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Archaeological Evaluation
at the former site of
St. Botolph's School, off Pump Square,
Boston, Lincolnshire
by Heritage Lincolnshire

on behalf of
Mr. J. L. O' Callaghan,
during February 1992.

TF 3295 4406

Summary

Between the 11th and 14th February 1992 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the former site of St. Botolph's School, off Pump Square, Boston, Lincolnshire. The purpose of the work was to evaluate the extent, nature and significance of any surviving archaeological remains prior to the re-development of the site, especially those relating to the urban expansion of Boston during the medieval period.

Two evaluation trenches were excavated and the archaeological deposits exposed recorded.

Excavation was terminated at 3.40m O.D., as this level represents the level of the base of the proposed foundations of the new development.

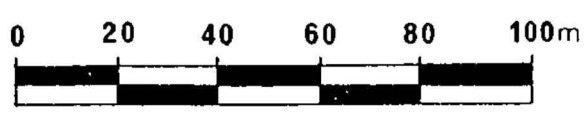
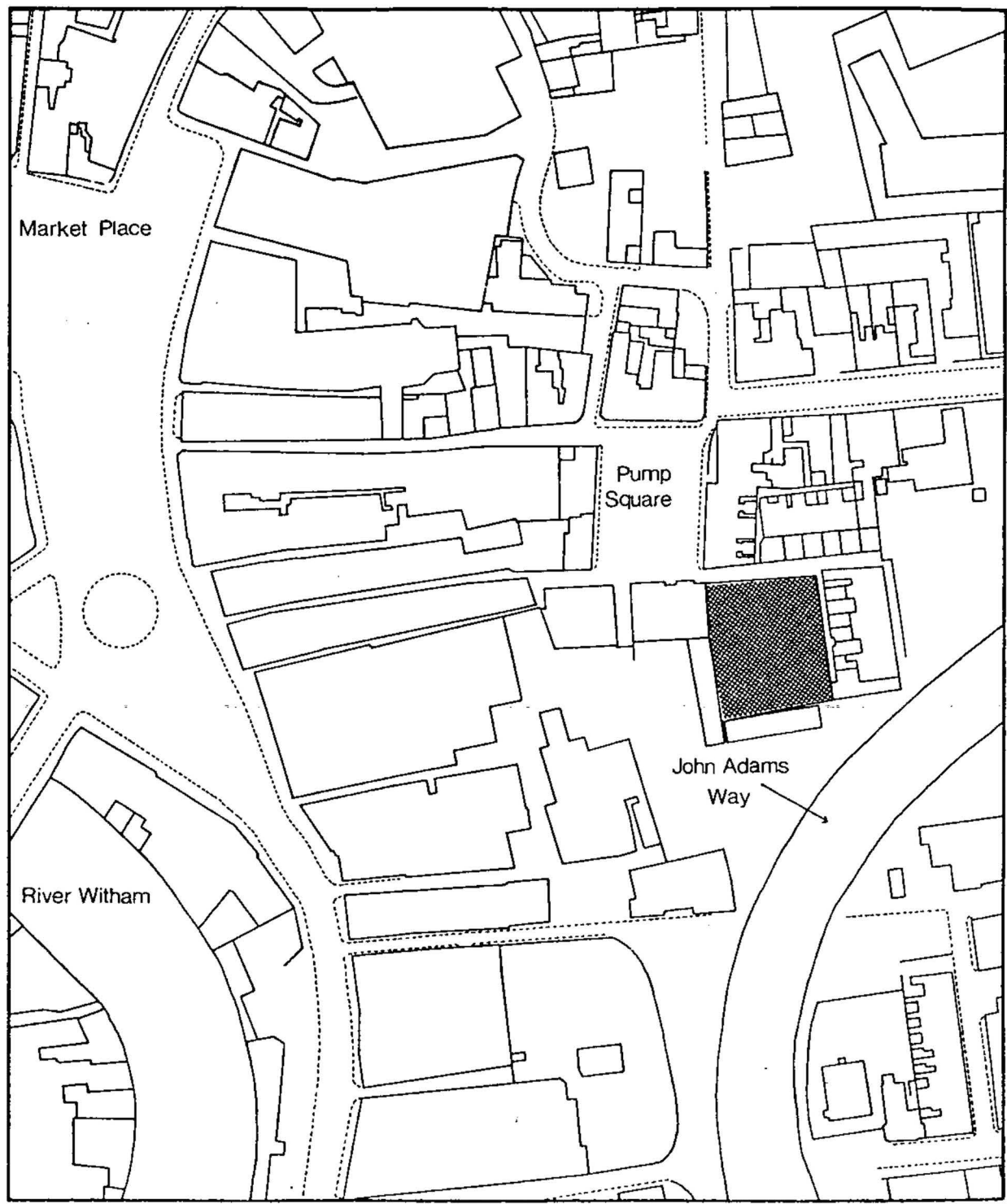
The deposits exposed were datable to the 18th and 19th centuries and relate to post-medieval activity and the construction of St. Botolph's School. It is, therefore, unlikely that buried medieval deposits will be disturbed by the proposed building works.

Heritage Lincolnshire recommend that no further archaeological investigations need take place on the site provided that construction works do not go deeper than 3.40m O.D.

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FIG 1

SITE LOCATION



Introduction

Between the 11th and 14th February 1992 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Mr. J. L. O'Callaghan, at the former site of St. Botolph's School, off Pump Square, Boston, Lincolnshire (N.G.R. TF 32944470) (see fig. 1), by Heritage Lincolnshire, prior to the re-development of the site for residential units. The purpose of the work was to evaluate the extent, nature and significance of any surviving archaeological remains to determine the nature of the archaeological requirement of the site.

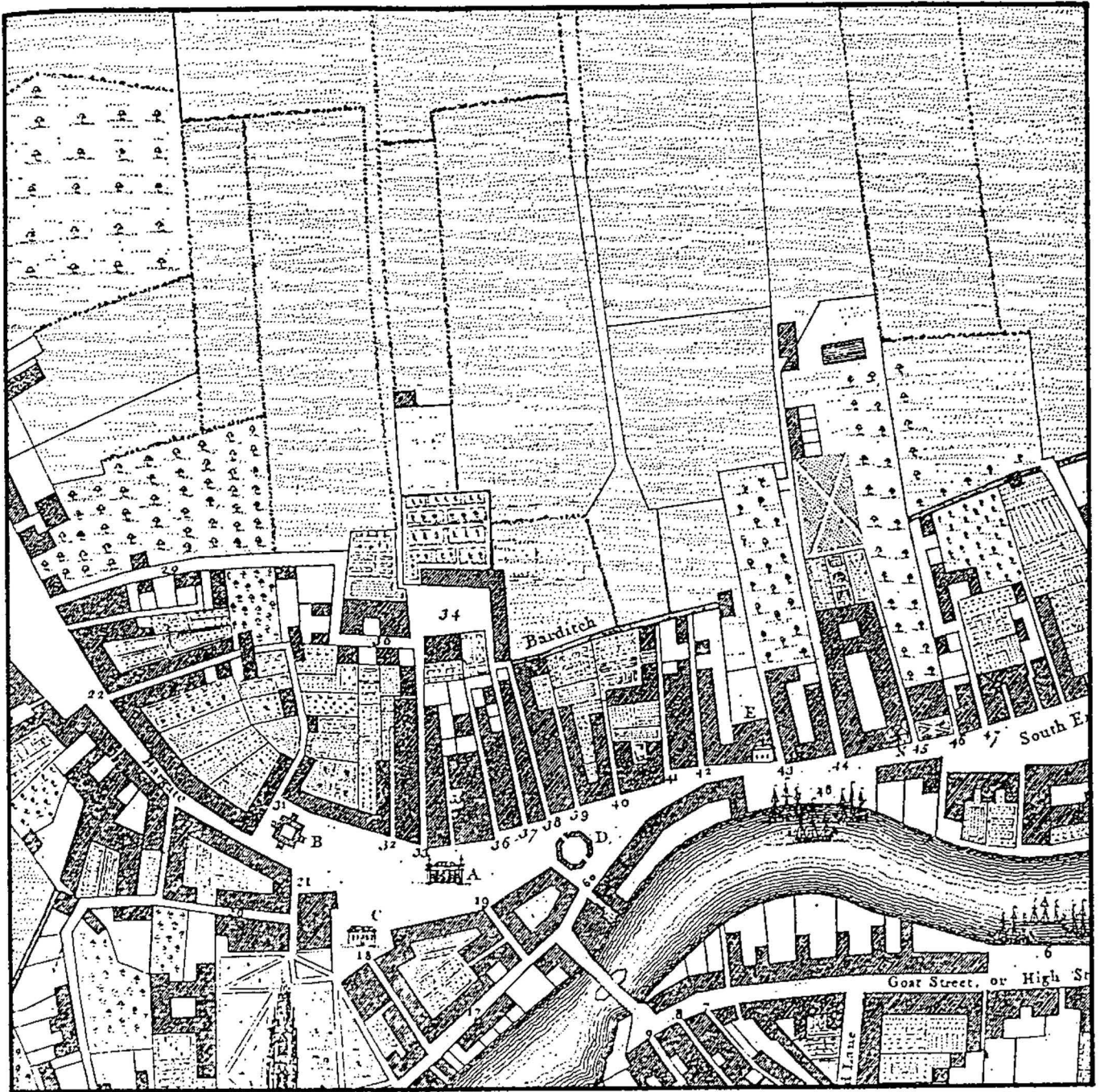
Archaeological Setting

East and south-east of the site a Bronze Age rapier, socketed axe and palstave have been recorded at separate locations, suggesting some form of prehistoric activity in the area.

The site is located approximately 50m east of the conjectured line of the Barditch, the former boundary of Boston town in the early medieval period. During the 13th century the town began to expand beyond this boundary and while this expansion occurred chiefly to the north-east of the Barditch, it is possible that urban expansion also occurred to the east of the Barditch. The location of archaeological deposits associated with the expansion during the medieval period was one of the primary objectives of the evaluation.

Approximately 150m south of the site are the remains of an early medieval Dominican Friary and associated burial ground. A map of the area, dated to 1741 (see fig. 2), shows that the site has buildings on its northwestern corner. Later maps show the area as being developed.

FIG 2
Boston - circa 1741



SITE

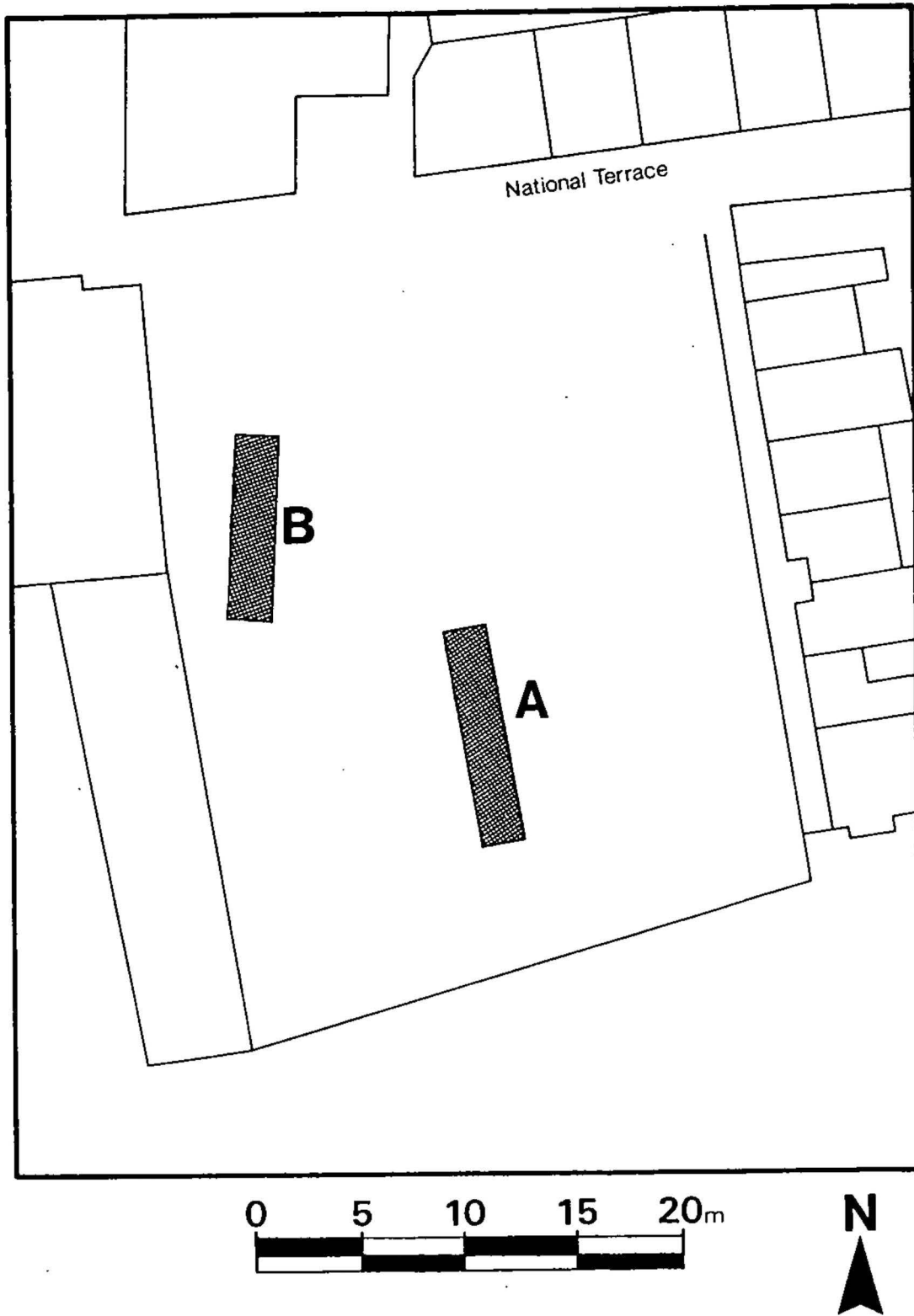


Methodology

Two trenches (A and B - see fig. 3) were excavated by machine to c. 3.40m O.D. Trench A (nominally 10m x 2m) was located in the central southern half of the site whilst trench B (nominally 8m x 2m) was positioned in the north-western corner. Archaeological excavation was terminated at 3.40m O.D. as this level represents the level of the base of the foundations for the new development. Excavation below this level was not required as the deeper archaeological deposits will be preserved *in situ*.

Following machine excavation of the evaluation trenches, they were cleaned by hand and the archaeological deposits exposed were recorded. A unique reference number was allocated to each archaeological deposit (e.g. pit-fill, pit-cut, layer etc.) and a written description made. Plans and sections were drawn at scale 1:20 and, where necessary, a photographic record was compiled.

FIG 3
TRENCH LOCATIONS



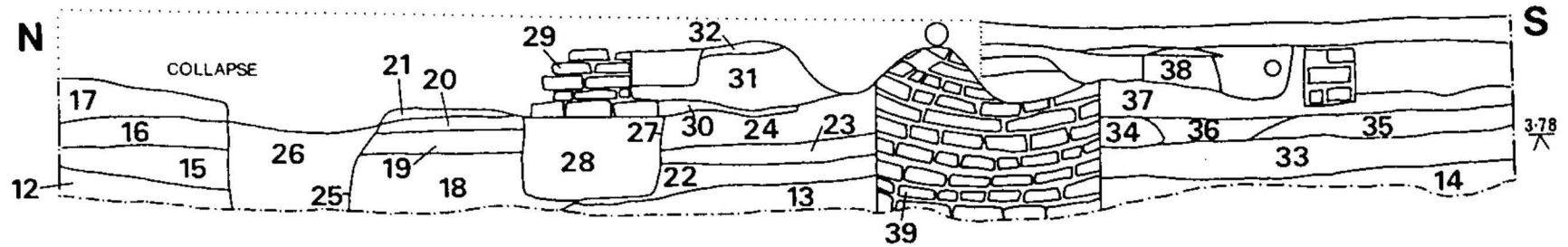
Results

Trench A:

Nineteen archaeological deposits (contexts) were exposed and recorded.

The earliest layer, [001], located in the southern end of the trench, consisted of a dark grey sandy silt containing burnt bone and fragments of clinker and mortar. It was sealed by layer [002] which extended over all the trench and comprised a deposit of sandy silt containing large quantities of domestic refuse, consisting of fragments of mortar, ceramic building material, charcoal, animal bone, shell and pottery. It seems probable that [002] was an established open land surface utilised as a rubbish dump. Sealing [002] to the east was a layer of grey sandy silt, [003], representing a dumped deposit and cutting through it to the west were the remnants of brick foundations, [004], (brick size = 120mm x 68mm x 240mm) for a now demolished boiler house. Cutting [002], in the centre of the trench, was a foundation trench [005], containing a clay fill [006]. North of [005] was a small deposit of clay [007] composed of the same material as [006]. North of [007] were two deposits, [008] and [009], chiefly composed of mortar. At the extreme north of the trench was a foundation trench [010], filled by mortar [011]. Foundation trenches [005] and [010] were part of St. Botolph's school.

FIG 4
TRENCH B - WEST FACING SECTION



Trench B:

Sixty four archaeological 'contexts' were exposed and recorded: forty three in section and twenty one in plan.

Figure 4 illustrates the archaeological processes which have occurred on the site since c. 1800. Context numbers are shown on fig. 4 without their preceding zero, (i.e. 12 = [012]).

The earliest deposits encountered were layers [012], [013] and [014]. Above [012] are a sequence of layers: [015], [016] and [017]; where [012] may be the remnants of a garden soil and [015], [016] and [017] have been subsequently deliberately deposited on top of it, possibly to raise the ground level.

Layer [013] is sealed to the north by layers [018] to [021] and to the south by [022] to [024]. Most of these layers contain building debris in the form of brick, tile and mortar fragments, except for [023] which is composed of clay. Each of these layers have almost certainly been intentionally laid down to raise the ground level.

Cutting through [017] and [021] is a foundation trench [025], containing a silt [026] which supported the remnants of a brick wall. South of this and cutting through [020] and [024] is another foundation cut [027] filled by concrete [028] and which supported the remnants of a brick wall [029]. Sealing [024] were a sequence of layers, [030] to [032], which are dumped deposits containing modern construction debris, i.e. fragments of concrete, brick and tile, laid down to

raise the ground level upon which was established the ground surface of St. Botolph's School.

At the southern end of the section, the earliest deposit, layer [014], is similar to and possibly contemporary with [012]. Overlying [014] are a sequence of layers: [033] to [038], the majority of which are deposits which have been deliberately accumulated.

Located between layers [013], [022] to [024], [030] to [032], [014] and [033] to [038], is an in-filled brick structure [039] (brick size = 230mm long x 80mm thick). The full extent of [039] was not determined. It is possibly the earliest feature exposed in the trench as there was no evidence for an associated construction trench and this may exist at a deeper level. If so, this would suggest that [039] was an up-standing structure, which became redundant and was subsequently buried by the layers recorded above. Alternatively, the structure may have been trench-built, in which case it would not be possible to determine at which level it was cut from.

The remaining contexts illustrated in fig. 4 represent construction activity likely to be contemporary with the building of St. Botolph's School.

Conclusions

The archaeology exposed in the evaluation trenches indicates that, to a depth of c. 3.40m O.D., the deposits are post-medieval in date. One sherd of Potterhanworth pottery, a rim sherd of a pancheon (or large bowl), datable to the fourteenth century, was recovered from trench A, but this sherd is certainly residual.

Previous archaeological fieldwork in this area of Boston has shown that medieval remains exist beneath c. 1m of overburden. As neither of the two trenches described here exceeded a depth of 1m, the potential medieval archaeology which may exist on the site was not exposed. It is not possible, therefore, to comment upon the degree of urban expansion in this area during and/or after the 13th century.

Recommendations

Heritage Lincolnshire recommend that, subject to the foundations of the new development on this site going no deeper than 3.40m O.D., no further archaeological work on the site is required, as the archaeological deposits on the site will be preserved *in-situ*.

However, should it be necessary during the course of construction works to excavate below 3.40m O.D. (c. 1m below the postulated 'finished' level of the site), then Heritage Lincolnshire recommend that a watching brief be undertaken whilst such works are in progress, to record the archaeological deposits exposed. It should be noted that this recommendation refers to all disturbances exceeding 1m below current ground level, with particular regard to service trenches.

Acknowledgements

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