

An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for land at Old Post Office Farm, Church Farm and land to the north of Church Farm, Horbling, Lincolnshire (TF 11 35).

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For Crown Estate Commissioners

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1 Summary

The desk-based archaeological assessment for the proposed residential development on land at Old Post Office Farm, Church Farm and land to the north of Church Farm, Horbling has suggested that it has potential for containing archaeological remains. The medieval village of Horbling lies on the edge of Horbling Fen. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, but intense scatters of Roman pottery to both the west and east of the village suggest it may have had earlier origins. The Cardike lies some 1.5km to the east of the village. Indeed, the presence of two bowl barrows 400m south of the village suggest the area may even be part of a prehistoric sacred landscape.

The proposed developments are situated within the historic core of Horbling and are close to the medieval St. Andrew's Church, Horbling (SMR Ref. 32843). The boundary of the Church cemetery has not been static over time and it is conceivable that human remains could survive within Church Farm farmyard. At least two of the standing buildings within the development area (Post Office Farm farmhouse and No.22 High Street) can be seen on the Tithe Award maps of 1765 and may have earlier origins. Further medieval buildings may survive, particularly along the street frontages. Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks survive on the strip of land to the rear of Post Office Farm.

In the land north of Church Farm three stone walls survive bounding a small field. The walls include large, well-dressed blocks and the ends of first floor timber joists suggesting the wall was once part of a standing building. Cartographic evidence indicates that the building must pre-date the 1765 Tithe Award map. A scatter of stones within the field suggests further wall foundations may survive below ground.

Finally, within a c. 19th century cart shed a group of five unusual oak posts were noted. The posts appeared to have been re-used in their current setting but contained a series of chase mortices with large wooden dowel pegs that suggest much earlier origins. The joints may represent a local tradition, or even the work of a particular craftsman but it is also possible that they are a very rare example of the survival of Saxo-Norman carpentry. Parallel joints have been seen on a timber bridge structure in Leicestershire constructed some time after 1097 AD.

2 Introduction

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2.1 This document consists of an archaeological desk-based assessment of the likely impact of the proposed residential development of land at Old Post Office Farm, Church Farm and land to the north of Church Farm, Horbling, Lincolnshire.

2.2 The desk-based assessment forms part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment following the recommendations of the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist, in her capacity as archaeological adviser to the planning authority. It follows the 'Project Brief for Archaeological Evaluation (Desk-top Assessment)', for Crown Estate Commissioners, hereinafter the 'brief'.

2.3 The proposed residential developments are centred on three locations within Horbling; Old Post Office Farm, on the western side of Billingborough Road, Church Farm, off Sandygate Lane and land to the north of Church Farm. (TF 1135, figs.1 & 2). A site visit was carried out to inspect current land use but there was no access to standing buildings current in residence.



Figure 1: Village location map. (Scale 1:50000)

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 130 Grantham Area, by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1974. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

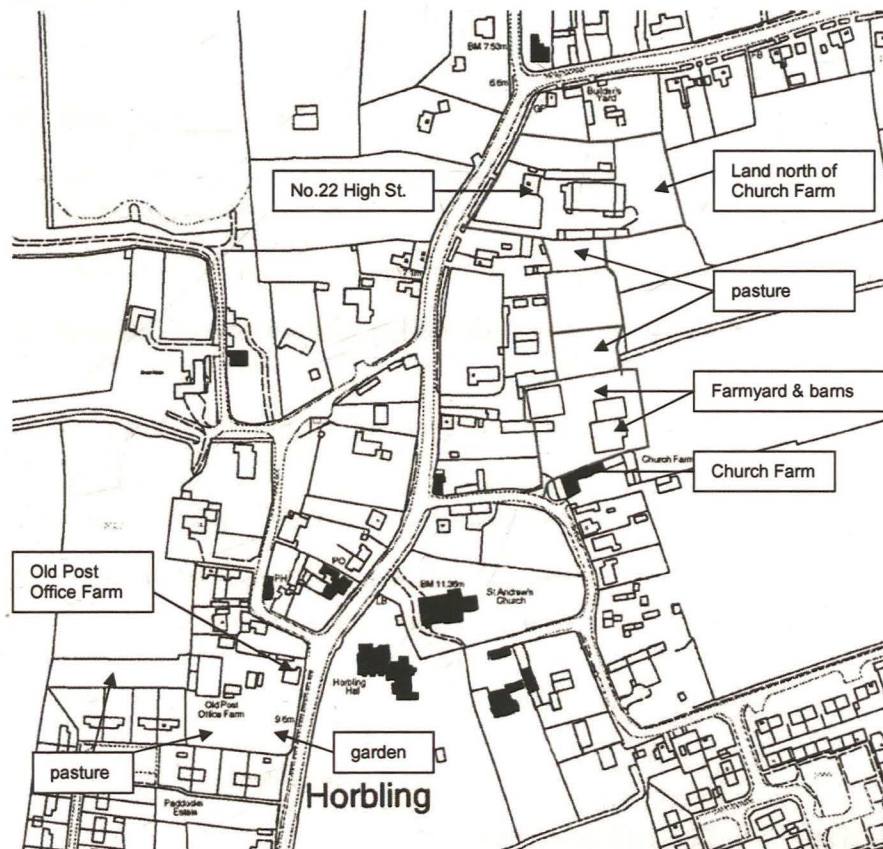


Figure 2: Area of proposed residential development highlighted (Scale: NTS). Listed buildings have been blocked in. Reproduced from the Development Plan provided by Carter Jonas Property Consultants 12/03/02.

3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aim of the desk-based assessment is to provide information on the extent, character, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of archaeological deposits within the area of the proposed development. This must take into account all known previous land uses. In addition, it must be established what impact the development might have on any archaeological remains. The desk-based assessment should, once the above information has been gathered, help provide an informed planning decision or suggest whether further stages of work are necessary.

3.2 All work follows the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Code of Conduct and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments*.

4 Methodology

The following sources have been consulted to assess previous land use and archaeological potential.

- 1) Archaeological records (Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record).
- 2) Previous maps of the area (Lincolnshire Archives, University of Leicester Geography Map Library).
- 3) Geological maps (University of Leicester, Geology Map Library).
- 4) Historical background material (Lincolnshire Archives, University of Leicester Main Library, Heritage Lincolnshire Library).
- 5) Site plan (Crown Estate Commissioners development plan)
- 6) The Lincolnshire fens and fen edge north of Bourne. Unpublished Thesis by B.B. Simmons, 1975.

5 Geology and Topography

5.1 The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 127 indicates that at Old Post Office Farm the underlying geology is likely to consist of Oxford Clay. The geology beneath Church Farm and land to the north of Church Farm is Fen sand and gravel. There is some potential for the survival of organic remains in the Oxford Clay. Over sands and gravels organic survival is unlikely unless remains are found below the water-table. Horbling lies at *c.10m* Ordnance Datum at the southern end of the village, sloping down to *c.7m* O.D. to the north.

6 Summary of the Archaeological Results

6.1 Archaeological Background

The following are details of relevant sites close to the proposed residential development and are included in the SMR (*figure 3* and *Table 1*).

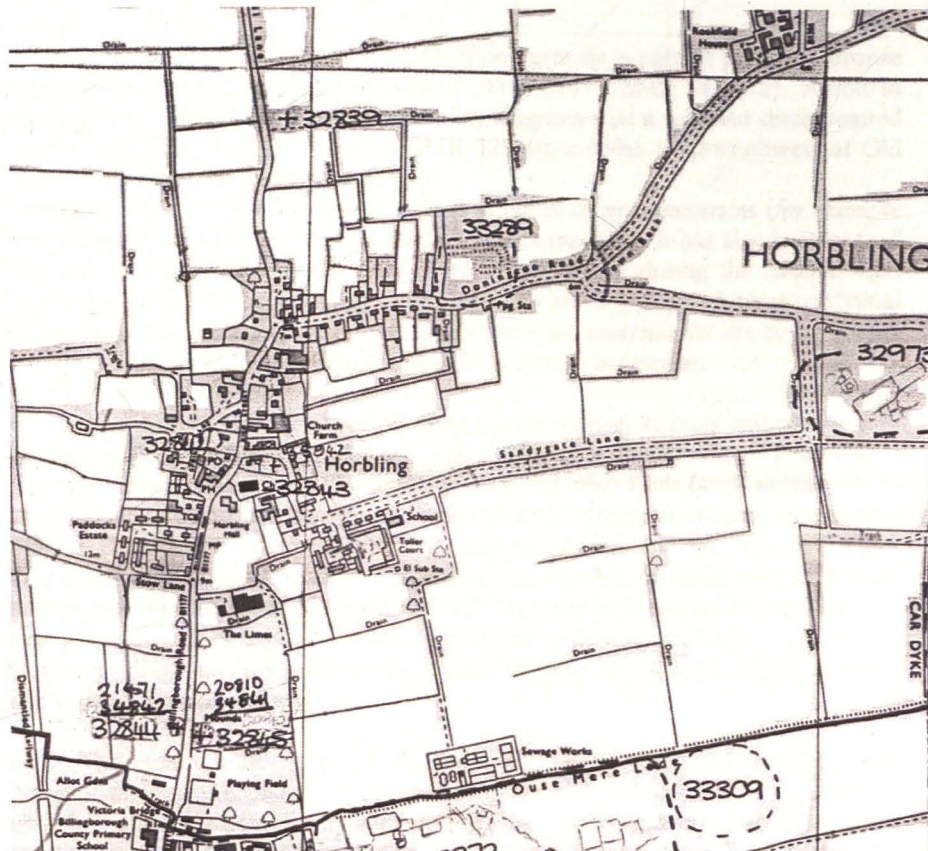


Figure 3: Plan of the development areas within Horbling showing location of Sites and Monuments Records references. Reproduced with permission from Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Records. Not to scale.

Table 1: List and location of Sites and Monuments Records entries.

SMR Ref.	NGR	Description
32844	TF11753469	One of two large mounds, one on each side of the Horbling-Billingborough road. Used as archery butts but are now scheduled as bowl barrows (Scheduling Document 20810 21471).
32845	TF11793468	As above.
32973	TF128274	Scatter of Romano-British and/or possibly Saxon pottery (43 AD to 409 AD).
32843	TF11883517	St. Andrew's Church and ditch (medieval 1066 AD to 1539 AD).
32839	TF11953589	Find spot of Edward I penny (medieval 1200 AD to 1299 AD).
32840	TF113350	Scatter of Roman pottery (43 AD to 409 AD). (West of dismantled railway, south of Stow Lane).
32841	TF113350	Ridge and furrow (medieval 1066 AD to 1539 AD). (as above)
32842	TF11803527	A stone cistern with possible medieval origins (1066 AD to 1539).
33289	TF125355	Moated site surviving as an earthwork (medieval 1066 AD to 1539 AD).
34841	TF11803468	Same as SMR Ref. 32845
34842	TF11761347 02	Same as SMR Ref. 32844
35042	TF11903522	Undated features (pit and ditch) seen during a watching brief on land adjacent to Sandygate Lane. (Archaeological Project Services, 1997, HSL97; Rep. 40/97).

6.1.1 Some 400m to the south of Post Office Farm lie a pair of probable Bronze Age bowl barrows (Scheduling Document 20810 21471, SMR 34841/2). A note in the Horbling Parish File (Heritage Lincoln) suggests that a rounded ditch centred on National Grid Ref. TF 116 355 (SMR 32840), c.400m west-southwest of Old Post Office Farm, may also be a barrow.

Bowl barrows are often found with a great range of other monuments (*for example* other barrows, henges, avenues, cremation cemeteries *etc.*). It has also been argued (English Heritage, Monuments Class Descriptions) that, during the Bronze Age, bowl barrows were frequently set in what are described as "sacred areas" or "ritual areas" in which a variety of burial and ceremonial monuments are to be found. Horbling village could lie within the bounds of such a landscape.

6.1.2 400m west of Horbling village centre Roman pottery scatters and other artefacts have been found (SMR Refs. 32840). Notes in the Horbling Parish File (Heritage Lincolnshire) state "From the pottery and other finds (such as lead weights) we must deduce that the site was a trading settlement of some size, even a town". The extents of the probable settlement are not known.

1km to the east of Horbling, within Horbling Fen, another similar scatter of Roman pottery has also been located (SMR Ref. 32973). Aerial photographs show an extensive network of features, including possible settlement activity.

Horbling village, and the proposed development areas therefore lie within an area of intensive Roman activity.

6.1.3 The extant building of St. Andrew's church is cruciform in shape, late Norman to Perpendicular in date (SMR 32843). The cemetery surrounding the church is currently bounded by the curving Sandygate Lane to the north, east and south. To the west it is bounded by the Billingborough Road (figure 2). This layout can also be seen on the Tithe Award of 1765. However, during an archaeological watching brief (Archaeological Projects Services, 1997) a large east west ditch was identified within the cemetery, dated to the 12th century. This suggests that the cemetery boundary has moved over the course of time and it is not inconceivable that the cemetery may once have extended beyond its current dimensions.

To the west of the village medieval ridge and furrow has been identified (SMR 32841). The ridge and furrow can also be seen to survive in the pasture to the rear of Old Post Office Farm and to the east of Church Farm (beyond the area of the proposed development). To the north east of the village earthworks of a medieval moated site survive (SMR 33289). To the north a silver penny of Edward I was found (SMR 32839) and within the village a stone cistern survives (SMR 32842), also thought to be medieval.

6.1.4 During the archaeological watching brief undertaken by Archaeological Projects Services (1997) to the north of the church an undated north south ditch was observed.

6.2 Historical Background

It has been suggested (Cameron 1998) that the name Horbling consists of the prefix **horh** 'filth, dirt', 'mud' (no doubt descriptive of the situation of the settlement), **Billa** a persons name, and the old English suffix **-ingas**. The same Billa family is thought to also have given their name to neighbouring village of Billingborough.

The entry in Domesday Book for Horbling says 'In Horbling, Thorkil had four carucates of land to the geld. [There is] land for as many ploughs. Now Walter has it of the archbishop. In demesne [is] 1 plough; and 9 villans and 1 bordar and 8 sokemen having 3 ploughs. There is a church, and 20 acres of meadow. The arable land [is] 1 league long and 1 broad. TRE worth £6; now 40s.; tallage 20s.' (The Lincolnshire Domesday, 1992). This suggests Horbling was then a fairly small settlement.

No further relevant historical references to the prosperity of Horbling were found in Lincolnshire Archives, Heritage Lincoln Library or Leicester University Library.

6.3 Map Evidence.

The earliest maps available are the tithe maps of 1765 and an Estate Map based on the 1765 Tithe Award (figures 4 & 5). Both maps show a broadly similar layout. The farmhouse on Post Office Farm appears to be in the same location as it is today, fronting onto the Billingborough Road at the northern extent of a roughly square plot. A lane or track ran behind the plot, beyond which were fields and open country.

The Church Farm development area lies in what was then the backs of a series of strip plots fronting onto the High Street. No.22 The High Street, now the farmhouse in the land to the north of Church Farm, can be seen to be in the same location. To the east of the development lay open farmland, as it does today.

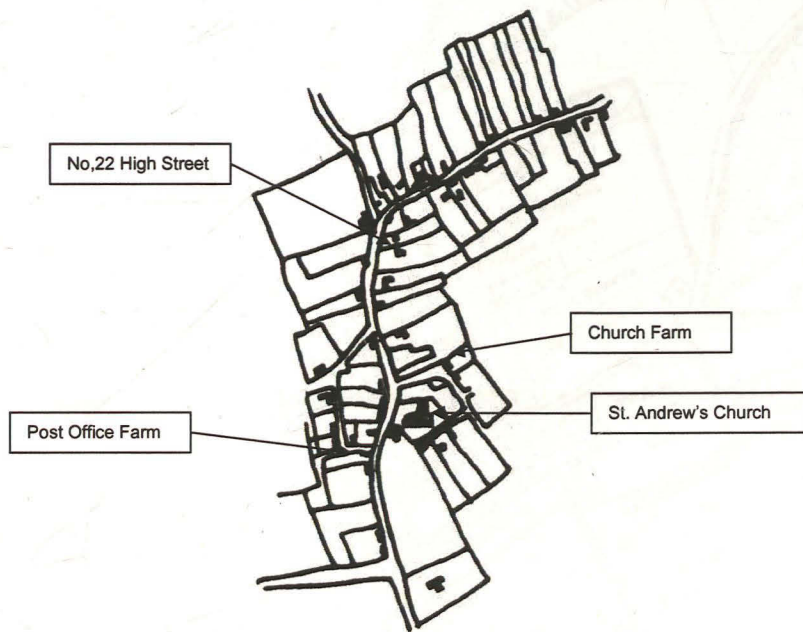


Figure 4: 1765 title award map of Horbling, Lincolnshire, hand-traced from original held at Lincolnshire Archives.

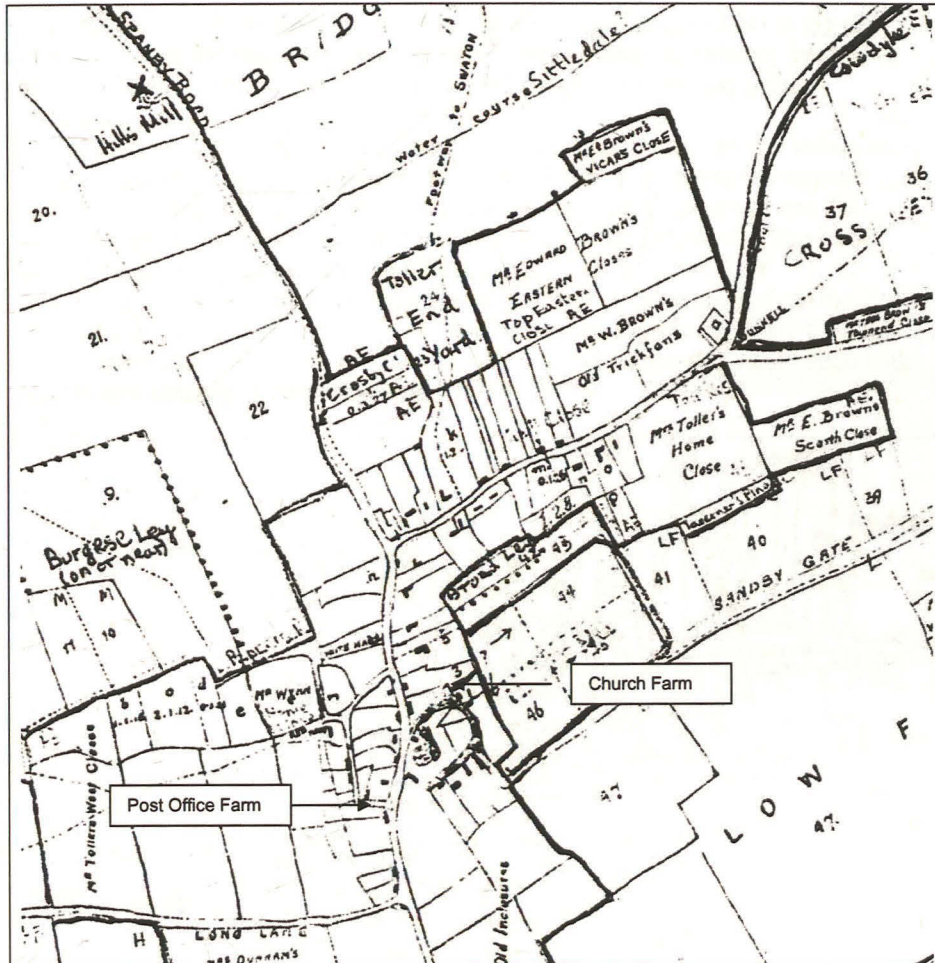


Figure 5: 1765 Estate map of Horbling village, Lincolnshire (not to scale).
Heritage Lincolnshire.

The first edition 25" to the mile Ordnance Survey map, dating to 1891 is the next depiction of the development area. By that time the village had almost doubled in size, developing to the west around Spring Lane and to the east along the Donington Road.

The farmhouse at Post Office Farm remains in the same location as that shown on the Tithe Award map, although outbuildings had been added along the northern boundary and the 'square' plot appears to have been divided (possibly into the farmyard, garden and pasture areas that can be seen today, Figure 2). The track behind the farm has disappeared and the plot has extended to the west.

In the farmyard at Church Farm a (?)barn can be seen in the farm yard. To the north of the yard appears to be an orchard in what is now pasture. No.22 the High Street appears to be in the same location. Many of the outbuildings associated with No.22 have also appeared by this time.



Figure 6: The first edition 25" to the mile Ordnance Survey map, dating to 1891, Horbling, Lincolnshire. University of Leicester Geography Map Library.

The 1904 second edition O.S. map shows that Horbling slightly increased in size, particularly to the south and once again to the east along the Donington Road. However, with the exception of an additional outbuilding in the farmyard of No.22 High Street the arrangement of buildings and land use within the development areas appear unchanged.

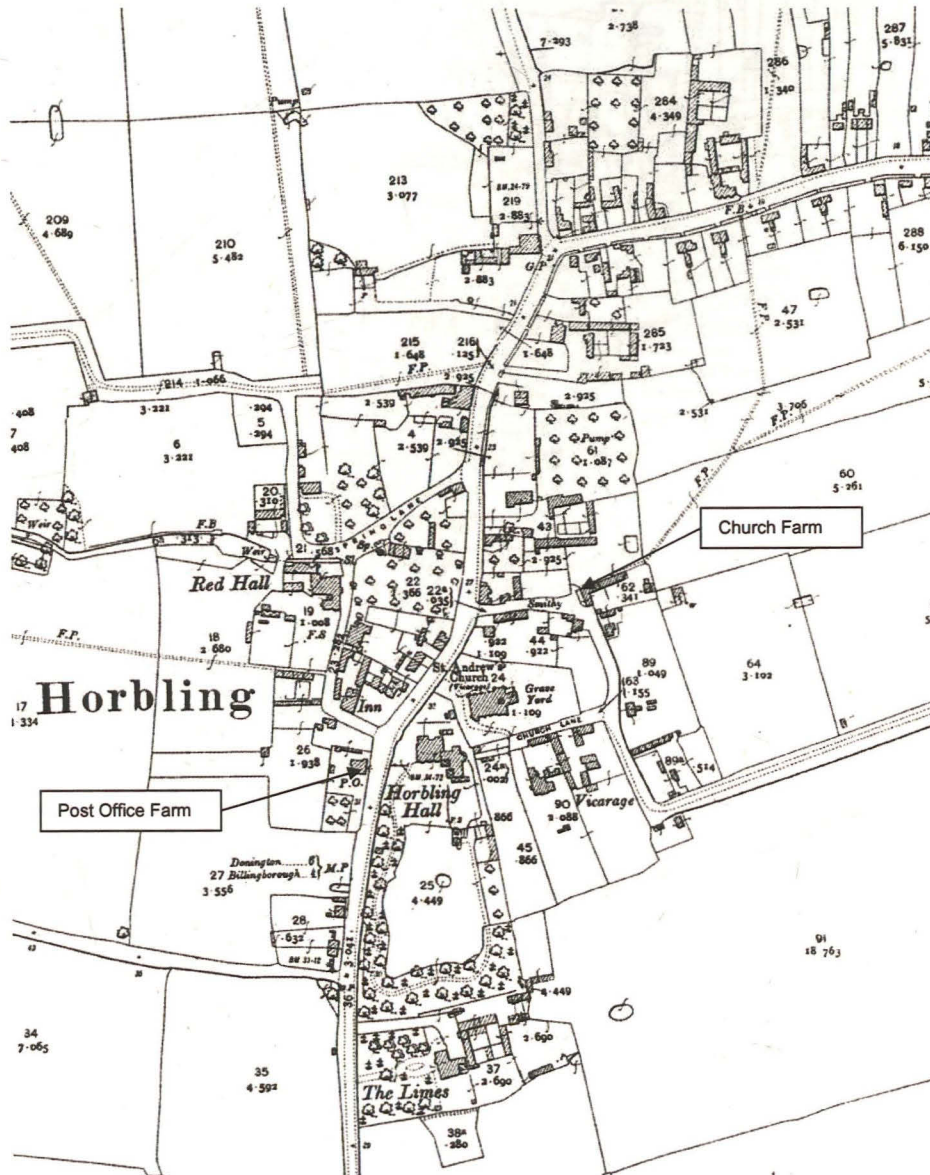


Figure 7: 1904 map of Horbling, Lincolnshire (NTS). University of Leicester Geography Map Library.

The 1906 O.S. map again shows the arrangement of buildings and land use within the development area to be unchanged.

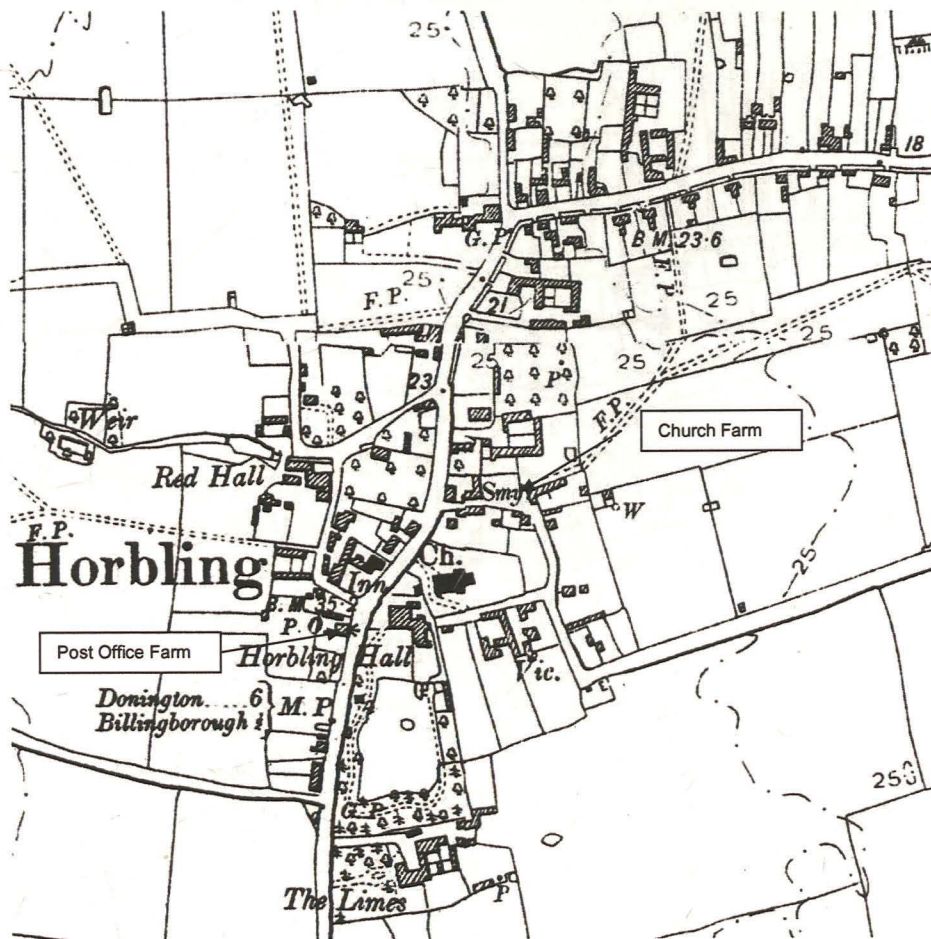


Figure 8: 1906 map of Horbling, Lincolnshire (NTS). University of Leicester Geography Map Library.

The 1947 additions to the 1906 O.S. map shows a large development to the east of Horbling on Sandgate Lane. The orchard to the north of Church farm appears to have reverted to pasture, but otherwise the land use and buildings within the proposed development area appear unchanged.

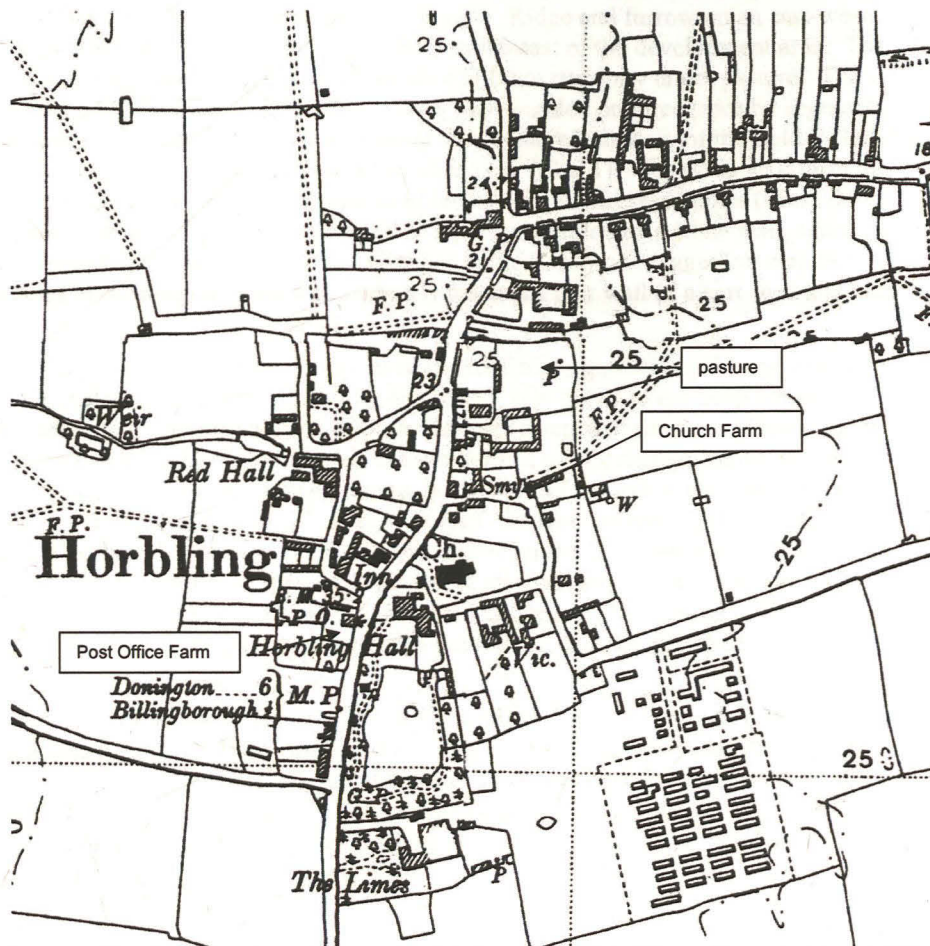


Figure 9: 1906 with additions in 1947 map of Horbling, Lincolnshire (NTS). University of Leicester Geography Map Library.

6.4 Site Visit

A site visit was undertaken on 22.04.02 (figures 10 & 11).

6.4.1 Church Farm farmyard was largely an open yard surfaced with concrete and/or hardcore with a modern barn towards the east of the plot and 19th century brick outbuildings in the northwest corner of the yard. Ridge and furrow on an east-west alignment could be seen to survive in fields to the east of the development area. To the north of the yard were two small fields which are currently under pasture. The northern portion of the more northerly field was bounded on three sides by segments of stone walls. The segment of wall along the southern boundary of the field included first floor timber joists embedded in the stonework (Illus 1). The stone wall forming the eastern boundary of the field included large, skilfully dressed stones (Illus. 2). The northern boundary of the field was also partly bounded by a stone wall, again including some large stone blocks. Changes in the stonework suggest an entrance way has been filled-in. This wall currently forms the rear wall of a cart shed and barn (Illus. 3).

Along the front elevation of the cart shed the roof was supported by 5 large oak posts (c.1' diameter). The posts were all 'in-the-round' (*i.e.* they had not been converted into 'timbers'). Down each side of the posts were a series of joints, *c.* 50cms. apart, which appeared to be early forms of chase tenons (a wedge shaped cut that would have completely housed a brace). Some, but not all, of the joints were secured with large (c.1") wooden dowels (Illus. 4). Joints of this type are rarely attested but similar joints have been noted on a Saxo-Norman timber bridge in Leicestershire (Cooper and Ripper *forthcoming*). Detailed examination of all the joints was not possible within the restrictions of a site visit, but the joints did not appear to be regular. This suggests that each joint was cut as it was needed rather than as part of a prefabricated structure.

To the north of the cart shed lay a group of mostly 20th century farm buildings surfaced with either concrete or hardcore. The outbuildings closest to No.22 High Street were late 18th century brick buildings. The farmhouse (No. 22) appears on the 1765 Tithe Award map, but may have earlier origins. The farmhouse was occupied and inspection of the property was not possible. To the west of the farmhouse (along the High Street) were lawned gardens.

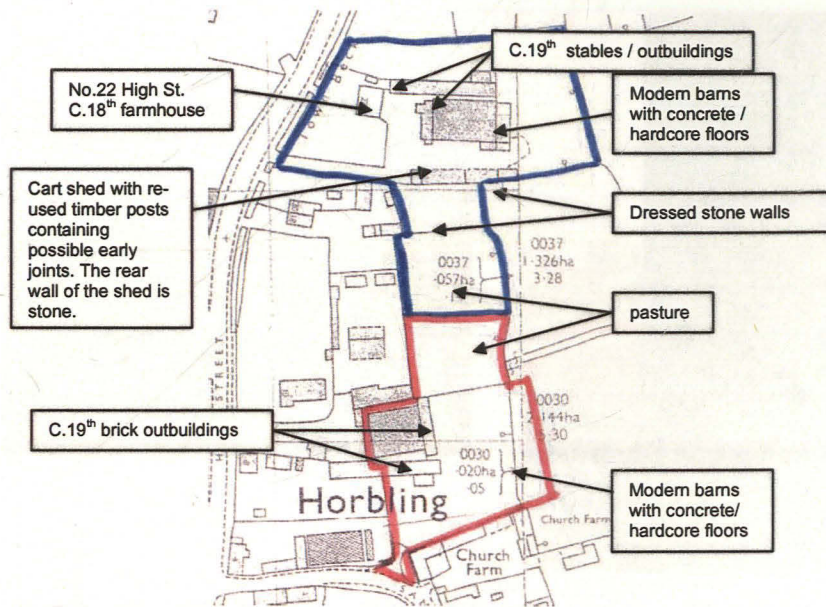


Figure 10: Church Farm and land to the north of Church Farm showing current land use. Extract of development map provided by Carter Jonas Property Agents.



Illus 1: Southern boundary of northern pasture field. Note the surviving first floor joists within the wall.



Illus 2: Eastern boundary wall of northern pasture field including many large well dressed blocks. Note also the scatter of stones within the field.



Illus 3: View looking north across the pasture fields to the north of Church Farm. The rear stone wall of the cart shed can be seen towards the centre of the picture.



Illus 4: Upright, un-converted oak post with early (possibly Saxo-Norman) chase mortice. Note the use of large wooden dowel pegs which suggest the joint was cut before the timber was seasoned. The post is currently supporting the roof of the cart shed to the rear of No.22 High Street.

6.4.2 Post Office Farm was a probable 18th century brick farmhouse fronting onto the Billingborough Road (figure 11, Illus. 5). The property is currently occupied and access for a detailed inspection was not possible. To the south of the farmhouse lay mostly lawned gardens with occasional fruit trees. To the west of the garden lay a small area of pasture. Behind the farmhouse lay an open hardcore yard and 20th century barns with concrete floors. A small group of *c* late 19th century brick outbuildings survived along the northern boundary of the property. To the west of the barns a narrow strip of ridge and furrow survives, separated by a hedge and ditch (Illus. 6). The ridge and furrow was on a north south alignment and could be seen to extend northwards into neighbouring fields.

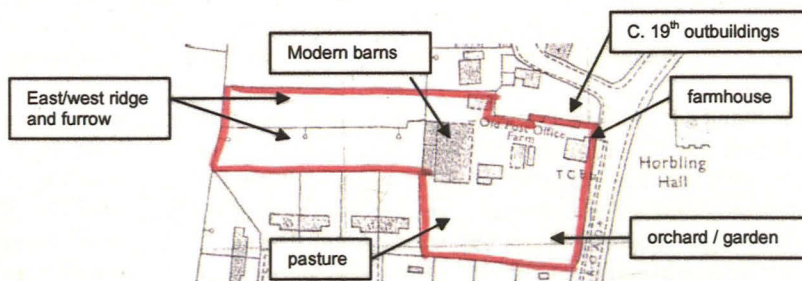


Figure 11: Post Office Farm showing current land use. Extract of development map provided by Carter Jonas Property Agents.



Illus 5: Rear (west) elevation of Post Office Farm.



Illus 6: North-south ridge and furrow surviving in land to the rear of Post Office Farm.

6.5 Photographic data

Photographs held in the collections at both the Lincolnshire SMR and at Heritage Lincolnshire were examined but none showed the area of the proposed developments.

6.6 Geotechnical information

No geotechnical data was available.

7 Appraisal of the Development Impact

7.1 Archaeological remains are likely to include:-

Church Farm. The remains of a c.19th century barn in Church Farm farmyard, below the modern barns (see figure 6). There is a possibility of medieval properties and plot boundaries, particularly fronting along Sandygate Lane. It is also conceivable that St. Andrew's Churchyard once extended into Church Farm, and human remains could survive. The c. 19th century brick outbuildings may be of interest to vernacular architects and, if demolished, should be more thoroughly assessed.

Land north of Church Farm. The standing walls surrounding the small field to the south of this development area may be the surviving remains of a substantial building. Scattered stones within the field suggest further subterranean foundations may also exist. The stonework may also be of intrinsic interest to vernacular architects. No.22 High Street is a c.18th century farmhouse, with possibly earlier origins. The c. 19th century brick outbuildings may also be of interest to vernacular architects and, if demolished, should be more thoroughly assessed.

The re-used timber posts within the cart shed could possibly have very early origins. If dated they could prove to be an important addition to the rarely attested *corpus* of Saxo-Norman jointing techniques. If they proved to be later woodworking methods they would be equally important to studies of the longevity of carpentry practices.

Old Post Office Farm. Medieval properties and plot boundaries could survive within the development area, particularly fronting along the Billingborough Road. Ridge and furrow survives as earthworks to the rear of the property and form a standing monument to the historic landscape. Old Post Office Farm farmhouse is a probable 18th century building with possible earlier origins. The brick outbuildings are c.19th century.

7.2 Horbling village lies within a rich historic landscape. Two bowl barrows to the south of the village allude to a prehistoric ritual landscape and Roman pottery scatters to both the west and east of the village suggest intensive Roman settlement. The likely impact of these on the development area is not known but the presence of archaeological remains is a possibility.

8 Conclusion

8.1 The desk-based assessment indicates that the village of Horbling lies within a rich historic landscape with possible activity from the prehistoric onwards in the vicinity. Situated within the historic core of Horbling the development areas lie close to the Norman church of St. Andrew's and are loosely surrounded by medieval ridge and furrow. The standing farmhouse buildings are c. 18th century and may have earlier origins. A building appraisal would clarify their architectural importance. There is also a likelihood of further medieval structural remains, particularly along surviving street frontages. Cartographic evidence suggests foundations of an early barn (c. 18th century) may survive in Church Farm farmyard.

The standing stone walls in the development north of Church Farm appear to be of a high quality (too well-built for boundary walls?) and surviving floor joists suggest a former standing building. Loose stones within the field suggest the possibility of further foundations.

The oak posts re-used in the cart shed in the development area north of Church Farm may be of national significance if they prove to have an early date. Even as later timbers they are important either as examples of local craftsmanship or as examples of the continuing use of an early joint type.

8.2 Map evidence and the site visit indicate that the area has not been substantially built on during the 20th century, excepting the modern barn constructions.

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1:2500 maps Leicestershire Sheet Nos. XXXV.12 (1903 and 1928).

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04.04.02