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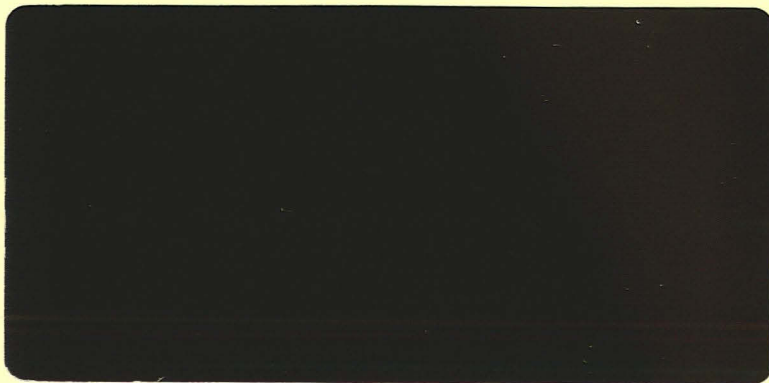
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF A DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE OF  
ABBEY PRINT,  
HIGH STREET,  
SPALDING  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SAP95)**



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OF A DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE OF  
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(SAP95)**

July 1996

Work Undertaken For  
David Parker Homes Ltd

Report Compiled  
by  
Paul Cope-Faulkner

A.P.S Report No. 27/96

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during foundation work on the former Abbey Print site at High Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the piling operations.*

*Historical sources suggest that Spalding began as a Royal Estate centre before the Domesday Survey, perhaps in the 7th or 8th centuries. The centre developed into a small town during the medieval period and was closely linked to with the Priory of St. Mary and St. Nicholas. Possibly founded before the Norman conquest, the Abbey was of considerable importance to the town and at the time of the dissolution was one of the richest in Lincolnshire. By the early 14th century, Spalding had grown to become one of the wealthiest settlements in the fens, serving as a centre for the distribution of wool exports via Boston and King's Lynn.*

*Archaeological recording was compromised by the nature of piling operations carried out. As such no deposits were recorded.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

Between the 24th and 25th January 1995, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during piling operations on the site of the former Abbey Print Works, High Street, Spalding (Centred on National Grid Reference TF 2520 2271). Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application H16/1210/93. Permission was granted subject to a standard negative condition for archaeological recording. The archaeological work was commissioned by David Parker Homes Ltd and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Spalding lies 23km southwest of Boston and 16km east of Bourne in the civil parish of Spalding, South Holland District (Fig. 1). Situated on the west bank of the River Welland, the site is approximately 300m east of the Market Place. Located at a height of c. 5m O.D., the development area is approximately 1500 square metres in extent.

As an urban area, the local soils have not been mapped by the soil survey of England and Wales, but are probably the Wallasea 2 association peloalluvial gley soils, that consistently occur on the west bank of the River Welland north and south of Spalding (Hodge *et al.* 1984, ###).

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

Spalding is located in an area of archaeological activity dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods.

Prehistoric activity is represented by two unprovenanced stone axe hammers found in 1733 (SMR TF 22 S.E. 7). These are unlikely to have been found *in-situ* as the Neolithic ground surface has since been buried by several metres of silt and clay.

Discovered at the same time was an urn, probably Roman, of "*coarse red earth*" found near the "*old bank by the mouth of the River Lenda*". Approximately 750m southwest of the investigation area Romano-British pottery, including samian ware, grey and calcite gritted ware and a small quantity of charcoal, was found at a depth of c. 1m in 1952 (SMR 22357). A votive model of a horse and a statue of the goddess Venus have also been found in the parish and are also of probable Roman date.

Situated c. 400m north of the development area is the site of the former castle,

constructed during the 11th century, where Ivo de Taillebois, nephew of William the Conqueror, held court after he became the Lord of Spalding and all Holland (SMR 22358). Located 400m southwest of the development area was the site of a Benedictine Priory, a dependency of the Abbey of Crowland. Refounded in 1074 as a cell of St. Nicholas' Abbey, Angers, it eventually became independent in 1397 and finally surrendered in 1540 (SMR 22355). Approximately 400m to the west is the Priors Oven, an octagonal room with a vaulted wooden ceiling, possibly a turret, and thought to be medieval (SMR 22362). Abbey Yard, a range of brick built medieval cottages traditionally associated with the priory (SMR 22363) are situated 350m west of the site.

Medieval pottery has been found at various locations within 500m north and east of the site (SMR TF251224, TF25112292 and SMR23066).

Situated c. 300m to the southwest is the former site of Holy Rood church. The building was probably located near the present town hall and was in ruins by 1284. Associated with it were a coffin containing a skeleton, and other remains from a single individual were found on the site. White's Directory of Lincolnshire also records that when old houses in Bridge Street were demolished, in excess of 40 stone coffins and associated human remains were unearthed. No known foundations of Holy Rood church remain (SMR 22354).

Located 300m south of the investigation area is SS Mary and Nicholas church, built in 1284 by the then prior of Spalding, William of Littleport. The fabric is early decorated (1290-1350) and Perpindicular (1335-1530) and has been rebuilt and restored. This church was built on the site of a Norman cemetery chapel of St Thomas à Becket that stood before 1284. The rough

and irregular masonry in the east wall of the church is believed to be the lower portion of the east wall of the chapel (SMR TF 22 S.E. 1). Situated in the general vicinity of the site, although the exact location has not been ascertained, was St Nicholas hospital, intended to care for the lepers of the neighbourhood. It is thought to be connected with Spalding Priory as it shares the same dedication. It is referred to in 1313 and 1323 in the Lincoln Episcopal Register (VCH 2, 1906, 234) and was possibly extinct by the time of the black death (SMR 22352).

Approximately 400m south of the site is Ayscoughfee Hall. Built c. 1420, additions have been made to the building particularly in 1793 and 1845 (SMR 22359 and 22360).

The name Spalding is probably derived from the Old English '*Spaldingas*', meaning the descendants of the *spaldas*, a Saxon tribe. The name *spaldas* is obscure but is considered to be continental in origin (Ekwall 1974, 433). Historical sources suggest that Spalding, the principle town in the Wapentake of Elloe, began as a Royal Estate centre before Domesday, possibly in the 7th or 8th century. The settlement became established where the navigable portion of the Welland crossed the higher land situated between the fens and the marshes. It was dominated by a Benedictine Priory that grew to be one of the richest religious houses in Lincolnshire.

### 3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Prior to the archaeological observation of the

site, topsoil had been stripped to a depth of approximately 0.5m. The resulting excavation had then been refilled with limestone aggregate to provide a base for piling operations. Approximately 130 pile holes were then sunk through the limestone aggregate and the underlying deposits. These holes were then immediately backfilled with more limestone aggregate.

## 5. RESULTS

Due to the nature of the piling operations, archaeological recording was next to impossible. A photographic record was maintained. No soil descriptions were attempted as the layer of limestone aggregate made observation of deposits impossible. Furthermore, no deposits were lifted by the piling machine from the pile holes.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The technique of piling at the site disallowed archaeological recording to be carried out adequately.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at the Abbey Print Site, Spalding were undertaken because the site fell within an area of known archaeological activity and the likelihood existed of archaeological remains being disturbed.

No archaeological deposits were recorded due to the adverse piling process. However, it is considered that 19th century development may have previously damaged archaeological deposits. Furthermore, the piling operation may have little impact on underlying archaeological deposits if present.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank David Parker Homes Ltd who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was kindly provided by Mark Bennett.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Haynes  
Research: Mark Dymond  
Site Supervisor: Rene Mouraille  
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ekwall, E., 1974 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th edition).

Hodge, C.A.H., Burton, R.G.O., Corbett, W.M., Evans, R. and Seal, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. 13 (Harpenden)

Page, W., (Ed.) 1902 *The Victoria History of the County of Lincoln*. Vol. 2 (Reprinted 1988)

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

SMR Numbers prefixed by these letters are the primary reference codes used by the Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council for the identification of archaeological sites and finds.



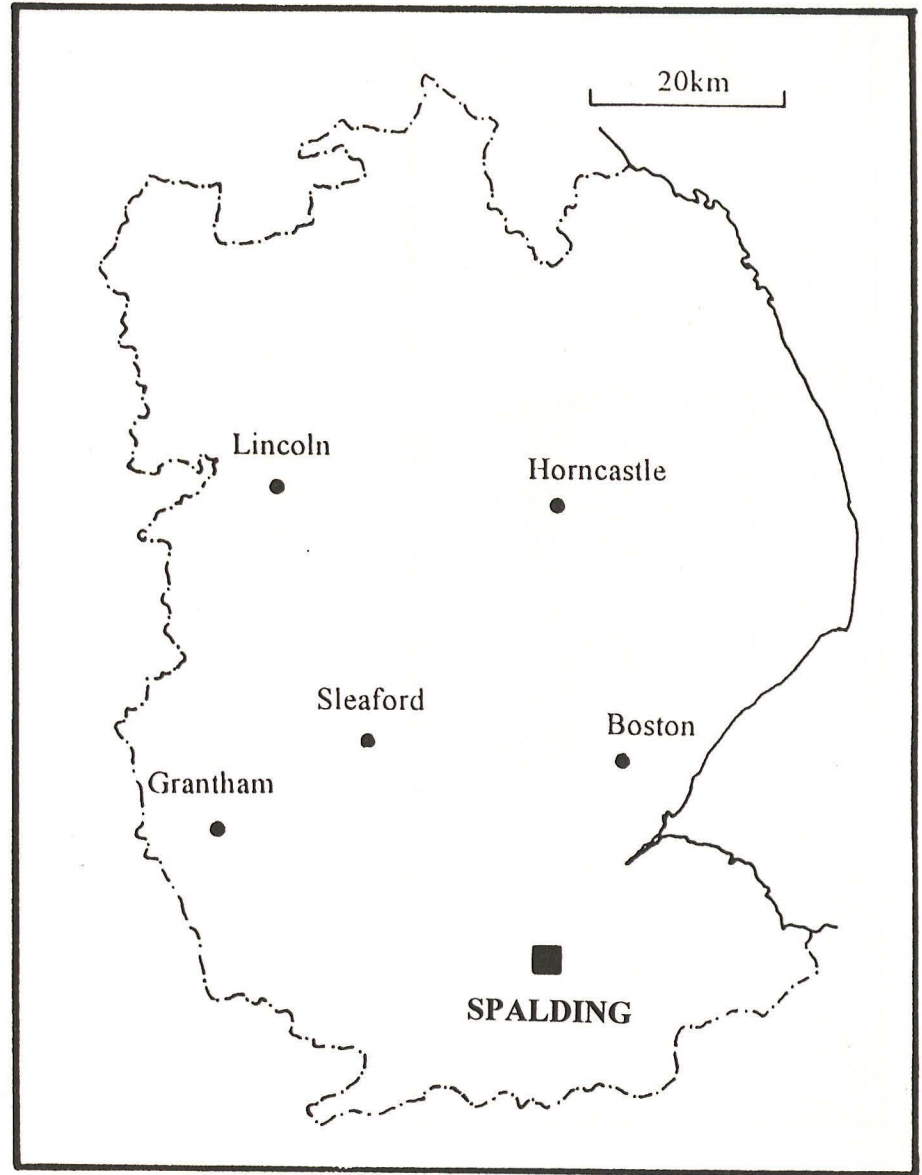
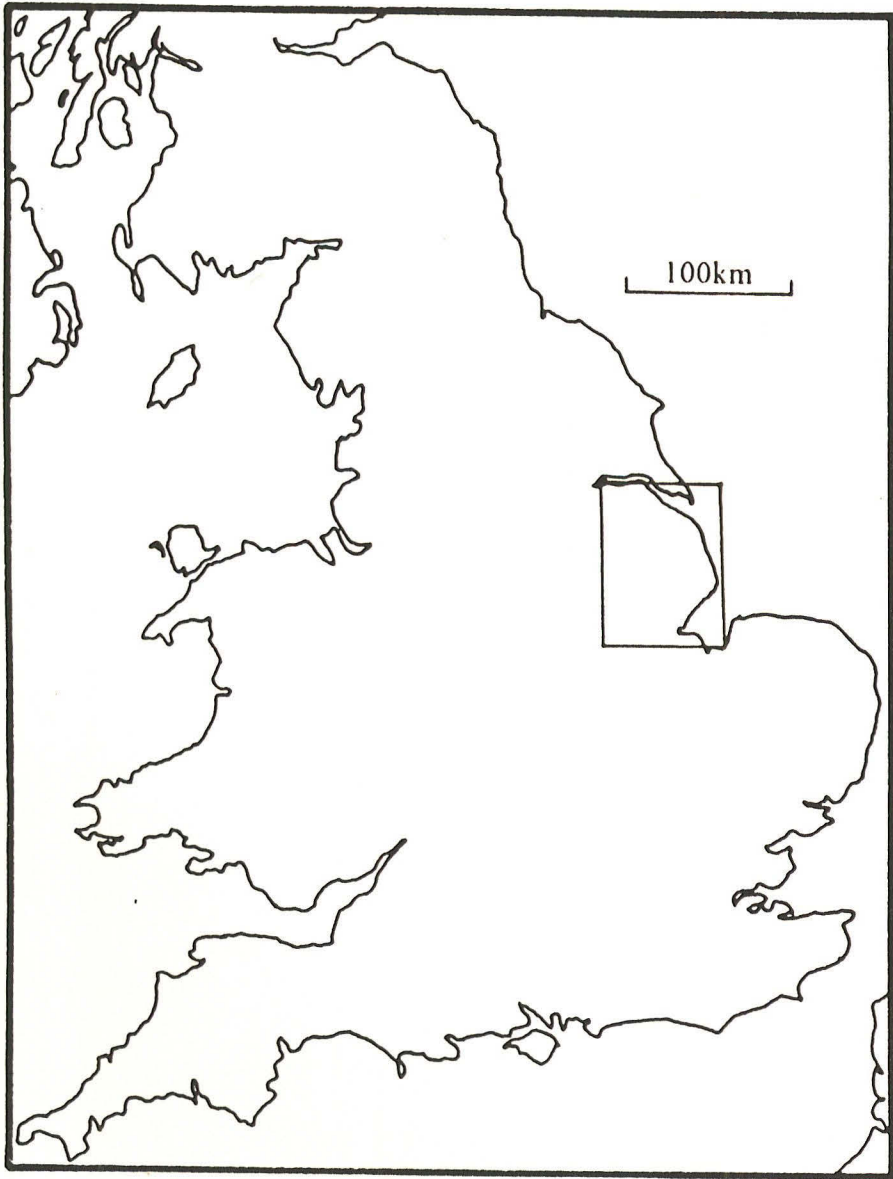


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan

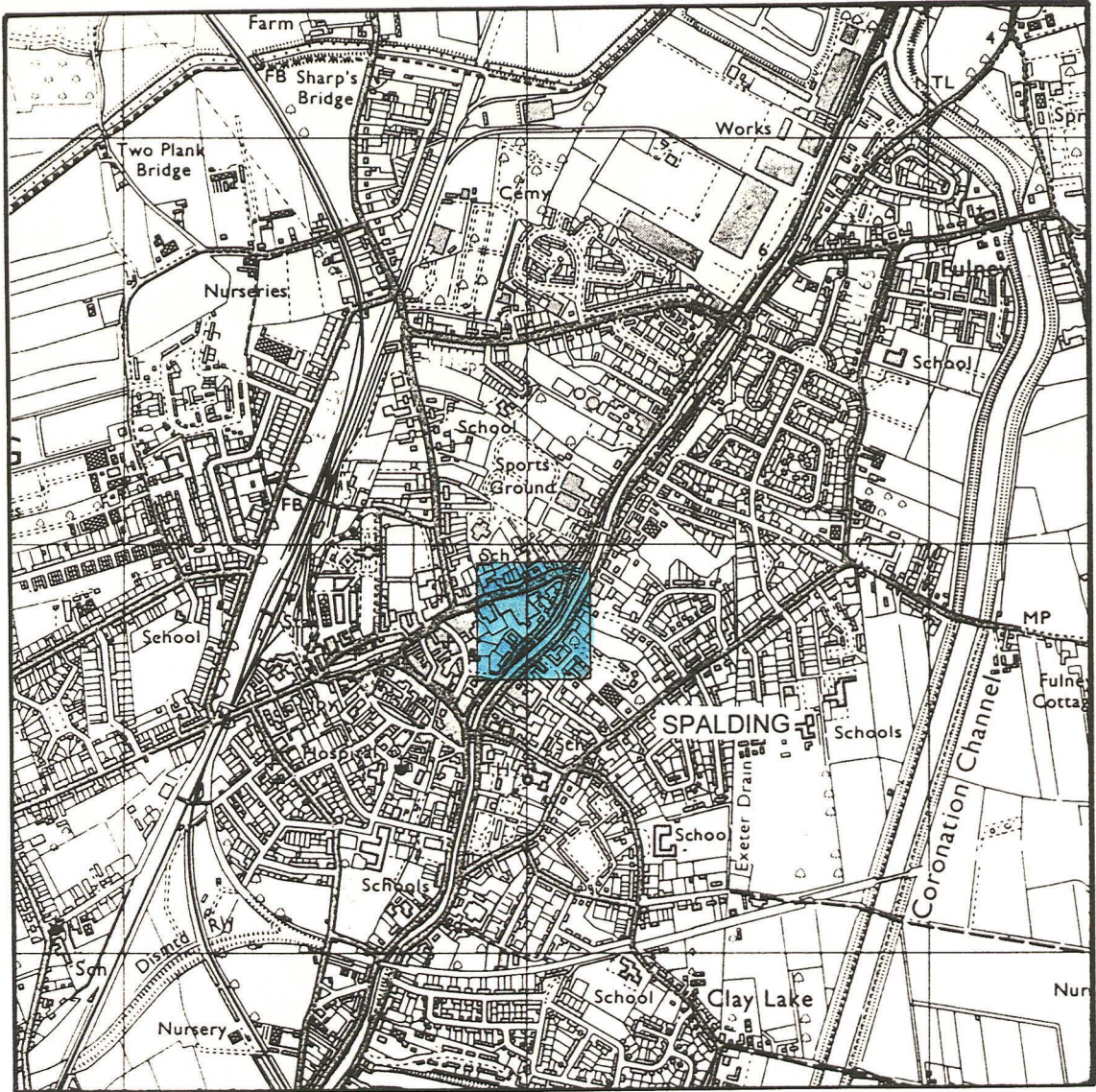


Fig. 3 Development Location Plan



Area of Development

Plate 1. General View of the Development Area



Plate 2. A typical pilehole, indicating the problems encountered



## Appendix 1

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 1 . . . Photographic records  
Various site notes

All primary records are currently kept at:

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

City and County Museum Accession number  
Archaeological Project Services project code

23.95  
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