
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT CHURCH ROAD,
SKIRBECK,
BOSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BOCR 09)**

**Work Undertaken For
Mr and Mrs Wright**

June 2010

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons)

Planning Application No: B07/00557/RESM
National Grid Reference: TF 3360 4346
The Collection Accession No: LCNCC: 2009.182
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APS Report No. **49/10**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at Church Road, Skirbeck, Boston, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundation trenches for a new detached dwelling.

The site lies close to known remains of Romano-British (AD 42-410) and Middle Saxon (AD 650-850) date. During the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) the site lay outside of the core of the village of Skirbeck, probably within the open fields of the settlement.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural alluvium overlain by modern dumped deposits. No archaeological deposits were identified and no artefacts 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 maybe disturbed or destroyed.*” (IfA 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Wright to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new residential development at Church Road, Skirbeck, Boston, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application B07/00557/RESM. The watching brief was carried out between the 15th and 22nd April 2010 in accordance with a

specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Boston Borough Planning Archaeologist.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Boston is located 45km southeast of Lincoln and 7km from the coast of The Wash in Boston Borough, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Skirbeck forms part of the southeastern suburb of Boston and lies 1km southeast of the town centre.

The site is located 400m north of the centre of Skirbeck as defined by the St Nicholas’ church at National Grid Reference TF 3360 4346 (Fig. 2). The site lies west of Church Road at a height of c. 3m OD on generally level ground.

As an urban area, local soils have not been mapped but are likely to be of the Butterwick Series, typically gleyic brown alluvial soils (Robson 1990, 12). These are developed over a drift geology of older marine alluvium which in turn seals a solid geology of Jurassic Amphthill Clays (BGS 1995).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Skirbeck is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Romano-British period to the present day. Romano-British pottery, some associated with ditches was retrieved from an area east and southeast of the site.

A small Middle Saxon settlement was excavated within 250m northeast of the site in 1995. Two sunken floored buildings with associated ditches were revealed (Palmer-Brown 1996, 10).

Skirbeck is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Scirebec*, the name is derived from the Old Norse and means ‘the clear stream’ (Cameron 1998, 111). At the time of Domesday, Skirbeck was held by Count Alan and Eudo son of Spirewic and

contained two churches with resident priests, 2 fisheries and 40 acres of meadow (Foster and Longley 1976).

The only extant remnant of the medieval period in Skirbeck is the 13th century church of St Nicholas (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 649).

A watching brief undertaken immediately west of the site revealed natural alluvium overlain by a buried topsoil which had then been sealed beneath various dumped and make-up layers (Cope-Faulkner 1995, 2). Undated gullies and ditches, some sealed by marine alluvium were identified during an evaluation undertaken to the east of the site (Dymond 1996, 1).

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

Prior to the excavation of foundation trenches, topsoil was partially stripped from the site. Piles for the new building were then inserted and foundation trenches excavated by machine to depths of 1.15m below the current ground level. Following excavation, the sides of the 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. 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 during the watching brief was a layer of grey clay (005) which measured in excess of 50mm thick.

This was overlain by a dumped deposit of yellowish brown silt (004) that was 0.4m thick (Fig. 4, Sections 1 and 2) and contained plastic fragments. Further dumping was identified, comprising greyish brown silt (003) and orange brown silt (002). These latter had a combined thickness of 0.6m.

Sealing all deposits was a topsoil of greyish brown silt (001), which, though partially removed from the site, measured over 50mm thick.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprised a clay layer of probable marine derived alluvium.

Above this were dumped deposits which may relate to the previous use of the site as a timber yard or from the construction of adjacent properties. A similar sequence of dumping was recorded from an adjacent watching brief (Cope-Faulkner 1995, 1).

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

7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land at Church Road, Skirbeck, as the site lay in an area of previous discoveries of Romano-British and Saxon date.

However, the watching brief identified natural alluvium which had been sealed by modern dumped layers. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr and Mrs Wright for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Steve Malone who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Jenny Young, the Boston Planning Archaeologist, kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone
 Site Supervisors: Denise Buckley, Ross Kendall, Mark Peachey
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services
 BGS British Geological Survey
 IfA Institute for Archaeologists

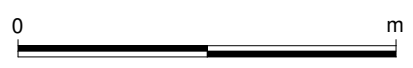


Figure 1 - General location plan



 Area detailed in Figure 3

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Project Name: Church Road, Boston BOCR09		
Scale 1:20000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 49/10

Figure 2 - Site location plan

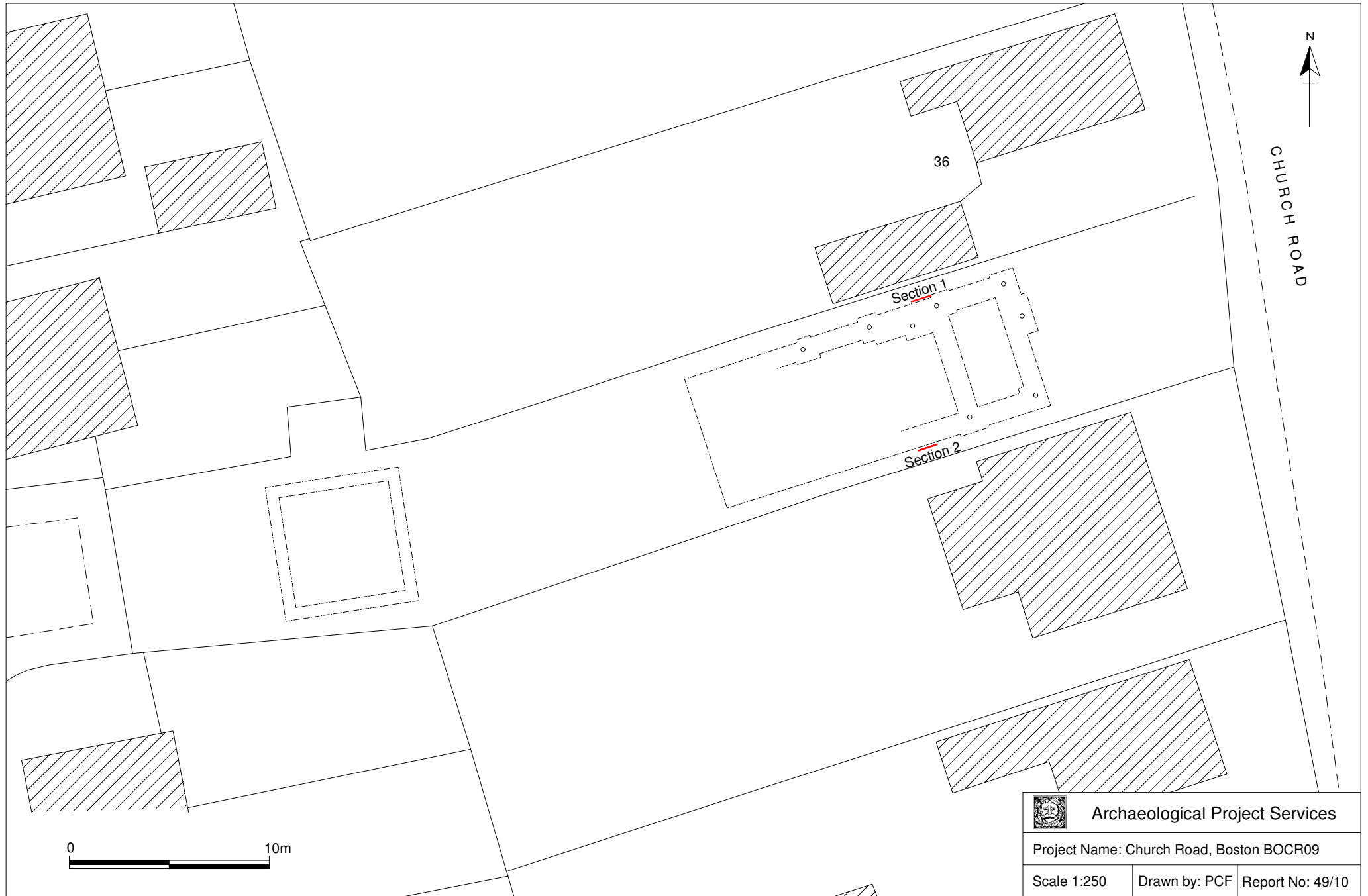

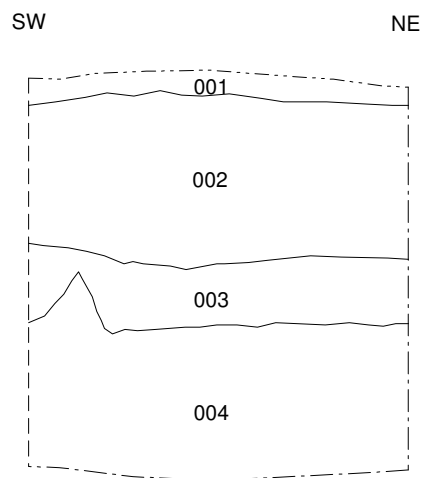
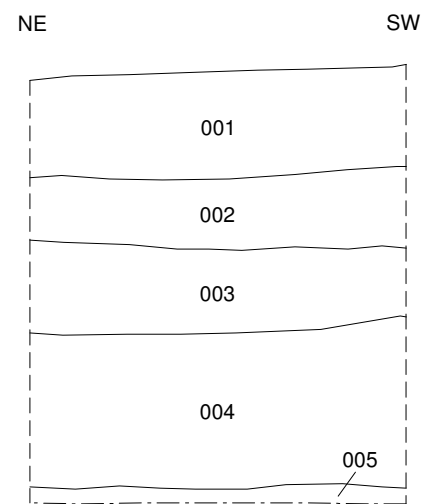


Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing section locations

 Archaeological Project Services		
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Scale 1:250	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 49/10



Section 1



Section 2



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Church Road, Boston BOCR09

Scale 1:20

Drawn by: PCF

Report No: 49/10

Figure 4 - Sections 1 and 2



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



Plate 2 – Section 1, looking northwest



Plate 3 – Section 2, looking southeast

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Loose dark greyish brown silt, 50mm thick	Topsoil
002	Firm dark orange brown silt, 0.4m thick	Dumped deposit
003	Firm dark greyish brown silt, 0.2m thick	Dumped deposit
004	Firm mid yellowish brown silt, 0.4m thick	Dumped deposit
005	Soft mid grey clay, >50mm thick	Alluvial deposit

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	A deposit (usually clay, silts or sands) laid down in water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea and freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or within 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 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).
Dumped deposits	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
Layer	A layer is a term 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.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

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

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: LCNCC: 2009.182

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BOCR 09

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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