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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

'THE CHASE', KINGSWAY, BOSTON

Site code: KB96
LCCM Accession No. : 12.96

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Prepared by CPH Palmer-Brown (Pre-Construct Archaeology) for Chestnut Homes Ltd.

July 1996

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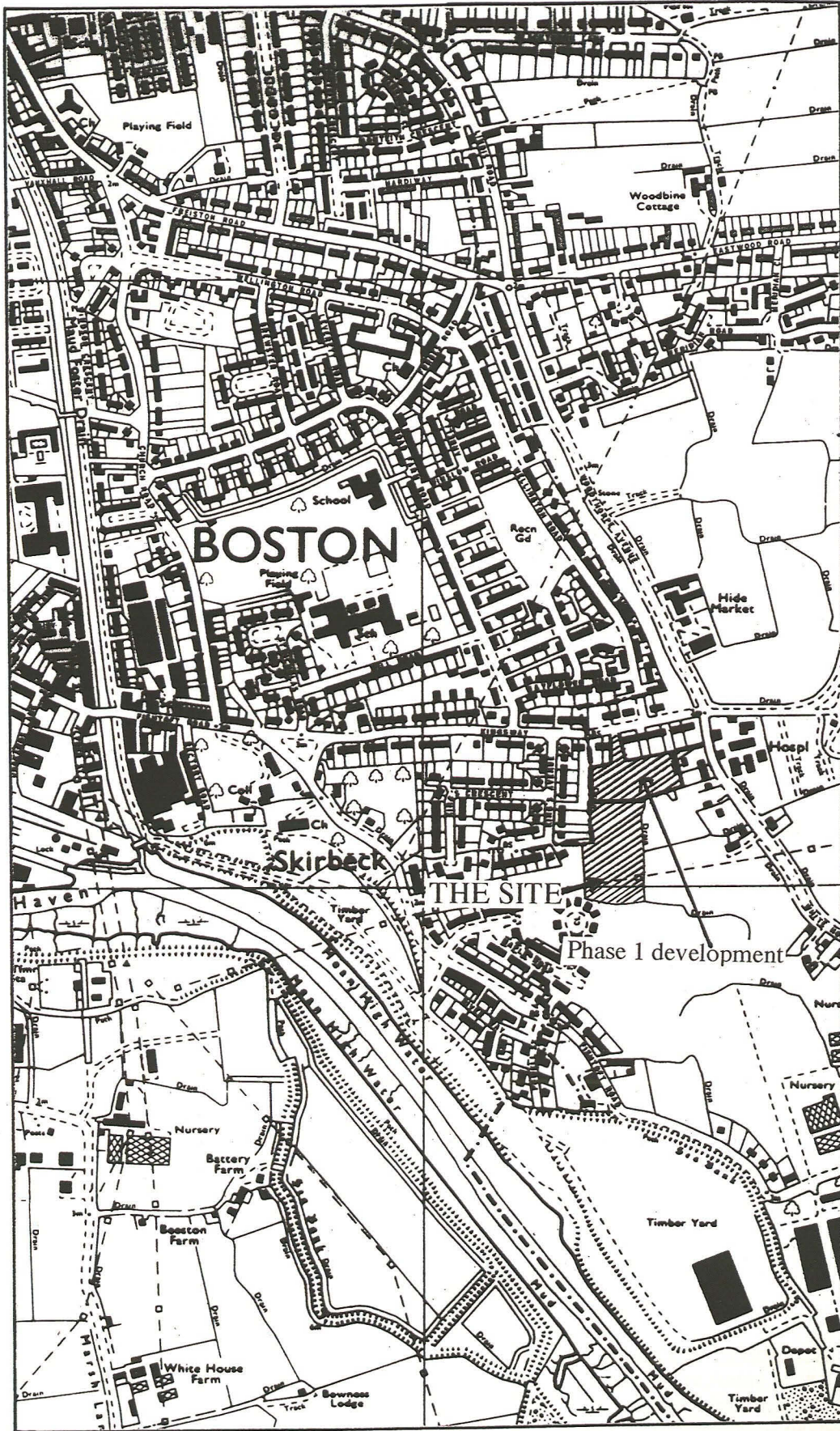
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Summary

- * *A planning application was submitted to Boston Borough Council for the construction of eighteen houses and six bungalows (incorporating access roads and infrastructure) (Fig. 1). The site of this development lies directly north of a field which contains important late Saxon and medieval settlement remains, and the permission was granted subject to archaeological conditions.*

- * *Following a staggered three-day selective recording brief, no significant archaeological deposits were exposed as a result of this development, and it is concluded therefore that the settlement remains exposed south of the development do not extend to the Kingsway site itself.*

Fig. 1 1:10,000 site location



1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place on January 16th, March 18th and July 1st, 1996 on the site of a residential development (Fig.'s 1 and 2). The works were commissioned by Chestnut Homes Ltd, and were centred on a project specification submitted to the Clients and the Community Archaeologist for Boston Borough Council on December 6th, 1995.

Information forming entries within the County Sites and Monuments Record, coupled with information from a recent field evaluation on land immediately west of White House Lane and south of the present site, suggested that late Saxon and (more probably) medieval remains could be disturbed as a result of the development.

An archaeological report, incorporating the results of gridded field walking and a magnetometer survey, was prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology in November 1995 (Palmer-Brown, unpublished). The combined results of this report suggested that the overall archaeological potential of the site was low. The Community Archaeologist did not request, therefore, that a programme of strategic trenching should be undertaken in advance of development. Instead, a requirement for a selective watching brief was issued (to include house plots 8, 9, 10, 14 and 15 and the eastern arm of Road 2 - See Fig. 2). The results of this watching brief are presented below.

2.0 Planning background

Chestnut Homes were granted outline planning permission for residential development on c. 2.5 hectares of land immediately south of Kingsway, centred on national grid reference TF 343 431. Full planning was granted following field evaluation, and subject to the undertaking of a watching brief during development.

An archaeological project brief was prepared following a detailed planning application (Ref. BO9/0455/95) for the erection of eighteen houses and six bungalows (this constitutes the first phase of a more extensive development).

3.0 Geology and topography

The site lies in a predominantly flat environment, where the height above sea level is approximately 3.0m OD. The modern landscape, which overlies deep silt deposits, conceals an earlier landscape, aspects of which were exploited in earlier periods. This concealed landscape is not flat, and explains the intermittent occurrence of surface or near-surface, as well as deeply-buried, archaeological sites dating to the Roman or prehistoric periods. Fishtoft lies in a slightly elevated position - on a moraine which marks the limit of the Devensian ice sheet (Lane, 1993, 30).

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The potential for this area was established in 1995 when a field evaluation on land immediately south of the present site exposed well-preserved (and regionally important) late Saxon remains of the late ninth/early tenth centuries AD: extensive enclosure ditches containing carbonised plant remains, pottery, and a well-preserved and potentially unique faunal assemblage. These deposits appeared to be confined to an area south of the existing development, though there was some evidence to suggest

that a medieval site, possibly an inland salt works, would extend into the eastern arm of the current development. The late Saxon settlement is considered to be of regional significance and may contain information pertinent to a more satisfactory explanation of settlement development in the Boston area in the early post-Roman period.

In November 1995, the entire development site was systematically field walked in 20m grids. Few artefacts were recovered from the site, and most of the finds consisted of late medieval or post-medieval pottery sherds displaying no evidence of clustering: no late Saxon forms were present in the assemblage, confirming the view that the settlement of this date lies further south by some 130m or more.

Subsequent to field walking, a selective magnetometer survey was carried out by GeoQuest Associates. This revealed a complex of ?natural/geological anomalies, as well as a service trench of modern origin. It also identified a linear, north-south, anomaly: interpreted as a line of 'ferrous litter' by the geophysicists, but now known to be part of a backfilled field boundary (below).

5.0 Aims

The principal aims of the watching brief were to ensure that any archaeological features or artefactual remains exposed or retrieved during groundworks were recorded and interpreted to standards accepted by the Community Archaeologist for Boston. A project specification, based on these objectives, was jointly agreed between Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), the Community Archaeologist and the Client.

The project brief required that the following areas should be monitored:-

the eastern arm of Road 2

house plots (including services) numbered 8, 9, 10, 14 and 15

6.0 Methodology

The site was inspected on three separate occasions, and each of the 'sensitive' areas defined in the brief (excluding plots 14/15) were closely monitored during development. Trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision.

The bases and sides of the construction/service trenches were intermittently cleaned and inspected for intrusive archaeological features.

A written account was prepared in the field using standard watching brief record sheets. Artefacts (stratified and unstratified) were collected and processed (washed, marked and bagged). Colour photographs were taken and features were planned and/or drawn in section at scale 1:20

Recording and excavation was undertaken by Simon Johnson and Colin Palmer-Brown of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

Fig. 2 1:500 outline plan of Phase 1 development, incorporating areas monitored during the watching brief

Based on Drawing KWSL/1b



7.0 Results

7.1 Road 2

The site was first inspected on January 16th, 1996. On this occasion, much of the development was in a boggy state; a predicament which made progress difficult for the building contractors. Much of a central sewer trench associated with Road 2 had, at this time, been excavated and backfilled and the cutting was approaching the terminal (east end) of the road. It was excavated to a depth approximately 2.0m beneath the top of the modern topsoil. Its width measured approximately 0.6m.

Although strictly outside of the brief, a substantial feature seen in the sides of this trench was investigated, which lay approximately 11.0m south of plot 4 (at the time the feature was exposed, the contractors had not reached the point at which the watching brief was scheduled to commence). Cleaning of the trench sides revealed the profile of a substantial ditch, [01], which was orientated north-south. Its width measured approximately 4.0m, and its depth exceeded 1.2m. Its profile was a classic U-shape. Its upper backfill (c. 0.6m depth) consisted of relatively clean, compact, light brown silty clay which contained fragments of animal bone and tile. Below this was a series of interleaving clay-silt and peat deposits; accumulations exceeding 0.6m in depth.



Ditch [01] exposed in east-west sewer trench, looking south-east

The location of ditch [01] was plotted at scale 1:500 and it was established that it corresponded to an anomaly detected by the magnetometer survey. As the anomaly aligned with a modern field boundary (Fig. 2), it was concluded that the ditch was of limited archaeological value. As it lay outside of the boundary defined for watching brief monitoring, a request for extra time was not made to the developers and an accurate 1:20 section drawing was not produced (a sketch is contained in the site archive).

7.2 House plots 8, 9 and 10

Foundation trenching for the dwellings took place on March 18th, 1996, and was monitored by Mr S Johnson of PCA.

No archaeological features were exposed in any of the three house plots. Construction trenches, which measured approximately 50cm in width, 65cm in depth, were cut through modern topsoil and natural silt-based deposits which may be summarised as follows:-

- 0 - 15cm of truncated silty topsoil
- /
- 10 - 20cm of yellow mottled sandy silt
- /
- 30 - 60cm+ of mid brown/grey sandy silt

7.3 House plots 14 and 15

Construction trenches for the plots were not monitored due to a misunderstanding on the part of the developers. However, following consultations with the Community Archaeologist, it was agreed that a retrospective inspection would take place: involving the excavation of a trench parallel with the east-west axis of the combined plots.

A trench measuring approximately 14m in length was excavated on the south sides of plots 14/15 (Fig. 2). No archaeological deposits were exposed and the recording brief was brought to a conclusion. Deposits exposed in the trench are summarised as follows:-

- 35cm of modern build-up: redeposited topsoil and builders rubble
- /
- 10cm of truncated topsoil
- /
- 42cm of dark grey clay-silt
- /
- 27cm+ of light brown silty clay.

No further archaeological recording took place on the site.

8.0 Summary and conclusions.

The watching brief has resulted in the exposure of no significant archaeological deposits and it is concluded therefore that, on this occasion, the works were of limited archaeological value. That said, the brief has confirmed the data derived from non-intrusive evaluation further to the south: that the late Saxon site sampled off White House Lane does not extend into the present development.

9.0 Acknowledgements

On behalf of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning body, Chestnut Homes Ltd.: in particular, Mr D Newton).

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Site Archive

10.2 References

10.1 Site Archive

The basic site archive comprises the following elements:

x3 watching brief record sheets

x1 film of colour prints

x1 (composite) 1:20 plan/sections drawing

Misc. notes and correspondence.

Primary records are currently with Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), though the paper and physical archive will be deposited at the City and County Museum within six months of completion of this report, together with a more detailed archive list.

10.4 References

Lane, T 1993 *East Anglian Archaeology* No. 66

Palmer-Brown, CPH 1995 (unpublished SMR/developer report) *White House Lane, Fishtoft: Archaeological Field Evaluation Report*