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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND AT, PLOT 2, CHURCH WALK, HOLBEACH, LINCOLNSHIRE (HCWK202)

1

Work Undertaken For RK Wilson Builders

Report Compiled by Steve Thomson BSc (Hons)

February 2003

National Grid Reference: TF 3590 2467 City and County Museum Accession No: 2002.475 Planning Application No. H09/1300/00



A.P.S. Report No. 2/03



Quality Control

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Holbeach, Church Walk (Plot 2) HCWK202

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with development on land at Church Walk, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. These were carried out as the site is archaeologically sensitive, lying close to All Saints' Church and the core of the medieval settlement.

During the course of the investigation a possible medieval refuse pit, cut into alluvium, was identified sealed beneath a late medieval to modern subsoil.

No artefacts were recovered, although brick, tile and oyster shell were noted.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as, 'a formal program of observation and conducted investigation during anv operation carried for out nonarchaeological 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

On the 7th and 8th October 2002, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling and detached garage on land at Plot 2, Church Walk, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. A planning application, H09/1300/00 was submitted for permission for the development. Permission was granted subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief.

Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned by RK Wilson Builders to undertake the watching brief. The work was carried out in accordance with a specification prepared by APS (Appendix 1) and approved by the Senior Built Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council.

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).

The development site is located close to the town centre on the left side of Church Walk, south of All Saints Church and is centred on National Grid Reference TF 3590 2467 (Fig. 2).

The site and surrounding area is on a slight slope downwards towards the south and lies at approximately 4m OD.

The town is located on soils of the Romney Series, generally coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous soils developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). South of the town are Wisbech Series, calcareous alluvial gley soils (*ibid.* 28). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium (generally sandy silt, sand and clay) which in turn seals a solid geology of Upper Jurassic clays (BGS 1992).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Evidence of the prehistoric period is scarce in the area, as the prehistoric land surface is believed to lie beneath several metres of marine alluvium.

However, remains dating from the Romano-British period to the present day

are known. Finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded in two locations c. 1km south of the town. These finds have been made at depth (c. 1m below the ground surface), and indicate that the Roman land surface is buried.

Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and is referred to variably as *Holebech*, *Holobec and Holebech*. The name is likely to derive from the Old English *hol*, 'hollow' and *bæc*, 'a beck'. Holbeach sits on a raised area and the name may mean 'the concave ridge, giving a topographical derivation to the place-name (Cameron 1998, 64).

At the time of the Domesday Survey the town was divided between the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon (Foster and Longley 1976).

The town was a prosperous market centre in the medieval period. This wealth was partly derived from nearby salt-making that took place north of Holbeach between the 12th and 15th centuries.

The only extant structural feature of the medieval period is All Saints' parish church, which was built largely in the 14th century by the then Bishop of Lincoln. This replaced an earlier church, first referred to in AD 1177 (Macdonald 1890, 19). Besides the church, Holbeach also had a number of chapels, the location of which are unknown, although the Chapel of St. Peter is believed to lie in the vicinity of the former railway station.

Investigations on the adjacent property revealed evidence of post-medieval occupation (Thomson 2003).

Archaeological evaluation of land at Park Road, within the believed core of the medieval town, identified an early medieval ditch (Herbert 1999). A subsequent watching brief only encountered modern material (Cope-Faulkner 2000).

A watching brief undertaken on the High Street identified three post-medieval brick structures of 17th century or later date (Snee 2000).

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief, as outlined in the specification (Appendix 1), was to record and interpret archaeological features exposed during the ground disturbance and, where present, to determine their form, function, spatial arrangement, date and sequence.

4. METHODS

Foundations trenches for a new dwelling and garage were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless blade, to depths of up to 1.7m below the present ground surface. The sides of the trenches were inspected to identify archaeological deposits. The depth and thickness of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts with interpretations appears as Appendix 2.

Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and a 1:50 scale plan of the foundations was produced. Recording of deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard APS practice. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

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Records of the deposits and features identified were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers shown in bold and in black are the context numbers assigned in the field.

5. **RESULTS**

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were recognised:

- 5.1 Phase 1 Alluvial deposits
- 5.2 Phase 2 Undated deposits
- 5.3 Phase 3 Modern deposits

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

5.1 Phase 1 - Alluvial deposits

The earliest deposit recorded comprised a mid-yellowish brown silt (006). The deposit was greater than 0.5m thick and was identified as alluvium.

5.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

In the northwest corner of the house foundations (Fig.4) was a rectangular cut, (003) visible in plan within, and outside of, the foundation trneches, measuring 1.8m north-south x 1.3m east-west and 1.3m deep. The cut was interpreted as a refuse pit and contained a primary fill of dark grey sandy silt (005) (Fig. 5) with frequent oyster shell. This was sealed by a secondary fill of light greyish brown sandy silt (004). Overlying the pit was a 0.3m thick, dark grey silt subsoil (002) containing occasional ceramic building material and charcoal fragments.

5.3 Phase 3 – Modern deposits

Sealing the Phase 2 subsoil, was a 0.3m thick, dark greyish brown silt topsoil (001). Cutting through this in the eastern half of the foundations was a modern drain cut (007) which was contained a dark brown silt (008) and storm drain pipe (009).

6. **DISCUSSION**

Phase 1 was represented by alluvium, which is likely to derive from marine flooding episodes. Alluvial silts such as these are in keeping with known sediments from prior investigations in the area.

Phase 2 deposits comprised a refuse pit and a subsoil. The subsoil deposit yielded no artefacts, however, the same layer from the adjacent plot contained material dating from the medieval to $19^{\text{th}} - 20^{\text{th}}$ centuries (Thomson 2003). This would suggest a later medieval or early post-medieval date for the formation of the subsoil. As a consequence the pit, sealed by the subsoil, is possibly of a medieval date and would indicate probable occupation of the period on the site. However, the precise nature of such occupation is not ascertainable.

The final phase of activity related to modern use of the site with a storm drain and topsoil. The presence of ceramic building material within the topsoil, and also the Phase 2 subsoil, would indicate that the site had been occupied, possibly with structural remains present, or in the vicinity, during the post-medieval and modern eras.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at Plot 2, Church Walk, Holbeach, were undertaken as the site lay within the core of the medieval settlement.

The watching brief identified a refuse pit, possibly of medieval date, suggesting occupation, or activity on the site, during that period, though the nature of this possible occupation cannot be determined.

Post-medieval and modern use of the site was attested in the form of ceramic building material in the top and subsoils and a modern drain.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of RK Wilson Builders who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The project was coordinated by Steve Malone. This report was edited by Paul Cope-Faulkner and Tom Lane.

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10. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

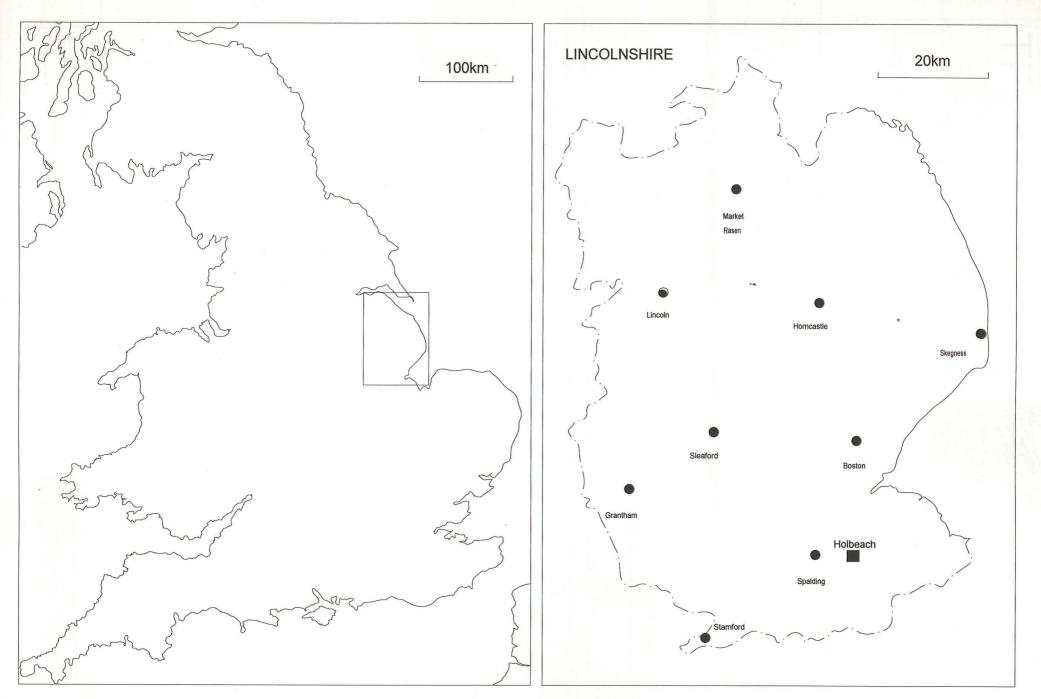
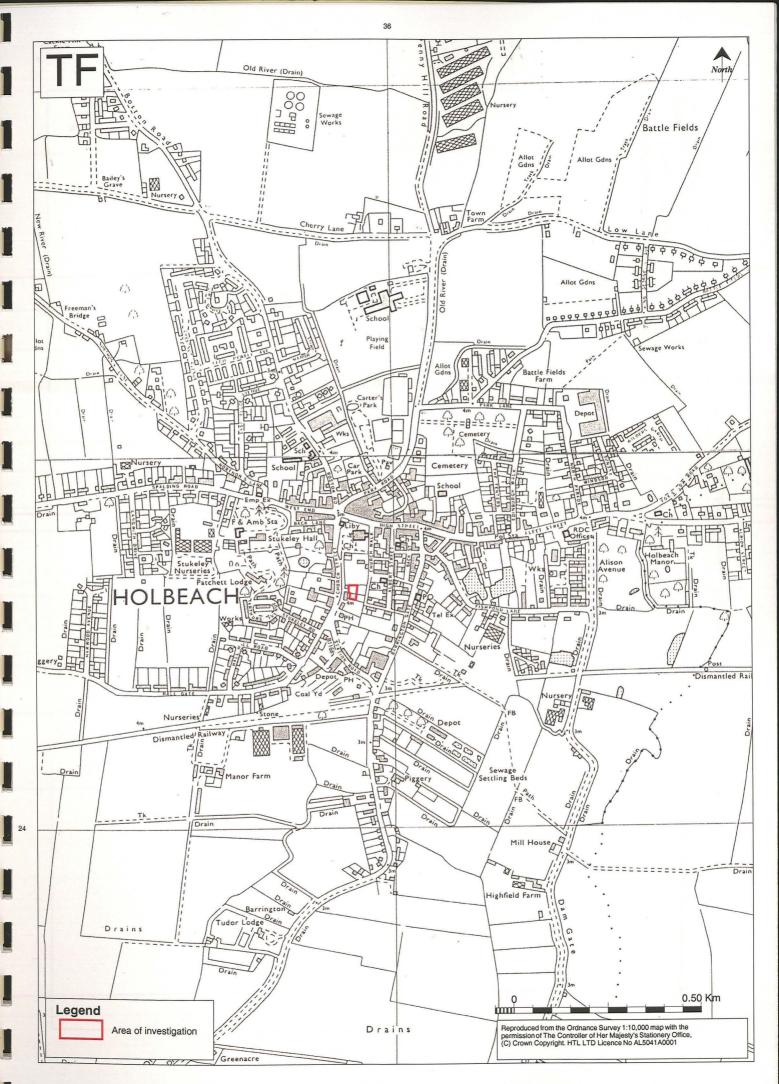
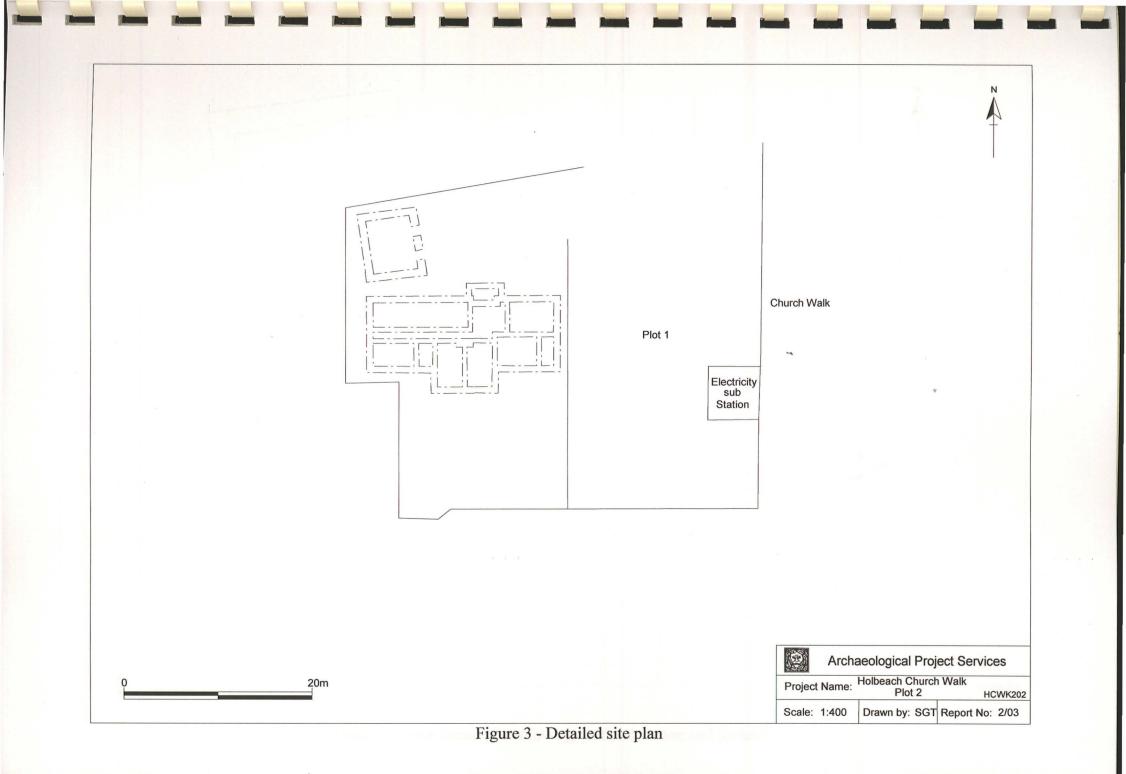
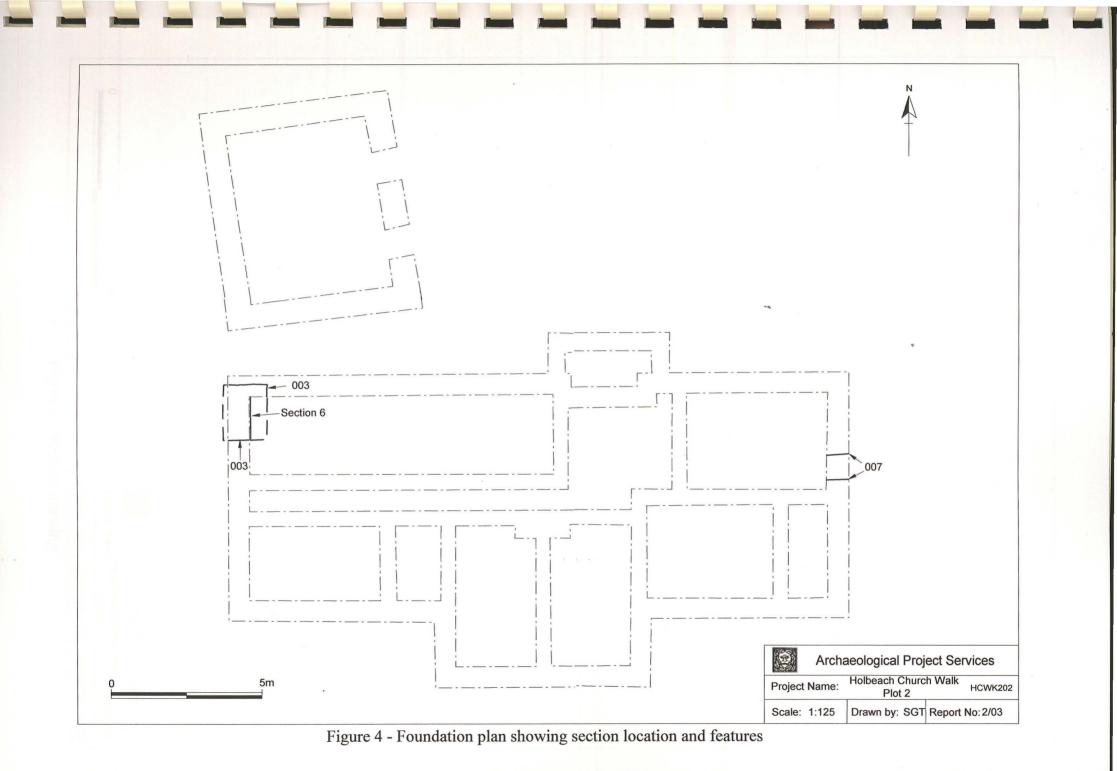
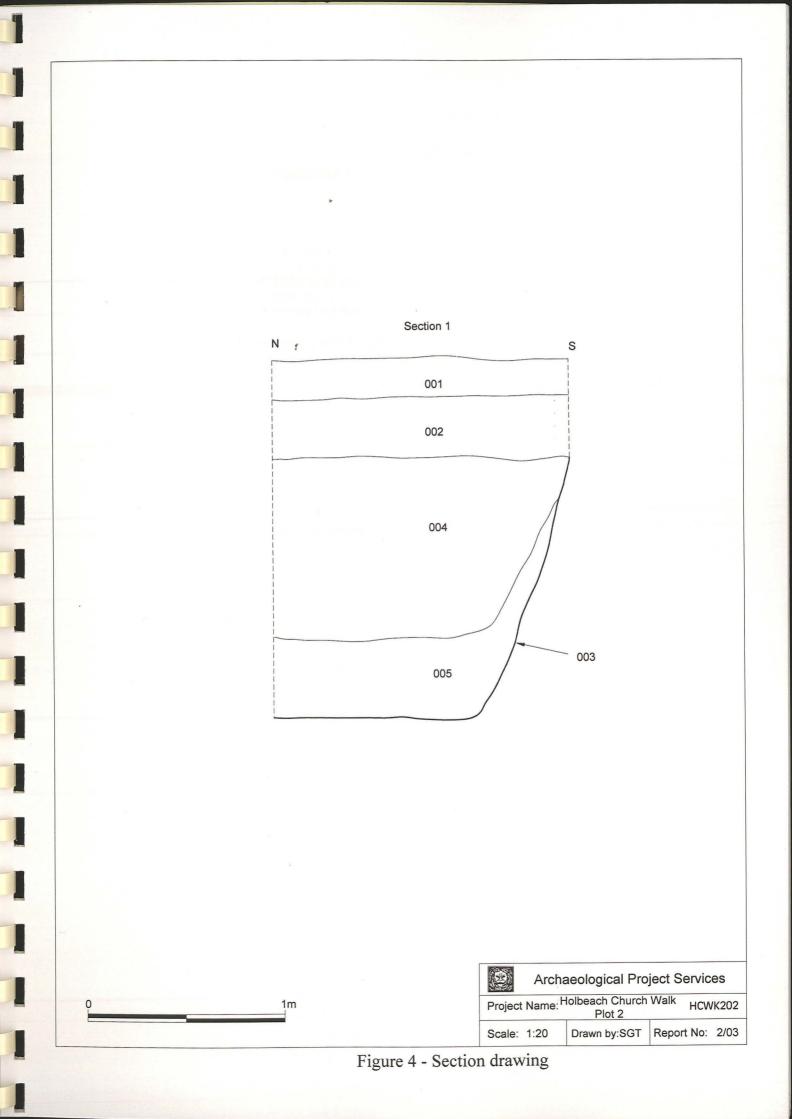


Figure 1 General Location Plan









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LAND AT PLOT 2 CHURCH WALK HOLBEACH LINCOLNSHIRE

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

PREPARED FOR RK WILSON BUILDERS

BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES Institute of Field Archaeologists' Registered Organisation No. 21

APRIL 2002

SUMMARY

1

- 1.1 A watching brief is required during residential development on land at Church Walk, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, close to All Saints church and the core of the medieval settlement.
- 1.3 The archaeological work will consist of a watching brief during development works on the site.
- 1.4 On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the watching brief. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for archaeological watching brief during construction of two bungalows with detached garages on land at Church Walk, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. The site is located at National Grid Reference TF 3590 2467.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
 - 2.2.1 Overview.
 - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
 - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
 - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

3 SITE LOCATION

3.1 Holbeach is situated 20km south of Boston in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire. The site lies in the centre of the town, south of All Saints' Church and the Vicarage between Church Street and Church Walk, centred on National Grid Reference TF 3590 2467.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

4.1 A planning application (H09/1300/00) was submitted to South Holland District Council for residential development on the site. Permission is subject to a condition requiring the undertaking of a watching-brief during groundworks associated with the development.

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 The site and surrounding area is on a very slight slope down to the south and lies at approximately 4m OD. Holbeach is located on soils of the Romney series, generally coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous soils, developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). South of the town are the Wisbech Series, calcareous alluvial gley soils (ibid. 28). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium (generally sandy silt, sand and clay) which in turn seals a solid geology of Upper Jurassic clays (BGS 1992).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

6.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the Holbeach region is scarce. The prehistoric land surface lies

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several metres below a series of later flood deposits.

- 6.2 The marshland stabilised during the Romano-British period, allowing agricultural and salt making activities to commence. Finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded from two locations south of Holbeach town centre. These finds were made at a depth of *c*. 1m and indicates that the Roman land surface is buried.
- 6.3 Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is referred to variably as *Holebech, Holeben, Holobech* and *Holobec.* At the time of the Domesday Book the town was divided between the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon. The site is located near the medieval core of the village and close to All Saints' Church.

7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The aims of the watching brief will be:
 - 7.1.1 To record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.
 - 7.1.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be to:
 - Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
 - Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
 - As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
 - Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

8 SITE OPERATIONS

8.1 <u>General considerations</u>

- 8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.
- 8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIFA). Archaeological Project Services is IFA registered organisation no. 21.
- 8.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

8.2 <u>Methodology</u>

- 8.2.1 The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and includes the archaeological monitoring of all phases of soil movement.
- 8.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be

compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.

- 8.2.3 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.
 - Throughout the watching brief a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:
 - the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
 - groups of features where their relationship is important
- 8.2.4 Should human remains be located the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained before their removal. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department and the police will be informed.

9 POST-EXCAVATION

- 9.1 <u>Stage 1</u>
 - 9.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the watching brief will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.
 - 9.1.2 All finds recovered during the field work will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

9.2 <u>Stage 2</u>

- 9.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.
- 9.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.
- 9.3 Stage 3
 - 9.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.
 - 9.3.2 This will consist of:
 - A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
 - A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
 - Description of the topography of the site.
 - Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
 - A text describing the findings of the watching brief.

- A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

10 REPORT DEPOSITION

10.1 Copies of the report will be sent to the Client; the South Holland District Council Planning Department; and to the County Council Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record.

11 ARCHIVE

11.1 The documentation and records generated during the watching brief will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to the City and County Museum, Lincoln. This will be undertaken following the requirements of the document titled Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives for long term storage and curation.

12 PUBLICATION

12.1 A report of the findings of the watching brief will be presented as a condensed article to the editor of the journal *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*. If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date, and *Medieval Archaeology* and the *Journal of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* for findings of medieval or later date.

13 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

13.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Lincolnshire Council Archaeology Section. They will be given seven days notice in writing before the commencement of the project.

14 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.
- 14.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator (*Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* 1998, Sections 5.7 and 18).
- 14.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.
- 14.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the

scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

15 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

- 15.1 The watching brief will be integrated with the programme of construction and is dependent on the developers' work programme. It is therefore not possible to specify the person-hours for the archaeological site work.
- 15.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- 15.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists. It is expected that each fieldwork day (equal to one person-day) will require a post- excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half person-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about four days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

16 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

Task	Body to be undertaking the work
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust
	Roman - B Precious, Independent Specialist
	Anglo-Saxon - J Young, Independent Specialist
	Medieval and later - G Taylor, APS in consultation with H Healey, Independent Archaeologist
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, Independent Specialist
Animal Bones	Environmental Archaeology Consultancy
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, Independent Specialist

17 INSURANCES

17.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

18 COPYRIGHT

- 18.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 18.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- 18.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.
- 18.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

19 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Specification: Version 1, 19 April 2002

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Context Summary

Context No.	Section	Description	Interpretation
001	1	Loose, dark greyish brown silt containing occasional ceramic building material and gravel, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
002	1	Loose, dark grey silt containing occasional ceramic building material and charcoal fragments	Subsoil
003	1	Rectangular cut, 1.3m deep x 1.8m N-S x 1.3m E-W, steep sides, flat, sloping base	Pit
004	1	Loose, light greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of 003
005	1	Loose, dark grey sandy silt containing frequent charcoal flecks, shell fragments and complete oyster shells	Fill of 003
006	- 1 C	Mid-yellowish brown silt, >0.5m thick	Alluvial deposit
007	-	Linear cut, 0.8m wide x 1.3m deep, vertical sides, flat base	Modern drain cut
008	-	Firm, dark brown silt containing occasional gravel and ceramic building material fragments	Fill of 007
009	-	Storm drain pipe	Drain pipe

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, <i>e.g.</i> [004].
Crop mark	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological or geological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
Cut	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.
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Fill	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) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
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.

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 9 Context records
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 5 Drawing sheets
- 1 Plan register
- 1 Section register
- 2 Daily record sheets
- 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 Museum Accession Number: 2002.475

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:

revealed during the current investigation.

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

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