



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at

Central Park, Norfolk Street,

Boston, Lincolnshire

May 2009

NGR TF 328 443

SITE CODE: NSBO 09

Accession No: LCNCC: 2009.73



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June 2009

Report 09/063

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Simon Carlyle		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at Central Park, Norfolk Street, Boston, Lincolnshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the installation of a manhole with valve in the sewerage system at Central Park, Norfolk Street, Boston. There was a ditch which contained a little medieval and post-medieval pottery, indicating that it was still open in the later 16th century. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.	
Project type	Watching brief	
Site status	Public park	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Recreational	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Early post-medieval ditch	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Lincolnshire	
Site address	Central Park, Norfolk Street, Boston, Lincolnshire	
OS Easting & Northing	532853 344392	
Height OD	5m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Historic Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Charlotte Walker	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle	
Sponsor or funding body	Anglian Water	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	May 2009	
End date	June 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	The Collection Museum, Lincoln Accession No: LCNCC: 2009.73	Pottery (1 bag) Tile (1 bag) Bone (1 bag)
Paper	As above	Watching brief forms (1) context sheets (12), colour slides (5), black and white contact prints (5), digital photographs (13)
Digital	As above	Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
CENTRAL PARK, NORFOLK STREET
BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE
MAY 2009**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the installation of a manhole with valve in the sewerage system at Central Park, Norfolk Street, Boston. There was a ditch which contained a little medieval and post-medieval pottery, indicating that it was still open in the later 16th century. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

In May 2009, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the installation of a new manhole and valve in the existing sewerage network at Central Park, Norfolk Street, Boston, Lincolnshire (NGR TF 328 443: Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Anglian Water following a specification produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology and approved by the Historic Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The development area is in the centre of Boston, in Central Park. The site was located on an area of hardstanding just within the main entrance of the park, which is to the north of Wide Bargate (Fig 1). The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological survey of Great Britain as comprising Upper Jurassic sediments of Ampthill and Kimmeridge Clay, overlain by quaternary alluvial deposits, mostly of marine origin (www.bgs.ac/geoindex/home.html).

The site lies at approximately 5.0m aOD on land which slopes gently east to west towards The Haven situated c 300m to the east. The Haven is the tidal river of the Port of Boston, into which the River Witham flows through the Grand Sluice.

2.2 Historical Background

Very little is known about the origins of Boston, although a single sherd of 9th century pottery found in Central Park points to Anglo-Saxon settlement in the area. Boston is famously not

mentioned in the Domesday Book, only that of Skirbeck, a soke of the manor of Drayton. The parish of Skirbeck had two churches at Domesday and it seems that one was almost certainly St Botolph's. The church was first mentioned in 1091 when it was granted by Count Alan to the monastery of St Mary of York, so it must have existed at Domesday, along with whatever community it served. Shortly after the conquest the port of St Botolph was established and the citizens were granted a charter by King John in 1203. At some point a ditch, known as the 'Barditch', and a wall enclosed the town on the eastern bank of the Witham, although there is no evidence that they were ever defensive in nature. By 1285 the walls were being repaired. No upstanding remains now exist of the wall or ditch, which was to the west of the site, although its remains have been located on several occasions, including at New Street (Table 1: HER 13360), where the remains of a stone wall were observed (Fig 2).

Table 1: Summary of LHER sites in vicinity of watching brief area

HER no.	National grid reference	Period	Description
12672	TF 331 448	Roman	Roman greyware sherds found
13360	TF 328 442	Medieval	3 New Street, remains of a substantial stone wall, either part of the medieval town wall or possibly a monastic building.
12651	TF 329 442	Medieval	Pescod Hall, remains of a 15th- and surviving part of building relocated.
13863	TF 327 446	Medieval	Pottery and ceramic building material found in Central Park, including a 9th-century Saxon sherd, probably the earliest Saxon pottery found in Boston.
13407	TF 328 443	Medieval	Red Lion Street, late medieval remains, including part of a building, a ditch and midden deposits.
13307	TF 330 446	Medieval	14th/15th-century pits and ditches
12647	TF 333 439	Medieval	13th/14th-century roof tile kiln
13327	TF 326 442	Medieval	Junction of Wormgate and Fountain Lane, 12th- to 14th-century building and structural remains; finds include a cloak brooch and a gold buckle.
13287	TF328 443	Medieval	24 and 28-30 Bargate, 14th-century and later occupation deposits, possible remains of timber buildings.
13628	TF 328 441	Medieval	13th/14th-century building remains
12697	TF 331 448	Medieval	St Leonard's Bedehouses, established c 1220
12644	TF 328 442	Medieval/post-medieval	Bargate/Barditch, town ditch and gate, town walls built in 12th century and much altered. No remains survive above ground.
13810	TF 325 445	Post-medieval	21 Norfolk Street, 17th/18th-century rubbish pits, brick culvert and foundations of a brick structure.
13368	TF 329 442	Post-medieval	11 Wide Bargate, a brick and stone-lined pit, a ditch, fragments of a bell mould, slag, wooden pins and a box lid found.
13275	TF 331 445	Post-medieval	Site of archery butts, mentioned in 1619

Although Boston never seems to have been a large town, in 1204 the amount of tax it paid was second only to London. With the large-scale development of wool production in the East Midlands and growth of trade with northern Europe, Boston remained the major port of northern England throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. Although wool was the most important export, other commodities also passed through the port in large quantities, including salt and grain. The range of goods coming into the port was extensive and included wine, timber and spices.

By the mid 14th century Boston's role as a major port began to diminish, primarily due to the expansion of domestic cloth industries. Although the port soon began to export cloth rather than wool, the ports closer to the manufactories gained predominance. Even though the staple was established in Boston in the 1360s, its decline could not be halted. The Haven was allowed to silt up and by the mid 16th century only small ships used the port.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The general aim of the project was to monitor groundworks associated with the installation of the manhole and investigate sub-surface deposits to determine the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area. The specific objectives were to:

- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.
- Set any archaeological remains, if encountered, within their local and regional context.
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The fieldwork comprised continuous monitoring of the excavation of the area down to natural geology. The groundworks were carried out using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. An initial trench was excavated in order to determine the alignment and exact location of the existing sewer (Fig 2). Although the line of the sewer was located, this trench was found to intersect with a telephone cable and a second trench was subsequently excavated to the north-west to avoid it. The main trench was 3.6m long and 3.6m wide. The watching brief was maintained until natural clays were observed throughout the trench (apart from the area of the sewer pipe), at 1.45m below ground level.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire

Archaeology *pro-forma* sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IfA 2008).

The weather was cool and wet.

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The initial trench was 3.6m long, 1.2m wide and 1.12m deep and was excavated to determine the exact location of the cut for the sewer (Figs 4 and 5). The earliest layer was a mid yellow brown clay silt containing bone, oyster shell and brick fragments [13]. Above this lay dark grey brown clay silt, [14], with frequent charcoal and some brick fragments, some 0.3m thick. This was sealed by a mid yellow brown clay silt with few inclusions, [15], probably representing alluvial deposition and was *c* 0.2m thick. A dark grey black silt, *c.* 0.1m thick, may have been a buried topsoil [4] The existing services cut through all these layers; but the base of neither cut was observed in this trench. All the deposits described above were sealed by successive make-up layers of crushed mortar, hard-core and finally tarmac.

The main trench was situated 2.5m to the north-west and measured 3.6m long by 3.6m wide. Aligned through the centre of the trench, the cut for the sewer pipe dominated, being 1.5m wide (Fig 7). Either side of the sewer cut, natural clays were observed at 1.45m below ground level with a compact mid greenish blue mottled silty clay overlain by a compact mid orange brown silty clay [12]. Overlying the natural clays was a layer of mid grey brown clay silt [11] with few inclusions other than occasional flecks of charcoal; this seems to have been an alluvial deposit.

Cut into this layer and the natural clays was what appeared to be a north-east to south-west aligned feature, probably a ditch [8], although only the southern edge was revealed in the trench (Figs 3 and 6). The ditch was at least 1.2m wide and was 0.45m deep with a steep southern edge and a broad flat base. The lower fill (10) largely comprised loose dark grey brown sandy silt containing frequent ceramic building material ceramic roof tile, spent coke, charcoal and bone. Four sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit, indicating that the ditch was still open in the later 16th century. Tile also dated to the medieval or early post-medieval period. The uppermost fill was very compact mid yellow brown sandy silt (9) and was largely made up of lime mortar fragments, small pieces of ceramic building material and oyster shell. Sealing the ditch was a further layer of mid grey brown clay silt [5], indistinguishable from [11] in appearance and most probably representing further alluvial deposits. Above the alluvial layer was a series of deposits equivalent to those found in the previous trench; the possible buried topsoil and subsequent modern make-up layers.

Context Number.	Type	Brief description	Date
1	Layer	Tarmac	Modern
2	Layer	Hardcore	Modern
3	Layer	Make-up layer: crushed mortar	Modern
4	Layer	Possible buried topsoil	-
5	Layer	Alluvium?	-
6	Cut	Cut for sewer pipe	Modern
7	Fill	Backfill of sewer trench	Modern
8	Cut	Cut of ditch	Post-medieval
9	Fill	Upper fill of ditch	Post-medieval?
10	Fill	Primary fill of ditch	Late 16th century
11	Layer	Alluvium	-
12	Layer	Natural geology	-
13	Layer	Layer containing charcoal, cbm and bone	Undated
14	Layer	Layer containing charcoal and some brick	Undated
15	Layer	Alluvium (possibly same as [5])	Undated

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The medieval and post-medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised four sherds with a total weight of 292g. It all came from the lower fill of ditch [8]. The material was related to the coding system and chronology of the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit type-series (Young and Vince 2005), with the following fabrics noted:

LSW2: Lincoln Glazed ware, 13th - 14th centuries, 1 sherd, 98g.

BOU: Bourne 'D' Ware: c 1450-1637, 1 sherd, 54g.

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenwares: Mid 16th – 19th centuries. 2 sherds, 140g.

The assemblage dates to the second half of the 16th century, with the LSW2 sherd being residual. It has been burnt post-breakage, unlike the other sherds in the assemblage.

5.2 Ceramic tile by Pat Chapman

There are just three roof tile sherds, one broken, which come from context (10), the fill of ditch [8]. Two are from flat roof tiles and the third may be a ridge or valley tile fragment. These sherds are made in a hard, slightly coarse, orange brown sandy clay, with some fine calcareous inclusions and some large grit and grog up to 18mm long.

The broken sherd comprises the bottom of a large, coarsely-made roof tile. It is 197mm wide

and c 20mm thick (7¾ inches by ¾ inch), larger than the standard of 165mm wide by 12mm thick ((6½ inches by ½ inch) as set down by an Act of Parliament in 1477, which would suggest that this tile is at least 15th century or earlier in date. The other flat smaller sherd is thinner and better made and still has some mortar adhering to both sides. The curve of the possible roof ridge or valley tile fragment is not symmetrical, which suggests an angled valley tile rather than a ridge tile. However, there is damage to the outer surface of this tile, where there is either the remnant of a crest or it is the result of the partial removal of the surface.

These tiles are medieval to early post-medieval in date. The large broken tile sherd and the curved tile could be 15th century or earlier in date, while the smaller tile sherd may be of 15th- to 17th-century date.

6 THE FAUNAL REMAINS

6.1 Animal bone by Karen Deighton

Animal bone weighing 285g was recovered from a ditch, [8], during the course of a watching brief. Preservation was good with only low level of surface abrasion and fragmentation. The identifiable bone fragments were as follows:

Bos (cattle) proximal scapula (possibly chopped) and unfused ulna.

Sus (pig) ulna with evidence of canid gnawing and green staining.

A large ungulate rib fragment and proximal humerus shaft fragment.

Little can be said of the animal economy of the site due to the small amount of material recovered. However it can be stated that cattle and pig were utilised at or near the site.

7 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

Record	Number
Watching brief forms	1
Context sheets	13
Colour slides	5
Black and white contacts and negatives	5
Digital photographs	12

The archive will be deposited with The Collection Museum in Lincoln, under the accession number LCNCC: 2009.73.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the watching brief show that this excavation was largely a re-excavation of existing service trenches which had destroyed any archaeological remains that may once have been present. The single archaeological feature exposed in this trench was a short length of ditch, located 0.88m below current ground level, which dated to the second half of the 16th century. The primary ditch fill contained large amounts of domestic refuse including pottery, ceramic building material and animal bone, while the upper fill was largely made up of pieces of mortar, ceramic building material and oyster shell. The ditch may have been a property boundary which had been backfilled primarily with domestic refuse and levelled off with demolition material. The orientation of the ditch may suggest that it was the rear boundary of a property that fronted onto Wide Bargate.

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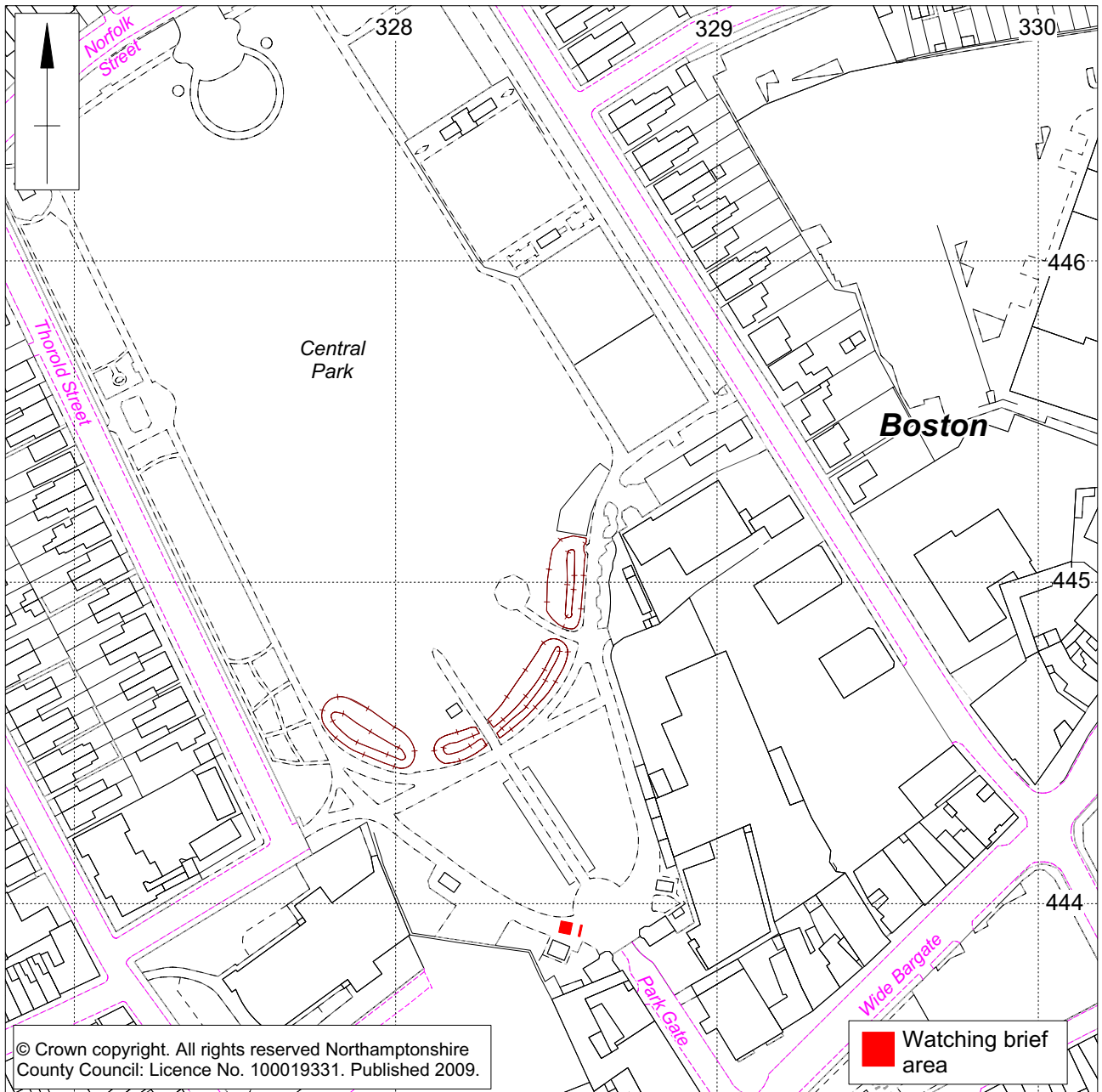
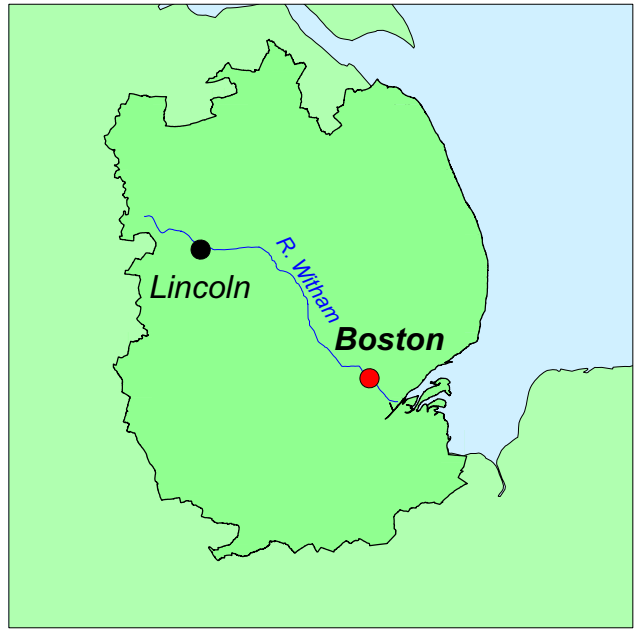
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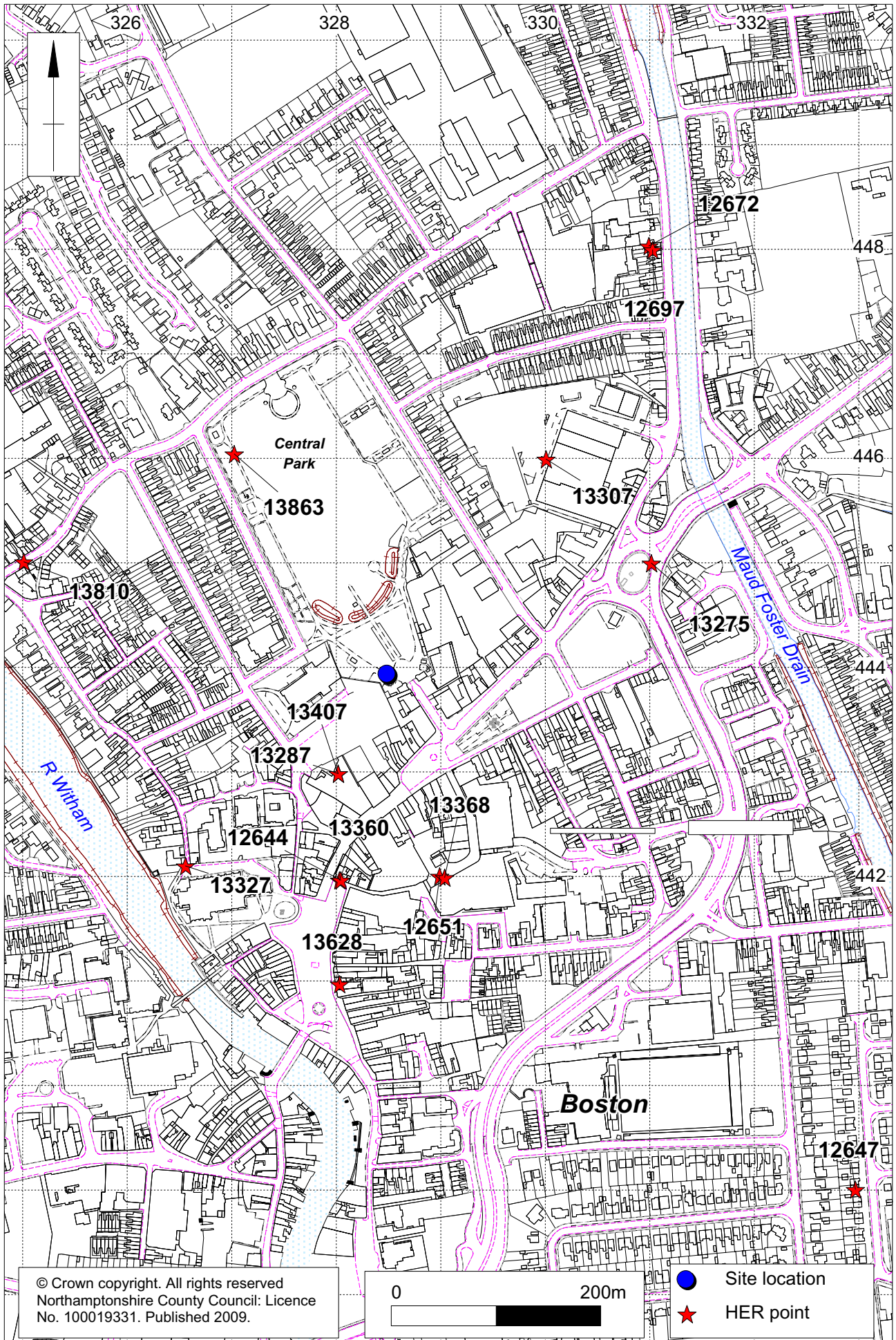
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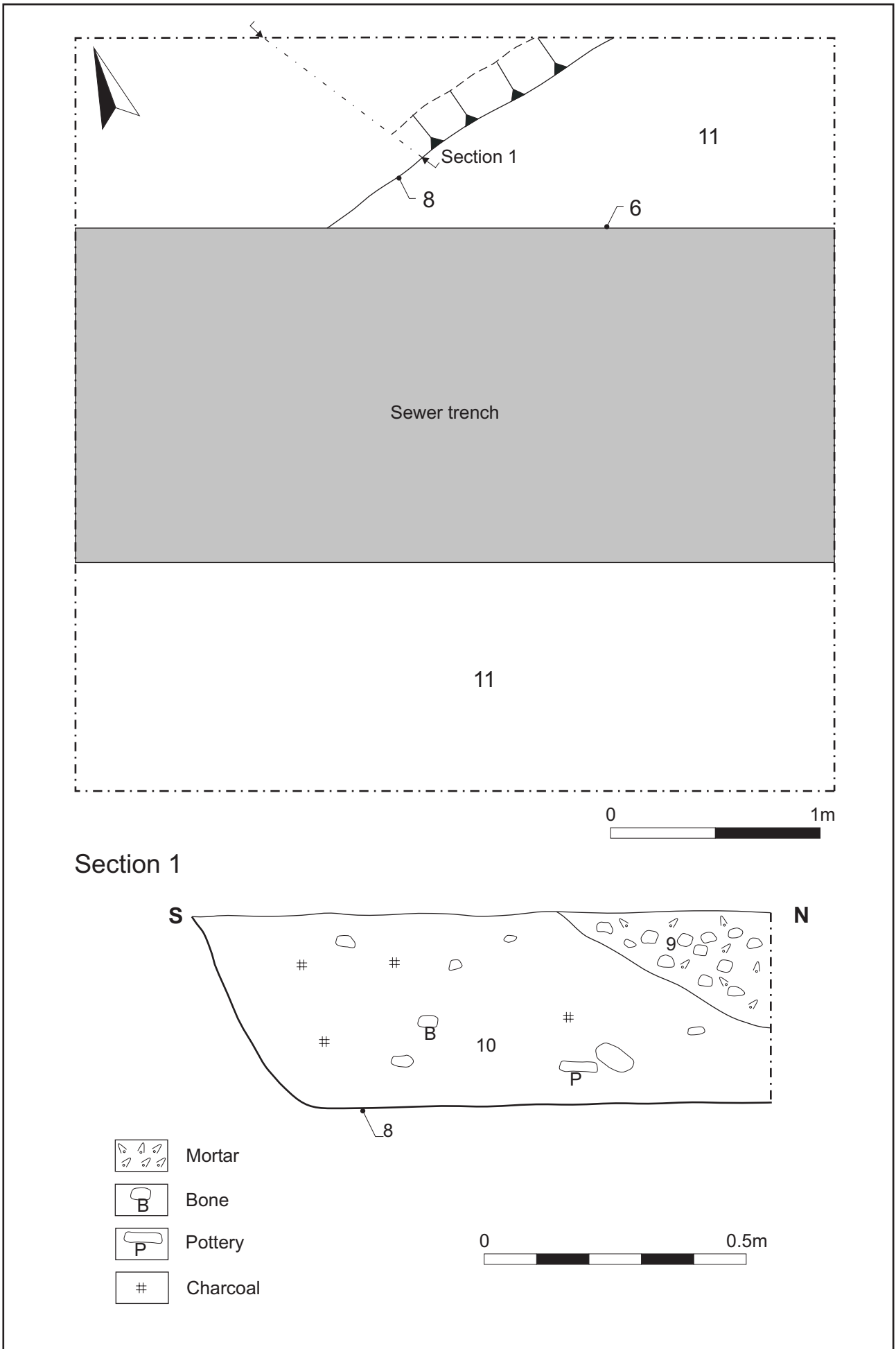
Scale 1: 2,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:5,000

Location of sites listed in historic Environment record (HER) Fig 2



Plan and section of post-medieval ditch Fig 3



Fig 4: The southern end of the initial trench, showing sequence of deposits



Fig 5: The northern end of the initial trench, showing services at base



Fig 6: The post-medieval ditch, truncated by the sewer cut (to top centre). The light upper fill and dark primary fill are clearly demarcated



Fig 7: Excavation of the main trench, showing natural to right of picture and disturbed backfill of the sewer trench to left



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