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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT LAND OFF HIGH STREET,
BASSINGHAM,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BAHS 07)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT LAND OFF HIGH STREET,
BASSINGHAM,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BAHS 07)**

**Work Undertaken For
Mr P Tully**

November 2007

Report Compiled by
Jennifer Wood MA BSc (Hons) AIFA

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City and County Museum Accession No: LCNCC: 2007.214
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES



APS Report No. 140/07

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High Street, Bassingham,
Lincolnshire
(BAHS 07)

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at High Street, Bassingham, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the footing trenches of a single dwelling.

The area of investigation occurred within an area of known archaeological activity within the local vicinity, and within close proximity to the historic core of Bassingham village.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural, undated and modern deposits. Undated deposits included an unidentified feature and a layer of redeposited subsoil/natural near the southern extent of the excavated area.

No finds were retrieved during the investigation.

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 Mr Paul Tully to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new drainage works at land off High Street, Bassingham, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application

07/0601/07. The watching brief was carried out on 11th October 2007.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Bassingham is located 12km northeast of Newark and 12km southwest of Lincoln. Bounded by the River Witham on the west, the village is located in the administrative district of North Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The development site is located on the western side of the High Street in the village core, centred on National Grid Reference SK 9113 6010.

Local soils are of the Fladbury 2 Association, typically mottled clayey soils, and the Blackwood Association, slightly stony typical sandy gley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 196; 127). These are developed on a drift geology of Older River Sands and Gravels which in turn seal a solid geology of Jurassic Lower Lias Clays, shale and limestone (GSGB 1973).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The earliest archaeological activity within the Bassingham area has been characterised by three spot finds of stone artefacts of possible Neolithic date. A dolerite adze was recovered from along Tolgate Lane, *c.* 700m to the Southeast of the development site. A Neolithic group 1 stone axe (SMR. A:NK07.7) was recovered *c.* 400m to the south of the current development and a flint chisel (SMR.D:NK07.5) was found *c.* 1.5km to the north (Hall, 2002).

In 1995, excavations were undertaken *c.* 200m to the west of the current development site. A 3rd century Roman domestic enclosure and part of a cemetery were revealed during the excavation (Cope-Faulkner, 1995). Further isolated finds of Romano-British date have been recovered within the Bassingham area. A Domitian coin (AD81-96) had been found

800m to the south of the development site and a gilt bronze crescent headed pin was found through dredging of the River Witham, to the west (Hall, 2002).

Bassingham is first mentioned within the Domesday Survey (1086 AD). The land was in the possession of the King and Earl Morcar, with two mills and a church present (Morgan and Thorne 1986).

The name, Bassingham, was derived from Old English and refers to "*the ham or settlement of Basa's people*" (Cameron 1998), suggesting a probable Saxon origin for the modern settlement.

In the church of St Michael, predominantly dating to the 13th century, a decorated stone font dating to the Anglo-Saxon period is present, suggesting earlier activity predating the current church (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 127).

Excavations at Hall Field (Cope-Faulkner 1995) followed by a watching brief (JSAC 1997), west of the site identified a 12th - 13th century manorial complex, comprising a stone-built aisled hall and garderobe within a moated enclosure with a dovecote located to the east. The manor fell into disuse in the mid 18th century (Cope-Faulkner 1995).

More recent archaeological works have identified further post-medieval remains at Manor Farm (Hall 2002), c. 650m to the south of the development site and at 3 Water Lane, directly to the north of the development site (Failes, 2007).

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

Footing trenches for the new dwelling were excavated by machine, utilising a 0.60m toothed ditching bucket for the external walls and a 0.45m toothed ditching bucket for the internal wall trenches.

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.

The records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated deposits
Phase 3	Modern deposit

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

The earliest deposit encountered was the friable/loose, coarse yellow-orange natural sands (006) and (009) (Fig. 5, Sections 1-3, Plate 4).

Overlying the natural sands in the southern extent of the excavated area was a mixed deposit of patchy yellow-brown silty sand (005) (Fig. 5, Section 1, Plates 2-3), probably representing a redeposited natural/subsoil.

Within the section at the southern extent of the excavated area was the partial profile of a feature [004] (Fig. 5, Section 2, Plate 3). The feature had a vertical sloping side on the eastern extent, but the base and the western side were not exposed. [004] was 1.97m wide and reached a minimum of 0.40m in depth. The feature contained a sterile deposit of friable, fairly dark greyish-brown, slightly silty sand, with occasional rounded gravel inclusions (003).

Sealing these deposits was a uniform layer of friable, greyish-brown, slightly silty-sand, with moderate rounded gravel inclusions (002) and (008) representing a subsoil, (Fig. 5, Sections 1-3, Plates 2-4).

Overlying this deposit was a layer of friable, dark grey, slightly silty-sand, with occasional small rounded gravel inclusions and topped with turf (001) and (007), representing the topsoil (Fig.5, Sections 1-3, Plates 2-4).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprised coarse sand with occasional gravel inclusions. Undated deposits were represented by a layer of mixed redeposited natural and subsoil, through which was cut an unidentified feature.

Modern deposits, subsoil, topsoil and turf sealed the undated deposits.

No other archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were retrieved from the investigation.

7. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was undertaken at High Street, Bassingham, as the site lay close to the core of the medieval village and in an area where Romano-British and post-Medieval finds have previously been made.

However, only a sequence of natural and undated deposits, sub and topsoil were encountered during the watching brief.

No artefacts were retrieved during the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr P Tully for the commissioning of the work.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Mark Williams
 Site Supervisors: R. Garlant
 Photographic reproduction: S. Unsworth
 Illustration: S. Unsworth, J. Wood
 Post-excavation analysis: J. Wood

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

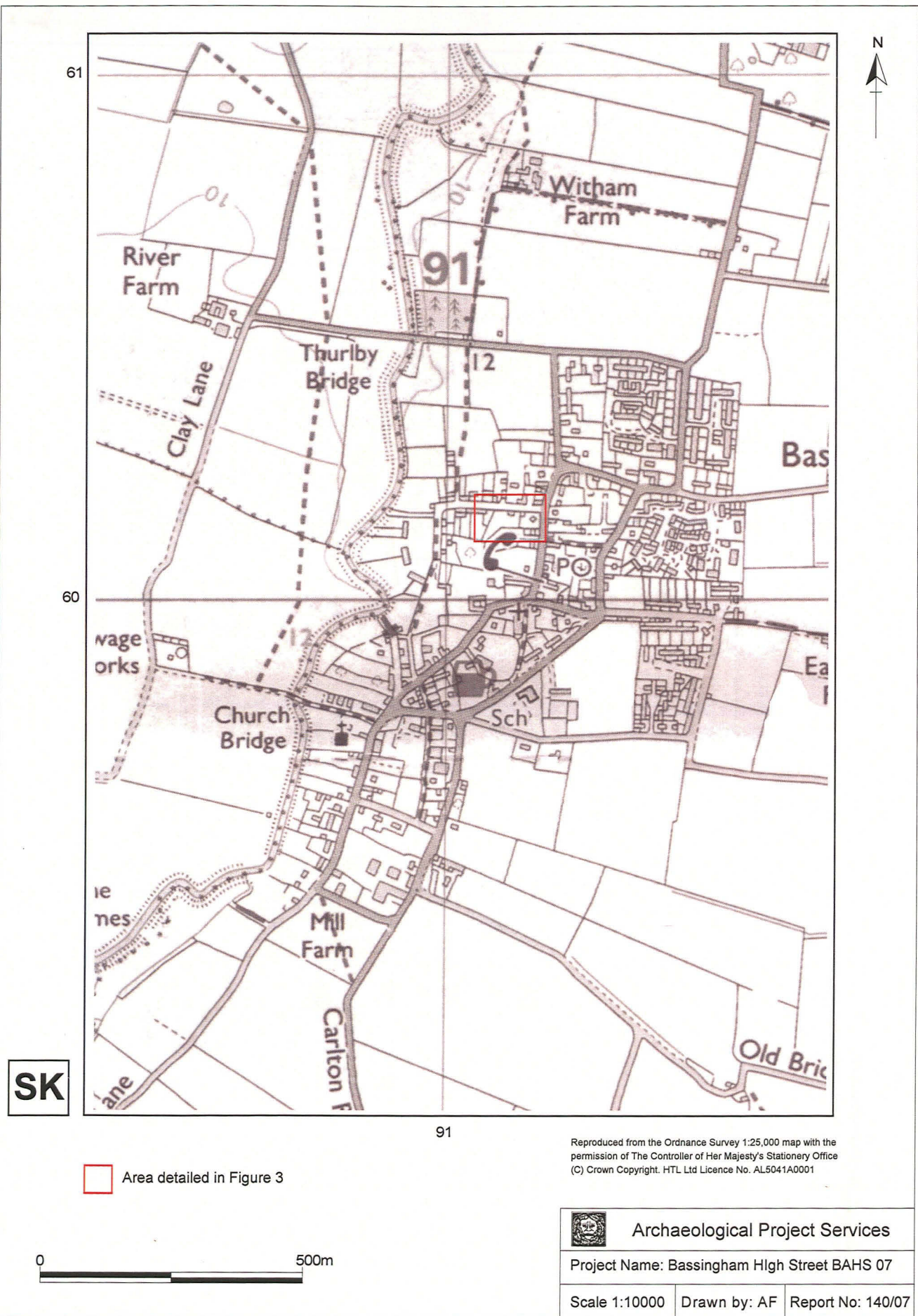
APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General location plan



SK

 Area detailed in Figure 3

0  500m

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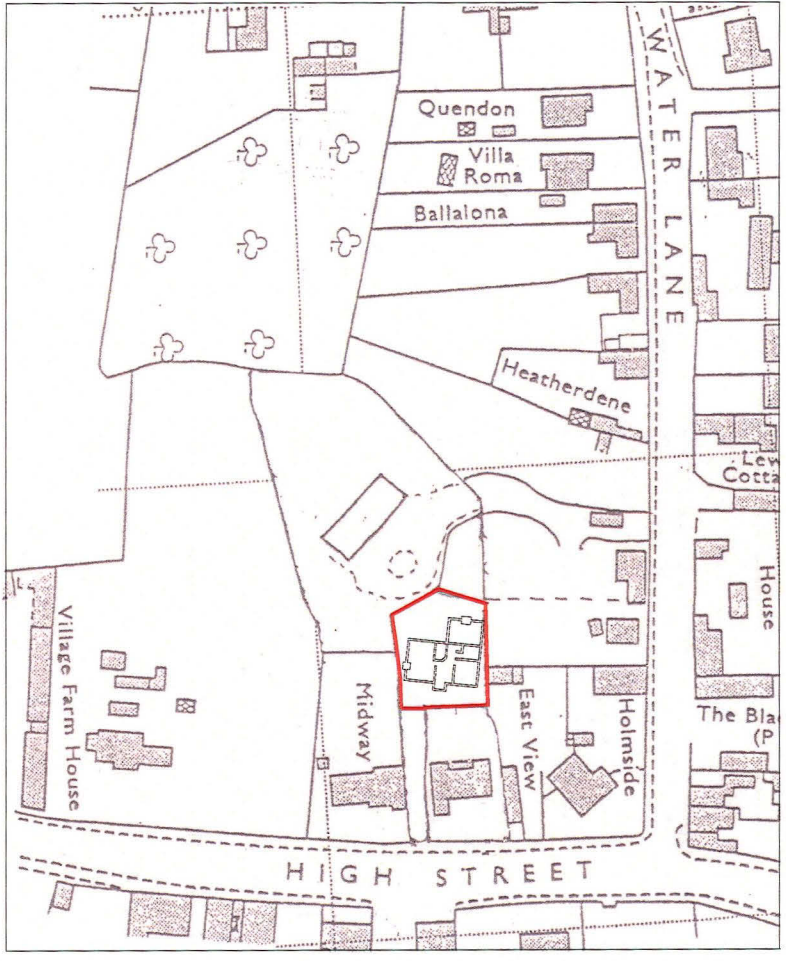
 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Bassingham High Street BAHS 07		
Scale 1:10000	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 140/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan



Development site



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Bassingham High Street

Scale 1:1250

Drawn by: JCW

Report No: 140/07

Figure 3. Development site

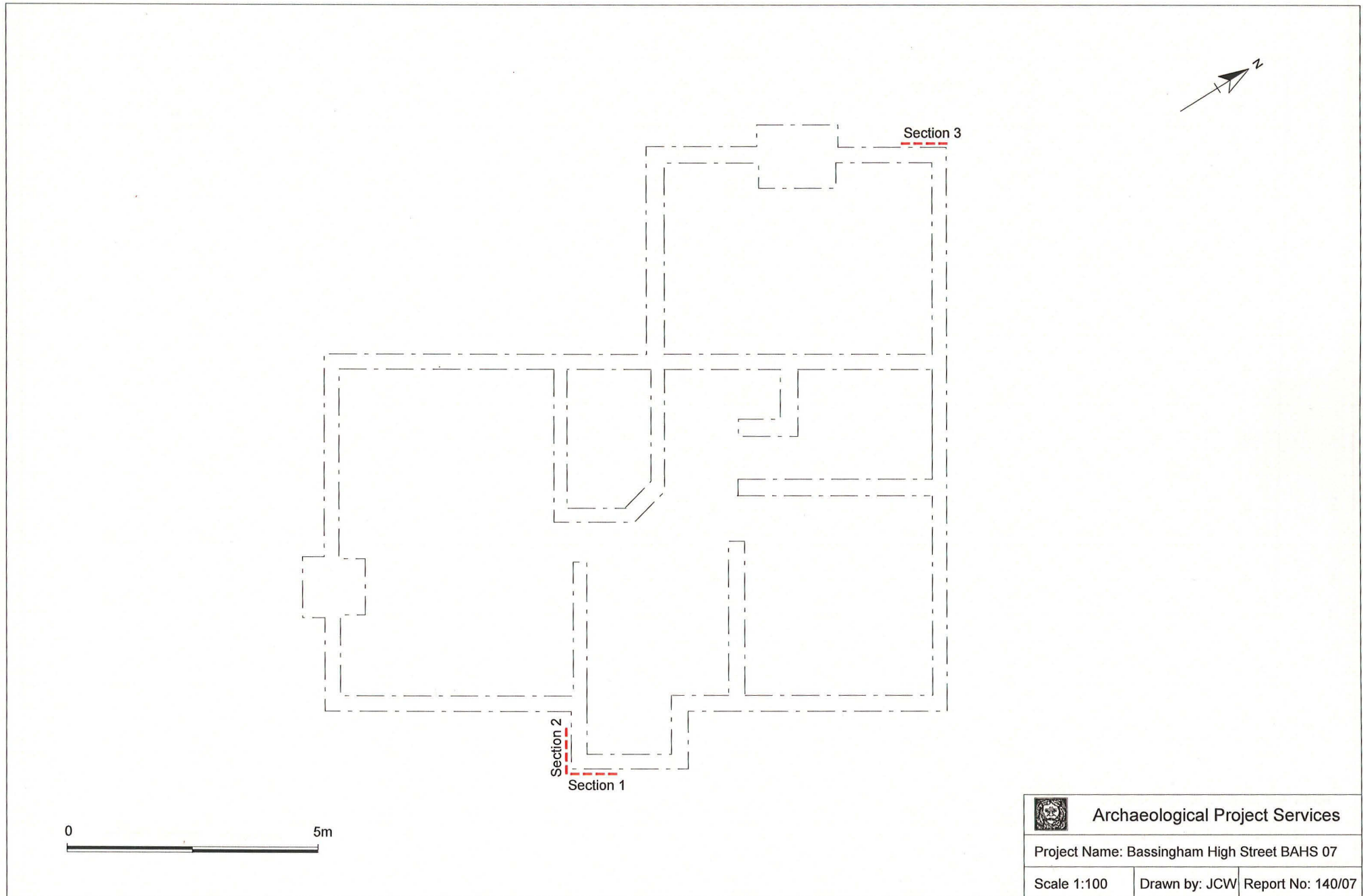



Figure 4. Footing trench plan

	Archaeological Project Services
Project Name: Bassingham High Street BAHS 07	
Scale 1:100	Drawn by: JCW Report No: 140/07

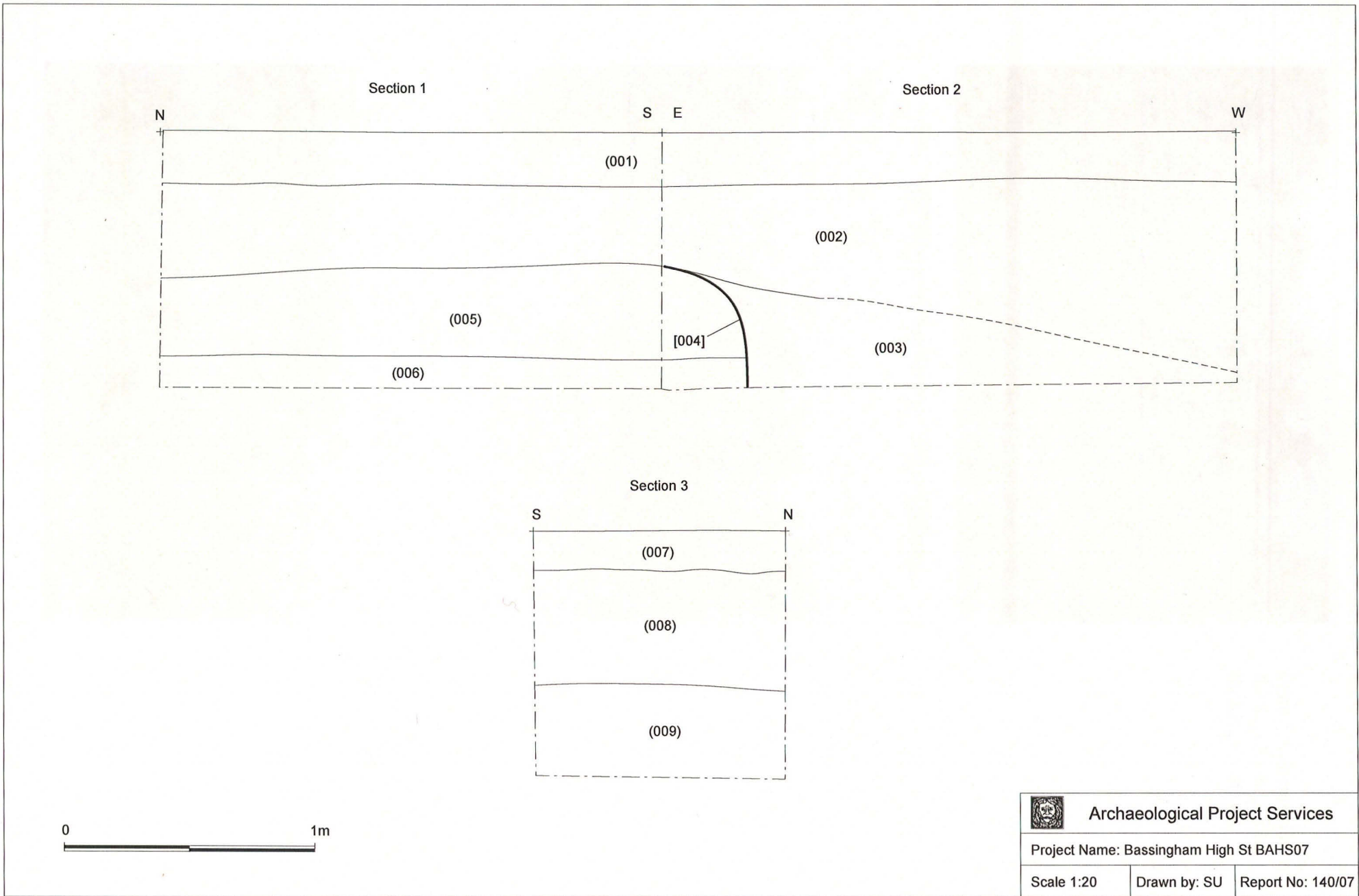


Figure 5. Representative sections



Plate 1, General view of the development site, looking southwest.



Plate 2, Representative deposits, Section 1, looking east.



Plate 3, Representative deposits and unknown feature [004], Section 2, looking south.



Plate 4, Representative deposits, Section 3, looking west.



Plate 5, General view of completed footing trenches, looking northwest.

Appendix 1

Context Summary

Bassingham, High Street (BAHS 07).

Trench 1

Context No	Type	Description	Thck (m)	Interpretation
001	Deposit	Friable, Dark Grey, slightly silty-sand. Occ small rounded gravel, Occ charcoal.	0.20	Lawn and garden soil
002	Deposit	Friable, Greyish- brown slightly silty sand, Moderate rounded gravel.	0.40	Subsoil
003	Deposit	Friable, fairly dark greyish-brown, slightly silty sand, occ rounded gravel	0.40	Fill of [004]
004	Cut	Unknown shape in plan. Steep straight sides, base not exposed.	0.40	Unknown feature, possibly associated with previously standing cottages
005	Deposit	Friable, patchy yellow-brown, silty sand.	0.40	Disturbed natural, former subsoil
006	Deposit	Friable/loose, yellow sand.	0.12	Natural sand
007	Deposit	Friable, dark grey, slightly silty-sand, occ small rounded gravel	0.15	Turf and topsoil (same as 001)
008	Deposit	Friable, greyish-brown, slightly silty-sand, moderate rounded gravel.	0.44	Subsoil
009	Deposit	Friable/loose, orange-yellow course sand and small gravel	0.32	Natural sand and gravel

Key to Abbreviations:

Occ- Occasional

Mod- Moderate

Frequ- Frequent

CBM- Ceramic Building Material

Appendix 2

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, e.g. [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. 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.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500 - 2250 BC.
Old English	The language used by the Saxon (q.v.) occupants of Britain.
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 1st 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 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

9	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Plan record sheet
1	Daily record sheet
1	Sheets of scale drawings

All primary records 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:

The Collection
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire
Danes Terrace
Lincoln
LN2 1LP

Accession Number: 2007.214

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BAHS 07

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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