

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF A SERVICE TRENCH  
AT REGENT STREET,  
NORTHAMPTON,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
(NARS 06)**

**Work Undertaken For  
Westleigh Developments Limited**

August 2007

Report Compiled by  
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Planning Application No: WN/2006/0040  
National Grid Reference: SP 7518 6095  
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-28824

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES**



APS Report No. **97/07**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at Regent Street, Northampton. The watching brief monitored the excavation of service trench associated with a new block of flats.*

*The site lies within the formerly walled circuit of the medieval (AD 1066-1540) town, close to the Cluniac Priory of St. Andrew. The only extant medieval remains in the vicinity is the 12<sup>th</sup> century church of the Holy Sepulchre. Late Saxon (AD 850-1066) remains are known to the south.*

*The watching brief identified a probable late post-medieval cellar with no other archaeological features recorded. No finds were retrieved during the investigation.*

## 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 Westleigh Developments Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the insertion of service trenches at Regent Street, Northampton. This followed a watching brief undertaken on the development site which has been reported upon separately (Cope-Faulkner 2007). Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application

WN/2006/0040. The watching brief was carried out on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1).

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Northampton is located fairly centrally in the county of Northamptonshire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 600m northwest of the centre of Northampton as defined by All Saints Church at National Grid Reference SP 7518 6095 (Fig. 2). The site lies on the north side of Regent Street next to its junction with St. Andrew’s Street at a height of 78m OD on a slope down to the east towards the valley of the Brampton River.

As an urban area, local soils have not been mapped. The site lies over the junction of Jurassic Upper Lias and Inferior Oolite series.

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

The site is located within the historic walled town of Northampton. Prehistoric and Romano-British remains are known from the general area, but the main settlement began in the Saxon period. Late Saxon remains have been found to the south of the site which were enclosed by earthen defences, although a suburb may have existed at the junction of St. Andrew’s Street and Broad Street (Williams and Bamford 1979, 24).

The site lies to the west of the extant church of the Holy Sepulchre, a circular church dating to c. 1110 built by Simon de Senlis, Earl of Northampton (Pevsner 2002, 323). Simon de Senlis was also responsible for the construction of the castle, which lay to the southwest of the site. De Senlis is also thought to have planned the town defences, which followed the line of Grafton Street to the

immediate north, although available murage grants date to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

To the north of the town defences was the site of St. Andrew's Priory, also founded by de Senlis between 1093 and 1100, for monks of the Cluniac order (Serjeantson and Adkins 1906, 102).

A watching brief undertaken during the construction of flats at the site only revealed demolition and hardstanding deposits (Cope-Faulkner 2007, 1).

### 3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief, as detailed in the specification (Appendix 1), were to locate and record archaeological deposits and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

A service trench was excavated along Regent Street by machine to depths required by the development. The depth of the trench, at approximately 2.2m below the current ground level, precluded the cleaning of the sides and all observations were made from the top of the trench. Each deposit encountered was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 2. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

Following excavation the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

### 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 was a probable natural layer of yellowish brown silty sand (008). Revealed 0.35m below the present ground surface, this measured in excess of 1m thick.

Constructed within a cut, which could not be discerned, was a limestone and brick cellar wall (009). This was greater than 2m long by over 1m high (Fig. 4, Section 3). An internal wall within the cellar was identified (013) and a possible chute also recorded (007).

Backfilling the cellar were dumped deposits of yellowish brown sand with limestone fragments (012), grey/black ash and silt (011) and yellowish brown silty sand with brick and stone (010). The chute had been backfilled with yellow sand (006).

Sealing all deposits was the current road surface of tarmac and its make-up deposits (005).

### 6. DISCUSSION

The watching brief encountered natural silty sands which may represent the upper weathered surface of the underlying solid geology.

A cellar was also recorded and is likely to relate to known buildings on the site which are recorded on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of the town. The infilling of the cellars is undated but could conceivably have been a fairly recent event.

No other archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were retrieved from the investigation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Regent Street, Northampton, as the site lay within the core of the medieval town.

However, only a cellar of probable late post-medieval date was identified during the watching brief. No artefacts were observed or recorded during the work.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr M. Finnie of Westleigh Developments Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
 Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Pevsner, N, 2002 *Northamptonshire, The Buildings of England* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised B, Cherry)

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## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists





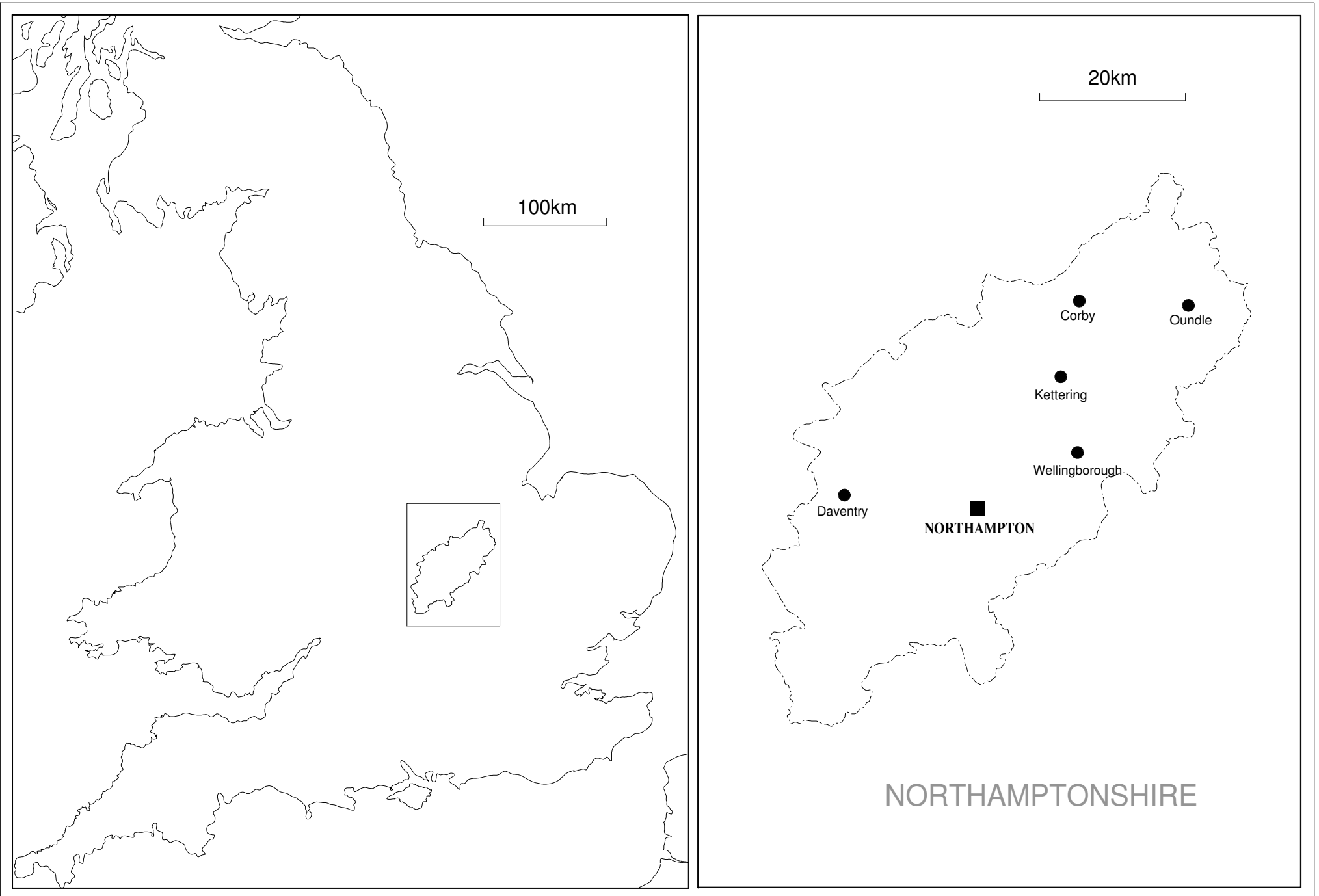
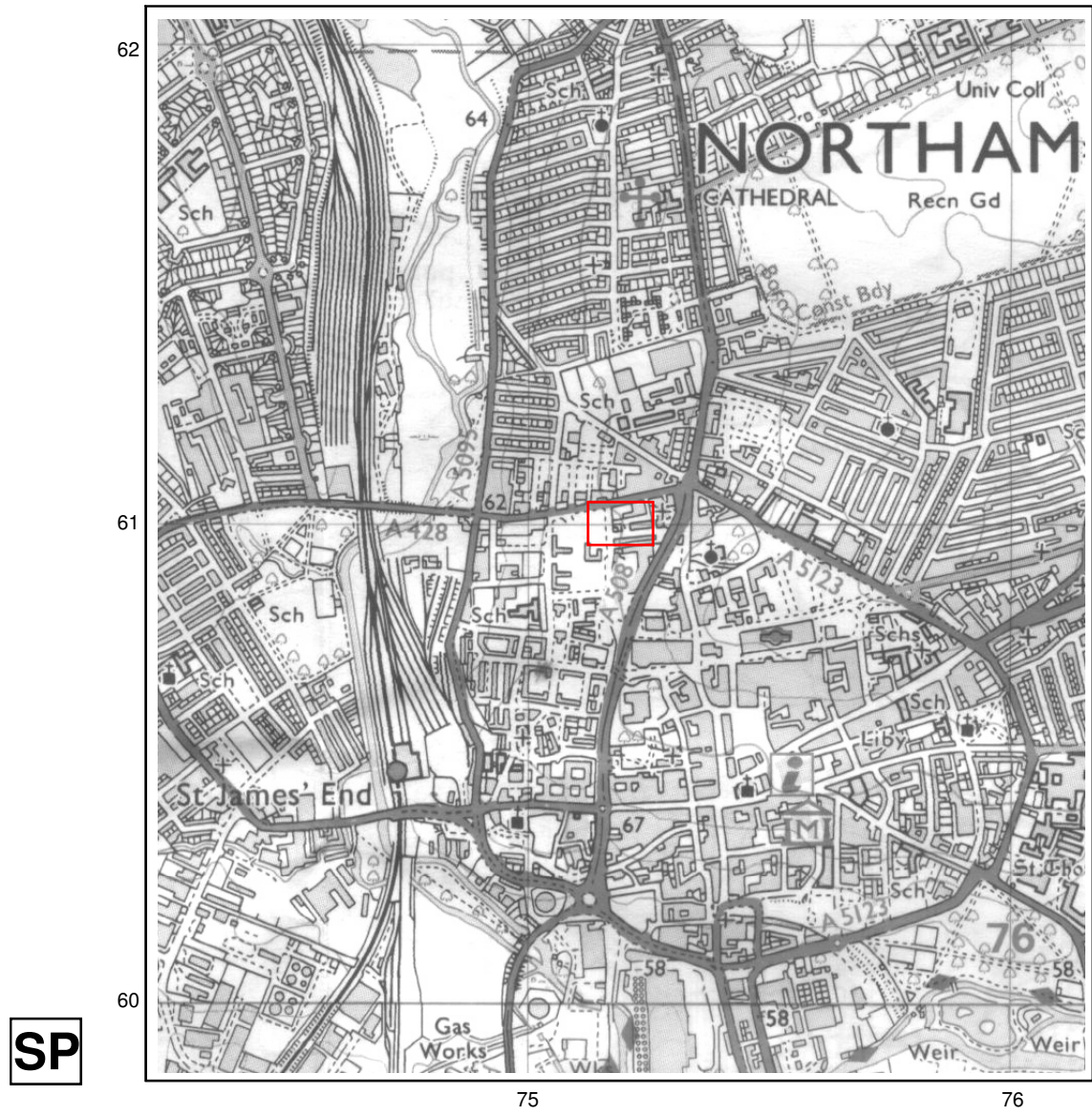



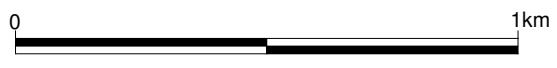
Figure 1 - General Location Plan





Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright. HTL Ltd Licence No. AL5041A0001

 Area detailed in Figure 3




 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Regent Street, Northampton NARS06		
Scale 1:15000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 97/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan



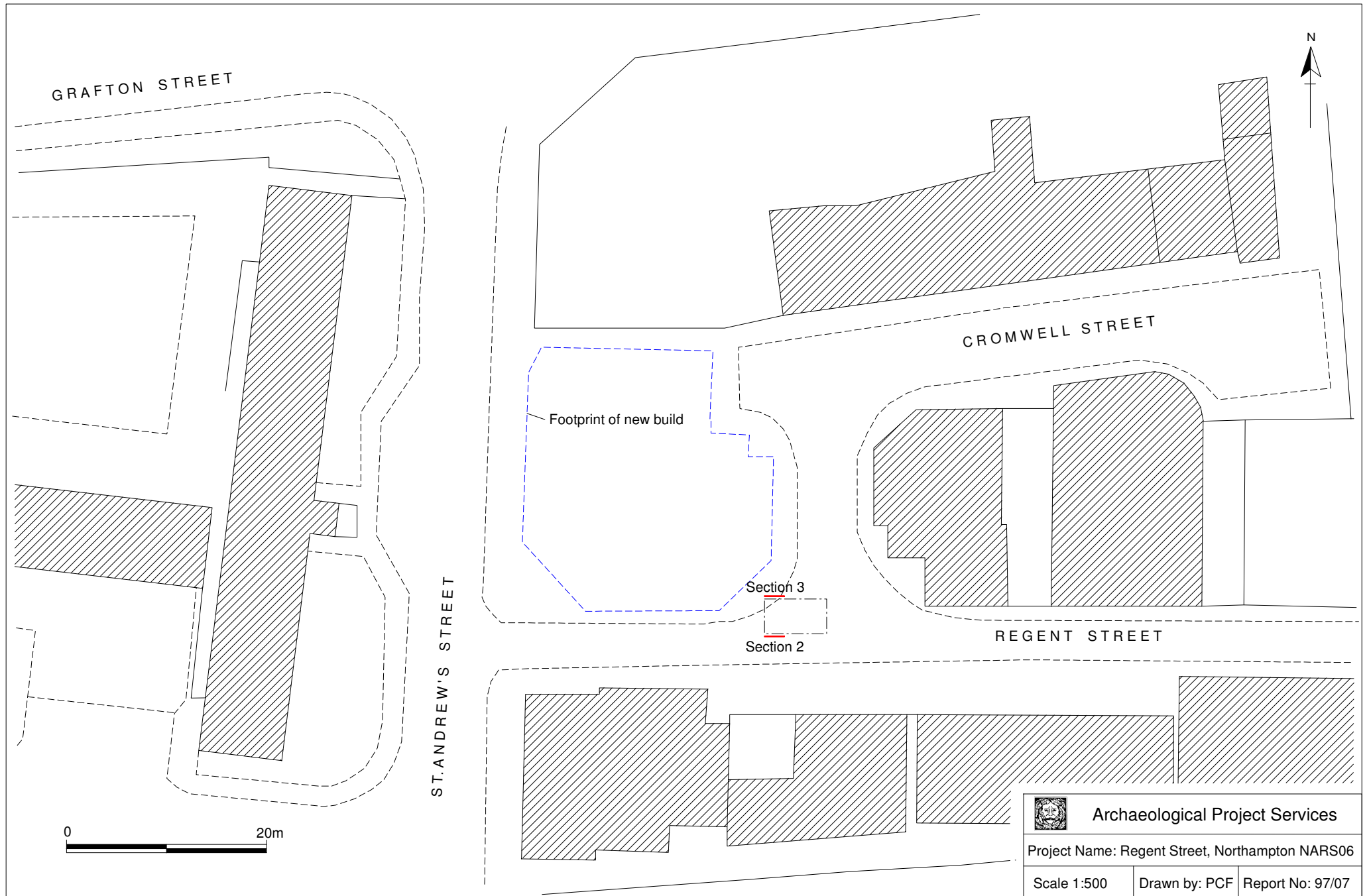



Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing location of drawn section

 <b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: Regent Street, Northampton NARS06		
Scale 1:500	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 97/07



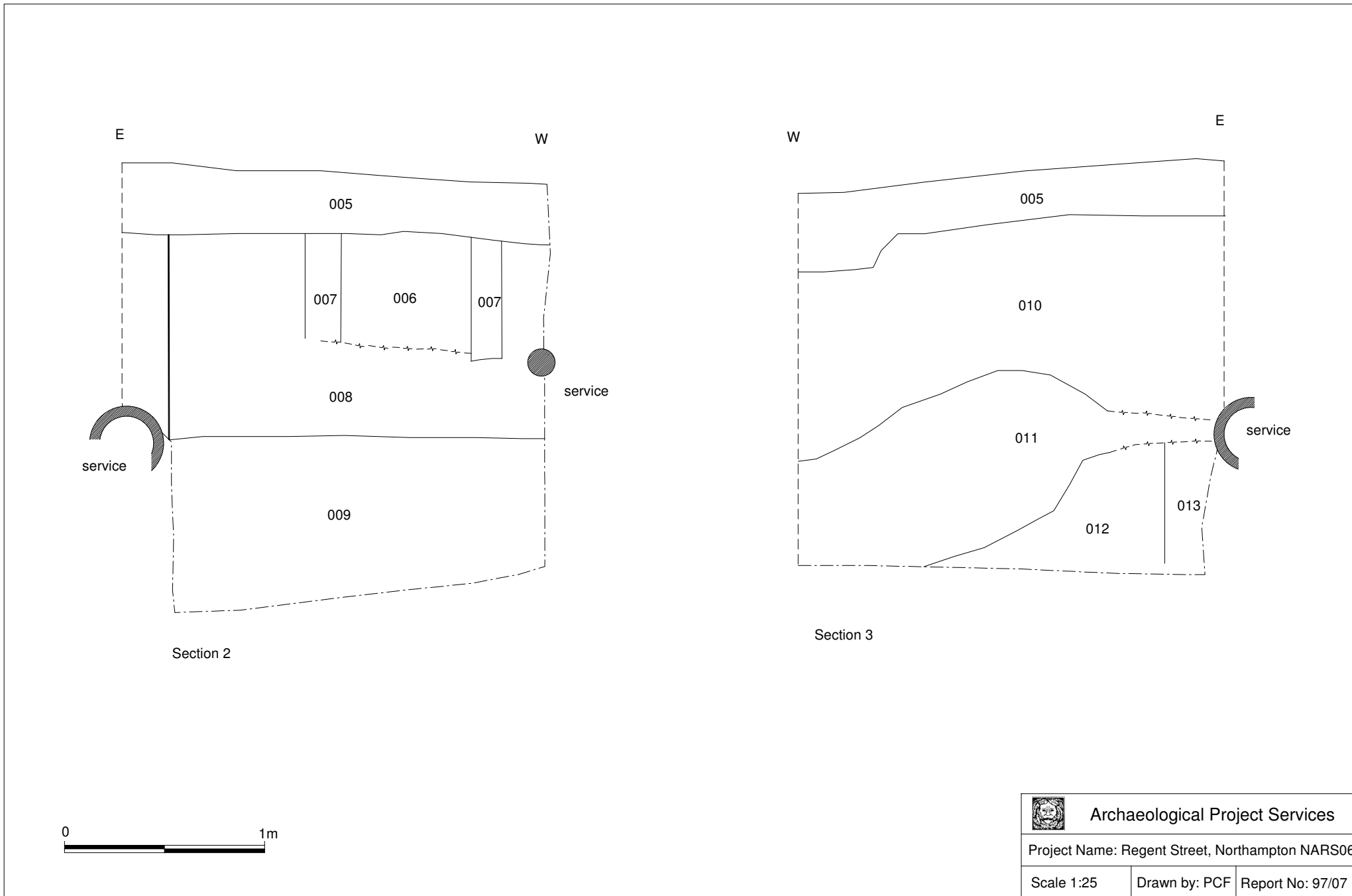


Figure 4 - Sections 2 and 3







Plate 1 – General view of the development area, looking northwest



Plate 2 – Section 2 showing the cellar wall, looking south



Plate 3 – Section 3, looking north



## **Appendix 1**

### **LAND AT REGENT STREET, OFF ST. ANDREW'S STREET, NORTHAMPTON - SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 *A watching brief is required during construction of flats on land at Regent Street, Northampton.*
- 1.2 *The site lies in an area of known archaeological significance. It lies in the historic core of the medieval walled town, between the castle bailey and the precinct of St Andrew's Priory, both established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Late Saxon, medieval and later remains have previously been found nearby.*
- 1.3 *The archaeological work will consist of a watching brief during development works on the site.*
- 1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the watching brief. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

#### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for archaeological watching brief during construction of flats on land at the junction of Regent Street and St Andrew's Street, Northampton.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
  - 2.2.1 Overview.
  - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
  - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
  - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

#### **3 SITE LOCATION**

- 3.1 Northampton is located in the southern part of the county of Northamptonshire. Regent Street is in the northern part of the town centre, immediately west of the church of St Sepulchre. The site is located at the western end of Regent Street, on its northern side, at its junction with St Andrew's Street, centred on National Grid Reference SP 752 609.

#### **4 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 A planning application (WN/2006/0040) was submitted to West Northamptonshire Development Corporation for the demolition of two houses and the construction of 28 flats with parking. Permission is subject to a condition requiring the undertaking of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted to and approved by the Local planning Authority. This document provides such a written scheme of investigation.

#### **5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 5.1 As an urban area soils have not been mapped. Ironstone provides the natural geology. The site is on a slope westward down to the Brampton Rover, a tributary of the River Nene, and lies at about 75m OD.

#### **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW**

- 6.1 The development site is located within the historic walled town core of Northampton, between the castle bailey and the precinct of St Andrew's Priory, both established in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The site also lies a short distance to the west of the Norman church of St. Sepulchre, and immediately east of St

Andrew's church, built in the 1840s. Prehistoric remains have previously been identified in Northampton but the main settlement begins in the Saxon period. Late Saxon remains have been found a short distance to the south on King Street and, at that same location, medieval quarry pits were identified, and there was evidence of post-medieval activity (Chapman 2000-1). Much of Northampton was destroyed in a major fire of 1675, but was rebuilt quickly. Both Regent Street and St Andrew's Street are shown on Speed's 1610 map of the city (Williams 1979).

## **7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

7.1 The aims of the watching brief will be:

7.1.1 To record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.

7.1.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be to:

- Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
- Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

## **8 SITE OPERATIONS**

8.1 General considerations

8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.

8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIFA). Archaeological Project Services is IFA registered organisation no. 21.

8.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and includes the archaeological monitoring of all phases of soil movement.

8.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.

8.2.3 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.

8.2.4 Throughout the watching brief a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

- the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
- groups of features where their relationship is important

8.2.5 Should human remains be located the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained

before their removal. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department and the police will be informed.

## **9 POST-EXCAVATION**

### **9.1 Stage 1**

9.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the watching brief will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

9.1.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

### **9.2 Stage 2**

9.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

9.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

### **9.3 Stage 3**

9.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.

9.3.2 This will consist of:

- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
- A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
- Description of the topography of the site.
- Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
- A text describing the findings of the watching brief.
- A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

## **10 REPORT DEPOSITION**

10.1 Copies of the report will be sent to the Client; the Northamptonshire County Council Built and Natural

Environment Service; West Northamptonshire Development Corporation; and the Northamptonshire County Historic Environment Record. The Historic Environment Record will also be provided with a digital copy of the report and all data.

## **11 ARCHIVE**

- 11.1 The documentation and records generated during the watching brief will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to Northampton Museum, for long-term storage and curation.

## **12 PUBLICATION**

- 12.1 Details of the investigation will be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS). A note on the investigation will also be submitted to the journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology*.
- 12.2 If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date, and *Medieval Archaeology* and the *Journal of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* for findings of medieval or later date.

## **13 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- 13.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Northamptonshire County Council Built and Natural Environment Service. They will be given written notice of the commencement of the project.

## **14 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES**

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.
- 14.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator.
- 14.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.
- 14.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

## **15 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS**

- 15.1 The watching brief will be integrated with the programme of construction and is dependent on the developers' work programme. It is therefore not possible to specify the person-hours for the archaeological site work.
- 15.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- 15.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists. It is expected that each fieldwork day (equal to one person-day) will require a post-excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half person-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about four days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

## **16 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT**

- 16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Body to be undertaking the work</u>
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust Roman - B Precious, Independent Specialist Post-Roman – P Blinkhorn, Independent Specialist
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, Independent Specialist, or G Taylor, APS
Animal Bones	J Kitch, APS
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist
Human Remains Analysis	J Kitch, APS

## **17 INSURANCES**

- 17.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

## **18 COPYRIGHT**

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## **19 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Chapman, A., 200-1 Excavations at the Moat House Hotel, Northampton, 1998, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 29

Williams, J., 1979 *St Peter's Street, Northampton, Excavations 1973-1976*

## Appendix 2

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
005	Indurated black tarmac and light yellow limestone fragments, 0.38m maximum thickness	Road surface and make-up
006	Soft to loose light to mid yellow sand, 0.6m thick	Backfill deposit
007	Parallel brick structures, aligned east-west, 0.8m apart, 0.6m high and 0.2m wide	Walls
008	Firm light to mid yellowish brown silty sand, >1m thick	?Natural deposit
009	Limestone and brick structure, aligned east-west, >2m long by >1m high	Cellar wall
010	Firm light to mid yellowish brown silty sand with frequent brick and stone fragments, 1m thick	Dumped deposit
011	Soft to friable dark grey/black ash and silt, >0.9m thick	Dumped deposit
012	Firm light to mid yellowish brown sand with limestone fragments, >0.6m thick	Dumped deposit
013	Brick structure, aligned north-south, 0.2m wide by >0.8m high	Internal cellar wall

Contexts 001 to 004 have previously been reported upon.



## 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>Murage</b>	Tax levied for building or repairing the walls of a town.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1 <sup>st</sup> century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
<b>Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive from the present investigation will be combined with that from the previous examination of the site. The total archive consists of:

13	Context records
2	Photographic record sheets
2	Daily record sheets
2	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records 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 Northampton Museum

Accession Number: *Pending*

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: NARS 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.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.