

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:
BRAZENOSE HOUSE, STAMFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Application: S09/0206/FULL
NGR: TF 03369 07335
AAA Site Code: STAB 09
Lincolnshire Museum Accession Number: 2009.109
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Report prepared for GSS Architecture
On behalf of Stamford Endowed Schools

by

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks on land at Brazenose House in Stamford, Lincolnshire. The works were undertaken as a condition of planning permission for the extension of an existing car park.

The site is situated in an area of significant archaeological potential, particularly for the medieval period. It is within the defences of the medieval town of Stamford, and in the grounds of the former medieval Brazenose College.

The fieldwork entailed the stripping of the entire footprint of the new car park to a depth of 150mm. Due to the shallow nature of the groundworks, only a modern garden soil was encountered.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by GSS Architecture, on behalf of their client, Stamford Endowed Schools, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for the construction of a car park extension at Brazenose House, Stamford in Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conform to current national and regional guidelines, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of the Environment 1990), the Institute for Archaeologists 'Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs' (IfA 2001) and English Heritage guidance on archaeological practice (www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740). The *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of archaeological practice* (LCC 2009) guidelines were also adhered to, along with a brief for the works (Young 2009) and a specification produced by AAL (Clay 2009).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln within six months of the completion of the report, where it will be stored under the accession number 2008.109.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Stamford is in the administrative district of South Kesteven, approximately 18km west-north-west of central Peterborough and 63km south of central Lincoln. The site is in the historic core of the town, in the grounds of Brazenose House, to the west of Brazenose Lane and to the south of St. Paul's Street. The site centres on NGR TF 03369 07335, and prior to the works was occupied by gardens with a flagstone path to the south.
- 2.2 The site is located over a solid geology of Northampton Sand, with no drift deposits shown (British Geological Survey 1978).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Full planning permission has been granted (Planning Application S09/0206/FULL) for the construction of an extension to the existing car park at Brazenose House, Stamford, Lincolnshire. Permission was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief by a suitably competent archaeologist. The watching brief comprised the monitoring of all groundworks for the scheme, and the recording of any archaeological remains exposed, effectively 'preserving the archaeology by record'. This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (1990).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The site is situated in an area of significant archaeological potential. Evidence for prehistoric activity is sparse, although a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery was recovered during a watching brief off Wharf Road, c.250m south of the site (Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (hereafter LHER) LHER Reference 36514).
- 4.2 There is evidence for Romano-British activity near to the site. Pottery scatters, coins and possible building remains have been recorded off Conduit Road, c.200m to the north-north-west (LHER Reference 30685), and greyware pottery and iron slag has also been found c.450m south-west of the current site (LHER Reference 30750). A Roman pewter dish was also found in Stamford in 1927, although its precise provenance is unknown (LHER Reference 30680).

- 4.3 Stamford appears to have developed as a major settlement during the Anglo-Saxon period, largely as a result of Viking settlers establishing a defended site at the location where the prehistoric Jurassic Way crossed a ford over the River Welland. The approximate line of the defences is believed to follow the line of Broad Street and St. Mary's Lane, to the west of the site (Sawyer 1998). During the 9th and 10th century, it was one of the Five Boroughs (with Lincoln, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham) that represented the main settlements in the Viking controlled Danelaw (*ibid.*).
- 4.4 Documentary evidence suggests that the Viking settlement was successfully besieged by Edward the Elder in 918, with a burgh (a fortified town) built on the south side of the river by Edward in 922. Saxon period features have been recorded in the centre of the town, including beam slots, pits and hearths (LHER References 30757 and 30758), and a pottery kiln of 9th century date from within the grounds of the former castle (LHER Reference 30671). There was also a mint operating in the town during the 10th century and a Sunday market by at least the 12th century, and possibly earlier (Sawyer 1998).
- 4.5 Soon after the Norman Conquest, a motte and bailey castle was built in Stamford, on the north side of the river and to the west of the current site (LHER Reference 30667). The castle was in a poor state of repair by 1340 and was destroyed in the reign of Richard III (1483 – 5). The motte has been partially levelled and there is little else left of the castle above ground. The Domesday Book of 1086 suggests that at this time Stamford was a royal borough and a major settlement of more than 4000 inhabitants (Sawyer 1998, Morgan and Thorn 1986).
- 4.6 Stamford continued to be a prosperous town in the Middle Ages, and was defended by a substantial stone curtain wall. The defences ran along the north side of the river, running north-eastwards broadly along the line of Wharf Road, and the eastern defences followed Brazenose Lane, immediately to the east of the site.
- 4.7 The development area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and comprises Brazenose College. The existing building is an early 18th century structure, built on the site of the medieval college, which had been suppressed by Edward III in 1334. At the corner of Brazenose Lane and St. Paul's Street is a 13th century gate from the college that was rebuilt in this location in 1688 (Pevsner and Harris 2002).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The groundworks for the development were undertaken on Wednesday 12th August 2009. Machine excavation was carried out using a tracked mini excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless bucket, with all groundworks monitored by the author at all times.
- 5.2 During excavation, all exposed plan and section surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned. A full written record of the work was maintained with plans and sections drawn at appropriate scales (1:50 and 1:20) and pro-forma AAL context recording sheets used to record each individual archaeological context.
- 5.3 A photographic record was maintained throughout the fieldwork, and a selection of shots has been included as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1).

6.0 Results (Figures 3 and 4)

- 6.1 The groundworks for the proposed development entailed only a minimal topsoil strip, to a maximum depth of 150mm below the existing ground surface. As such, a single context was exposed, a modern garden soil, 01, comprising a dark grey brown silty sand, with occasional poorly-sorted stone rubble.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The watching brief exposed only a single context, representing the modern garden soil deposited to form the existing garden and lawns that occupied the site prior to the groundworks. Any archaeologically significant finds or features that may exist within the development are therefore likely to be buried at some depth, beyond the impact of the current scheme of works.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The application of an archaeological watching brief was an appropriate level of mitigation for the scale of the development. It has determined that the groundworks have had a negligible impact on the archaeological resource, without interfering with the progress of the development.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank GSS Architecture and Stamford Endowed Schools for this commission and for their cooperation during the fieldwork.

10.0 References

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11.0 Site archive

- 11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeology Limited. It will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln within six months, where it will be stored under accession number 2009.109.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: Working shot during site stripping, looking south-west from the north-east corner of the site



Plate 2: Representative section showing shallow depth of groundworks. Looking south-south-east



Plate 3: General view of the stripped area at the completion of groundworks. Looking north-east

Appendix 2: Context Summary List

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
01	Layer	Dark grey brown silty sand, occasional poorly sorted stone rubble	Modern garden soil, extends below limit of excavation

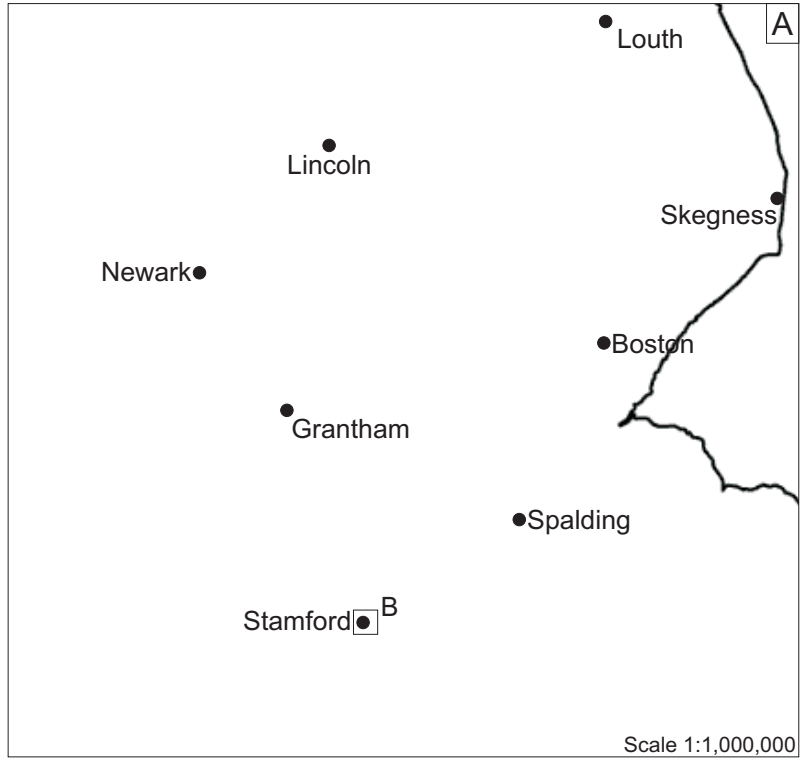


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000, with site outlined in red
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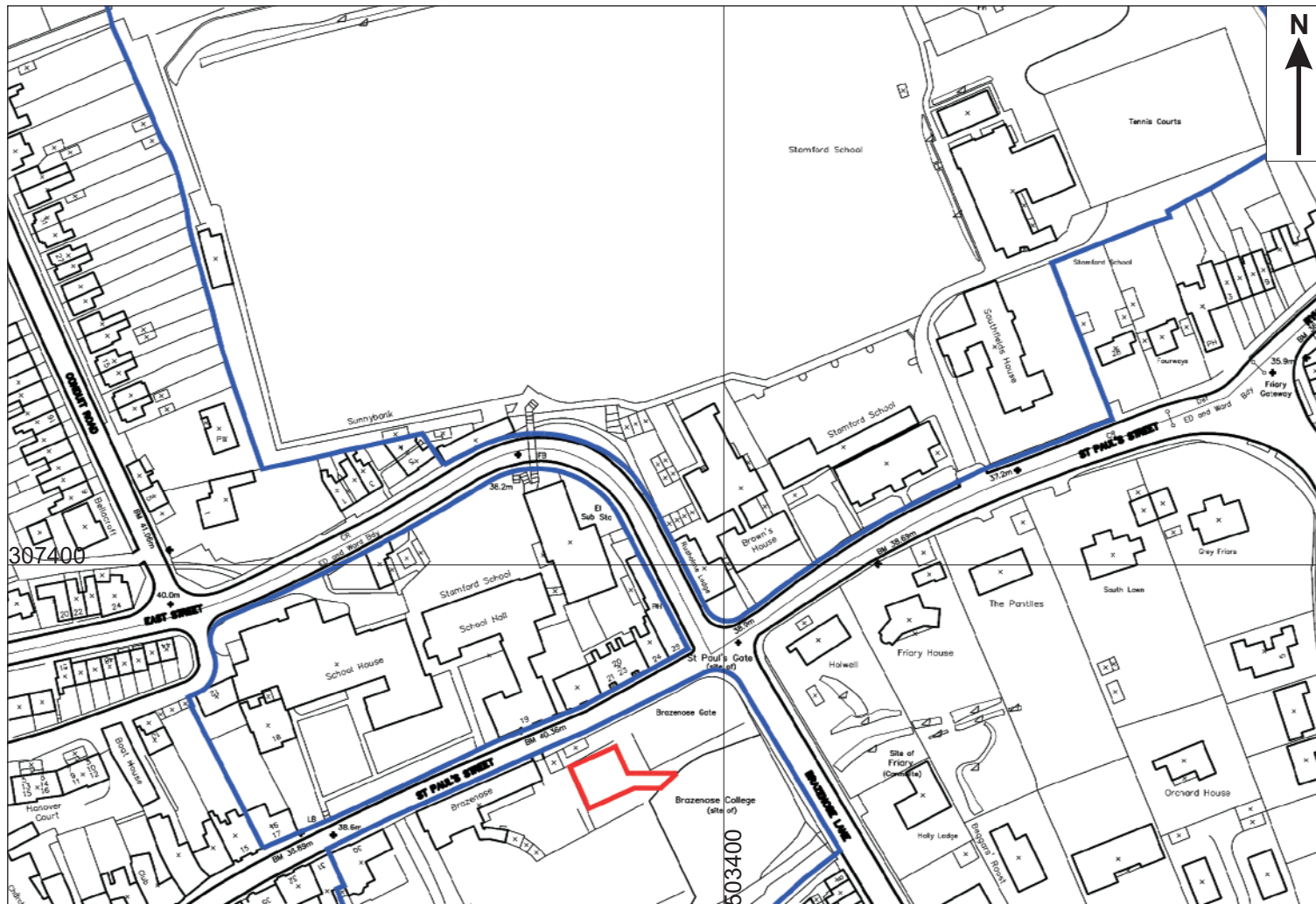


Figure 2: Site location plan at scale 1:2000 with the new car park outlined in red

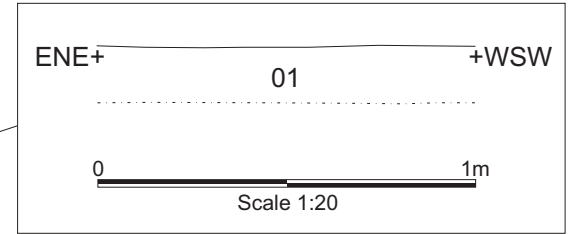
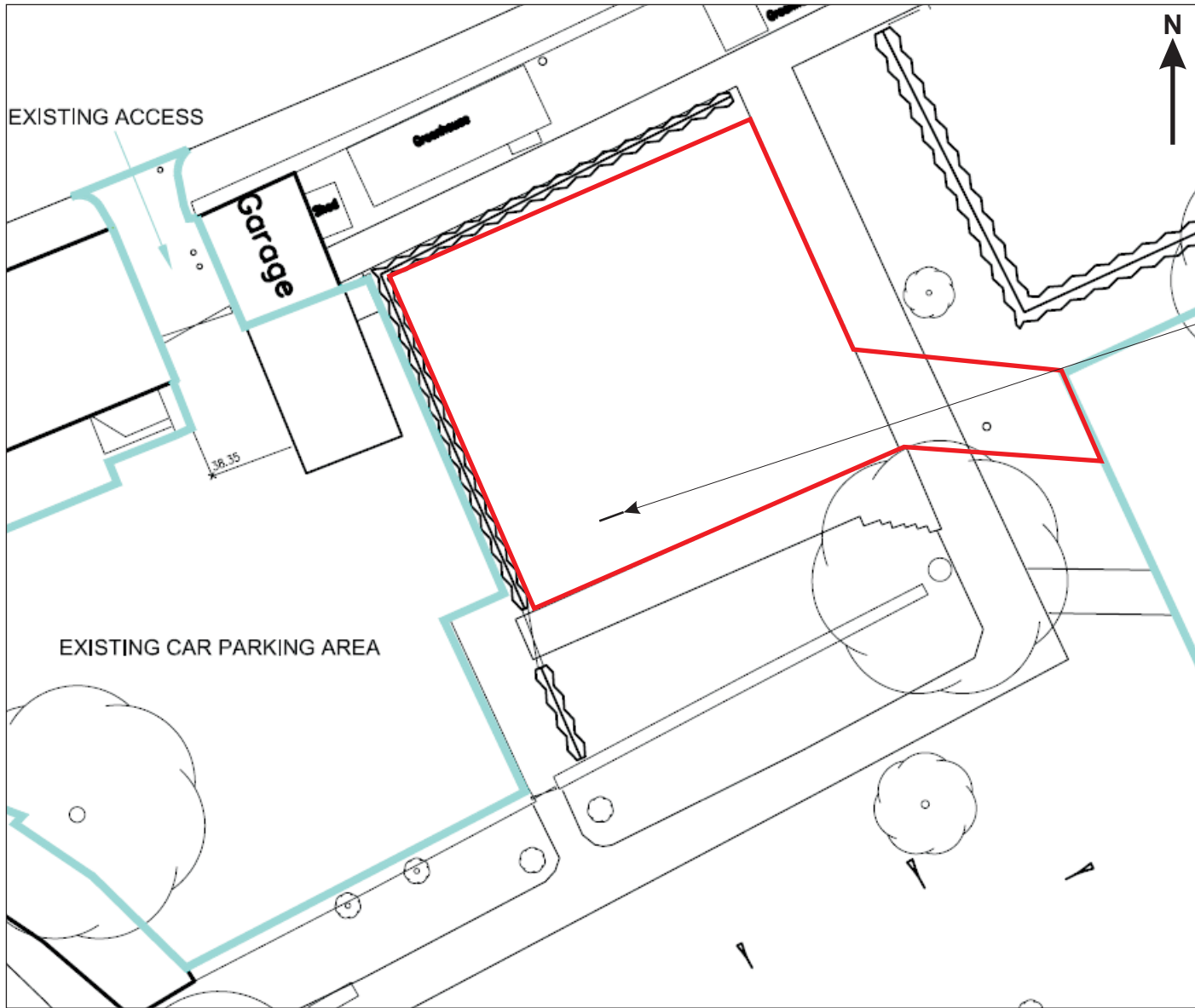


Figure 3: Site plan at scale 1:250 and sample section at scale 1:20