

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND TO THE REAR OF 42 FLEET STREET HOLBEACH LINCOLNSHIRE (HOFS08)

Work Undertaken For

D BROWN BUILDERS

April 2008

Report Compiled by Thomas Bradley-Lovekin MA PIFA

National Grid Reference: TF 3629 2473 Planning Application No: H09/0464/07 City and County Museum Accession No: LCNCC:2008.24 OASIS Ref: archaeol1-41316

APS Report No: 48/08

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES





Quality Control Land to the rear of 42 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire (HOFS 08)

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Date: 09-05-08	Date: 09-05-08		

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of dwellings on land to the rear of 42 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.

The watching brief was required by the local planning authority as the site lies in an area of archaeological potential, in the historic core of Holbeach, some 250m east of the parish church of All Saints.

The watching brief revealed an undated pit within Plot 2 as well as deposits of natural silt, subsoil, topsoil and modern demolition material.

Finds were limited to a single ceramic drain cover of 20th century date, which is suitable for discard.

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 maybe disturbed or destroyed." (IFA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Project Services Archaeological commissioned by D Brown Builders Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of three dwelling on land to the rear of 42 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the planning submission of application (H09/0464/07) to South Holland District Council. The watching brief was carried out between the 8th and the 10th of April 2008.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Holbeach is situated 20km south of Boston in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire (Fig.1). The site lies close to the centre of the town, to the rear of properties fronting onto Fleet Street, approximately 250m east of All Saints' Church, at National Grid Reference TF 3629 2473 (Fig. 2).

The site lies at approximately 4m OD on fairly level land. Local soils are the Romney Series silts developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). South of the town are the Wisbech Series, calcareous alluvial gley soils (*ibid*. 28). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium (generally sandy silt, sand and clay) which in turn seals a solid geology of Upper Jurassic clays (BGS 1992).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the Holbeach region is scarce. The prehistoric land surface lies several metres below a series of later flood deposits.

The marshland stabilised during the Romano-British period, allowing agricultural and salt making activities to commence. Finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded from two locations south of Holbeach town centre. These finds were made at a depth of c. 1m and indicates that the Roman land surface is buried.

Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is referred to variably as *Holebech*, *Holeben*, *Holobech* and *Holobec*. It is possible that the name derives from Old English 'hol' and 'baec', meaning 'concave ridge', an appropriate topographic name as the town is elevated above the surrounding fen

(Cameron 1998). At the time of the Domesday Book the town was divided between the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon (Morris 1986). Features of late Saxon date have previously been noted in the town (Herbert 1999).

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

Foundation trenches for two of the new dwellings (Plots 1 and 2) were excavated using a mechanical excavator and were monitored by APS staff. Each deposit identified was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with 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 and 1:20. 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.

Groundworks for the third new dwelling (Plot 3) were not monitored. This building was constructed to a different, piled, foundation design.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis three phases were identified;

Phase 1 Natural deposits
Phase 2 Undated deposits
Phase 3 Recent deposits

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

5.1 Phase 1 Natural Deposits

A single deposit of loose light yellowish brown silt (002) extended across the base of the footings for Plot 2 to a depth of at least 0.38m (Fig. 4 Sections 1 and 2 and Plates 2 and 3).

5.2 Undated Deposits

A single, irregular, undated pit [004], measuring 1.42m in diameter, cut (002) in the central part of Plot 2. At least 0.42m deep, the pit was filled with a loose midbrown silt (003) (Fig. 4 Section 2, Plan 1 and Plate 3).

5.3 Recent Deposits

Within Plot 1 a light to mid-yellowish brown subsoil (006) was sealed by a 0.26m thick demolition deposit (005), consisting of demolition rubble mixed with mid-brown silt (Fig. 4 Section 3).

A single deposit of loose very dark greyish brown organic silt topsoil (001) sealed the earlier deposits within Plot 2. A ceramic drain cap cover recovered from (001), has been discarded as it is of 20th century origin (Taylor *pers. comm.*)

6. DISCUSSION

Remains of Romano-British and late Anglo Saxon date are known within the vicinity of the development, although no datable archaeological remains were identified during the watching brief. Indications elsewhere in the Holbeach region suggest that the prehistoric land surface lies several metres and the Romano-British levels at least a metre below the present ground level, protected beneath later flood deposits.

Although pit [004] is undated, for the reasons outlined above, its shallow depth indicates that it is likely to post-date the Romano-British period.

7. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of three dwellings on land at Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire, as the site lies within an area of potential archaeological interest. Romano-British, and late Anglo-Saxon finds have previously been discovered within the vicinity.

In the event however only an undated pit along with deposits of natural silt, subsoil, topsoil and modern demolition material were revealed within the groundworks monitored.

Finds were limited to a single drain ceramic drain cover of 20th century date, which has been discarded.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services (APS) wishes to acknowledge the assistance of D Brown Builders Ltd who commissioned both the fieldwork and this report. The project was co-ordinated by Steve Malone who, along with Tom Lane Edited this report.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker

Illustration and plates: Thomas Bradley-

Lovekin

Post-excavation analysis: Thomas Bradley-Lovekin

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Morris, J., ed. 1986 Domesday Book, Lincolnshire

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

DoE Department of the Environment

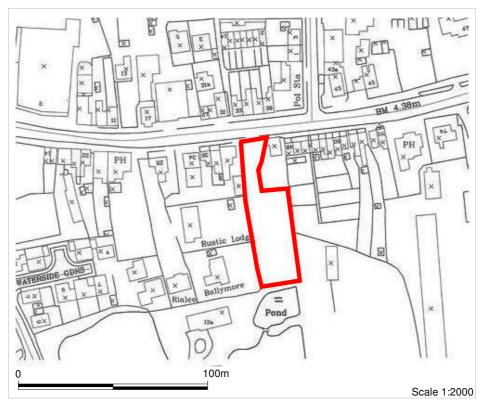
GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1: General Location Plan





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Figure 2 Development Location Map

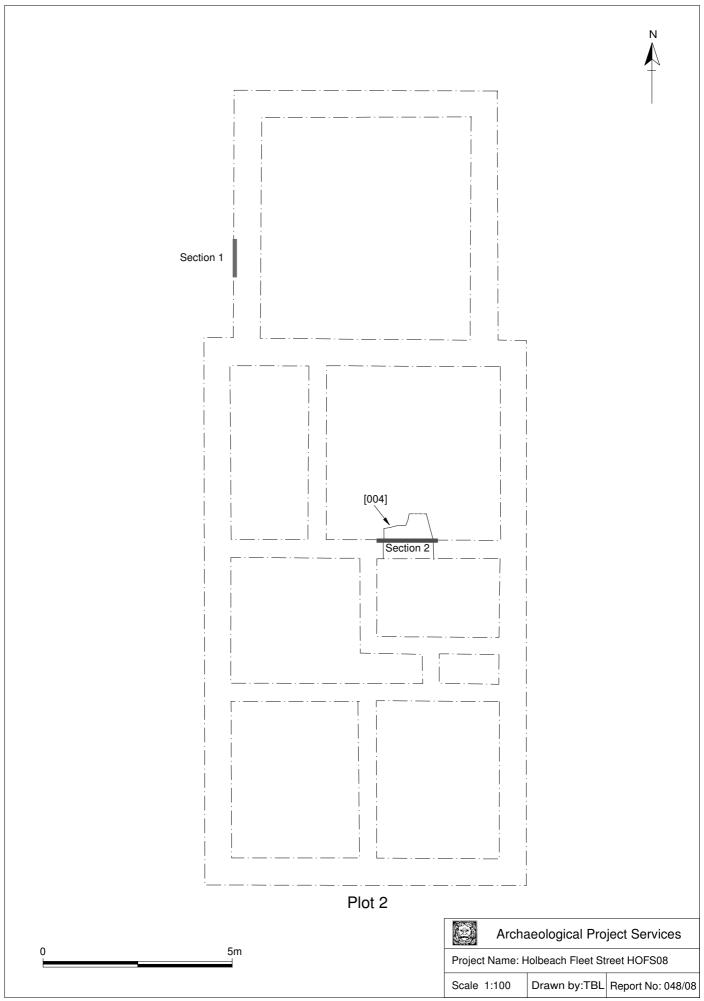


Figure 3 Plan of Plot 2 footings showing location of Sections 1 and 2

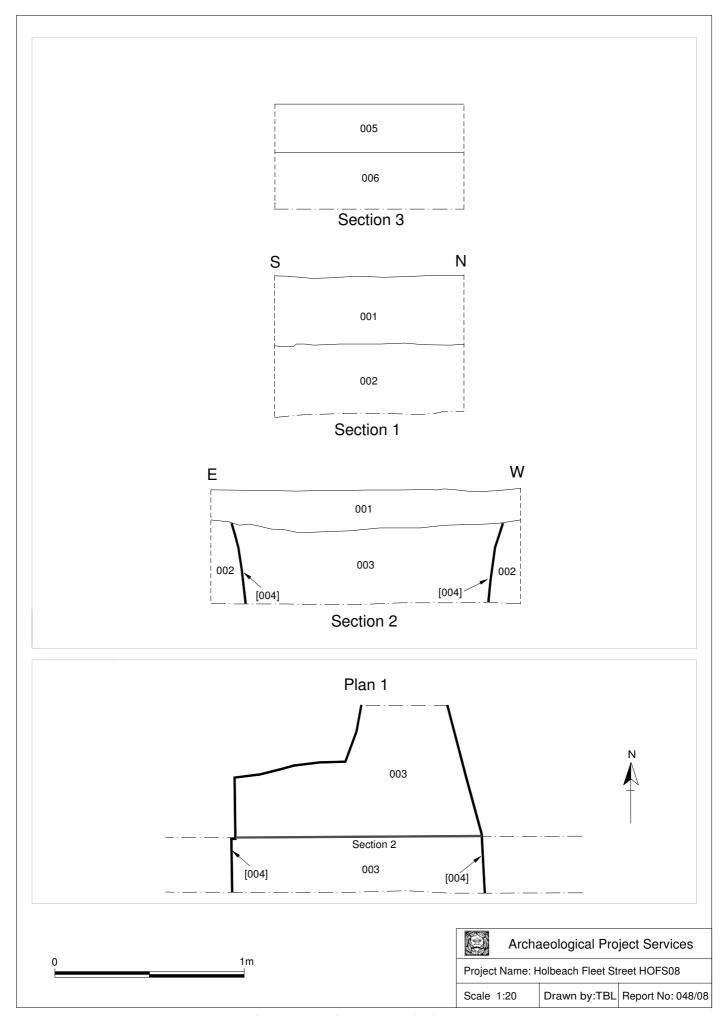


Figure 4 Sections 1-3 and Plan 1



Plate 1 North facing view across the development



Plate 2 Section 1



Plate 3 Section 2 showing Pit [004]

APPENDIX 1

LAND TO THE REAR OF 42 FLEET STREET, HOLBEACH LINCOLNSHIRE

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF December 2007

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 A watching brief is required during construction of dwellings on land to the rear of 42 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, located in the historic core of Holbeach some 250m east of the parish church of All Saints.
- 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 dwellings on land to the rear of 42 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.
- 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 Holbeach is situated 20km south of Boston in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire. The site lies close to the centre of the town, to the rear of properties fronting onto Fleet Street, approximately 250m east of All Saints' Church, at National Grid Reference TF 3629 2473.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

4.1 A planning application (H09/0464/07) was submitted to South Holland District Council for construction of three dwellings. Permission is subject to a condition requiring the undertaking of a watching brief during groundworks associated with the development.

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 The site lies at approximately 4m OD on fairly level land. Local soils are the Romney Series silts developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). South of the town are the Wisbech Series, calcareous alluvial gley soils (*ibid*. 28). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium (generally sandy silt, sand and clay) which in turn seals a solid geology of Upper

Jurassic clays (BGS 1992).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 6.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the Holbeach region is scarce. The prehistoric land surface lies several metres below a series of later flood deposits.
- 6.2 The marshland stabilised during the Romano-British period, allowing agricultural and salt making activities to commence. Finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded from two locations south of Holbeach town centre. These finds were made at a depth of c. 1m and indicates that the Roman land surface is buried.
- 6.3 Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is referred to variably as *Holebech*, *Holebech* and *Holobech* and *Holobec*. It is possible that the name derives from Old English 'hol' and 'baec', meaning 'concave ridge', an appropriate topographic name as the town is elevated above the surrounding fen Cameron 1988. At the time of the Domesday Book the town was divided between the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon (Morris 1986). Features of late Saxon date have previously been noted in the town (Herbert 1999).

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 <u>Methodology</u>

- 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 <u>Stage 1</u>

- 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 <u>Stage 2</u>

- 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 <u>Stage 3</u>

- 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; South Holland District Council Planning Department; and to the County Council Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record.

11 ARCHIVE

11.1 The documentation and records generated during the watching brief will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to The Collection, Lincoln. This will be undertaken following the requirements of the document titled Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives for long-term storage and curation.

12 PUBLICATION

- Details of the investigation will be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).
- 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

Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the County Council Archaeology Section. 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.
- 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 (*Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* 1998, Sections 5.7 and 18).
- 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.

Task Body to be undertaking the work

Conservation Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln

Pottery Analysis Prehistoric - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust

Roman - B Precious, Independent Specialist

Anglo-Saxon - J Young, Independent Specialist

Medieval and later - A Boyle, APS/J Young, Independent

Specialist

Non-pottery Artefacts J Cowgill, Independent Specialist/G Taylor APS

Animal Bones J Kitch, APS

Environmental Analysis V Fryer, Independent Specialist

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

- 18.1 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.
- 18.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.
- 18.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

19 BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS, 1992 Spalding, Solid and Drift Geology, 1:50,000 map sheet 144

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Morris, J., ed. 1986 Domesday Book, Lincolnshire

Robson, JD, 1990 Soils of the Boston and Spalding District (Sheet 131), Memoirs of the Soil Survey of Great Britain

Specification: Version 1, 12 December 2007

Appendix 2

CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation
001	Loose very dark greyish brown organic silt	0.37m	Topsoil
002	Loose light yellowish brown silt	0.38m	Natural
003	Loose mid brown silt	0.40m	Fill of [004]
004	Cut feature partially exposed within Plot 2, measured 1.42m in diameter	0.42m>	Pit cut
005	Mixed deposit of demolition rubble and mid-brown silt	0.26m	Demolition deposit
006	Light to mid yellowish brown silt	0.30m>	Subsoil

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern

Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately

AD 450-1066.

Context 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 interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].

Cut A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation

trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and

subsequently recorded.

Domesday Survey A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of

William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.

Fill Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it

can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are

referred to as its fill(s).

Iron Age A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools,

between 800 BC and AD 50.

Layer A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that

is not contained within a cut.

Medieval The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.

Natural Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the

influence of human activity

Post hole The hole cut to take a timber post, usually in an upright position. The hole

may have been dug larger than the post and contain soil or stones to support the post. Alternatively, the posthole may have been formed through the

process of driving the post into the ground.

Post-medieval The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-

1800.

Prehistoric 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 1st century AD.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 6 Context records
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 1 Section record sheet
- 1 Plan record sheet
- 3 Daily record sheets
- 2 Sheets of scale drawings

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:

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

Accession Number: LCNCC. 2008.24

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: HOFS 08

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.