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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT ST PAUL'S OLD CHURCHYARD,  
LOW CHURCH ROAD,  
MIDDLE RASEN,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(MROC 07)**

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Work Undertaken For  
Graham Cook Architect

March 2007

Report Compiled by  
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons) AIFA

National Grid Reference: TF 0906 8943  
City and County Museum Accession No: 2006.259  
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-24113

APS Report No. **21/07**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at St Paul's Old Churchyard, Low Church Road, Middle Rasen, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the removal of a retaining wall and the excavation of a foundation trench for a new wall.*

*St Paul's church was granted to Drax priory in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and, although noted as being in good repair, was demolished in 1860. St Peter's church became the parish church at this time.*

*The watching brief revealed a sequence of graveyard soil sealed by subsoil and topsoil deposits. No archaeological features were identified and finds comprised two fragments of post-medieval roof tile.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.*” (IFA 1999).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Graham Cook, Architect, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with a new retaining wall to the former churchyard of St Paul's church, Low Church Road, Middle Rasen, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

## 2.3 Topography and Geology

Middle Rasen is located 21m north of Lincoln and 24km west of Louth in the administrative district of West Lindsey, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 310m southeast of the centre of the village as defined by the parish church of St Peter at National Grid Reference TF 0906 8943 (Fig. 2). The churchyard lies on the west side of Low Church Road at a height of c. 17m OD in the valley floor of the River Rase.

Local soils are of the Holme Moor Association, typically gley podzols (Hodge *et al.* 1984). These soils are developed on a drift geology of blown sand which in turn seals a solid geology of Upper Jurassic Amphill Clay Formation (BGS 1999).

## 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Rasen is first mentioned in a charter dating to 973. Referred to as *æt ræsnan*, the name is derived from the old English *ræsn* meaning a plank, a possible reference to a bridge (Cameron 1998, 100). It is referred to as *Media Rasa* as early as 1115 (*ibid.*). The charter details a transaction of 2 hides of land to Thorney Abbey by Bishop Æthelwold (Hart 1966, 169).

At the time of the Domesday Survey, the land was principally held by the Bishop of Bayeaux with smaller allotments held by Roger of Poitou, Alfred of Lincoln, Gocelin, son of Lambert, Ralf Pagenel and Durrand Malet and contained a church with a priest and 280 acres of meadow (Foster and Longley 1976). In the subsequent Lindsey Survey of c. 1115, the land was held by Ralf Malet, Walter Malet, Ralf Panell, Gilbert, son of Gocelin, Alan of Lincoln and Gilbert Nevill (*ibid.*).

Before 1135, William Paynell, founded Drax Priory in Yorkshire and granted to it St Paul's church at Middle Rasen (Page

1974, 205). The church of St. Peter was probably a later foundation and was granted to Topholme Abbey prior to 1190 (Page 1906, 206).

In 1856, St Peter's church was described as dilapidated and St Paul's in good repair (White 1856, 485). However, in 1860, St Peter's church was restored and St Paul's was demolished (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 563).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the demolition of the previous retaining wall and the excavation of a new foundation trench for the new wall. Following demolition and excavation of the foundation trenches, the exposed sections were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable

relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

### 5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief was a layer of brown sandy silt (005) identified as a graveyard soil. This measured in excess of 0.7m thick.

Developed upon this was a subsoil layer of brownish grey sandy silt (002 and 004). This was between 0.45m and 0.57m thick.

Sealing all deposits was the current topsoil comprising a 0.35m-0.4m thick layer of grey sandy silt (001 and 003).

### 6. DISCUSSION

Graveyard soils were the earliest deposit encountered and were sealed by subsoil layers, presumably created since the church was demolished in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Finds retrieved from the graveyard soil comprise two fragments of post-medieval roof tile.

### 7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at St Paul's churchyard as the possibility existed of remains associated with the former church being exposed during renovation works.

However, a graveyard deposit sealed by subsoil and topsoil were the only deposits encountered. Finds include two fragments of tile.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr G. Cook for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Steve Malone who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone  
 Site Supervisor: Bob Garland  
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services  
 BGS British Geological Survey  
 IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General location plan





Area detailed in Figure 3



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<b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: St Paul's churchyard, Middle Rasen		
Scale 1:2500	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 21/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan

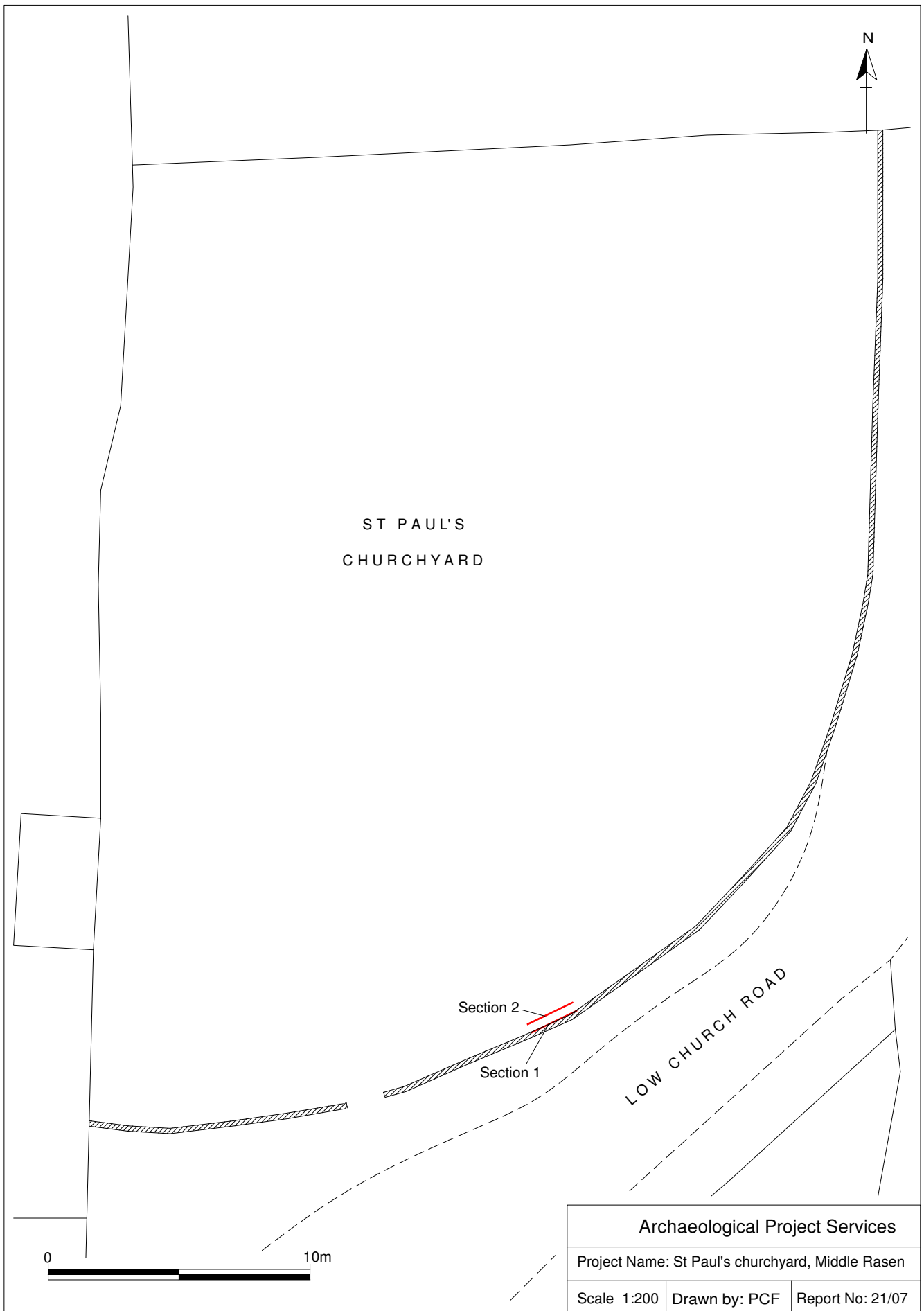
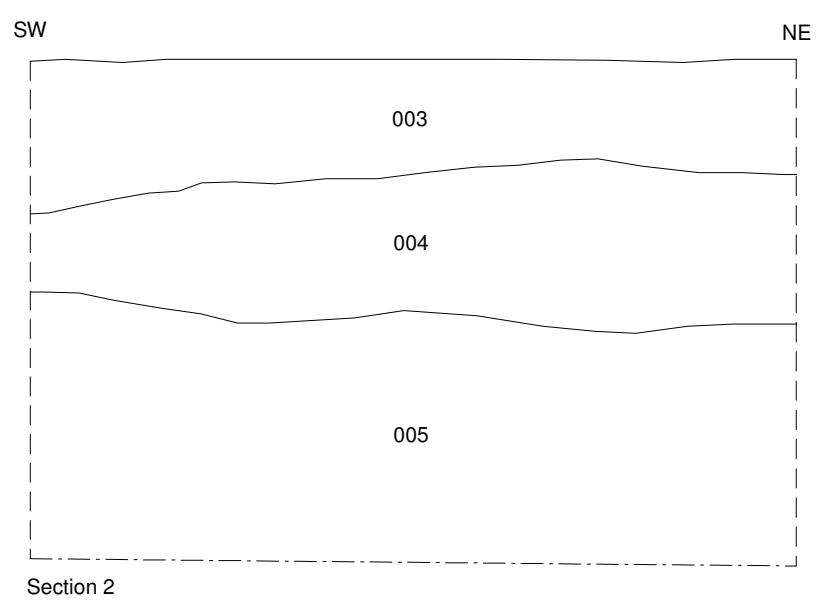
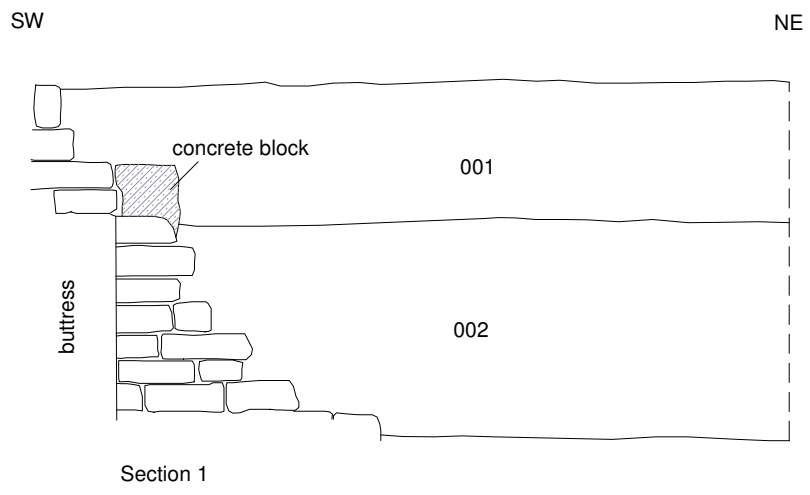


Figure 3 - Plan of the churchyard showing section locations



Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: St Paul's churchyard, Middle Rasen		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 21/07

Figure 4 - Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 - View of the churchyard wall showing the repairs in progress, looking northeast



Plate 2 - Section 1, looking northwest



Plate 3 - Section 2, looking northwest

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Friable dark grey sandy silt, 0.35m deep	Topsoil
002	Friable mid brownish grey sandy silt, 0.57m deep	Subsoil
003	Friable dark grey sandy silt, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
004	Friable mid brownish grey sandy silt, 0.45m deep	Subsoil
005	Friable mid brown sandy silt, >0.7m thick	Graveyard soil

## Appendix 2

### THE FINDS *by Gary Taylor*

A small quantity of artefacts, all brick/tile or stone, comprising 3 items weighing a total of 50g, was retrieved from two separate contexts. No other artefacts or faunal remains were recovered.

#### Provenance

The material was recovered from subsoil (004) and graveyard soil (005).

All of the ceramic building material was probably made locally in the Middle Rasen area.

#### Range

The range of material is detailed in the table.

*Table 1: Artefacts*

Context	Material	Description	No.	Wt (g)	Context Date
004	CBM	Tile, mortar adhering, post-medieval	1	26	Post-medieval
	CBM	Tile, sandy fabric, late medieval-early post-medieval	1	21	
005	Uncertain	Fired clay or stone	1	3	

Note: CBM = Ceramic Building Material

#### Condition

All the material is in good condition and presents no long-term storage problems. Archive storage of the collection is by material class.

#### Documentation

Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

#### Potential

The small collection of artefacts is of very limited local potential and significance.

The lack of any material earlier than the late medieval period is informative and suggests that archaeological deposits dating from prior to this time are absent from the area, or were not disturbed by the development, or were of a nature that did not involve artefact deposition.

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

5	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
2	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix
1	Bag of finds

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

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

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

The Collection  
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire  
Danes Terrace  
Lincoln  
LN2 1LP

Accession Number: 2006.259

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: MROC 06

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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