
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING
ON LAND OFF BACK LANE,
HOLBEACH,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(HOBL 09)**

**Work Undertaken For
R. K. Wilson Builders**

May 2010

Report Compiled by
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

National Grid Reference: TF 3574 2483
City and County Museum Accession No: 2009.199
Planning Application No: H09-0956-08
OASIS ID No: archaeol1-77169

Report No: **36/10**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



**Quality Control
Back Lane,
Holbeach, Lincolnshire
(HOBL 09)**

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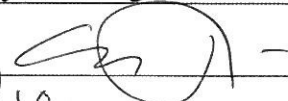
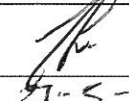
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1. SUMMARY

A scheme of archaeological recording was undertaken during groundworks on land off Back Lane, Holbeach Lincolnshire. The investigation monitored the excavation of footings for a pair of semi-detached houses.

The site is archaeologically sensitive, located within the historic core of Holbeach, close to the medieval parish church and a possible preaching cross and medieval bridge.

However, very few medieval remains were uncovered during the investigation. An isolated pit containing late 13th to 14th century medieval pottery was the only feature identified. This was cut through a silt flood deposit and overlain by a medieval or later subsoil and a recent topsoil layer.

Finds retrieved during the investigation consisted of three fragments of medieval pottery.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by R. K. Wilson Builders to undertake a scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of two new semi-detached dwellings on land off Back Lane, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application H09-0956-08. The investigation was carried out on the 9th of March 2010.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Holbeach is located 11km east of Spalding in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Back Lane lies in the

centre of the town, about 50m west of the parish church and just south of West End. The site is on the north side of Back Lane, at its western end, at National Grid Reference TF 3574 2483. The ground at the site slopes slightly down to the south at c. 5m OD.

The town is situated on soils of the Romney Series, generally coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous soils developed on roddons and reclaimed marshland (Robson 1990, 26). South of the town are Wisbech Series, calcareous alluvial gley soils (Robson 1990, 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).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Evidence of prehistoric activity in Holbeach is scarce as the prehistoric land surface is believed to lie beneath several metres of marine alluvium.

As the Holbeach area's wetland began to stabilise in the Romano-British period, agricultural and saltmaking practices were introduced. Finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded at two locations c. 300m south of the development site. These finds have been made at depth (c. 1m below the ground surface) and indicate that the Roman land surface is buried.

Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086 and is referred to variably as *Holebech*, *Holeben*, *Holobech* and *Holobec*, derived from the Old English and meaning hollow (*hol*) back (*bæc*), a topographic reference to the ridge upon which the village sits (Cameron 1998, 64). At the time of the Domesday Survey over a hundred acres of meadow belonged to the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon (Foster and Longley 1976).

The only extant remains of the medieval period is All Saints' parish church, which was largely built in the 14th century by the

then Bishop of Lincoln. This replaced an earlier church, first referred to in AD 1177 (Macdonald 1890, 19). Besides the church, Holbeach also had a number of chapels, the locations of which are unknown, although the Chapel of St. Peter is believed to lie in the vicinity of the former railway station roughly 400m south south-west of the site.

A medieval bridge and a possible preaching cross were also previously located close to the site. The probably 15th century preaching cross was pulled down in 1683 and is thought to have stood c. 100m east north-east of the site in the centre of what is now a major road junction. The site is probably that of an earlier cross, as Thomas de Multon, Lord Egremont, obtained a fair and market for Holbeach in 1253, and a cross is mentioned here in 1273 (Vallance 1920).

3. AIMS

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

4. METHODS

Trenches for the houses' footings were excavated by machine to a suitable depth. Trenches were then 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 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.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis four phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Medieval deposits
Phase 3	Medieval or later deposits
Phase 4	Recent Deposits

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

Phase 1 Natural deposits

A naturally deposited layer of firm, mid greyish yellowish brown clayey silt (003), with occasional flecks of charcoal and ceramic building material (CBM), occurred in the base of the footings trenches and extended across the whole of the site (Figs 4 & 5, Section 1) (Plates 2, 3, 5 and 6).

Phase 2 Medieval deposits

Cut through deposit (003) was a roughly circular pit [005] with steep sides breaking gradually to a flat base and measuring 0.56m long by 0.54m wide with a depth of 0.31m (Figs 4 & 5, Section 2) (Plates 5 & 6). The pit was filled with a firm dark brown clay (004) containing occasional shells and two sherds of medieval pottery, a fragment of late 13th to 14th century Toynton medieval ware and a piece of Bourne-type pottery dating from the 13th to 14th century.

Phase 3 Medieval or later deposits

A 0.46m thick subsoil layer of firm dark brown clayey silt (002) containing occasional fragments of CBM and charcoal flecks overlay feature [005] (Fig 5, Section 1) (Plate 2). A single sherd of late 13th to 14th century Toynton medieval ware was retrieved from this deposit.

Recent deposits

The subsoil was sealed by a 0.72m thick layer of friable dark grey clayey sandy silt (001) containing frequent bricks, fragments of CBM and clay pipe (not retained). A brick lined well was recorded in the southeast corner of the footings (Plate 4).

6. DISCUSSION

The earliest deposit encountered at the site was a naturally deposited flood silt. This deposit had a late 13th to 14th century feature cut into it, thus its formation must predate the late 13th to 14th century. Additionally, the silt contained flecks of charcoal and CBM. This is suggestive of nearby occupation during the flooding episode that resulted in the deposition of this silt.

The feature itself is probably a small pit. The fill of the pit contained occasional shells and two sherds of medieval pottery which date the feature to the late 13th to 14th century and denote activity of the period in the area. No other features were identified during the investigation.

Overlying the medieval feature was a subsoil layer of uncertain date, though medieval or later, which contained a single sherd of late 13th to 14th century pottery. The pottery is probably residual as there is a feature of this date cut through silt layer below.

A very thick recent topsoil containing demolition debris, probably from the former building at the site, completed the

sequence of deposits. A recent brick lined well was also observed and recorded in plan.

7. CONCLUSION

A scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on land off Back Lane, Holbeach, Lincolnshire, during groundworks associated with the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses. The work was required due to the site's location in the historic core of Holbeach, lying close to the medieval parish church and a possible preaching cross and medieval bridge.

However, the investigation uncovered very little in the way of medieval remains. An isolated late 13th to 14th century medieval pit was the only feature uncovered during the watching brief. This was cut through a silt flood deposit and overlain by a medieval or later subsoil and a recent topsoil layer.

Finds retrieved during the investigation consisted of two fragments of late 13th to 14th century Toynton ware pottery and a sherd of 13th to 14th century Bourne-type ware.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of R. K. Wilson Builders 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 allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Andrew Failes

Finds processing: Denise Buckley
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Andrew Failes
Post-excavation analysis: Andrew Failes

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS, 1992 *Spalding, Solid and Drift geology*, 1:50,000 map sheet **144** (Keyworth)

Cameron, K., 1998 *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names*

Foster, C.W. and Longley, T. (eds), 1976 *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, The Lincoln Record Society **19**

Macdonald, G.W., 1890 *Historical Notices of the parish of Holbeach in the County of Lincoln*

Robson, J.D., 1990 *Soils of the Boston and Spalding District (Sheet 131)*, Memoirs of the Soil Survey of Great Britain

Vallance, A. 1920 *Old Crosses and Lychgates* London: Batsford

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

CBM Ceramic building material

BGS British Geological Survey

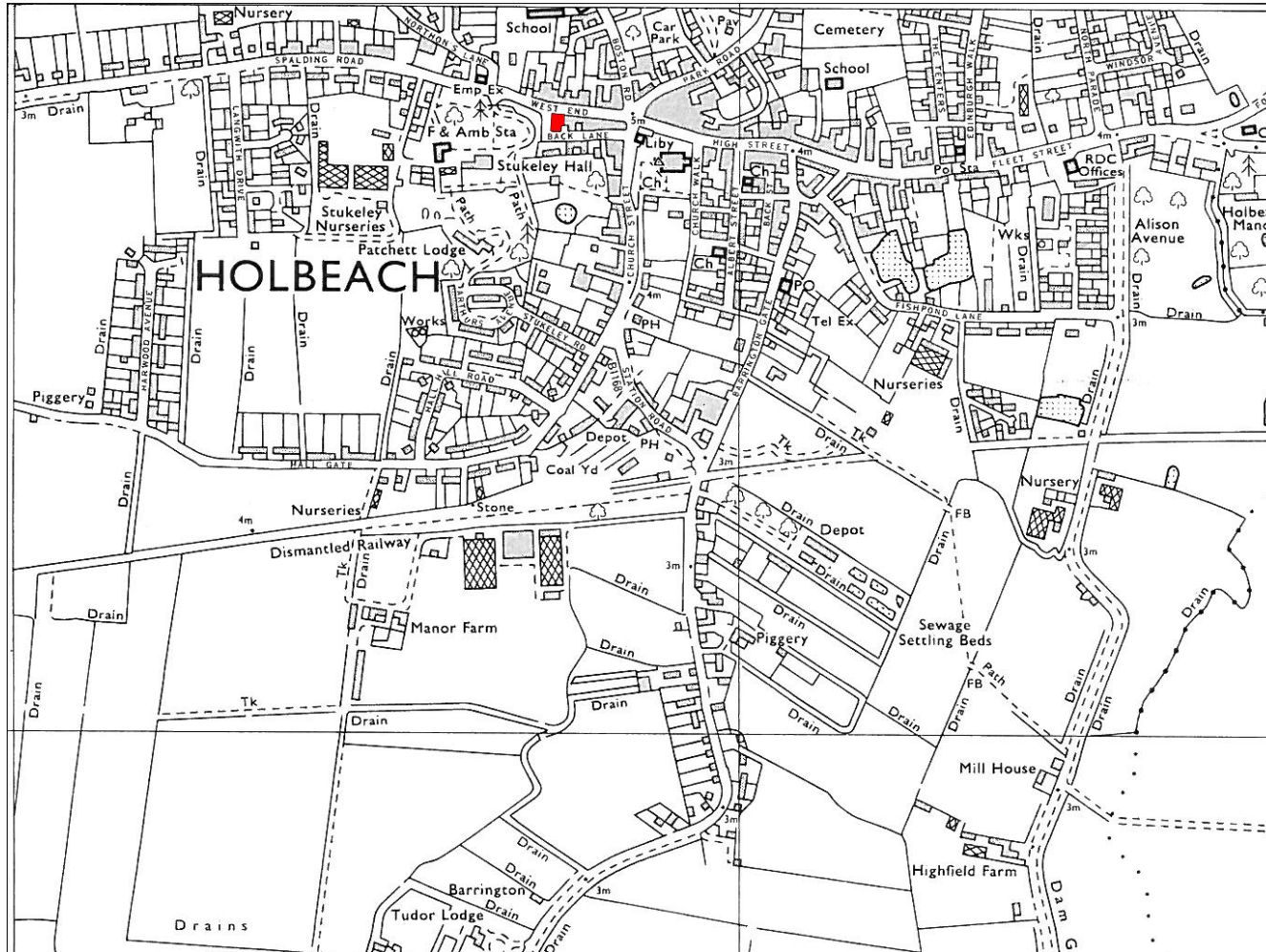
IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 General Location Plan

35
25

36



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TF



■ - Site location



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Scale 1:10000 Drawn by: AF Report No: 36/10

Figure 2 - Site Location Map

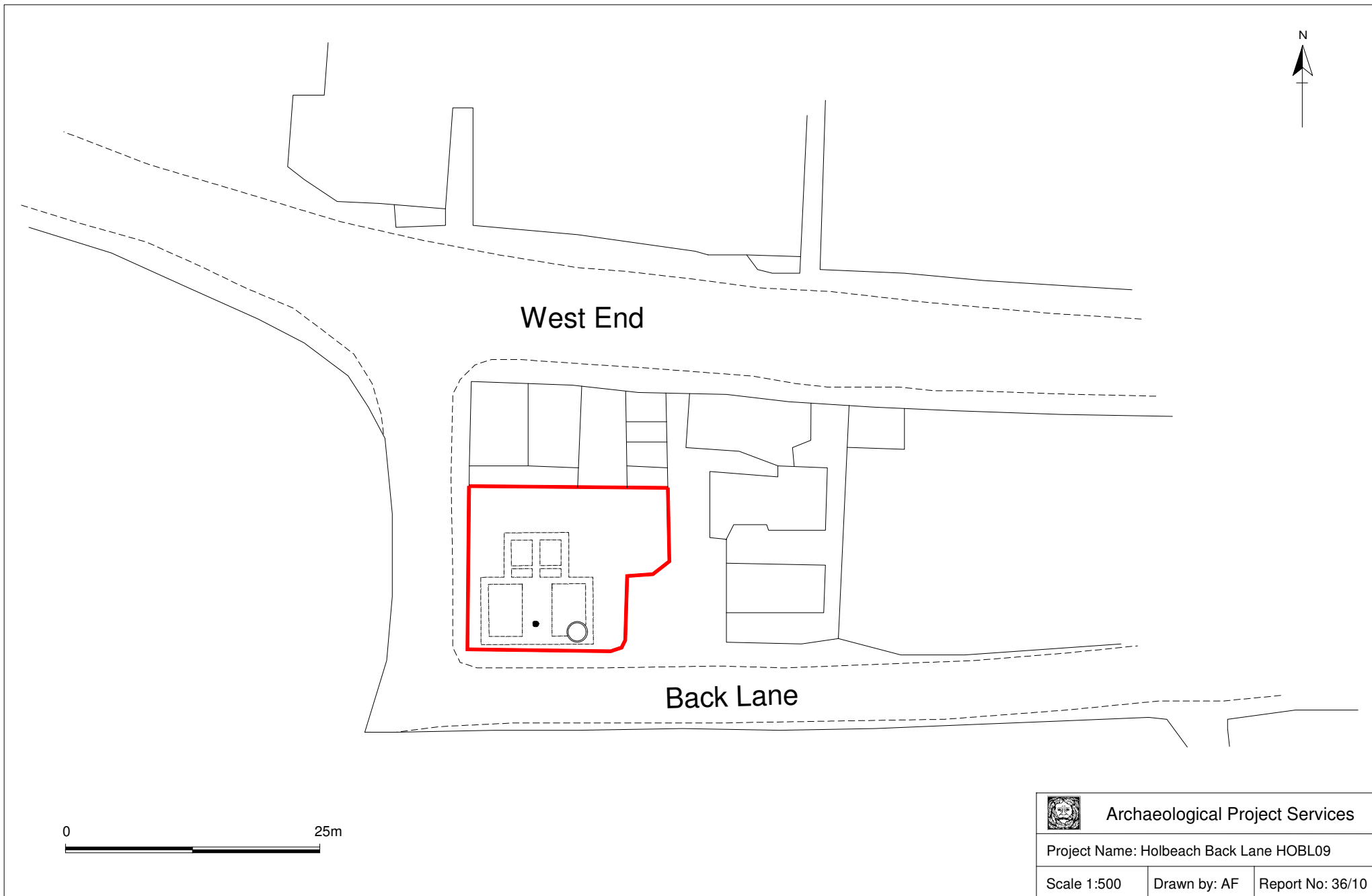
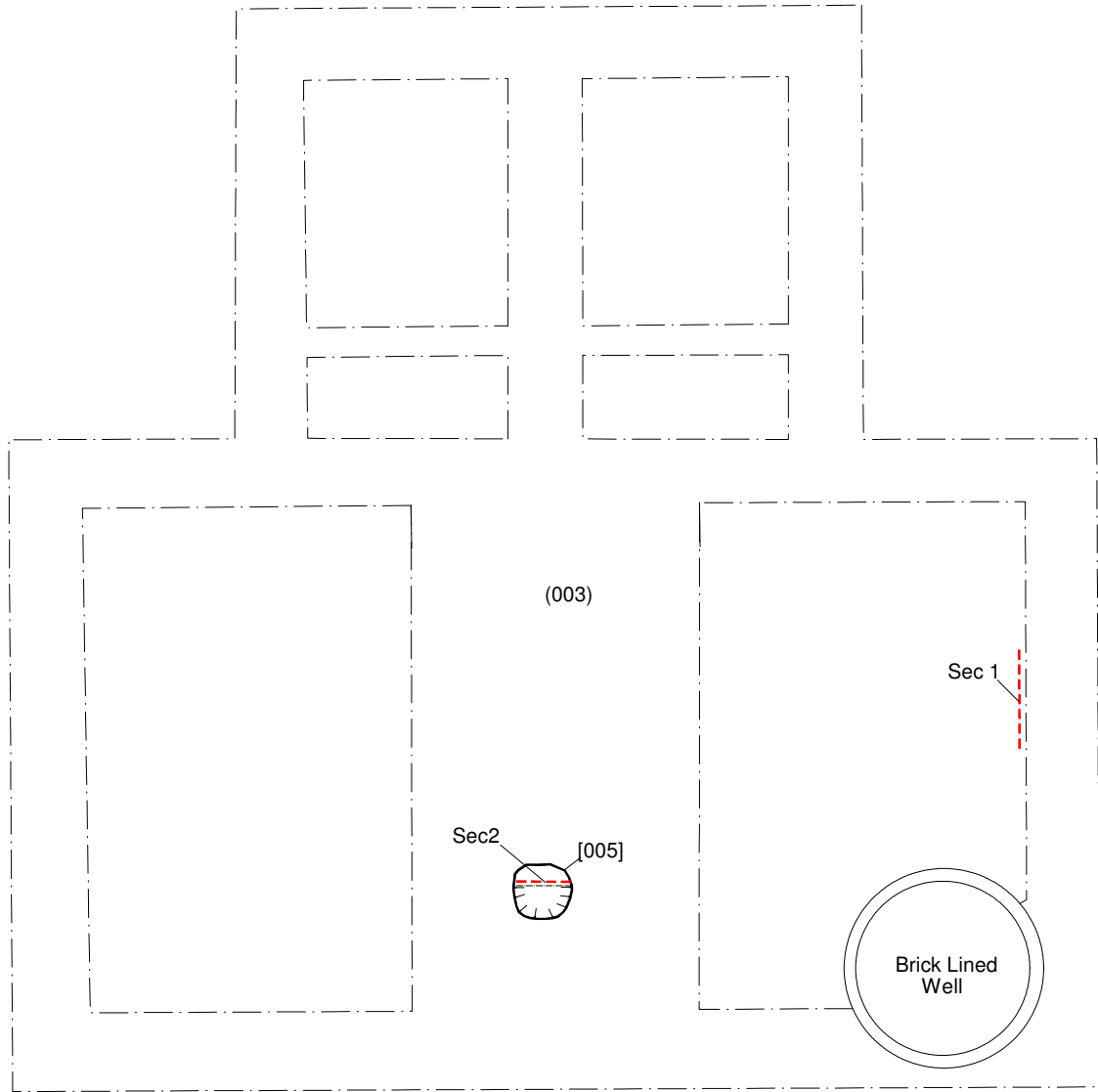


Figure 3 - Site location plan



(003)

Sec 1

Sec2

[005]

Brick Lined Well



Archaeological Project Services

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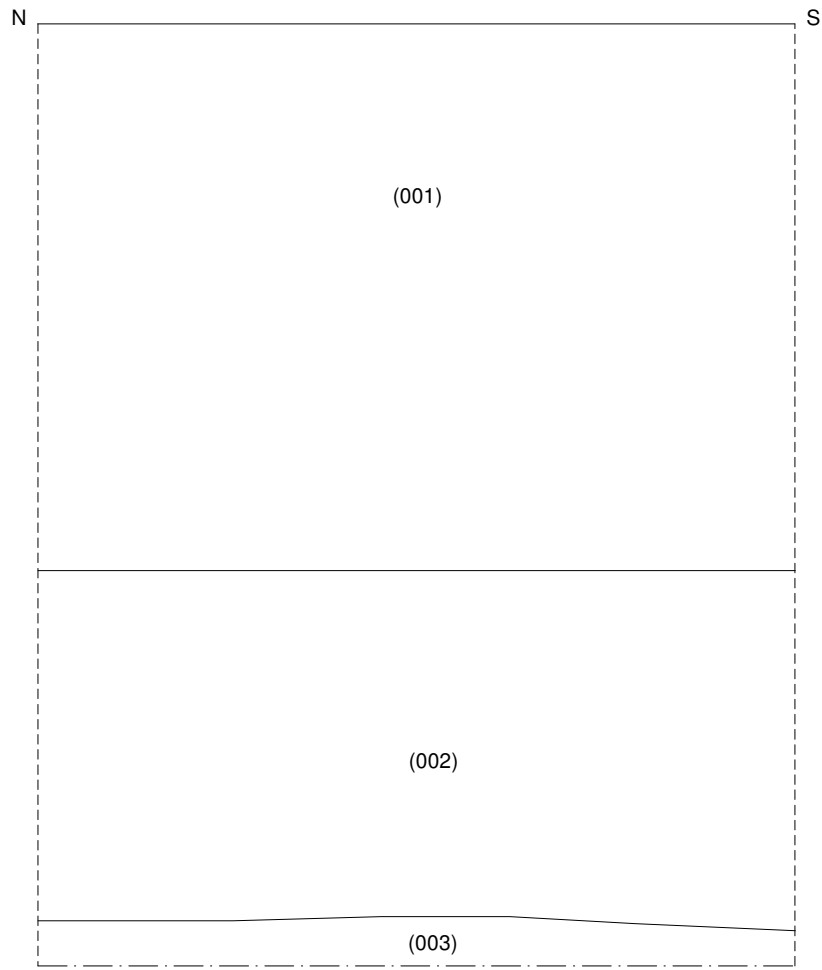
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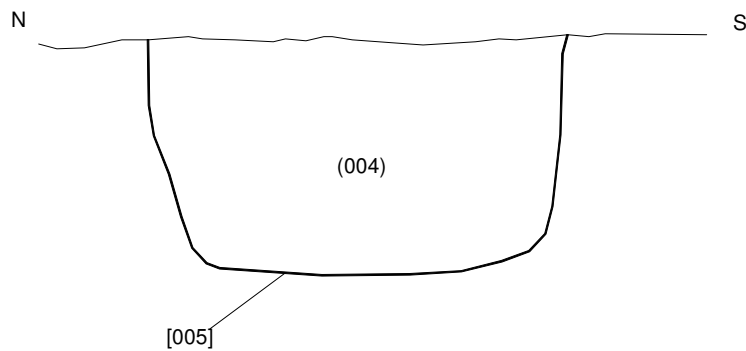
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Figure 4 - Footings plan

Section 1



Section 2



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Scale 1:10

Drawn by:AF

Report No: 36/10

Figure 5 - Sections 1 & 2



Plate 1 – General view of site looking south-west



Plate 2 – Section 1



Plate 3 – View of southernmost footing looking west



Plate 4 – Brick lined well



Plate 5 – View of central footing showing pit [005], looking north



Plate 6 – Pit [505], Section 2

Appendix 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Friable dark grey clayey sandy silt with frequent bricks, CBM fragments and pipe fragments, 0.72m thick	Dumped deposit of demolition debris
002	Firm dark brown clayey silt with occasional fragments of CBM and charcoal, 0.46m thick	Possible former topsoil
003	Firm mid greyish yellowish brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal, clinker and CBM fragments	Flood silt
004	Firm dark brown clay with occasional shells	Fill of pit [005]
005	Roughly circular cut, 0.56m L x 0.54m W x 0.31m D with steep sides breaking gradually to a flat base	Pit [005]

Appendix 2

THE FINDS**POST ROMAN POTTERY***By Anne Boyle***Introduction**

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001) and to conform to Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeology Handbook*. The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005). A total of three sherds from three vessels, weighing 26 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1. The pottery dates to the medieval period.

Condition

All the sherds are in fairly fresh condition.

Results*Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive*

Cxt	Cname	Full name	Fabric	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Description	Date
002	TOY	Toynnton Medieval ware		Jug/jar	1	1	9	BS	Stacking shadow	Late 13th-14th
004	BOUA	Bourne-type fabrics	A/B + flint	Jar?	1	1	6	BS	?ID	13th-14th
004	TOY	Toynnton Medieval ware		Jug/jar	1	1	11	BS		Late 13th-14th

Provenance

Medieval pottery came from topsoil (002) and fill of pit [005].

Potential

The pottery is stable and poses no problems for long-term storage. No further work is required on the assemblage.

Summary

A small group of 13th to 14th century pottery was retrieved from two contexts.

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table 2 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 2, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
002	Late 13th to 14th	Date on a single sherd
004	Late 13th to 14th	

ABBREVIATIONS

BS	Body sherd
CXT	Context
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

~ 2003, *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* [internet]. Available at <<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?catId=3155>>

Slowikowski, A. M., Nenk, B., and Pearce, J., 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2

Young, J., Vince, A.G. and Nailor, V., 2005, *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln* (Oxford)

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	Deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea, and fresh water alluvium is laid down by rivers and in lakes.
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).
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
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.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

5	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Plan record sheet
1	Daily record sheet
4	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Bag of finds

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: 2009.199

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: HOBL09

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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