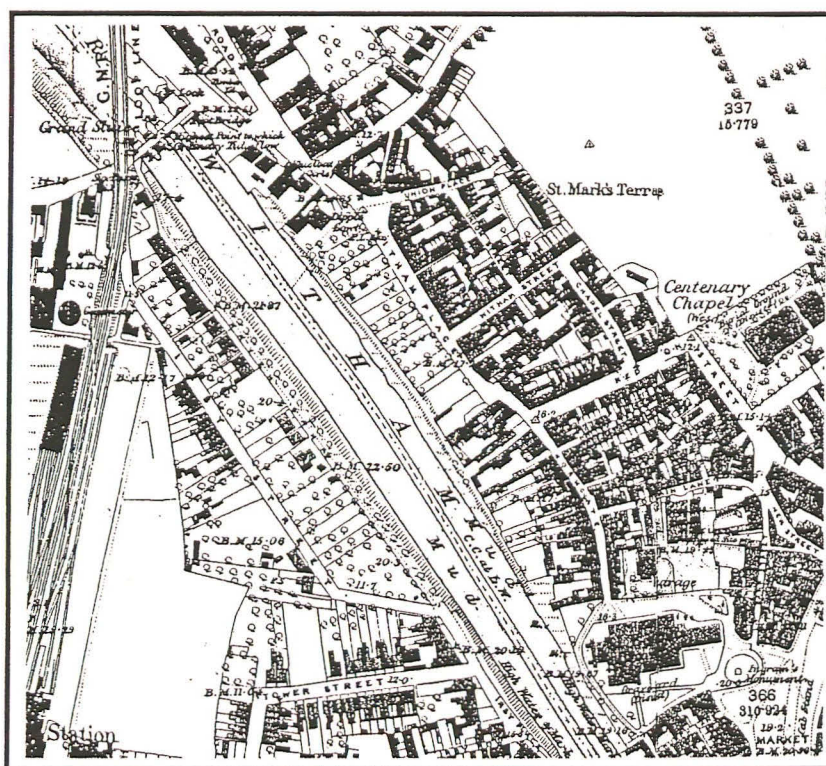


Figure 7: Witham Place as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887. The two small buildings (near the 'T' of Witham) are situated in the garden of 26 Witham Place – the site is located in the two garden plots to the immediate north (source: Molyneux & Wright, 1974).

was also the engineer behind the enclosure and draining of the East, West and Wildmore Fens, designed this whole programme of works.

Name	House Number - Witham Place	Occupation	Place of work - if other than Witham Place
John Marshall		gentry/other misc. occupations	
Misses Grantham		Teachers - dame school	
Henry Marshall		attorney & Clerk to the Paving Commissioners	
Pishey Snaith		chemist and druggist	Mainridge
William Mawer		corn & seed merchant	Corn Exchange
William Taylor		corn & seed merchant	Market Place
J Borland		linen and woollen draper	'travelling'
Mary Dimaline		shopkeeper	
Charles Aspland	1	gent	
Thomas Wise	2	gent	
Misses Mary Ann & Martha Robinson	7	gentry/other misc. occupations	
Edward Thompson	9	gent	
William Roberts	11	tobacconist, chemist and druggist	
Mrs Sophia Wheatcroft	12	gentry/other misc. occupations	
Absalom Webb	16	butcher	
Henry Charles Doncaster Borne	17	baker, corn & flour dealer	

Table 1: The residents of Witham Place and their occupations, as listed in White's Directory (1856).

As part of this scheme of works, the bend situated between the Grand Sluice and St Botolph's Church was removed in 1826 (Wright, 1994) (fig. 8). Much of this area of the river was comprised of tidal salt marsh, which bracketed the main channel. The new channel ran slightly to the west of the original, partly due to the presence of housing on Wormgate and the eastern side of Witham Place. The now redundant area of the bend in the river was filled, and this process created all the land that now constitutes the western side of Witham Place (fig. 7). The majority of the deposits encountered during the watching brief, (104) to (109), were sandy silts containing quantities of finely crushed shell. In origin, these are all alluvial and it seems likely that they are derived, at least in part, from the excavations for the 'new' canalised section of the river. The latter would have generated significant quantities of unwanted sediment, and as there was now a void immediately adjacent to these works, it would have made logistical sense to deposit it there.

The street numbering system initially provided an indication that the land on the western side of the road had been created at a later date. Rather than having odd numbers on one side of the street and evens on the other, it was noted that the numbers ran sequentially from south to north along the eastern side of Witham Place (i.e. from 1, 2, 3, up to 22), this corresponding with the location of older, late-Georgian buildings. The numbers then transferred to the western side and returned, again sequentially, this time from north to south (i.e. 23, 25, 26, etc.), these numbers identifying relatively modern structures.

PLAN OF THE PORT and PART of the TOWN of BOSTON

under the direction of John Rennie Esq^r C.E., F.R.S.

by Nettleham & Francis Giles

1811

Wm Rennie

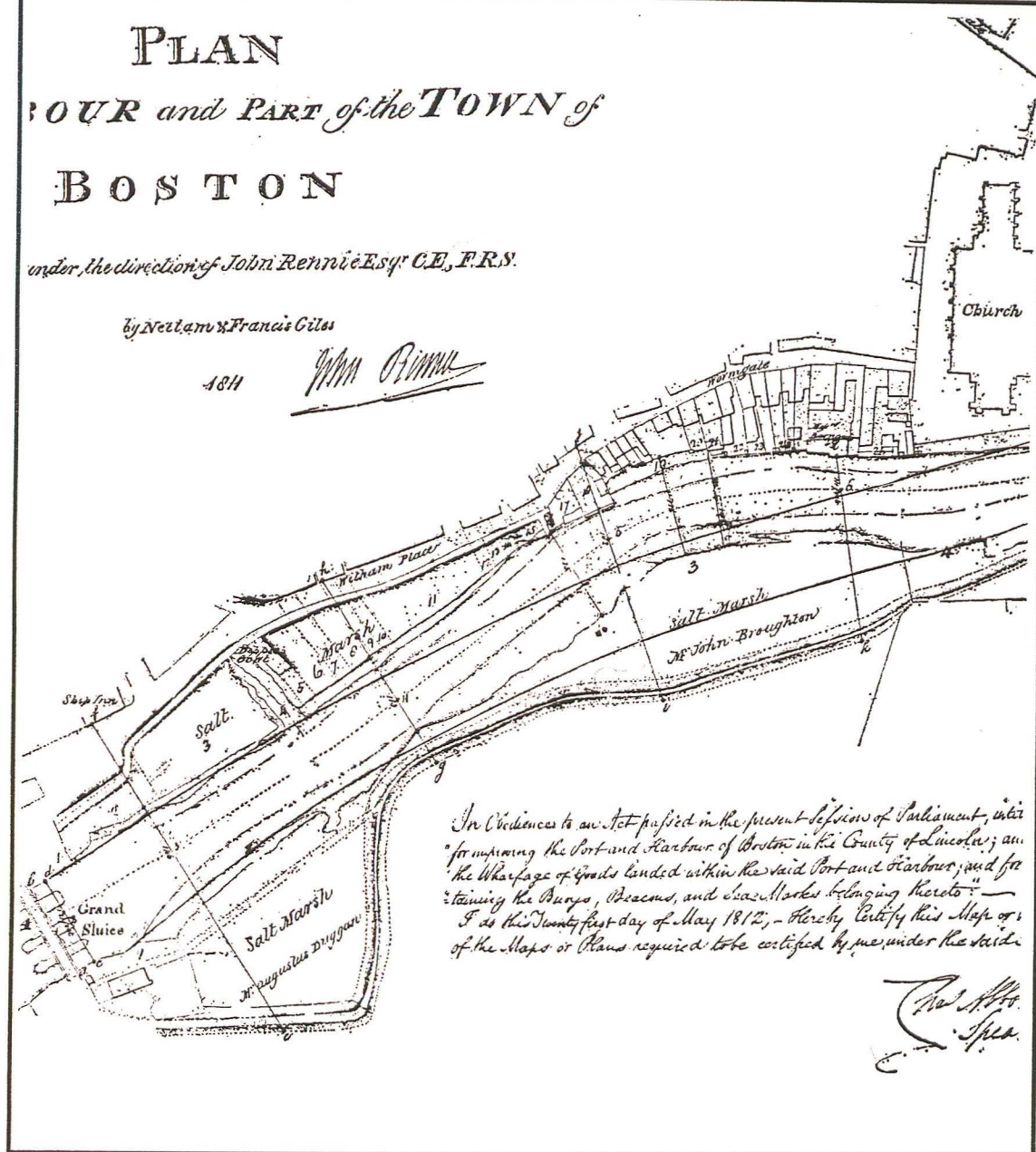


Figure 8: Survey conducted by Nettleham and Giles in 1811, for John Rennie, in advance of the scheme for canalising the River Witham. Rennie has annotated the drawing with his suggested route for the river – in fact the channel was eventually even straighter and ran a little further to the west. The site is situated approximately in the area marked as '8', above the river. Note also the Deppol-gowt entering the river in the area marked as '4' (source: Molyneux & Wright, 1974).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1887 indicates that the reclaimed land had been laid out as a series of long narrow garden plots (fig. 7). 25 Witham Place incorporates two of these plots, each being c. 8.3m wide; the existing house stands upon one and the extension will be erected upon the second. All of the gardens were raised above the level of the natural land surface. In part, this must have been implemented in order to help retain the river within its new channel at times when flooding seemed imminent. The sheer bulk of the newly made up ground would therefore have supplemented the river wall that formed the western boundary of each of these garden plots. The eastern boundary, fronting onto Witham Place was also remarkably uniform. Each plot, being higher than the road, was retained by a brick wall, the front face of which was battered, at an angle of c. 60° to the horizontal. A cast iron gate opening onto steps penetrated this wall at the centre point of each plot; the gate was complemented on each side by cast iron railings running along the top of the wall.

These gardens were sold to the owners of the houses on the eastern side of Witham Place in the late 1820s, for relatively nominal sums of money (R. Isaac, *pers. comm.*). The majority appear to have been retained as gardens, orchards and other reasonably open space until relatively recently; notably, none of the dwellings now occupying these parcels of land appear to predate the 1950s. Initially, it is likely that houses were not built because this was made up ground and, was considered too soft and liable to subsidence and settlement. There is one exception to this trend, which is shown on the map of 1887. There are two small structures situated in the plot now occupied by 26 Witham Place. In plan, these seem to be too small to be houses; they are more likely to be workshops of some kind. The northern end wall of the larger of these buildings is still extant and forms the boundary between number 25 and 26.

The recovery of medieval stonework from the garden of 26 Witham Place is cited as one reason for the planning condition requiring the watching brief detailed in this report. Consequently, the opportunity was taken to examine the stonework located in that garden. This consisted of one carved stone head, two sections of mullion, and a piece from a plinth or pedestal, which all appear to be of medieval date and carved upon limestone. However, there are also a large number of other carved pieces that utilise a variety of stone types and are undoubtedly of post-medieval date. Accompanying these were a range of unworked, cobble-sized blocks of stone of varying provenance, including sandstone, flint nodules, chalk, and granite. All of this stone, which is now utilised in rockeries, was originally recovered from a large amorphous heap, which abutted the river wall at the south-west corner of the plot. Considering the wide variety of substrates represented, it is highly likely that this material came to Boston as ballast in one or more of the numerous ships using the harbour. Whether it was initially deposited at this location (e.g. if the ship was loading materials from the two possible workshops), or was moved from elsewhere in the town, in order to help bolster the flood defences remains debateable.

The presence of medieval carvings within this deposit should not seem unusual. We know that the material cannot have been deposited prior to 1826 and that the 19th century was characterised by the Neo-Gothic revival, which resulted in the 'restoration' of the majority of the nation's churches. This generally resulted in wholesale demolition of existing fabrics and their rebuilding with new materials (e.g. see Pevsner & Harris, 1989). The debris from this work would have contained medieval carving, and any village situated near a waterway would have been only too

happy to dispose of it as ballast. Thus, this material could have come from virtually any settlement situated on or near limestone.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

Although there were relatively few archaeological residues identified during the watching brief, it is considered that this programme of monitoring, combined with the complementary documentary and cartographic research, adequately served to determine the spatial distribution, nature and date of deposits located in the area of the development.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Terry Sykes and Mr Isaac for this commission, and for discussion during the course of the groundworks.

Leaving her former course, in which she first set forth,
Which seemed to have been directly to the north.
She runs her silver front into the muddy fen,
Which lies into the east, in the deep journey, when
Clear Bane a pretty brook from Lindsey coming down,
Delicious Wytham leads to holy Botolph's town;
Where proudly she puts in amongst the great resort,
That their appearance make, in Neptune's wat'ry court

Drayton (extract from *Polyolbion*, song XXV)

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11.0 Site archive

The site archive (documentary and physical) for this project is in preparation and will be deposited at the Lincoln City and County Museum and the Lincolnshire Archives Office (documentary) within six months. Access to the archive may be granted by quoting the global accession number 2000.156.

12.1 Colour photographs



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking north-east toward the Georgian houses on the eastern side of Witham Place.



Plate 2: Deposit (101)a as exposed in the south-east facing section of the most northerly trench. Note some of the cobbles and rubble removed from this deposit, left foreground.

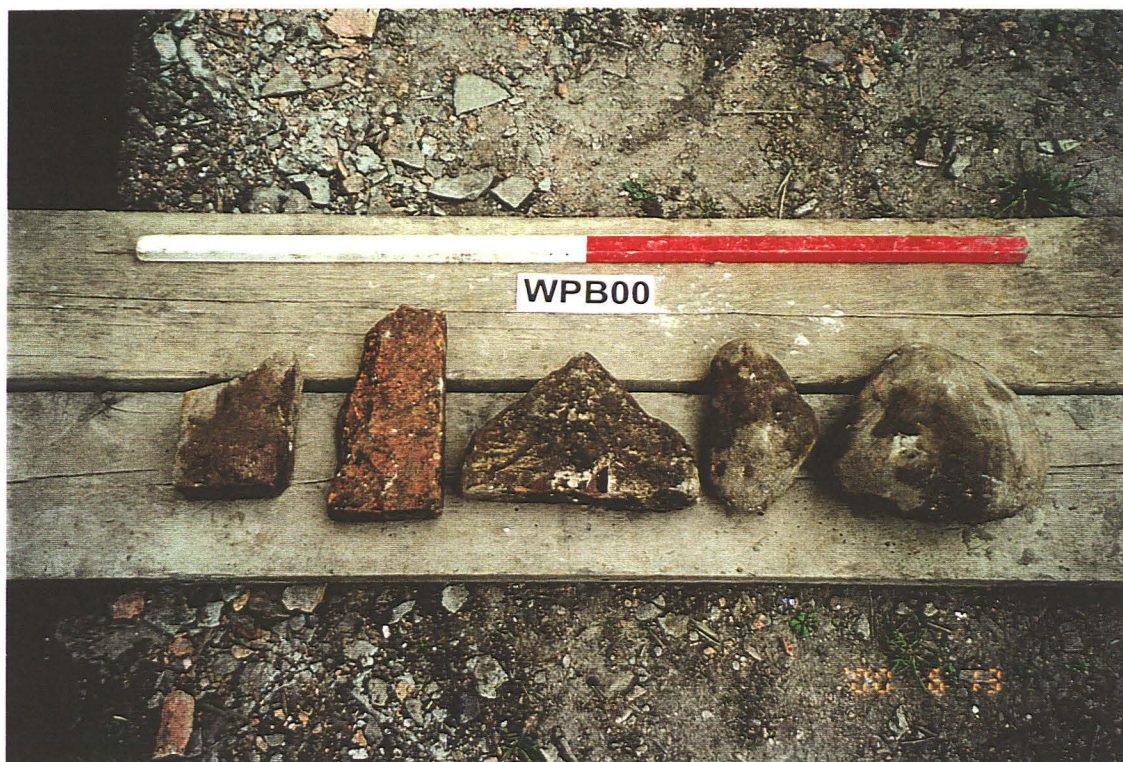


Plate 3: Material from (101)a. From left to right: two handmade bricks, handmade ceramic coping block, two quartzite cobbles.

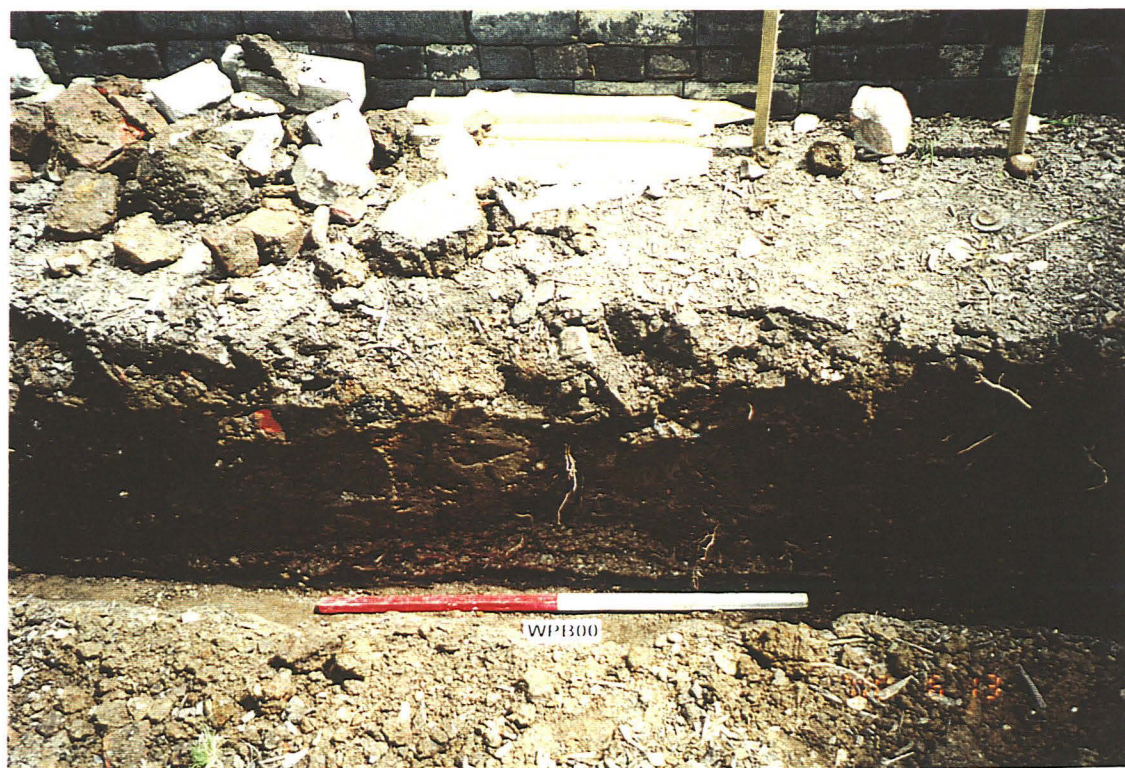


Plate 4: The lime mortar deposit (110) as exposed at the base of the trench.



Plate 5: Witham Place looking west. Note the battered brick walls retaining each of the raised gardens created when the tidal salt marsh was reclaimed. The iron railings and gates are also an original feature.



Plate 6: The carved stone, part of a mullion, flint nodules and sandstone blocks in the garden of 26 Witham Place – all are likely to have been imported as ballast.

pottery archive wpb00

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	part	description	date
101A	BERTH	Brown glazed earthenware	jug?	1	handle		18 to 19th
101A	CRMWARE	Creamware	mug	1	base	brown banded	18 to mid 19th
101A	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	bowl	1	rim		18th
101A	LPM	Early Modern wares (general term)	dish	1	rim	overglaze paint	19th
101A	LPM	Early Modern wares (general term)	dish	1	rim	plain	19th
101A	LPM	Early Modern wares (general term)	?	1	BS	yellow earthenware	19th
101A	LSTON	Late stoneware	bottle	1	BS		19th
101A	SLIP	Unidentified slipware	bowl	1	base		18 to 19th
101A	SLIP	Unidentified slipware	bowl	1	base		18 to 19th
101A	STSL	Staffordshire/Bristol slipware	bowl?	1	rim	very abraded	17 to 18th

tile archive wpb00

site code	context	cname	full name	frags	description	date
wpb00	110	NIB	nibbed tile	1	type 3 nib	13th

12.3 List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Layer	Topsoil: a dark grey sandy silt.
101	Layer	Possible levelling layer: subdivided into (a) – mid-brown sandy silty clay containing c. 40% rubble, including brick, tile and chalk; (b) – sandy silty clay containing c. 5% rubble.
102	Lens	Thin deposit of clean yellowish sand. Possibly related to the construction of the present house at 25 Witham Place.
103	-	CONTEXT ABANDONED
104	Layer	Pinkish yellowy brown sandy silt. Contains finely crushed shell – riverine deposit.
105	Layer	Pale greyish brown sandy silt. Contains finely crushed shell – riverine deposit.
106	Layer	Greyish sandy silt. Contains finely crushed shell – riverine deposit.
107	Layer	Mid-grey brown sandy silt
108	Layer	Mid-brown sandy silty clay – some discrete blocks of pale blue gleys
109	Layer	Orangey-brown sandy silt. Contains finely crushed shell – riverine deposit.
110	Deposit	Dump of lime mortar up to 0.11m thick and 2.06m wide