

## Excavations at Red Lion Street, Boston

### Introduction

The excavations were undertaken over two weeks in November; this being the first of a series of evaluations to be undertaken in conjunction with Chartwell Holdings, as a major redevelopment of this part of Boston takes place. The site on Red Lion Street consisted of two car parks; one public and one private (Woolworths) - a trench being put in each.

### Historical Background

According to known evidence, this part of Boston was town fields until quite late and is outside the Bar Ditch. Red Lion Street itself dates from around the Late C18th and early C19th. Little is known of what buildings existed on the rear car park. It is known that a theatre was built on the site of the front car park in 1805, this being knocked down in 1847 to make way for a congregational church. This was replaced by a second church in 1868; the site finally being cleared in 1974, since when it has been used as a car park.

### Archaeological method

It was decided to open a large area, at the same time getting as long a section as possible running back from the road. For this purpose, two trenches were opened. Trench 1, was 2m x 7m, running back from Red Lion Street and about 1/3 of the depth back of the car park. Trench 2 was located in the rear car park, separated from the front car park by a block of garages. This trench was also about 2m x 8m, lying on approximately the same line as T1.

Both these trenches were opened by JCB. All the C19th and C20th deposits were removed from T1 before hand excavation began. In the case of T2, after removing very modern brick and concrete, natural soil layers were seen to go down to a depth of 1.9m, all of which were removed by JCB. A major change in

deposits occurred at this point so from then on excavation in this trench was also carried out by hand.

## Results

### Trench 1

The top 0.28m was modern hardcore, forming the present car park. Beneath this, for a further 0.85m, were various levelling and destruction layers, which relate to the construction and destruction of the known C19th and C20th buildings on the site. These were very complex and within them, crossing the site north-south, were 3 pieces of walling within one foundation trench. These would relate to the last building on the site. Beneath these layers were grey and brown silty clays into which a well was sunk. The well was bricklined, although the brickwork appeared to be unmortared and had been deliberately filled with loose rubble, brick and mortar fragments.

In the east end of the trench we took an area 2m x 1.5m further down. It proved difficult to go down to any depth due to the high level of water seepage. In this area the deposits contained great quantities of pottery, tile and general rubbish going back to the late C14th early C15th at the base of excavation. The concentration of material suggests midden or other rubbish deposits may exist here.

A machine sondage was dug just before refilling, this went down 2.1m going through grey/black clays for most of its depth and hitting a brown silty clay at its base. These deposits all appeared to be natural.

### Trench 2

In this trench, the 1.9m removed by JCB showed nothing of interest in section. At this depth and just below 2m interesting features turned up. The first was a small, steep sided feature 213 cut into the underlying clay. This was linear running north-south and extending into the north section. The

two fills, 212 and 214, of this were highly organic, almost fibrous in nature and contained some degraded wood as well as C13/14th pottery.

The second feature found was a very large ditch, 223. This was about 1.9m deep and 3.5m across. The main fill of this, 216, was a patchy blue/grey/brown clay that filled the top 1.5m and sealed a natural highly organic layer 218 that appeared to be rotted vegetation on the sides and bottom of the ditch.

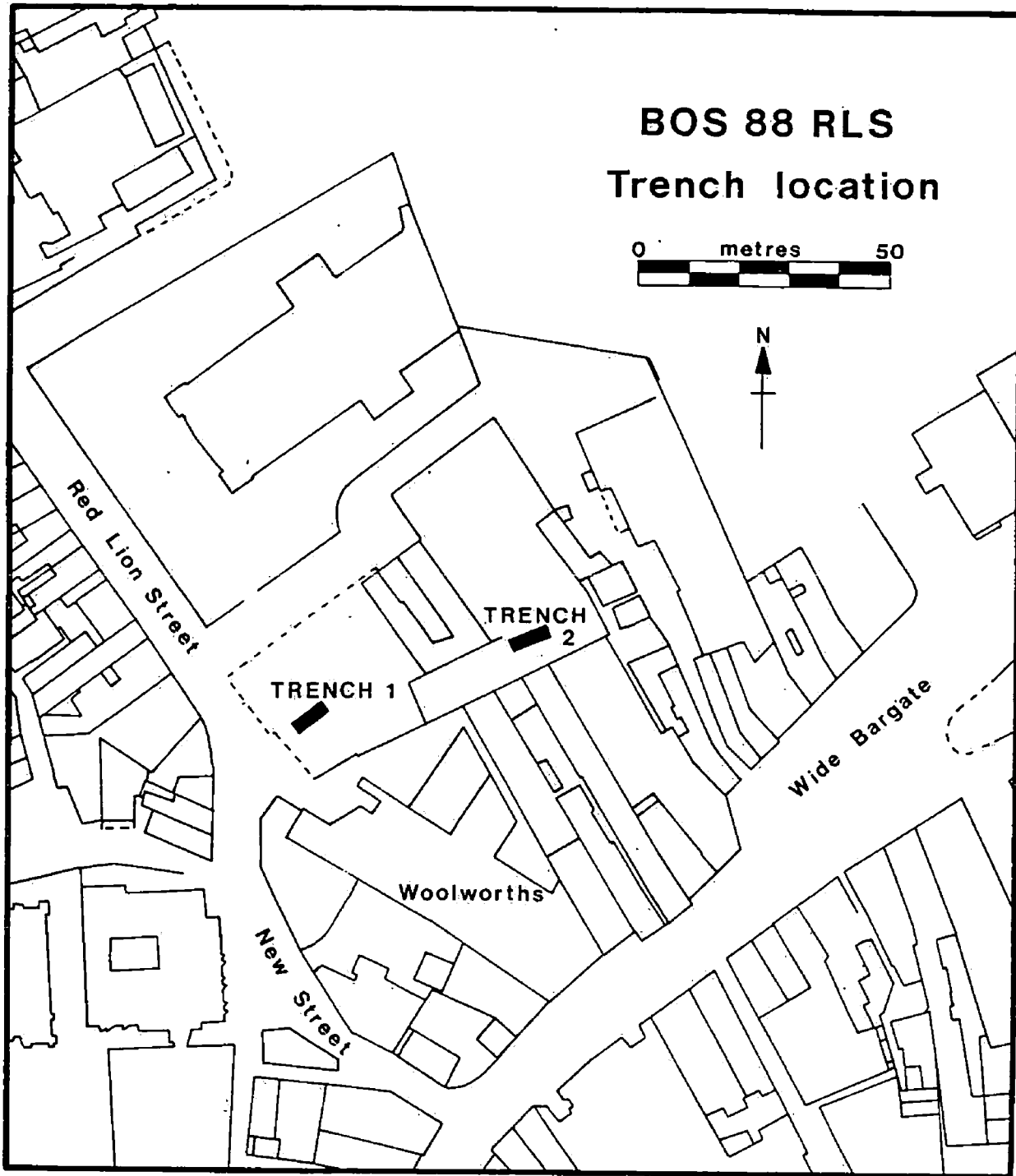
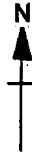
218, the organic layer, contained C14th pottery whilst 216 overlying it, contained C13th to C16th pottery all mixed up; this layer possibly being redeposited and deliberately infilled. One further organic layer, 215, contained dateable material from C14th.

### Conclusions

It would appear from the work undertaken so far, that little medieval remains exist in this area, and that which does is at quite a depth, around 2m. But having said that, the ditch found in T2 is most surprising and its size would indicate that it must have been of some importance, and further investigation of it could well prove valuable.

BOS 88 RLS  
Trench location

0 metres 50



74m  
77m