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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGY

ST JOHN'S STREET, HOLBEACH, LINCOLNSHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
JANUARY - MARCH 2003

REGISTERED IFA ORGANISATION

EVENT LI 4267 SOURCE LI 8813 LI 8814

PRN 20557

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

APRIL 2003

MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER: 2002.233

SITE CODE:HSJO2

NGR:TF 360 240 360 247

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: HO9/0256/01

ST JOHN'S STREET, HOLBEACH, LINCOLNSHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF JANUARY - MARCH 2003

Conservation Services

24 APR 2003

Highways & Planning Directorate

SITE ADDRESS:	SAINT JOHNS STREET, HOLBEACH, LINCOLNSHIRE
SITE CODE:	HSJO2
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2002.233
ORIGINATING BODY:	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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ST JOHN'S STREET, HOLBEACH, LINCOLNSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

JANUARY 2003

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks in advance of residential development on land at St John's Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. It confirmed that archaeological deposits discovered in a previous evaluation lay at a depth of 0.9m. The groundworks therefore did not disturb any significant archaeological remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during January 2003 on land at St John's Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire, (NGR TF 360 240; Fig 1). The work was undertaken to a specification submitted to Lincolnshire County Conservation Service on the 12th August 2002, and approved.

The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor the groundworks to ensure that they conformed to the mitigation strategy and to identify and record any archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the groundworks.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Location

The site lies on level ground occupying an area approximately 25m by 30m within the centre of modern Holbeach and fronts onto St Johns Street. The underlying geology comprises marine silts interspersed with river formed roddens, which have produced gleyic brown calcareous soils (New 2001). Beneath these deposits lie marine alluvium which seal solid Upper Jurassic clay.

2.2 *Archaeological and Historical*

A desk-based assessment (New 2001) indicated that the site lies close to Holbeach town centre in an area that would have had an important commercial position both in the medieval and post medieval periods. The earliest detailed map of Holbeach, dated 1828 was produced following the re-organisation of the town after the diversion of the River Holbeach.

The antiquarian William Stukeley (1687 – 1765) drew a map, dated 1703 which shows the development lying close to the site of his birthplace. However this map may not be regarded as entirely accurate (New 2001).

The sites and monuments record show that little archaeological work has been conducted in this part of the town. However an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Lloyd and Soden 2001) on the site prior to development work. This identified a number of pits containing pottery datable to the 15th century, along with some waterlogged remains. These were buried at a depth of 900mm below ground level.

3 *FIELDWORK*

In order to mitigate any adverse effects on archaeological deposits, Lincolnshire County Conservation Service recommended the construction of the dwellings on raft foundations above archaeological levels. This entailed the levelling of the site to a formation level no deeper than 400mm below existing ground level.

A tracked Kubota mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to remove the overburden to formation level. The overburden comprised a grey/black silty sand containing considerable amounts of modern brick and tile and post-medieval pottery. In the western half of the site the earlier evaluation trench was encountered. This was re-excavated and then lined with geo-textile and backfilled with stone following the agreed methodology.

Upon completion of the levelling the excavation of a service trench was observed in the north – eastern half of the site. This was 600mm wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 750mm. The stratigraphy comprised a grey/black silty sand extending the full depth of the trench. This contained modern brick and tile fragments along with sherds of post-medieval

pottery. Along the base of the trench a grey/brown subsoil was occasionally revealed which contained sherds of post-medieval pottery.

4 *CONCLUSIONS*

The watching brief confirmed the results of the earlier evaluation by showing that significant archaeological deposits lay at a depth of 900mm below ground level prior to groundworks. As a result the groundworks for the new development have not disturbed any significant archaeological deposits.

5 *ARCHIVE*

The archive comprising 10 colour slides and 7 black and white negative contacts along with 5 watching brief forms will be deposited with the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

REFERENCES

New, D, 2001 *An archaeological desk based assessment on a proposed housing development on land off St John's Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire (Revised),* Soke Archaeological Services

Lloyd, R, & Soden, I, 2002 *An Archaeological Evaluation on land at St John's Street, Holbeach,* Northamptonshire Archaeology Reports

Northamptonshire Archaeology
a service of the Northamptonshire County Council 15 April 2003

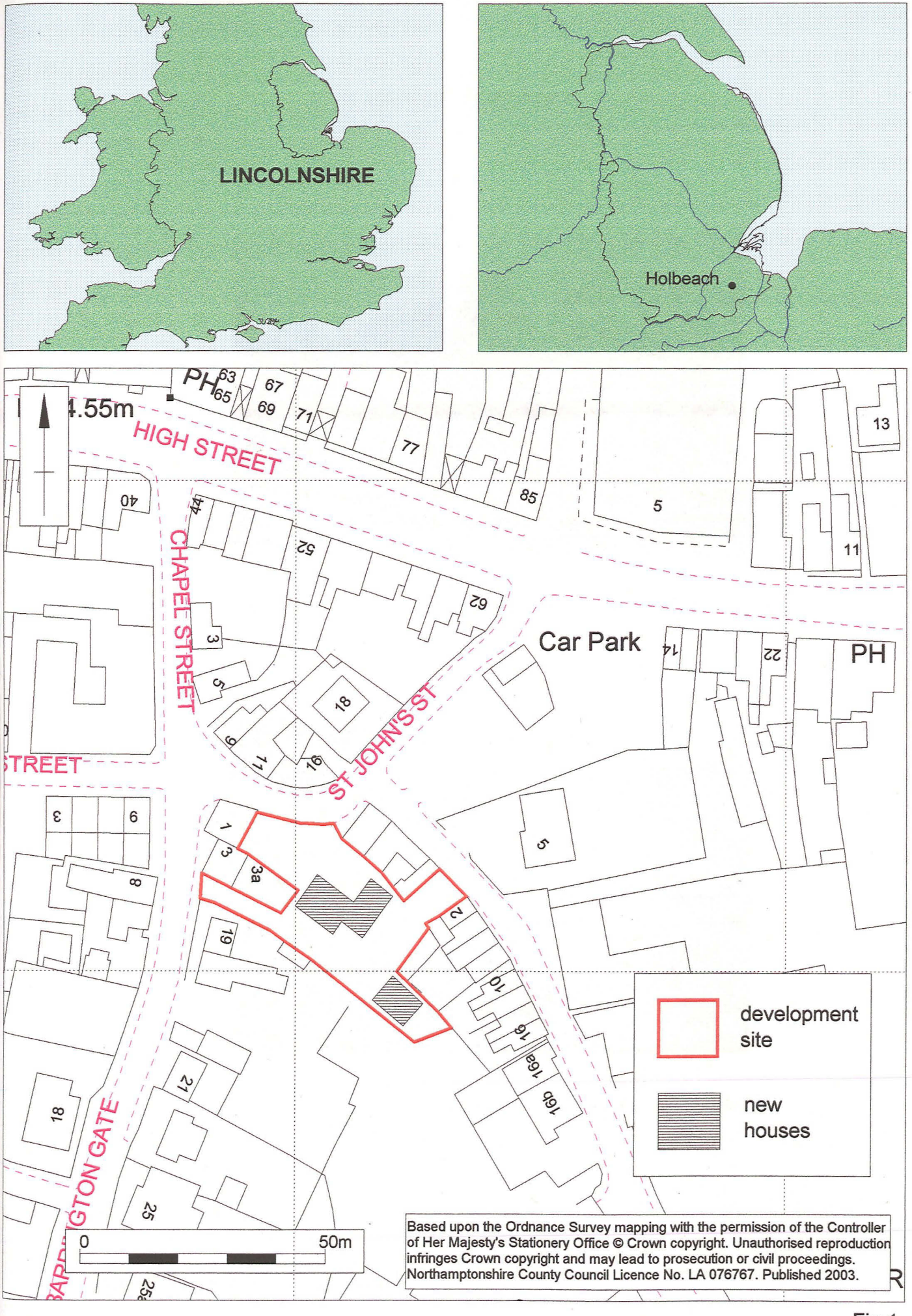
LINCOLNSHIRE
Holbeach
4.55m
HIGH STREET
CHAPEL STREET
ST JOHN'S ST
Car Park
PH
development site
new houses
0
50m
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Fig 1

Plate 1 General view of site during reduction of ground level, looking south

Plate 2 General view of site during reduction of levels, looking west