

**FORMER HP FOODS FACTORY SITE,
WHITEHORSE LANE,
BOSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING
REPORT**

Site code	WLBL10
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LCNCC Acc No:	2010.5
PCA Ref:	10/610

Report prepared for

Chestnut Homes Limited

by

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August 2010



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Summary

- *Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during contractors groundworks for a property development at the former HP Foods Factory, which involved ground reduction and removal/consolidation of previous services prior to laying a concrete raft.*
- *The monitoring proved negative with regards to locating any significant archaeology. The deposit sequence was characterised by dense accumulations of post-medieval demolition and levelling deposits truncated by two pits and a construction trench for an unknown structure, though possibly the remains of former 19th century shipyard buildings that were removed prior to the development of the HP Foods Factory.*

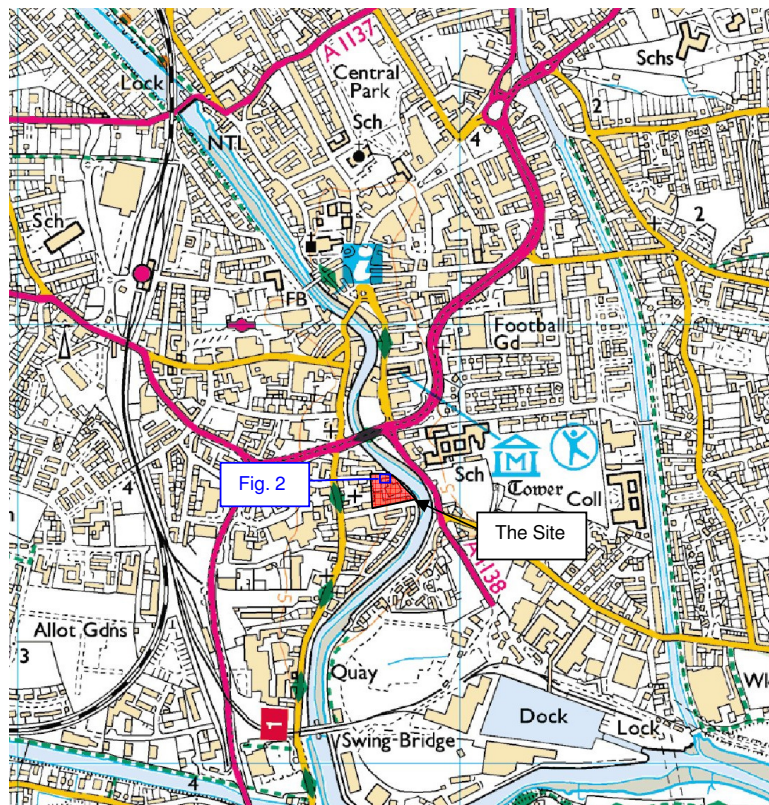


Fig. 1: Site location plan. The site is highlighted in red and the area shown on Fig. 2 is outlined in blue. Scale 1:12500. (based on the 2000 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map, Sheet 261. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278).

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) conducted archaeological monitoring and recording for Chestnut Homes Limited during groundworks for a new property development at the former HP Foods Factory site, Whitehorse Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire. Archaeological monitoring of the ground reduction for a concrete raft was undertaken by L Hamilton (04 – 08/3/2010) and F Walker (15/6/2010).

These investigative works were undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a brief issued by the Planning Archaeologist of Boston Borough Council, in accordance with archaeological best practice and national guidelines, as set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy and Guidance Note 16* (Department of Environment 1990), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 2008).

2.0 Site location and description (Figs 1 & 2)

The site is within the administrative district of Boston Borough, approximately 53km east-south-east of Newark and 49km north-east of Peterborough. The monitored area lies within the former HP Foods site to the south of the town centre, which comprised industrial and residential dwellings at a mean elevation of 4m AOD (the development area having been levelled and consolidated with aggregate). The site is bounded to the north by Whitehorse Lane, to the east by the west bank of the River Witham, to the south by residential properties, and to the west by other residential dwellings and the site of a former Nonconformist burial ground.

3.0 Geology and topography

The drift geology of the area consists of Barroway Drove Beds of the Quaternary period, consisting of silty clay salt marsh deposits (British Geological Survey, 1995).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Boston was founded shortly after the Norman Conquest by the Earl of Richmond who established a port and a series of fairs there in AD1071.

The medieval forms of the title Boston are of the type *Villa Sancti Botulfi* 1093-1136 where the name has been associated with St Botulf and the second with OE tun 'a farmstead or village' (Cameron 1998).

The early town developed to the east of the River Witham. The chief export from the medieval port was wool, with Lincolnshire being one of the richest wool producing areas in Europe at that time. The rapid expansion of the woollen trade throughout the early medieval period saw the contemporary town develop to the west of the river. With the increasing prosperity of the port there was a corresponding increase in the volume of production of allied trades such as shipbuilding, which became established on both banks of the river. By the late 13th century Boston had become one of the most important commercial ports in England, second only to London. However, from the beginning of the 14th century, the port underwent a gradual decline as the River Witham, its main outlet, gradually silted up (Clay 2005).

By the 16th century, the eastern side of the Witham had been extensively settled with both residential and commercial activity. Whitehorse Lane, which forms the northern boundary of the site, was first documented in 1564. The burial ground was in use from 1763, and was finally closed in 1856.

5.0 Methodology

The monitoring works focused on the northern element of the development within Block B, a 23m x 7m area which was subsequently extended 2m to the north and west to create an area of hard standing to facilitate the later use of a piling rig.

Ground reduction to a depth of 1.2m was carried out by a JCB equipped with a toothless 2m wide ditching bucket. All groundworks were monitored by the attending archaeologist.

6.0 Results

6.1 Ground reduction north-west area (Figs 3 – 4)

The earliest material encountered was natural sandy silt (130), most likely an accumulation of flood deposits, covered by a layer of mottled sandy silt (131) from which a single sherd of mid 17th-18th century Staffordshire/Bristol slipware was retrieved along with two sherds of glazed tin ware from the late 16th to mid 17th-18th century. Sealing this sand was a deposit of black silt ash (129), interpreted as an early ground horizon into which a shallow, rectangular pit [128] was cut. At 5m+ long and 1.6m wide, this feature contained two distinct fills; the primary comprised black-grey ash and cinder (127) with brick and tile, shell, and clay pipe inclusions and was similar in composition to ground horizon (129). This was covered by brown sandy silt (126) which yielded post-medieval brick and tile, glass and a base sherd of 18th century Nottingham stoneware.

Sealing the above was a fine clean sandy silt (140), interpreted as a flood deposit, approximately 0.36m thick, and cut by a feature of unknown interpretation [125]. At least 4m in length and 0.6m in depth, this has been loosely interpreted as a structural revetment, the full extent of which was never fully ascertained. The feature itself appeared to be filled by a single deposition of ash and silt (124) which contained brick and tile, mortar fragments, coal and pottery in the form of two fragments of Nottingham stoneware and a partial rim of 18th century Staffordshire/Bristol slipware posset pot. This deposit became indistinct towards the upper level of the feature where it became integrated with a possible ground surface.

Residing above (124) was a small dump of mixed yellow-brown silt (123) yielding demolition inclusions of plaster, mortar and brick. The full western extent of this deposit was never ascertained, being truncated by a modern land drain and a small pit or post hole [122], 0.3m wide and 0.14m deep, and filled by two ash dumps (121) and (120), the latter containing the usual post-medieval debris of brick, animal bone and the handle and base fragments of an 18th century Nottingham stoneware jug/jar.

Covering the above were two dumps of material, the earliest (119) comprised brown silt containing frequent stones and sand lenses, covered by a clean ash silt deposit (118). Both appeared to be levelling or consolidation deposits approximately 0.1m thick for the yard surface (117) directly above it.

6.2 Ground reduction south-west area (Figs 3, 5)

As with the north-west area, the earliest material exposed was natural sand-silt (130), into which was cut a regular shallow pit-like feature [139], approximately 0.2m deep. This was filled with dark organic silt (138), which appeared to be degraded wood shavings with occasional brick and mortar fragments and a single sherd of mid 18th-19th century creamware plate.

Sealing this feature was a natural accumulation of light yellow sand (137), consolidated by 0.26m of brown-grey gritty silt (136).

Truncating pit [139] and deposit (137) was a 0.8m deep feature of uncertain extent [135]. Its fill (134) comprised numerous loose mixed lenses of yellow-brown and black-grey demolition material. Consolidating this was a 0.3m levelling deposit of grey-brown sandy silt containing frequent pebbles, underlying a modern levelling of silt, stone and rubble (132) approximately 0.4m thick.

6.3 Ground reduction south (Figs 3, 6)

The earliest deposit encountered was light yellow soft sand, approximately 0.25m thick with occasional patches of silt, (112). Similar in composition to (102), and interpreted as a levelling deposit, this material yielded a single sherd of glazed red earthenware of mid 16th -18th century date. It was sealed beneath a sequence of consolidation or levelling deposits, (113), (111) and (109).

These alternating sand and rubble deposits were sealed beneath a layer of fine ash (108) into which steep-sided feature [104] was cut. This has been interpreted as a construction trench for a structure demolished prior to the building of the HP Foods building. Its fill (114) contained a concentration of demolition debris at the base, along with charcoal residue, small stones, and two fragments of ceramic building material in the form of one 13th-14th century peg, nib or ridge tile of local Boston fabric and 14th- 17th century handmade red brick.

Consolidating the above was 0.2m of grey-brown silt clay (107).

A further sequence of levelling deposits was observed above this (contexts (106), (105) and (103)), sealed beneath clean yellow sand (102), and modern levelling for the present ground surface (100) of demolition debris and crushed stone.

6.4 Concrete structure (115) (Figure 3)

Located between section figures 5 and 6 on fig. 3, a large rectangular concrete structure oriented north-west to south-east was exposed. Detailed investigation of this structure was abandoned due to unsafe ground. It appeared to relate to the former shipyard, though its specific function is uncertain.

6.5 Post holes (116) (Figure 3)

Three post holes were observed at the northern limit of the area investigated, a few metres from the wall bounding the River Witham. The centre post hole retained its wooden post *in situ*. These features were close to the surface, 0.5m below the tarmac, and their close proximity to the River Witham suggests that they may represent the remnants of a jetty connected with the former shipyard.

7.0 Conclusion

Monitoring and recording at the former HP Foods site revealed numerous sequences of levelling and demolition deposits, with occasional observations of alluvial inundations from the River Witham (interrupting stages of consolidation).

The earlier deposits exposed appear to have resulted from the demolition of structures from the 17th -18th century and potentially as early as the 14th century with the palimpsest view of surviving material at the base of construction cut [104].

Later structural features in the form of three post holes to the north of the area monitored and a large concrete structure to the south appear to relate to the former shipyard. Unfortunately these could not be investigated in detail due to unstable ground and the presence of a live gas main adjacent to the post holes which have been interpreted as the remnants of a former jetty.

8.0 Bibliography

British Geological Survey, 1995, Boston: England and Wales Sheet 128, Solid and Drift Edition. 1:50,000 Provisional Series.

Cameron, K., 1998 A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names, The English Place-Name Society, Nottingham.

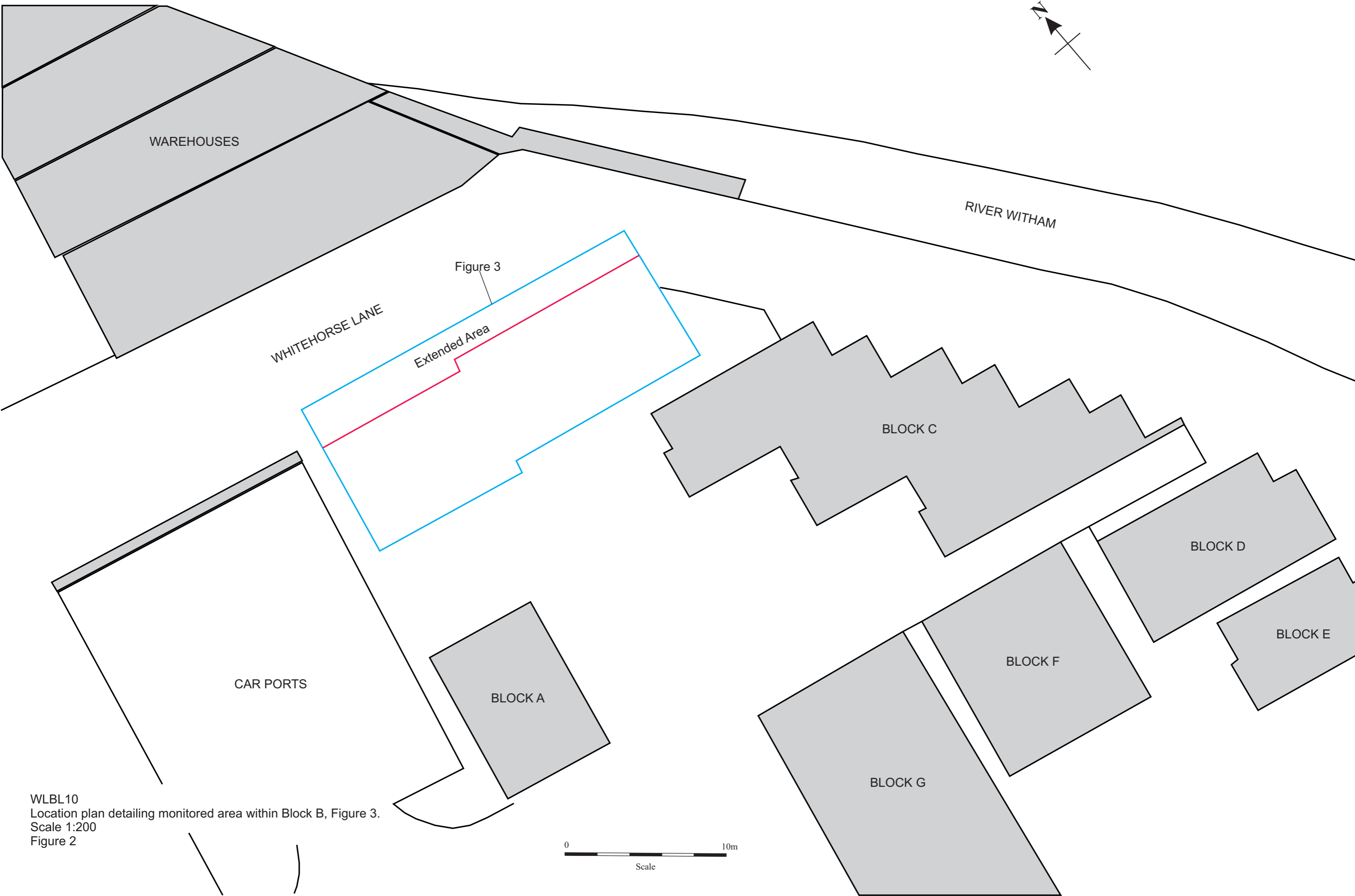
Clay, C., 2005, Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: Land off Toot Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire. Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) client report no. 215.

9.0 Acknowledgements

PCAS would like to thank Chestnut Homes Limited for this commission and for their cooperation and assistance during the fieldwork.

10.0 Site Archive

The archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd, Saxilby, Lincolnshire and arrangements are in hand for deposition at a suitable local museum.



WAREHOUSES

WHITEHORSE LANE

RIVER WITHAM

Figure 3

Extended Area

BLOCK C

BLOCK D

BLOCK E

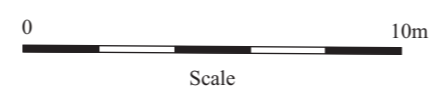
BLOCK F

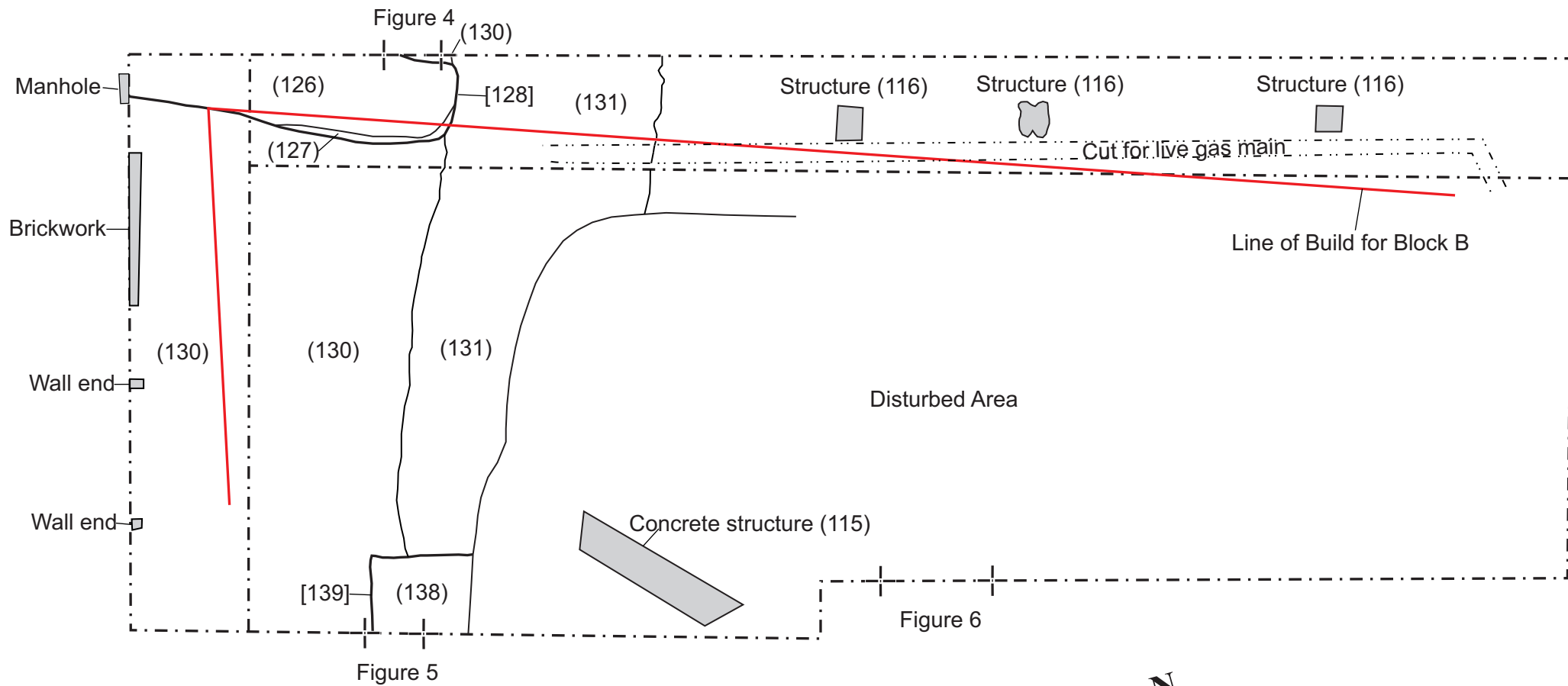
BLOCK A

BLOCK G

CAR PORTS

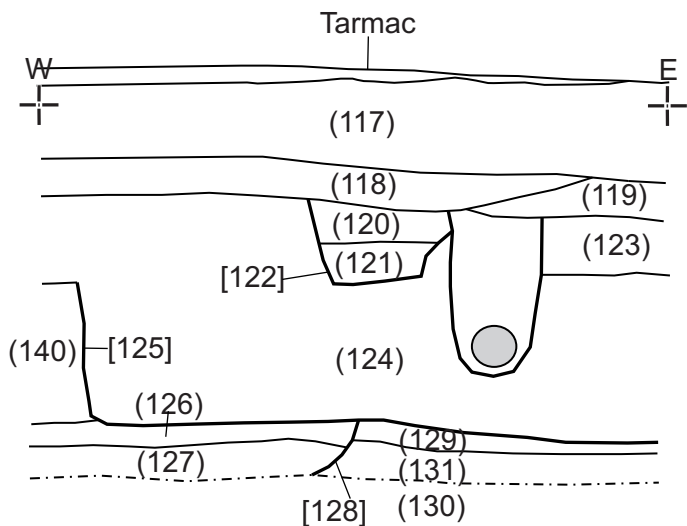
WLBL10
Location plan detailing monitored area within Block B, Figure 3.
Scale 1:200
Figure 2



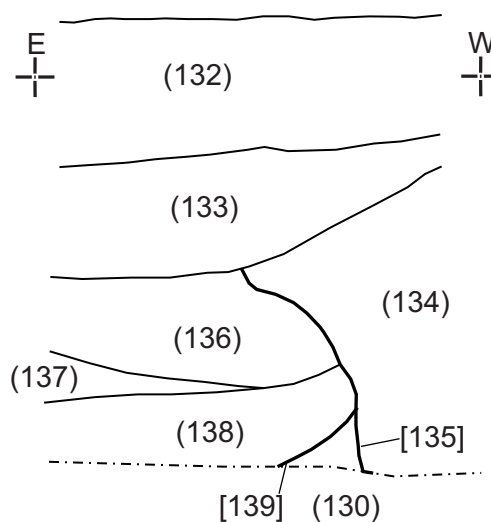


WLBL10
 Plan of excavated area Block B.
 Scale 1:100
 Figure 3

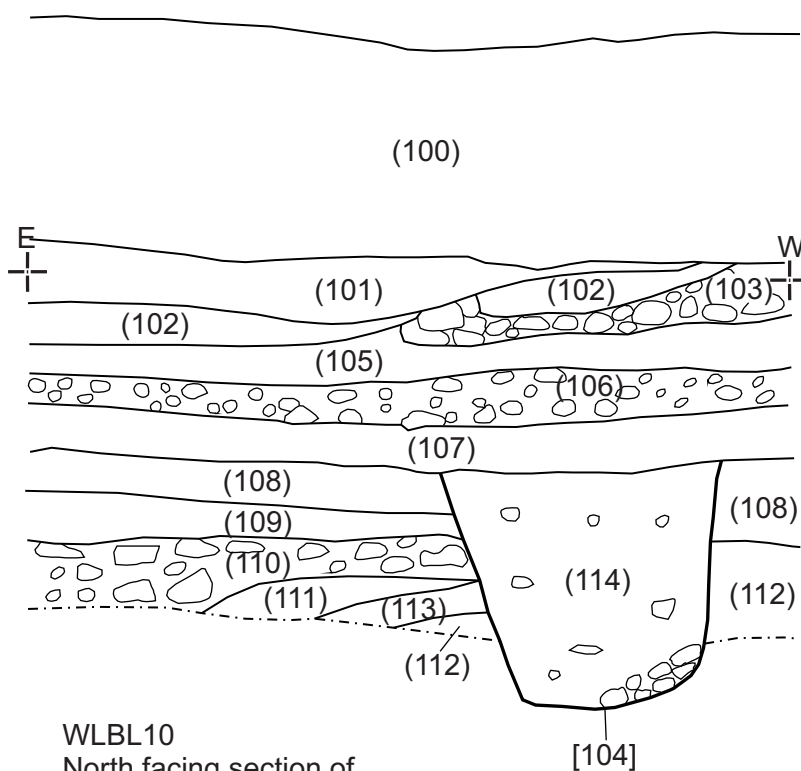




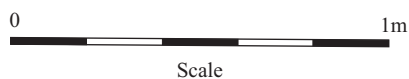
WLBL10
 South facing section Pits [122], [128] & feature [125]
 Scale 1:20
 Figure 4



WLBL10
 North facing section Pits [135] & [139]
 Scale 1:20
 Figure 5



WLBL10
 North facing section of
 construction slot [104]
 Scale 1:20
 Figure 6



Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General View of site Looking north-west.



Plate 2: Pits [122] [125] & [128] Looking north.



Plate 3: Pits [135] & [139] looking south.

Plate 4:
Construction trench
[104] looking south.



Plate 5: Concrete
structure (115)
looking south-west.

Plate 6: Post hole
Alignment (116)
looking east.



Appendix 2

Context Summary (WLBL10)

Context No.	Type		Description	Finds/Dating
100	Layer	Above 101	Building rubble & crushed stone 0.6m thick.	Modern
101	Layer	Below 100, above 103	Top soil & rubble fragments 0.2m thick.	Modern
102	Layer	Below 101, above 103	Mixed silt sand levelling. 0.1m thick.	Modern
103	Layer	Below 102, above 105	Demolition rubble 0.18m thick.	Modern
104	Cut	Below 107, above 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 112	Construction cut 0.64m wide, 0.6m deep.	18 th century? With surviving 13 th -14 th century material at base.
105	Layer	Above 106, below 107	Mixed layer of top soil and rubble 0.1m thick.	Modern
106	Layer	Above 107, below 105	Levelling of gravel, sand & rubble 0.2m thick	Modern
107	Layer	Above 108, below 106	Mixed top soil, sand & rubble 0.1m thick.	Modern
108	Layer	Above 107, below 109	Layer of ash 0.1m thick.	19 th century-modern
109	Layer	Below 108, above 110	Levelling of sand 0.16m thick	19 th century-modern
110	Layer	Below 109, above 111	Demolition rubble 0.2m thick.	19 th century-modern
111	Layer	Below 110, above 113	Sand levelling 0.1m thick.	19 th century-modern
112	Layer	Below 113	Mixed silt sand 0.08m+ thick.	Mid 16 th - 18th century
113	Layer	Above 112, below 111	Dark silt sand 0.08m thick.	19 th century - modern
114	Fill	Within 104	Single fill of cut 104	18 th century? With surviving 13 th -14 th century material at base.
115	Structure	unexcavated	Concrete structure reinforced with iron rods. 3m long, 0.6m wide and 1.2m+ deep.	19 th century - modern

116	Structure	unexcavated	Three post holes, one with wooden post, 0.6m by 0.4m.	19 th century - modern
117	Layer	Above 118	Tarmac/hard core yard surface.	Modern
118	Layer	Below 117, above 119	Levelling of ash-silt, 0.1m thick.	Modern
119	Layer	Below 118, above 120	Levelling of stone and silt, 0.1m thick.	Modern
120	Fill	Below 119, above 121, within 122	Upper fill of pit 122.	18 th century
121	Fill	Below 120, within 122	Primary fill of pit 122.	18 th century
122	Cut	Contains 120, 121	Small pit.	18 th century
123	Layer	Below 119, above 124	Levelling of yellow-brown silt, 0.14m thick.	18 th century?
124	Layer	Below 122, 123, above 140 and within 125	Single fill of pit/revetment 125, integrated with ground surface, 0.6m thick.	Late 17 th -18 th century
125	Cut	Filled by 124, above 140	Large pit or revetment feature, 4m+ long, 0.4m+ deep.	Late 17 th -18 th century
126	Fill	Fill of 128, above 127	Upper fill of shallow pit 128	18 th century?
127	Fill	Fill of 128, below 126	Primary fill of shallow pit 128	18 th century?
128	Cut	Filled by 126 & 127, above 129	Shallow pit, 5.5m long, 1.6m wide, 0.2m deep.	18 th century?
129	Layer	Below 128, above 131	Black ash deposit, 0.06m thick.	18 th century?
130	Layer	Below 131	Clean sand silt	Natural
131	Layer	Below 128, above 130	Mottled sand silt, 0.03m thick.	Late 16 th -18 th century
132	Layer	Above 133	Sand silt & rubble	Modern
133	Layer	Below 132, above 134	Sand silt & pebbles, 0.3m thick.	19 th century-modern
134	Fill	Fill of 135	Ash silt fill of pit 135, 0.8m thick.	19 th century-modern
135	Cut	Filled by 134, above 136	Pit, 3m wide, 0.8m deep.	19 th century-modern
136	Layer	Below 135, above 137	Gritty silt, 0.26m thick.	19 th century-modern
137	Layer	Below 136, above 138	Fine yellow sand, 0.13m thick.	Natural
138	Fill	Below 137, fill of 139	Dark organic silt fill of pit 139, 0.2m	Mid 18 th -19 th century

139	Cut	Above 130, filled by 138	Shallow pit, 1.6m long, 1.3m wide, 0.2m deep.	Mid 18 th -19th century
140	Layer	Below 125, above 126	Fine yellow sand silt, 0.36m thick.	Natural

Pottery Archive for the Former HP Foods Factory Site (WLBL 10)

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	weight	decoration	part	description	date
112	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware		?	1	1	1		BS	int & ext glaze	mid 16th to 18th
120	NOTS	Nottingham stoneware		jug/tankard	1	1	7		handle	central rib	18th
120	NOTS	Nottingham stoneware		jar ?	4	1	7		BS		18th
124	SLIP	Unidentified slipware	fine red fabric	jar ?	1	1	15		base	fineware;int white slip;Yorks ?	18th
124	STSL	Staffordshire/Bristol slipware	cream fabric	posset pot	1	1	17	brown vertical trailed lines int	rim		late 17th to 18th
124	NOTS	Nottingham stoneware		jar ?	1	1	9		BS		18th
126	NOTS	Nottingham stoneware		?	1	1	18		base		18th
131	STSL	Staffordshire/Bristol slipware	cream fabric	cup/honey pot	1	1	14	brown trailed double zig-zag dec ext	rim		mid 17th to 18th
131	TGW	Tin-glazed ware		plate	1	1	2	blue int dec	rim	blue-tinged glaze	17th to 18th
131	TGW	Tin-glazed ware		plate ?	1	1	1	blue int dec	BS	lead backed	late 16th to mid 17th
138	CREA	Creamware		plate	1	1	4		rim		mid/late 18th to mid 19th

Ceramic Building Material Archive for the Former HP Foods Factory Site, Boston, Lincolnshire (WLBL 10)

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	fabric	frags	weight	description	date
114	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	Boston Fabric 2	1	100	flat roofer;mortar incl over breaks	13th to 14th
114	BRK	Brick	orange-red	1	52	handmade;mortar incl over breaks	14th to 17th

Appendix 3: OASIS Entry

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Former HP Foods Factory Site, Whitehorse Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire - Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

OASIS ID - preconst3-82115

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Will Munford	will@pre-construct.co.uk	7 September 2010

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?

Grey literature	Upload boundary file	Request record re-opened
Printable version		

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