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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF SERVICE TRENCHES AT
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH,
STAMFORD,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SSJ 04)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF SERVICE TRENCHES AT
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH,
STAMFORD,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SSJ 04)**

**Work Undertaken For
Tim Ratcliffe Associates**

October 2004

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

National Grid Reference: TF 0293 0709
City and County Museum Accession No: 2004.136

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES



APS Report No. 138/04



Quality Control
 St. John the Baptist's Church
 Stamford
 SSJ 04

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Supervisors	Aaron Clements, Rachael Hall, Mary Nugent
Finds Processing	Denise Buckley
Illustration	Paul Cope-Faulkner
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Paul Cope-Faulkner

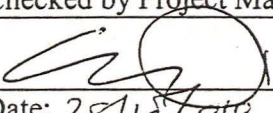
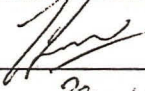
Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
 Gary Taylor	 Tom Lane
Date: 28/10/04	Date: 28-10-04

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at St. John the Baptist's church, Stamford, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of drainage trenches around the church.

The church is of the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) with most of the building dating to the 15th century, although late 12th century stonework is evident within the building.

The watching brief revealed undated stairs, a 19th century brick built grave, graveyard soils and a dumped deposit. Finds retrieved during the investigation include medieval pottery from Bourne, as well as later 17th - 19th century examples. Brick, tile, metalwork (including slag) and glass were also collected.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as "*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. 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

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Tim Ratcliffe Associates to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new drainage works at St. John the Baptist's Church, Stamford, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out between the 3rd August and 6th September 2004.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Stamford is situated 63km south of Lincoln and 23km southwest of Spalding, in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The town lies on the bank of the River Welland, close to its confluence with the Gwash which provides the eastern boundary to the town.

St. John the Baptist's church is located towards the centre of the town, 140m west of St. Mary's church and south of Red Lion Square at National Grid Reference TF 0293 0709 (Fig. 2). The church lies on ground that slopes down to the south at a height of c. 31m OD.

Stamford sits in a narrow valley of which the northern side cuts through the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, Upper Lincolnshire Limestone and the overlying Great Oolite Series. The site itself is situated over the Upper Lincolnshire Limestone (BGS 1978).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Stamford is mentioned as early as AD 658 as the site of a new monastic foundation, although the reference is generally considered unreliable. However, by the end of the ninth century, Stamford was described as one of the five boroughs of the Danelaw. A reference to the visit of Edward the Elder in 918 indicates that the Danish *burh* lay north of the Welland and also records that the King commanded a new borough to be built on the south side of the river (Mahaney 1982, 3).

In the Domesday Survey of c. 1086, Stamford is referred to as a royal borough comprising six wards, five of these north of the river. A bridge spanned the river and in the wards to the north were over four hundred messuages, three and a half mills and a castle. In addition, four churches, one dedicated to St. Peter, were located in

the northern part of the town (Foster and Longley 1976, 9).

It is considered that St. John the Baptist's church was not one of those referred to in the Domesday Survey due to the siting, on the edge of the borough, and the size and shape of the parish (Hartley and Rogers 1974, 29). The earliest reference to St. John's church is in the early 13th century (*ibid.*) although carved stones of late 12th century date were found during repairs to the chancel arch (RCHME 1977, 17).

The present church dates mainly to the 15th century and window glass inscribed with a date of 1451 (recorded during the 18th century) appears to corroborate this. Few alterations have occurred to the church apart from the addition of a new vestry in the southeast corner of the church in 1897 (*ibid.*, 15).

3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Trenches for the new drains were excavated by a small machine along the north, east and southern sides of the church. Trenches were then cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard

Archaeological Project Services' practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were identified;

Phase 1	Undated deposits
Phase 2	19 th century deposits
Phase 3	Recent deposits

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

Phase 1 Undated deposits

Located within the southern trench, adjacent to the South Chapel was a deposit of brown mortar (009) identified as a bedding layer (Fig. 4, Section 5). Upon this were sandstone slabs with brick risers (008) forming steps.

Phase 2 19th century deposits

Located 4m southwest of the undated steps was a brick built tomb (007). This was 2.4m long by 0.75m wide and deeper than 1.75m (Fig. 4, Section 4). Backfilled around this tomb was a deposit of grey clayey silt (006) which contained human bone, limestone rubble as well as 19th century pottery, brick, glass and a nail.

Above the tomb and built up against the undated stone steps was an extensive graveyard soil deposit. This varied from greyish brown clayey silt (003) to brown clayey silt (005). Finds retrieved from the

latter included 18th – 19th century pottery, brick, a nail and a penknife with a bone handle.

Above the graveyard soil to the east of the church was a dumped deposit of brownish red sand (010). This was 0.2m thick and contained iron smithing slag and coke (Fig. 4, Section 6).

Phase 3 Recent deposits

Above the 19th century dumped deposit and evident within the trench north of the church and above the steps on the south side was a layer of built up ground. This comprised a 0.6m thick deposit of brownish grey clayey silt (002).

South of the church, recent deposits comprised a concrete path (004) laid above a 0.5m thick topsoil of brown clayey silt (001) with frequent limestone fragments and human bone. Finds retrieved from this layer include medieval and later pottery, brick, tile, glass and 2 coins.

6. DISCUSSION

A set of steps with mortar bedding (Phase 1) was the earliest feature identified but is undated due to a lack of artefactual material. A view of St. John the Baptist's church of the early 18th century (Peck 1979, Plate 15) does not depict any steps and it is possible they pre-date this.

Deposits of 19th century date (Phase 2) comprise a brick built tomb, extensive graveyard soils and a dumped deposit.

Medieval pottery was the earliest material retrieved from the investigation. 17th century and later pottery was also collected as was brick, tile, iron nails, a bone handled knife, glass and slag.

7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during drainage works at St. John the Baptist's church, Stamford, as the possibility existed of archaeological remains being disturbed.

Structural remains associated with the church were revealed but were undated. Graveyard deposits and features, including a brick lined grave, of 19th century and later date were also recorded.

Finds from the investigation included medieval and later pottery, brick, tile, metalwork and glass. Human remains were also recorded but not collected.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr A, Gardner of Tim Ratcliffe Associates for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Mark Williams and this report was edited by Gary Taylor and Tom Lane. Jenny Young, the South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist, kindly permitted access to the parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Mark Williams
 Site Supervisors: Aaron Clements, Rachael Hall, Mary Nugent
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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Foster, C.W. and Longley, T. (eds), 1976, *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, The Lincoln Record Society 19

Hartley, J.S. and Rogers, A., 1974, *The Religious Foundations of Medieval Stamford*, Stamford Survey Group Report 2

IFA, 1999, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Mahaney, C., 1982, 'The Town', in Mahaney, C., Burchard, A. and Simpson, G., *Excavations in Stamford, Lincolnshire 1963-1969*, The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series 9

Peck, F., 1979, *The Antiquarian Annals of Stamford* (reprint of 1727 edition)

RCHME, 1977, *An Inventory of Historical Monuments: The Town of Stamford*

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

RCHME Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England

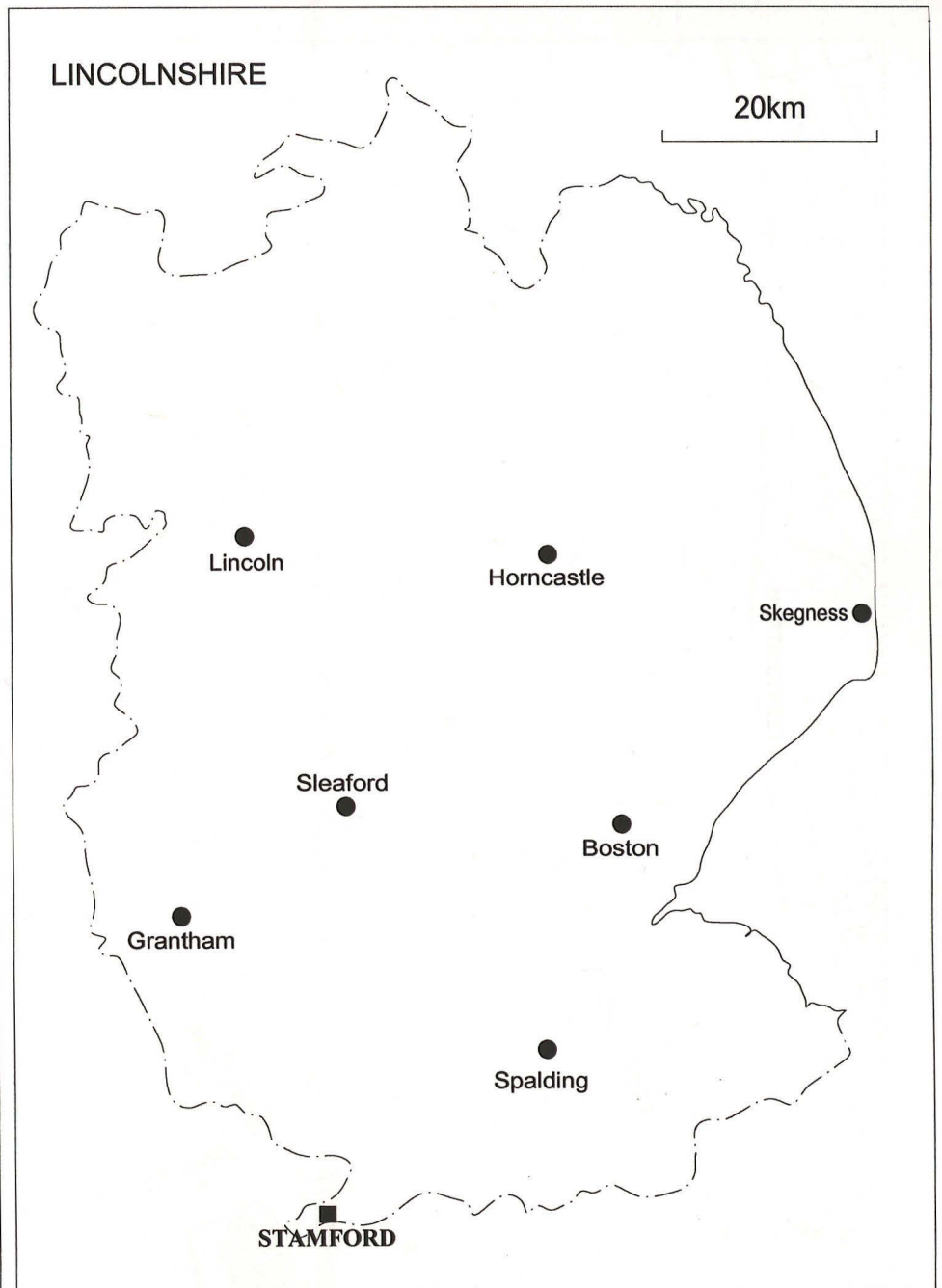
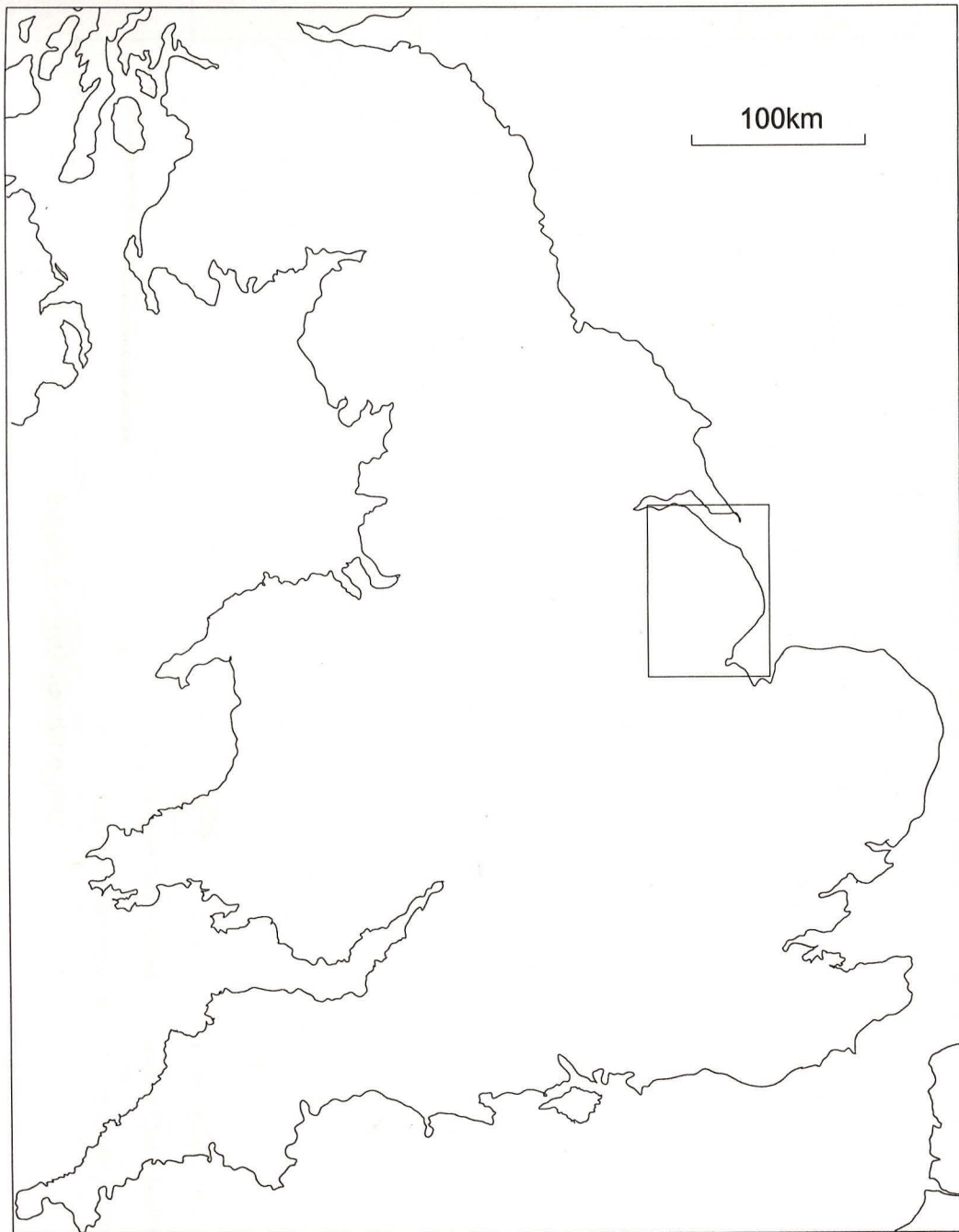
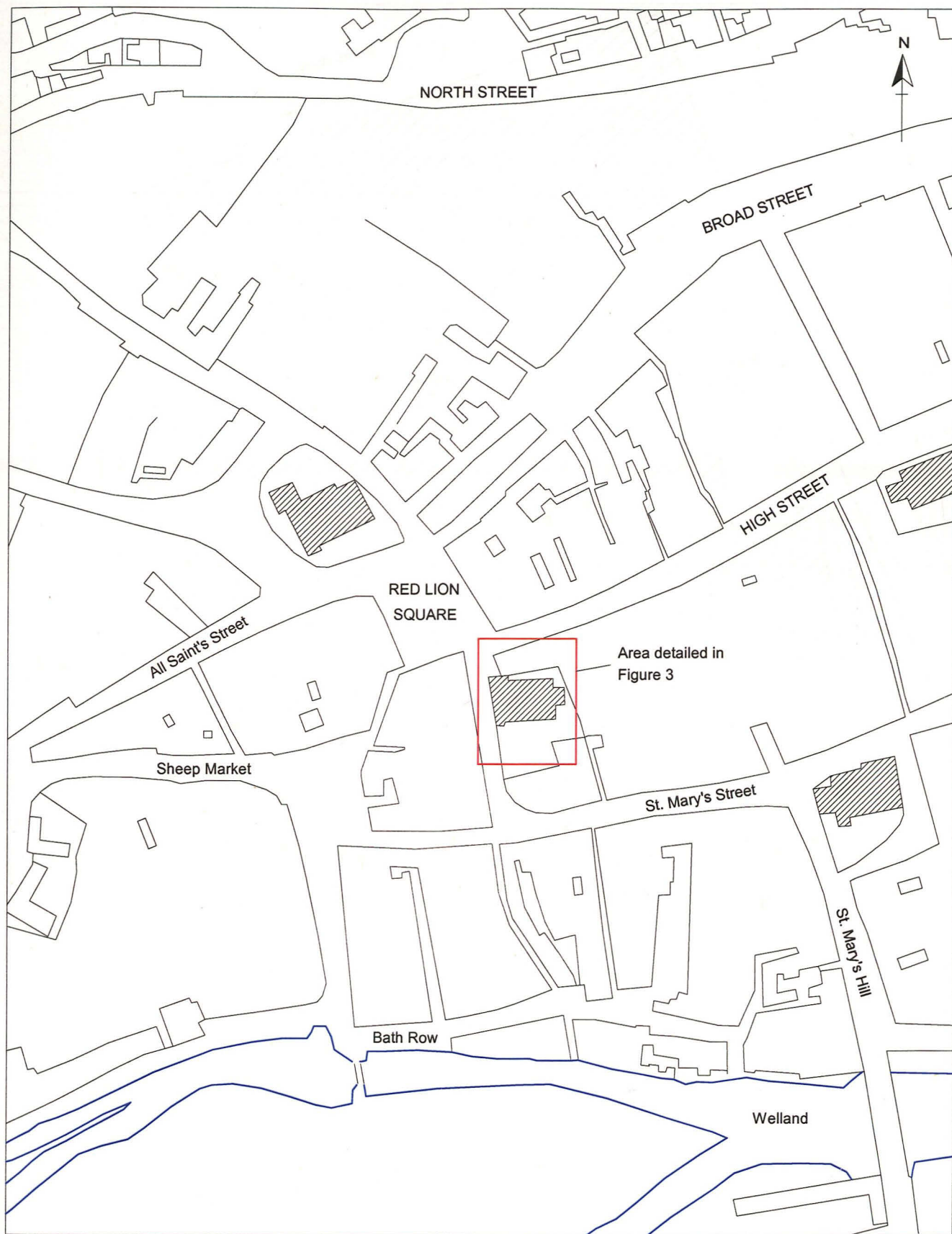


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: St. John the Baptist's Church SSJ04

Scale 1:2000 Drawn by: PCF Report No: 138/04

Figure 2 - Site location plan

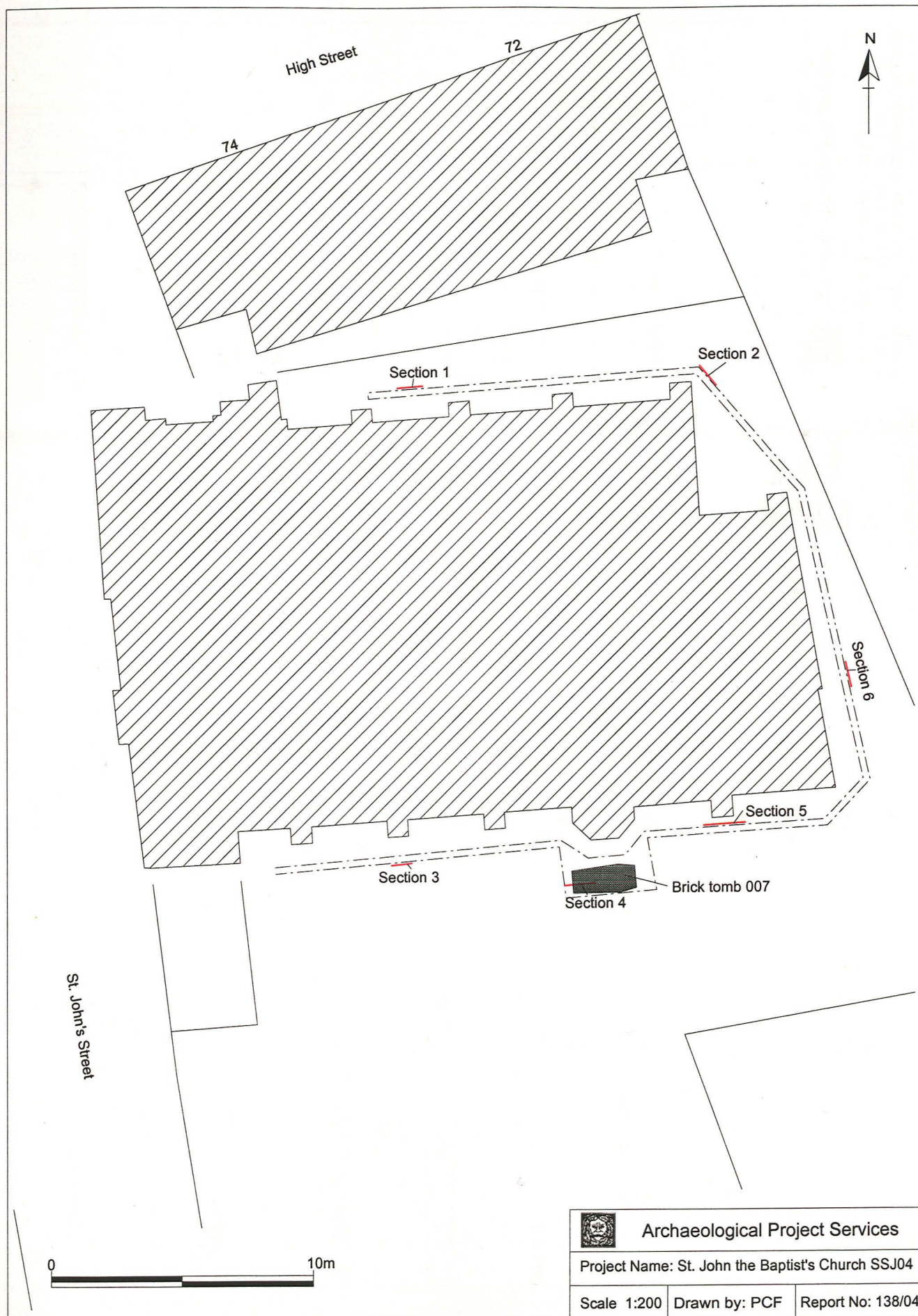


Figure 3 - Plan showing the route of the drainage trench and section locations

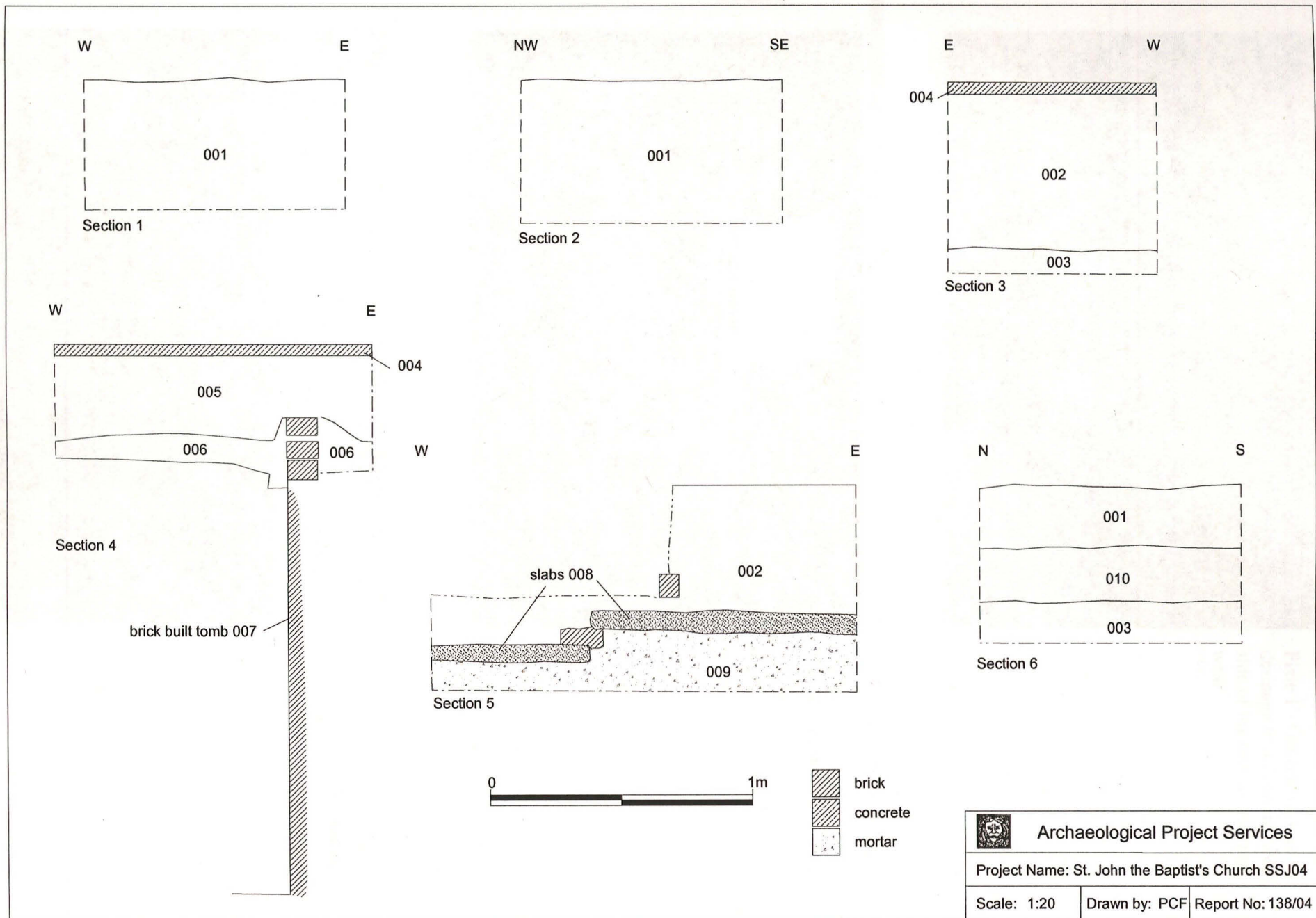


Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 6



Plate 1 - General view of the drainage trench on the north side of the church, looking west



Plate 2 - Section 1, looking north



Plate 3 - Section 3, looking south



Plate 4 - View showing the brick built tomb (007), looking east



Plate 5 - View showing the sandstone steps (008), looking east

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Firm mid brown clayey silt with frequent limestone and human bones, 0.5m thick	Built up ground
002	Friable mid brownish grey clayey silt with frequent limestone, 0.6m thick	Topsoil
003	Soft mid greyish brown clayey silt, 100mm thick	Graveyard soil
004	Indurated light grey concrete, 40mm thick	Path
005	Loose mid brown clayey silt, 0.33m thick	Graveyard soil
006	Firm dark grey clayey silt with frequent human remains and limestone rubble	Backfill around (007)
007	Brick (240mm x 120mm x 70mm) structure, forming rectangular box, 2.4m long by 0.75m wide by 1.75m deep	Brick built tomb
008	Sandstone slabs and brick (240mm x 120mm x 70mm) structure forming steps	Steps
009	Soft light brown mortar, 0.23m thick	Bedding for (008)
010	Loose dark brownish red sand with slag, 0.2m thick	Dumped deposit

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

by Hilary Healey and Gary Taylor

Recording of the pottery was undertaken with reference to guidelines prepared by the Medieval Pottery Research Group (Slowikowski *et al.* 2001) and the pottery was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Lincolnshire ceramic type series. A total of 18 fragments of pottery weighing 490g was recovered from 3 separate contexts. In addition to the pottery, a moderate quantity of other artefacts, mostly brick/tile, comprising 20 items weighing a total of 1078g, was retrieved. No faunal remains were recovered.

Provenance

The material was recovered from made ground (001), graveyard soil (005), the backfill around a brick tomb (006) and a dumped deposit (010).

All of the earlier pottery was made in moderate proximity to Stamford, at Bourne 15km to the northeast, and in the Stanion-Lyveden area of northeast Northamptonshire, about 22km to the southwest. Many of the earthenwares were probably also made in the Stamford region, though the latest tablewares are Staffordshire products.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the tables.

Table 1: Pottery

Context	Fabric Code	Description	No.	Wt (g)	Context Date
001	PEARL	Blue and white transfer printed pearl ware, early 19 th century	1	2	Early 19 th century
	CRMWARE	Creamware, early 19 th century	2	23	
	BL	Red painted black glazed earthenware, 18 th century	1	24	
	MP	Midlands Purple type ware, 17 th century	4	112	
	GRE	Glazed red earthenware, 17 th century	1	34	
	BOUA	Bourne A ware, abraded, 12 th -14 th century	2 (link)	17	
	BOU	Bourne D ware, 15 th -16 th century	1	7	
	STANLY	Stanion-Lyveden ware, abraded, 12 th -13 th century	1	15	
005	TPW	Blue and white transfer printed tableware, 19 th century	1	2	19 th century
	BL	Red painted black glazed earthenware, 18 th century	2	229	
006	CRMWARE	Creamware	2	25	Early 19 th century

Table 2: Other Artefacts

Context	Material	Description	No.	Wt (g)	Context Date
001	CBM	Handmade brick, 68mm thick, post-medieval	1	517	19 th -20 th century
	CBM	Tile, oxidized throughout, 14mm thick, mortar adhering, post-medieval	1	30	
	CBM	Tile, reduced core, glazed, 15mm thick, medieval	1	85	

Context	Material	Description	No.	Wt (g)	Context Date
	Glass	Green window glass, 19 th -20 th century	3	14	
	Stone	Tile, burnt, 6mm thick, post-medieval	1	12	
	Copper	Halfpenny coins, 1672-1860	2	15	
005	CBM	Machine-made brick, very burnt, late 19 th -20 th century	2	113	Late 19 th -20 th century
	CBM	Firebrick, burnt, late 19 th -20 th century	1	157	
	Iron	Nail	1	18	
	Iron and bone	Penknife, bone handle decorated with scored lines and cross hatching, late post-medieval	1	59	
006	CBM	Machine-made brick, very burnt, late 19 th -20 th century	1	7	Late 19 th -20 th century
	CBM	Brick, extremely burnt, post-medieval	1	34	
	Glass	Pale green window glass, much iridescence, 19 th century	1	1	
	Iron	Nail	1	10	
010	Slag	Iron smithing slag, post-medieval	1	4	Post-medieval
	Coke	Coke	1	2	

Note: CBM = Ceramic Building Material

Although having a reduced core, the glazed roof tile from (001) is oxidized on a broken edge. This suggests the piece was broken in the kiln and was effectively a waster, but potentially usable. This may imply that glazed tiles were made close to the site during the medieval period.

All of the brick from (005) and (006) is severely burnt, with one piece a firebrick. This may indicate the presence of some form of high temperature heating system or other facility where fire occurred.

Two copper disks were recovered from (001). These appear to be halfpenny coins but are totally illegible, being encrusted. Copper halfpennies were introduced in 1672 and continued to be produced at the same dimensions until 1860 (Spink 2002).

Condition

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

Documentation

There have been numerous previous archaeological investigations at Stamford that are the subjects of reports. Additionally, there has been reported study of the archaeological and historical evidence for the town and its vicinity. Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record and the files of the South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist.

Potential

The small quantity of medieval artefacts recovered is of limited local potential and significance but does indicate use of the site at that time. In particular, the glazed medieval tile is informative and illustrates how the church was roofed during that period. The post-medieval material is also of limited local potential but confirms the use of the site through time. The burnt brick provides some indication of functional activity involving very high temperatures.

The lack of any material earlier than the 12th century is informative and suggests that archaeological deposits dating from prior to this period are absent from the area, or were not disturbed by the development, or were of a nature that did not involve artefact deposition.

References

Slowikowski, A., Nenck, B. and Pearce, J., 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2

Spink, 2002 *Coins of England and the United Kingdom* (37th ed)

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Burh	Old English (Saxon) term for a fortified town or dwelling.
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 interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
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.
Dumped deposits	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
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) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term 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.
Messuage	A dwelling and the land surrounding it.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
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 1 st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

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

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

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

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 2004. 136

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SSJ 04

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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