

**LAND OFF FERRY BOAT LANE, MEXBOROUGH,  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



On behalf of  
PUD Construction Ltd and  
Bradshaw & Griffiths Properties Ltd

**CS Archaeology**  
December 2011

**On behalf of:** PUD Construction Ltd and Bradshaw & Griffiths Properties Ltd

**National Grid Reference (NGR):** SK 4811 9975

**Project Number:** 91

**Oasis Reference:** csarchae1-115025

**Planning Application Nos.:** 11/02084/FUL, Cond.11 and 11/02143/FUL

**Fieldwork, Report and illustrations:** Chris Scurfield

**Timing:** Fieldwork November 2011  
Report December 2011

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## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 An Archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the strip foundation excavations for the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings on land opposite Ferry Boat Inn, Mexborough.
- 1.2 The archaeological watching brief was recommended by South Yorkshire County Council (SYAS) on planning consents (App. Nos. 11/02084/FUL, Cond.11 and 11/02143/FUL) as there were two conditions for the north and south of the site.
- 1.3 Situated within Mexborough's historic core the site had high potential but a proportion had been truncated, probably during the building of a Post Medieval farmstead (a well and trough were revealed). The remaining southern section had never been developed but had been subject to a series of levelling deposits characterised by a succession of industrial slags and cinders.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The site lies within Mexborough's historic medieval core and is opposite the Ferry Boat Inn on Ferry Boat Lane. The site therefore lies on a historic junction of the road between Wath and Doncaster and the ferry crossing of the River Don (**Figure 1**). The site comprises of 0.83 hectares of land on a south slope, a terrace of the River Don, and is centred on (NGR) SK 4811 9975 (**Figure 2**).
- 2.5 The watching brief took place on the 16/11/2011, following appropriate notifications to SYAS.

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Mexborough's economy was based around coal mining, quarrying, brickworks and the production of ceramics. This period heralded considerable change and growth for Mexborough, particularly from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The catalyst for this change was an improvement in communications across South Yorkshire (Sheffield and Doncaster). This was provided by the canal and the branch turnpike road (CS Archaeology 2011).
- 3.2 In 1801 the population was 417, which had expanded to over 10,000 by 1901. Hunter (1828) noted that the population doubled from 403 to 865, between 1811 and the 1821s, which provides a date for Mexborough's industrial and population expansion(ibid).
- 3.3 A traveller on the canal reported that at Mexborough there was a community of 10,000 engaged in making railway wheels, glass bottles and grindstones for Sheffield, and further noted that the grindstone deposits were nearly as valuable as the coal (ibid).
- 3.4 Potteries were established alongside the canal at Swinton and Mexborough during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. And by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexborough became a strategically important railway junction. In 1840 the North Midland Railway from Derby to Leeds opened with a station at Swinton. Passengers from Doncaster had to travel via coach or canal 'aquabus' until a direct line was established 8 years later (ibid).
- 3.5 The PDA lies on the junction of Church Street and Ferry Boat Lane. The earliest detailed depiction of the PDA is in 1839 where a single building is depicted. This building abutts Church Street along the northern edge of the PDA (Appendix 1). There is therefore potential for archaeology in the form of post medieval buildings bordering Church Street as well as for unknown archaeological deposits.

## 4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 To ensure that any archaeological remains present, whether buried or part of a standing building, are investigated in order than an understanding of their nature extent and significance gained, before they are damaged or destroyed, and that the knowledge gained is then disseminated.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 This watching brief has been carried out in accordance with the Project Design issued by CS Archaeology, and approved by SYAS, in October 2011 (Appendix 1) and was fully adhered to.
- 5.2 General colour digital shots of the works were taken and mono chrome (Black and White) photographs were also taken of the post-medieval features revealed during the course of the excavations. Digital photographs have been used to illustrate the report and are detailed in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Mr A Lines (SYAS) was notified in advance of the date of the watching brief and was informed about the final results.

## 6. RESULTS

- 6.1 Prior to the watching brief the site had been cleared and in small areas, truncated (up to 0.75m). It was noted that in one location flat (in situ) flagstones were evident (**Plate 1**) as well as the remains of a coursed sandstone wall along the interface with Church Street (**Plate 2**).
- 6.3 A 360° excavator with a toothed ditching bucket was employed throughout the excavations. Gradual machining technique enabled a fairly good visibility through all the exposed surfaces.
- 6.4 Stratigraphically the site was divided into two. The northern third of the site had been subject to historic reduction, and no topsoil was encountered just a mixed greyish brown clay up to 0.5m deep with cinder lenses. The natural throughout the site consisted of a buff/grey sandy clay with frequent sandstone fragments. The northern site also features a series of modern cross walls and drains, possibly associated with garages (e.g. **Plate 3 & 7**). These structures consisted of brick walls comprised of 'Mexborough' bricks (0.235 x 0.075 x 0.11). The general stratigraphy of the northern end of the site consisted of: a greyish brown clay up to c0.55m deep, containing localised cobble surfaces above cinder levelling deposits. The trenches truncated the buff/grey sandy clay natural 0.45 – 0.55m below the surface.
- 6.5 The southern end of the site had a full stratigraphic profile (**Plate 4**) with upper levelling deposits overlying buried soil and sub soil. The deposits consisted of a 0.2m layer of tarmac above cinder, a loamy top soil with ash and cinder layers which was 0.27m deep and then onto a 0.25m deep subsoil until the trenches generally truncated the underlying natural by 0.25m.
- 6.6 Excavations at the NE corner of the site revealed a deep defined feature (**Plate 5**) which was initially thought to be a midden. The upper deposit was very loose, with frequent voids, and was found to contain a number of artefacts including kiln spacers, probably associated with local pottery production (**Plate 6**). Upon cleaning and removing collapsed debris a stone lining was revealed (**Plate 8**) and the lining was revealed to be roughly circular in plan (**Plate 9**). Its construction was of faced rubble sandstone packed with sandy clay re-deposited natural. No bonding of the stone was evident. It was at this stage concluded that the feature was a well. The fill of the well consisted of voids and large sandstone blocks with a loose fill on top.

- 6.7 A similar well which extended down to 25' was fully excavated, during the construction of a semi-detached house during the 1970/80s (pers. comm. Mr Priestley).
- 6.8 The well's interpretation is based upon its location to the south of the historic building range. Further light was shed on this building range since Mr Priestley remembers the building as the front of a narrow 'L' shaped barn. Therefore historically the site appears to have been part of a farmyard and the well was positioned in the corner of the yard. The well is not noted on the early Ordnance Survey Maps (1854 and 1893) but the buildings and enclosures are.
- 6.9 Excavation of the well was not carried out and a design solution involving re-enforced beams negated the need to investigate this feature further. Therefore the well remains largely in situ.
- 6.9 During the southern foundation excavations a brick wall and a substantial brick feature were as removed. The wall ties in with the historic plans of a boundary between the site's historic farmyard and Ferry Boat Lane. The brick structure was removed from the trench whereupon the bricks fell out revealing the base of a large sandstone water trough (l 1.75 x w 0.93m x depth 0.11m: **Plate 10**).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Archaeological watching brief has managed to identify some historic features which tie into the 19<sup>th</sup> century use of the site as a part of a farmstead with its independent water source and also a water trough close to the western perimeter wall. The date of these features is provisionally set as later Post-Medieval (19<sup>th</sup> century). No features earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century were identified within the site.
- 7.2 Bearing in mind the historic position of the site within Mexborough's historic core a greater depth of archaeology would have been expected. The negative results of pre 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts may be explained by historic site reduction during the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries associated with the planned layout of a farmstead possibly based on 'new' model farm lines, where the almost industrial organisation of agriculture was aspired to.
- 7.3 The fact that a farmstead developed or was established so close to the centre of the settlement ultimately led to its gradual abandonment during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

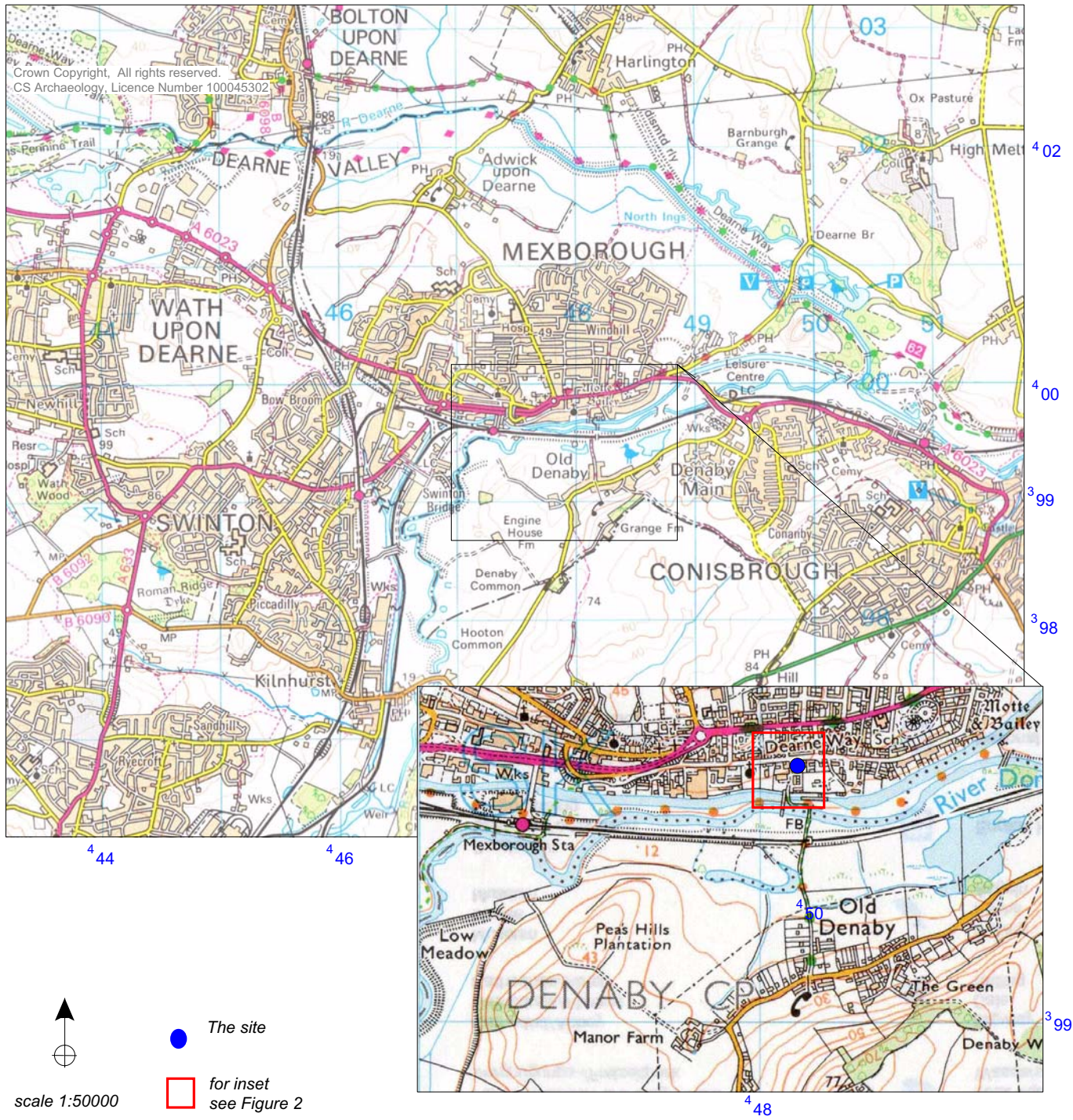
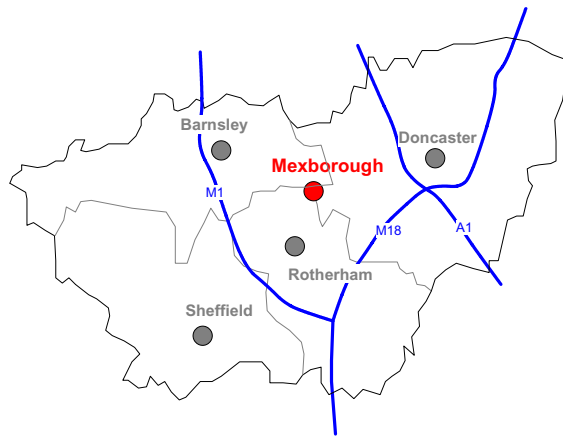
CS Archaeology, 2011, *Land to the west of Station Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire: An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, unpublished client report

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to PUD Construction and Bradshaw & Griffiths Properties Ltd for commissioning this report and Mr A Lines (SYAS) for highlighting the archaeological potential of the site.



# FIGURES

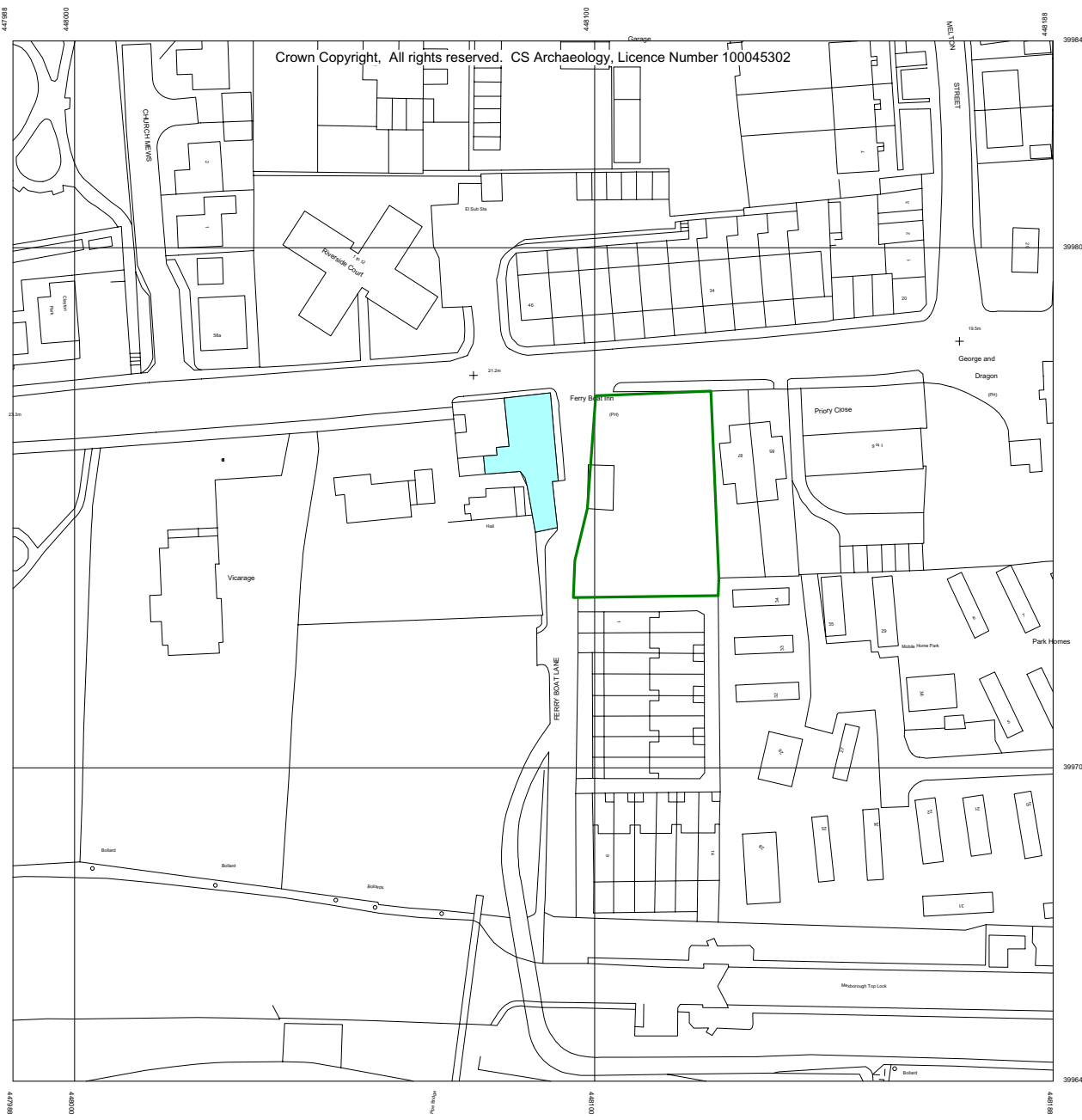


Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 1: Location Map

CS Archaeology  
December 2011

Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
 Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
 An Archaeological Watching Brief



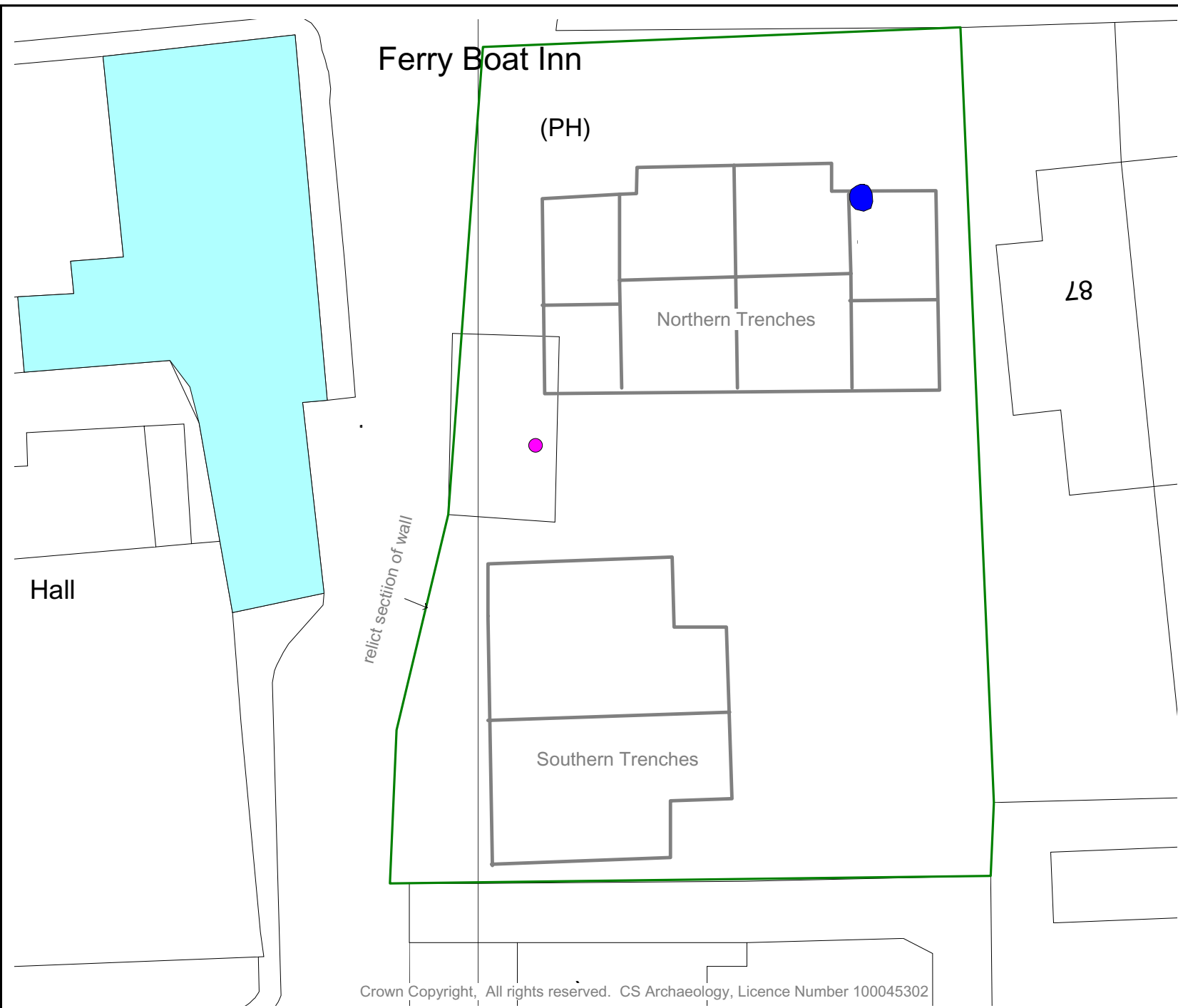
- The site boundary (0.083 Ha)
- Ferry Boat Inn



scale 1:1250

Figure 2: Site Location Map

Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief



- site boundary (0.083 Ha)
- Ferry Boat Inn
- The well (NGR SK8117 9764)
- site of the trough (NGR SK 8102 9753)
- foundation plan

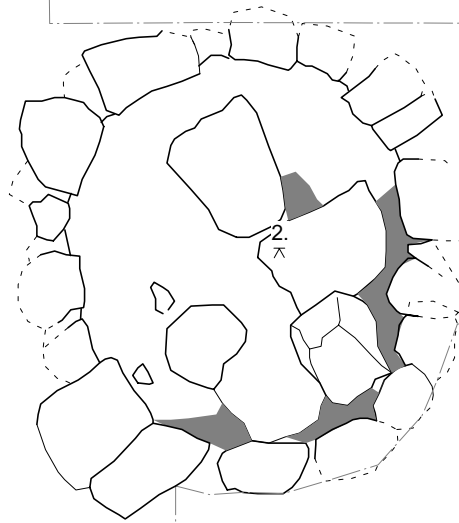
scale 1:250

Figure 3: Site Plan  
with Results

CS Archaeology  
December 2011

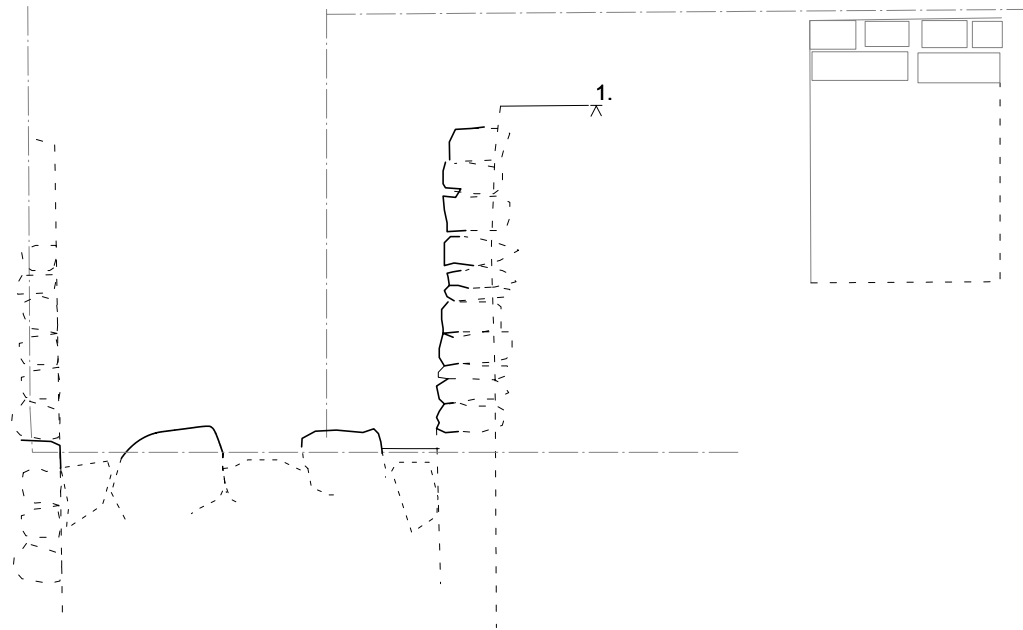
Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief

Plan of the well



Section

- - - Projected feature lines
- Limit of excavation
- voids
- levels AOD (meters)  
1. 21.8  
2. 21.3



Section of the well

Figure 4: Plan and  
Section of the Well

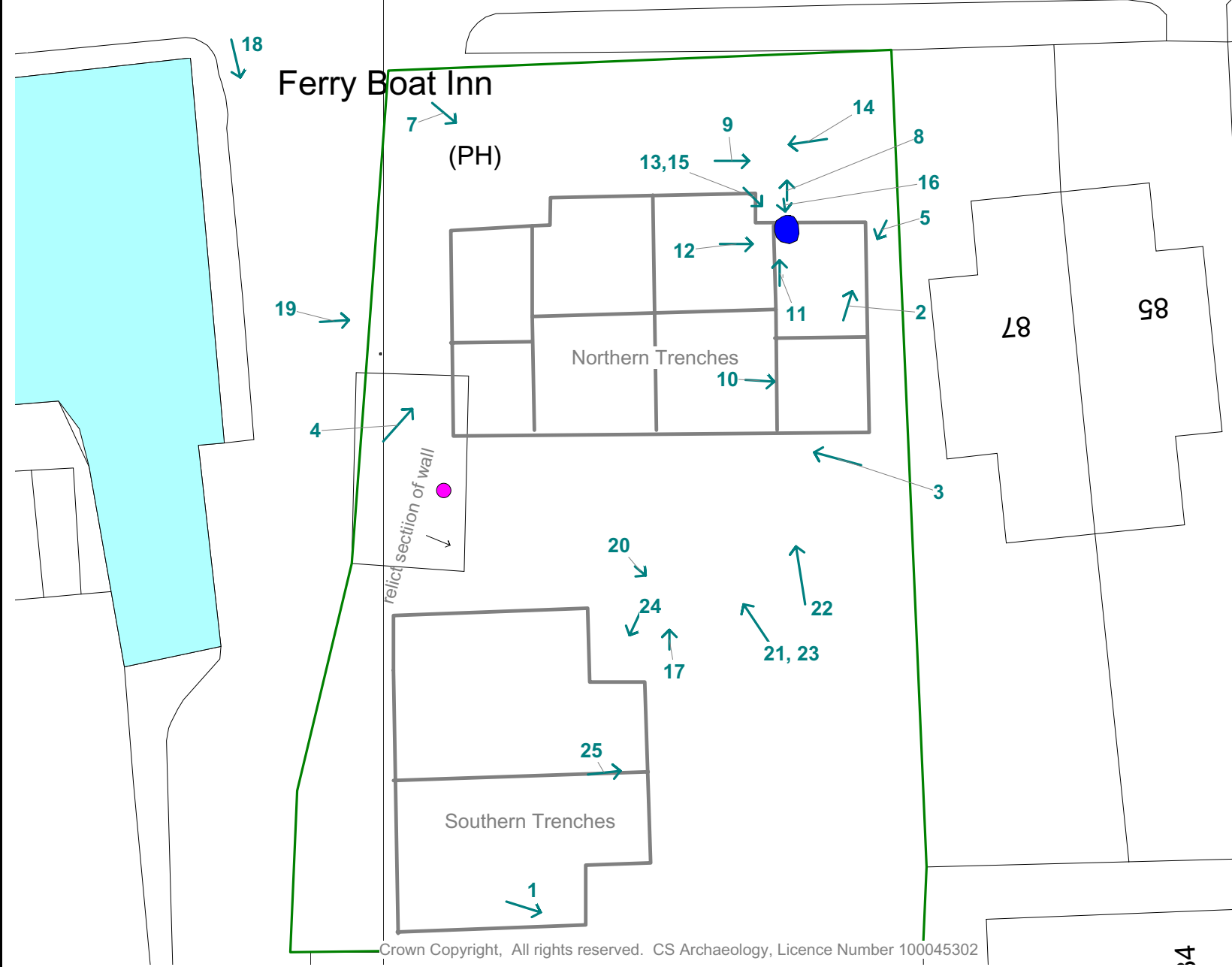
CS Archaeology  
December 2011

scale 1:20

scale 1:20



Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
 Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
 An Archaeological Watching Brief



- site boundary (0.083 Ha)
- Ferry Boat Inn
- The well (NGR SK8117 9764)
- site of the trough (NGR SK 8102 9753)
- foundation plan
- ↖ photographic position and number



scale 1:250

Figure 5: Photographic  
 Position Plan

CS Archaeology  
 December 2011

# PLATES

With photographic positions in *italics*



**Plate 1, 8:** view of the probable historic floor level, looking north



**Plate 2, 6:** relict section of wall along Church Street, looking north



**Plate 3, 25:** view of the southern part of the site



**Plate 4, 10:** view of the modern walls



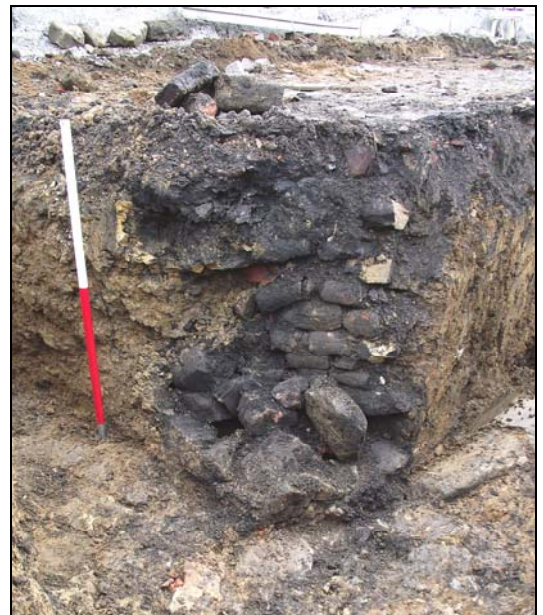
**Plate 5, 11:** initial view of a feature cutting the natural, looking north



**Plate 6, 26:** artefact assemblage from the well's upper fill



**Plate 7, 12:** a cross section of the feature and modern wall (Figure 4), looking west



**Plate 8, 15:** view of the well's stone lining





**Plate 9, 16:** the well in plan



**Plate 10, 17:** view of the sandstone trough (not in situ)



**Plate 11, 22:** general post excavation view of the site, looking north



**Plate 12, 24:** general post excavation view of the site, looking southwest

# APPENDICES

**PROJECT DESIGN FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT LAND OFF FERRY BOAT LANE, MEXBOROUGH, SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE**

**For: PUD Construction Ltd &  
Bradshaw & Griffiths Properties Ltd**

**CS Archaeology**  
October 2011

## 0 SUMMARY

- 0.1 This Project Design (PD) is in response to two conditions, placed on planning consents (App Nos. 11/02084/FUL, Condition 11 and 11/02143/FUL) for the construction of two semi-detached dwellings on the former site of the Ferry Boat car park.
- 0.2 This PD proposes that an archaeological watching brief is implemented to record potential archaeological deposits during all below ground works, specifically site reduction, service trenches and foundation excavations.
- 0.3 The results from these archaeological works will provide a more detailed record of the Proposed Development Area's (PDA) archaeological resource, and will mitigate any archaeology by 'preservation by record'.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Details

- 1.1.1 *Site Name:* Land at Ferry Boat Lane
- 1.1.2 *Location:* Former car park off Ferry Boat Lane, Mexborough (**Figure 1**)
- 1.1.3 *Status:* None (but within Mexborough's Historic Core)
- 1.1.4 *Grid reference:* 44811 39975
- 1.1.5 *Area of site (hectares):* c. 0.083

### 1.2 Archaeological Background

- 1.2.1 Historically Mexborough was a small village. In 1801 the population was 417, which had expanded to over 10,000 in 1901. Hunter (1828) noted that the population doubled from 403 to 865, between 1811 and 1821s, which provides a date for Mexborough's industrial and population expansion. This expansion had taken place west of the village in what became known as New Mexborough (CS Archaeology 2011).
- 1.2.2 Mexborough's economy was based around coal mining, quarrying, brickworks and the production of ceramics. This period heralded considerable change and growth for Mexborough, particularly from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The catalyst for this change was an improvement in communications across South Yorkshire (Sheffield and Doncaster). This was provided by the canal and the branch turnpike road (ibid).
- 1.2.3 A traveller on the canal reported that at Mexborough there was a community of 10,000 engaged in making railway wheels, glass bottles and grindstones for Sheffield, and further noted that the grindstone deposits were nearly as valuable as the coal (ibid).
- 1.2.4 Potteries were established alongside the canal at Swinton and Mexborough during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. And by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexborough became a strategically important railway junction. In 1840 the North Midland Railway from Derby to Leeds opened with a station at Swinton. Passengers from Doncaster had to travel via coach or canal 'aquabus' until a direct line was established 8 years later (ibid).
- 1.2.5 The PDA lies on the junction of Church Street and Ferry Boat Lane. The earliest detailed depiction of the PDA is in 1839 where a series of probably dwellings are depicted facing onto Church Street along the northern edge of the PDA (**Figure 2**). There is therefore potential for archaeology in the form of post medieval buildings bordering Church Street as well as for unknown archaeological deposits.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 This Project Design (PD) has been written in response to a condition on planning consent (Application Nos. 11/02084/FUL, Condition 11 and 11/02143/FUL).
- 1.3.2 This PD represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements during the redevelopment of the PDA. This is in accordance with Local Plan Policies and the National Planning Policy Guidance, PPS5.
- 1.3.3 This PD covers the removing and assessment of any archaeologically significant material revealed during the watching brief.

## **2 OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 To ensure that any archaeological remains present, whether buried or part of a standing building, are investigated in order than an understanding of their nature extent and significance gained, before they are damaged or destroyed, and that the knowledge gained is then disseminated.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Procedures and Objectives**

- 3.1.1 Access during the works will be afforded to CS Archaeology at all reasonable times, arrangements for access to the site will be agreed with the commissioning body, PUD Construction Ltd. in advance.
- 3.1.2 CS Archaeology will ensure that any plant and machinery operated by CS Archaeology is used with due care and attention.
- 3.1.3 This project will be undertaken in a manner consistent with the guidance of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and professional standards and guidance (IFA, 2001).
- 3.1.4 All finds that are 'treasure' will be reported to the coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act Code of Practice (1997).
- 3.1.5 If architectural features or archaeological remains are discovered during the course of the site works CS Archaeology will be afforded the opportunity to investigate and record them. Significant or unexpected discoveries will be immediately reported to the archaeological monitor (SYAS).
- 3.1.6 During the watching brief analytical drawings and a written report on the deposits will be made sufficient to illustrate archaeological details.

### **3.2 Photography**

- 3.2.1 A general and detailed photographic record of the demolition will be made. General and detailed photographs will be taken with a 35mm camera. All photographs will be in black and white using an appropriate silver based film (Ilford Delta 400 Professional), this will form the primary photographic record.
- 3.2.2 This record will be supplemented by 35mm colour slides, especially where colour is an aspect that needs to be recorded, e.g. bedrock and characteristic stratigraphy. All photographs will contain an appropriate graduated photographic scale. Digital photographs will also be taken to illustrate the report and to supplement the archive, copies will be included in the digital archive which will be supplied both to SYAS.

### **3.3 Site Monitoring**

- 3.3.1 SYAS will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the site works and the start of the archaeological watching brief, so that arrangements for monitoring the work can be made.
- 3.3.2 Monitoring will be arranged so that all excavated areas can be inspected in an exposed condition.

### **3.4 Finds Recovery and Conservation Strategy**

- 3.4.1 If any site reduction work does take place and this is not anticipated, the following categories of artefact may be predicted on this site: pottery, ferrous and non ferrous metalwork, glass, ceramic building material, worked bone, flint and/or worked stone. Potential finds could date from any period.
- 3.4.2 The site archive will be offered to Doncaster Museum Service.
- 3.4.3 All recording, marking and storage of material will be of archive quality and recording systems will be compatible with Doncaster Museum. Allowance will be made for preliminary conservation and stabilisation of all objects and an assessment of their long-term conservation and storage needs.
- 3.4.4 Finds will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication First Aid for Finds. In accordance with the procedures outlined in MAP2, all iron objects, a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including coins), and a sample of any industrial debris relating to metallurgy will be X-radiographed before assessment.
- 3.4.5 If required a specialist assessment report on the recovered artefacts will be undertaken, with a view to their potential for further study. Any assessment report will form an appendix to the main report. Allowance will be made for preliminary conservation and storage needs.

### **3.5 Health and Safety**

- 3.5.1 CS Archaeology will operate with due regard to health and safety and a copy of the risk assessment will be sent for approval to the archaeological monitors (SYAS).

### **3.6 Post –Recording Work and Report Preparation**

- 3.6.1 Once the site works have been completed, a full report of the results of the watching brief will be undertaken by CS Archaeology, within 3 months. The post-excavation assessment of material if recovered will be undertaken in accordance with the guidance of MAP2 (English Heritage, 1991). The report will include: background information, methods, detailed results, grid references, conclusion and discussion.
- 3.6.2 The watching brief report may include a phased interpretation of the site, should this be necessary.
- 3.6.3 The watching brief report will also consist of a detailed photographic index.
- 3.6.4 The report will provide an interpretation of the results, placing them in their local and regional context.
- 3.6.5 A copy of this PD will be included as an appendix to the final report.

### **3.7 Report Submission**

- 3.7.1 Copies of the completed report will be submitted in both hard (if required) and digital formats to:
- The Clients: PUD Construction Ltd & Bradshaw & Griffiths Properties Ltd;
  - Mr A Lines and the HER at the SYAS.

### **3.8 Report Submission**

- 3.8.1 Upon completion of the field work a full report will be produced and copies with CD Rom containing the text of the report and illustrations (including all photos and slides taken), scanned at 300 dpi, is to be provided with each copy of the printed report submitted to the client, PUD Construction Ltd., and Mr. A Lines of the SYAS. As a minimum, a summary or interim statement will be produced 6 weeks after completion of the fieldwork, and a full report within 3 months
- 3.8.2 A summary report of an appropriate length, accompanied by illustrations, will be prepared and submitted in digital format (word/jpg >300dpi), for publication in *Archaeology in South Yorkshire*.

### **3.9 Publicity**

- 3.9.1 Provision will be made for publicising the results of the work locally, and an OASIS form will be completed for the project.
- 3.9.2 CS Archaeology will either arrange for copyright on the deposited material to be assigned to the Doncaster Archives in perpetuity; this licence will allow the archive to reproduce material, including for use by third parties, with the copyright owner suitably acknowledged.
- 3.9.3 CS Archaeology is aware that this work may lead to further archaeological dissemination.



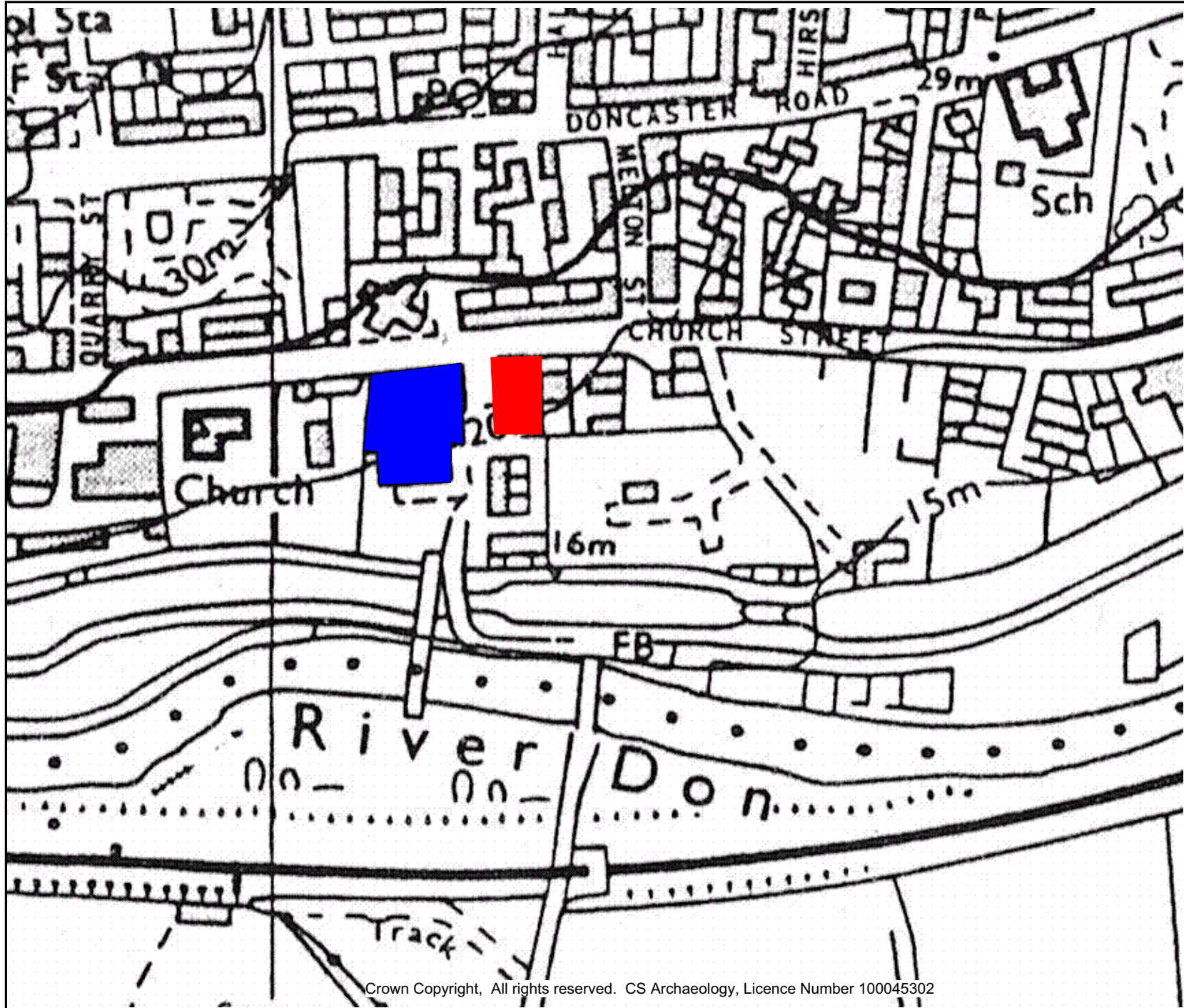
### 3.10 References

- CS Archaeology, 2011, *Land to the west of Station Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire: An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment, unpublished client report*
- English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*
- Institute of Archaeologists, 2001, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* Reading
- Watkinson D. & Neal V., 1998, *First Aid for Finds* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), RESCUE & the Archaeological Section of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.
- Treasure Act, 1996, Code of Practice
- Planning for the Historic Environment 2010, National Planning Policy 5 (PPS5).

Any comments on this PD please address to Chris Scurfield at:

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Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
 Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
 An Archaeological Watching Brief

- PDA (0.083 Ha)
- Ferry Boat Inn



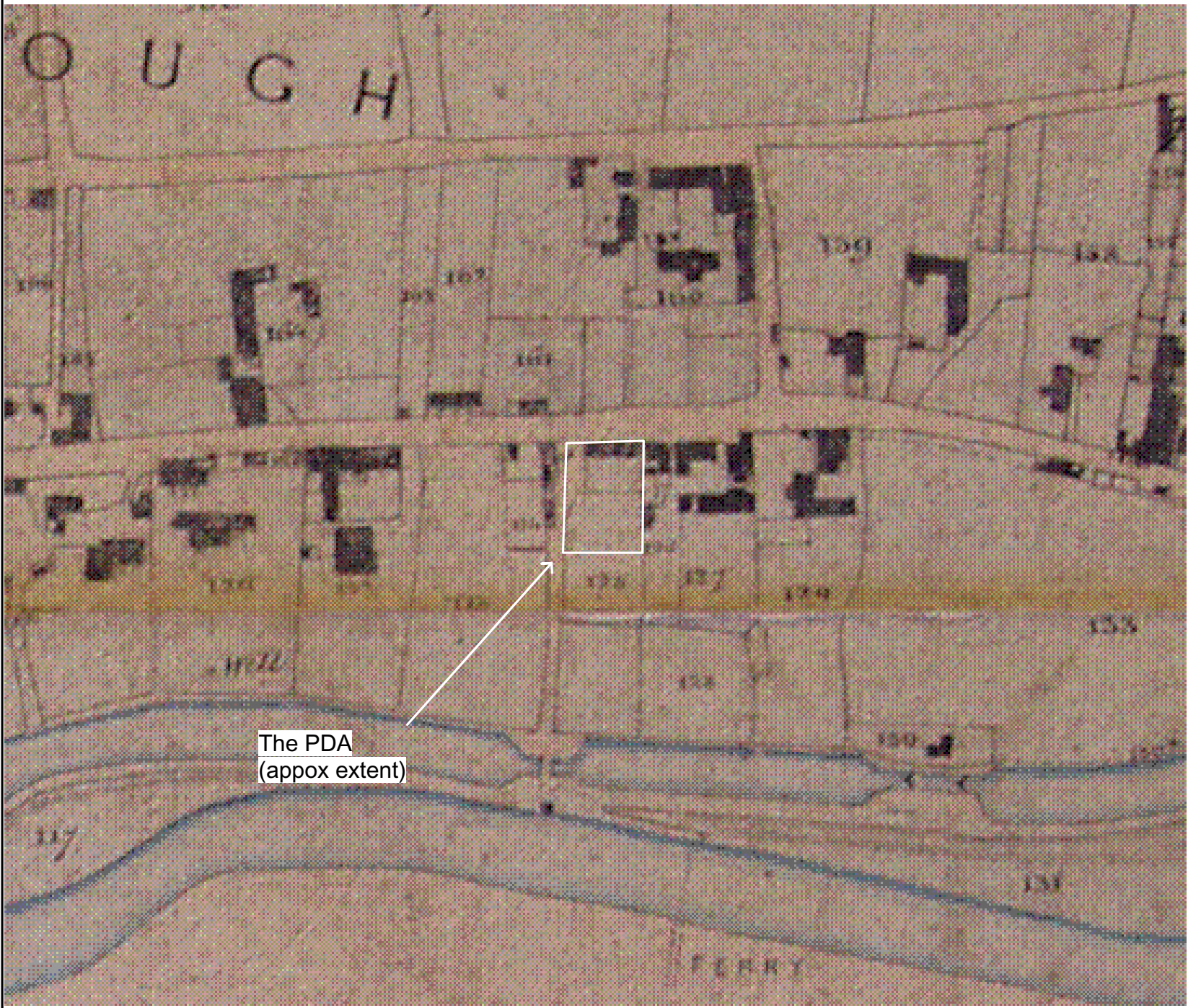
scale 1:2500

Figure 1: Location Map  
 of the PDA

based on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1979

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Land off Ferry Boat Lane,  
Mexborough, South Yorkshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief



*not to scale*



Figure 2: The Mexborough  
Tithe Map of 1839

CS Archaeology  
October 2011

## Appendix 2: ARCHIVE

### 1. PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER of digital photographs (12MP)

Photographic position numbers are used to cross reference with the photographic plan (**Figure 5**)

Photo. Position	Plate	Description	Looking
1		Initial view of the southern foundation trench	WSW
2		Initial view of a northern foundation trench	N
3		General view towards the Ferry Boat Inn	W
4		General view across the site	NE
5		View of a northern foundation trench which truncated modern shallow brick cross walls	S
6	<b>2</b>	View of a relict section of sandstone walling along Church Street	N
7		General view across the site	SE
8	<b>1</b>	View of the probably in situ flagstone	NNW
9	<b>16</b>	View of the probably in situ flagstone	E
10	<b>4</b>	View of one of the brick cross walls	E
11	<b>5</b>	Excavation view of a deep feature (the well)	N
12	<b>7</b>	View of the east facing section showing the feature (the well) and a cross wall	E
13		General view of the feature (the well) pre-cleaning	SE
14		General view of the excavations	SW
15	<b>8</b>	Post cleaning view of the well with its stone lining	SE
16		Plan view of the well	S
17	<b>10</b>	View of the sandstone trough (not in situ)	N
18		General view of the site	S
19		View of the trough's original location	E
20		View of the underside of the trough	-
21		Post-excavation view of the trenches	NW
22	<b>11</b>	Post-excavation view of the trenches	N
23		Post-excavation view of the trenches	NW
24	<b>12</b>	Post-excavation view of the trenches	SW
25	<b>3</b>	Representative view of the stratigraphy of the southern trenches	E
26	<b>6</b>	Detail of the finds from the upper fill of the well	-

NB Artefacts from the watching brief, (from the upper fills of the well) lacked a secure context so will not be retained as part of an archive