
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING
LAND OFF FEN ROAD
HOLBEACH
LINCOLNSHIRE
(HBFR22)**

Work Undertaken For
Ashwood Homes

February 2023

Report Compiled by
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Planning Application No: H09-1027-22
National Grid Reference: TF 3570 2384
The Collection Accession No: LCNCC:2022.4
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-513306

APS Report No. 7/23

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks for a residential development on land off Fen Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire.

The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area south of the settlement of Holbeach, immediately southwest of a probable Late Saxon farmstead and in close proximity to early medieval saltmaking activity. Roman remains in the vicinity lie at depth beneath later flood silts. A prior evaluation of the current site had revealed a boundary ditch, a shallow gully and a pit of early medieval, probably mid 12th century date, and two undated furrows. This indicated domestic activity at the site around a century later than that to the northeast.

The monitoring and recording revealed no archaeological features. Extensive disturbance of the site from machine tracking had occurred and it was decided to abandon the archaeological monitoring after two plots.

Finds comprised a single fragment of late 17th century clay pipe.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

A residential development (planning application no. H09-1027-22), comprising 38 dwellings with a new access road, has been approved for the site subject to archaeological monitoring and recording. Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Ashwood Homes to undertake this phase of the work which was carried out between 4th and 6th January 2023 in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by

Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Planning Archaeologist, Lincolnshire County Council.

2.2 Location, Topography and Geology

Holbeach is located 11km east of Spalding and 20km southwest of Boston in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site is in the southern edge of the village, about 950m south of the parish church of All Saints, on the northwest side of Fen Road at National Grid Reference TF 3570 2384 (Fig. 2). The old river forms the northwestern boundary of the site.

Local soils are of the Wisbech Series, typically coarse silty alluvial gley soils, with coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous alluvial soils of the Romney Series in the northeast corner of the site (Robson 1990, 26, 36). These soils are developed on a drift geology of younger marine alluvium which in turn seal a solid geology of Jurassic West Walton Formation mudstones (BGS 1992). The site is on generally level ground within the fenland of south Lincolnshire at around 3m AOD.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Much Roman pottery, perhaps indicative of settlement, has been found on the east side of Fen Road, 200m east of the site, beneath alluvial deposits.

Holbeach is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Holobec*, *Holobech* and *Holebech*, the name is derived from the Old English and means the ‘hollow (*hol*) back (*bæc*)’, derived from the topographic position of the town on raised ground (Cameron 1998, 64). The Domesday Survey records that Holbeach was held by the King (as sokeland of Gedney), by Crowland Abbey (as a manor), Count Alan (as sokeland and

a berewic) and Guy de Craon (also manorial) and contained extensive arable land and pasture (Foster and Longley 1976).

The manor belonging to Crowland Abbey appears to have been the principal manor in Holbeach and seems to have formed part of the demesne lands of the abbey at the time of the dissolution in 1539 (Dugdale 1819, 124). The descent of the manor is generally unknown but was held by Sir Joseph Banks in the 18th century and was known as Holbeach Abbots.

A chapel dedicated to St Peter is recorded at Holbeach during the reign of King John (Owen 1975, 19). Only one document relates to its existence in which Fulk of Oiri made over the advowson of the church and Chapel of St Peter to Conan (RC 1811, 97). The fate of this chapel is unknown but it must have had some importance as it held burial rights. This was shown by the discovery of 130 skeletons when a mound was levelled in 1867. Recent archaeological work in the vicinity of the presumed chapel, 400m north of the current site, identified medieval features and pottery (Cope-Faulkner 2014).

Archaeological evaluation of an area 300m north of the current site near Manor Farm revealed evidence of settlement along with saltmaking activity along the bank of a former watercourse. A series of large ditches containing 11th to 13th century pottery were excavated (Failes 2016). Manor Farm was built in the 19th century but the name is thought to refer to the location of a manor house mentioned in the 17th century. A concentration of Late Saxon and medieval pottery suggests it may have been present since the Saxon period (Lane 2014). Geophysical evidence has suggested the presence of rubble, indicating buildings, in the area (Jefferson 2014).

A trenching evaluation immediately northeast of the current site revealed a concentration of pits and linear features in the trench closest to the abovementioned saltmaking area. Several of the features were dated by pottery to the Late Saxon period. The pottery was domestic rather than industrial in nature while environmental samples suggested a freshwater rather than saltwater environment in Late Saxon times. They also indicated the processing of cereals in the vicinity, especially hulled barley. Together with hand collected animal bone the samples also indicated cattle and sheep husbandry. This evidence suggested a small Late Saxon farmstead in the vicinity of the trench. One ditch in the trench was dated to the 13th-14th century (Peachey 2019).

A subsequent strip, map and sample excavation of the site (currently being developed) during 2021 revealed many more pits and ditches of Late Saxon date, with some disarticulated human bone being among the finds (Peachey 2022a).

A prior evaluation of the current site revealed a boundary ditch, a shallow gully and a pit of early medieval, probably mid 12th century date, and two undated furrows (Peachey 2022b).

The Tithe apportionment map of 1838 shows that the site was already in its present layout.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the investigation were to record and interpret the deposits and any archaeological features exposed during the development groundwork.

The objectives of the investigation were to:

- Determine the form and function of

the archaeological features encountered;

- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
- Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

4. METHODS

The footings were stripped by mechanical excavator to the depths required by the development.

Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and plans were drawn at scales of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

The location of the excavated trenches was plotted with a survey grade differential GPS.

Following excavation, finds were examined and a period date assigned

where possible (Appendix 2).

5. RESULTS (Figs. 4-5)

The results of the archaeological monitoring and recording are discussed in plot order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Plot 14 (Fig. 4; Plates 1, 3)

The earliest deposit revealed in these footings was a natural mid blueish grey silty clay (5002). This was sealed by a 0.65m thick mid yellowish brown sandy silt layer (5001) (Fig. 5, Section 7; Plate 2). Above this, a layer of recently removed disturbed ground (5000) produced a single fragment of late 17th century clay pipe.

Plot 15 (Fig. 4; Plate 4)

These footings also contained an at least 0.17m thick natural deposit of mid blueish grey silty clay (5005). This was sealed by a 0.59m thick mid yellowish brown sandy silt layer (5004). Above this, was a thin layer of ground disturbed by the movement of dumpers (5003) (Fig. 5, Section 8; Plate 5).

Plots 14 and 15 garages (Fig. 14; Plate 6)

In the garage footings, the firm blueish grey clay (5008) natural deposit was overlain by a 0.7m thick mid yellowish brown sandy silt layer (5007). Above this was a 0.1m thick layer of ground disturbed by dumpers (5006) (Fig. 5, Section 9; Plate 7).

6. DISCUSSION

The natural deposit revealed was a mid blueish grey silty clay. This was overlain

by an up to 0.7m thick mid yellowish brown sandy silt alluvial deposit. No archaeological features were identified during the work.

The lack of archaeological features meant that this stage of the work didn't contribute to the research objectives for the East Midlands (Knight *et al*, 2012).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks for a residential development on land at Fen Road, Holbeach. This was because the site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area adjacent to a probable Late Saxon farmstead and in close proximity to early medieval saltmaking activity.

However, only a few of the plots were monitored as the site had already been badly disturbed by machines tracking across it. No archaeological features were revealed.

Finds comprised a single fragment of late 17th century clay pipe.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Ashwood Homes who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Paul Cope-Faulkner who also edited this report.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Site Supervisor: Anna Farrell
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey
CAD Illustration: Mark Peachey

Post-excavation Analysis: Mark Peachey
Archiving: Denise Buckley, Maria Leroi

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

CIfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

RC Records Commission

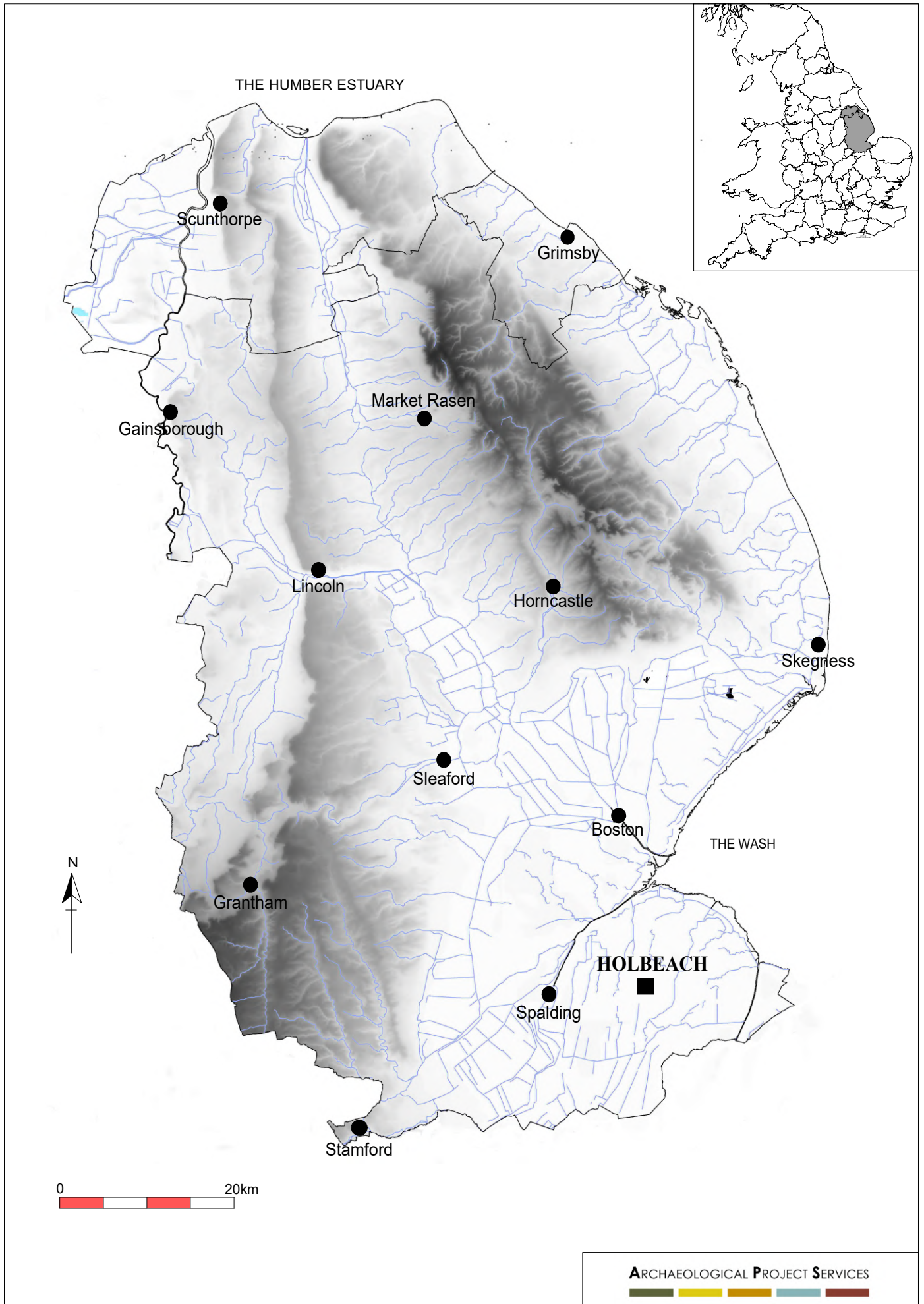


Figure 1 - General location plan

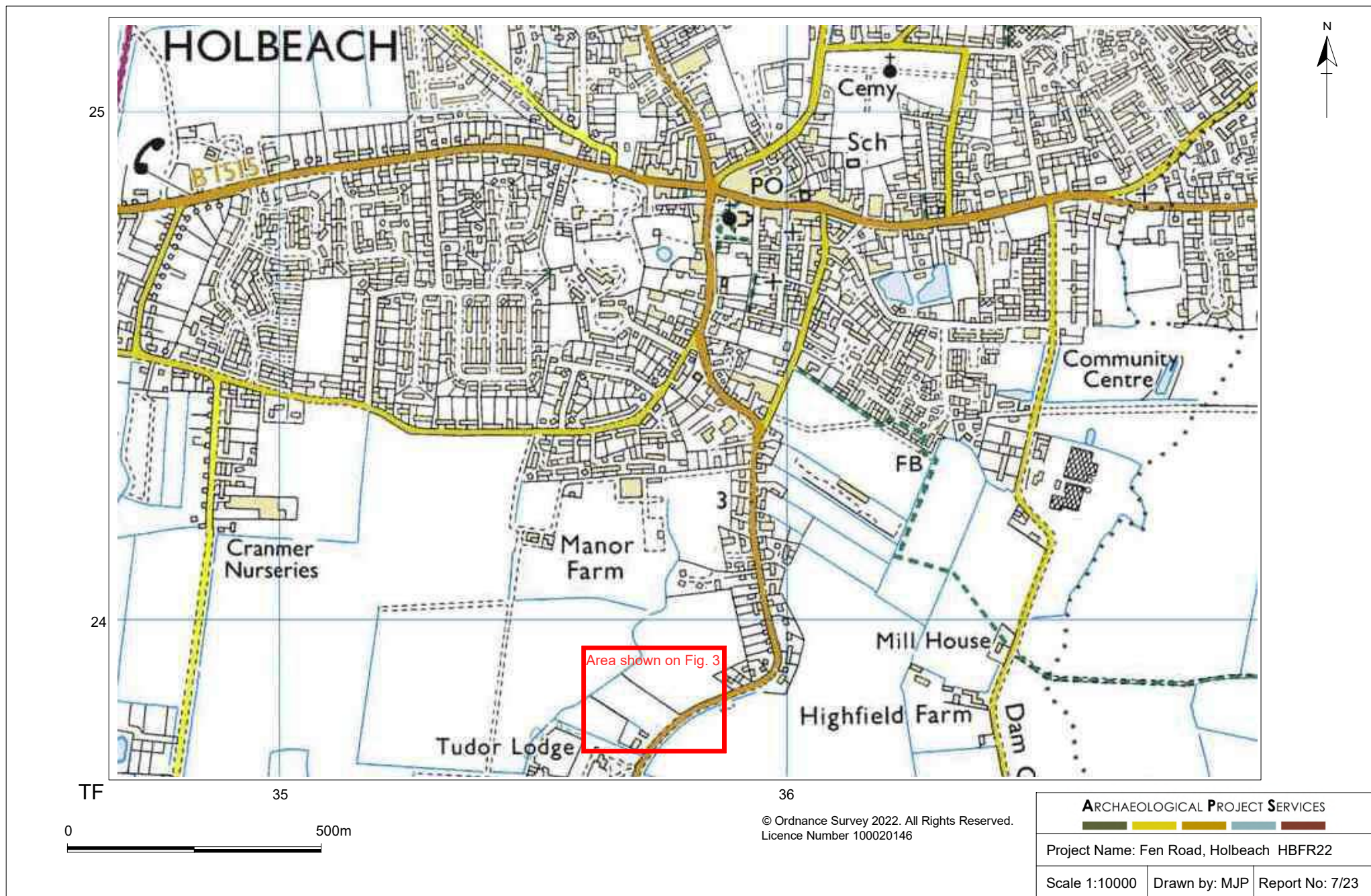
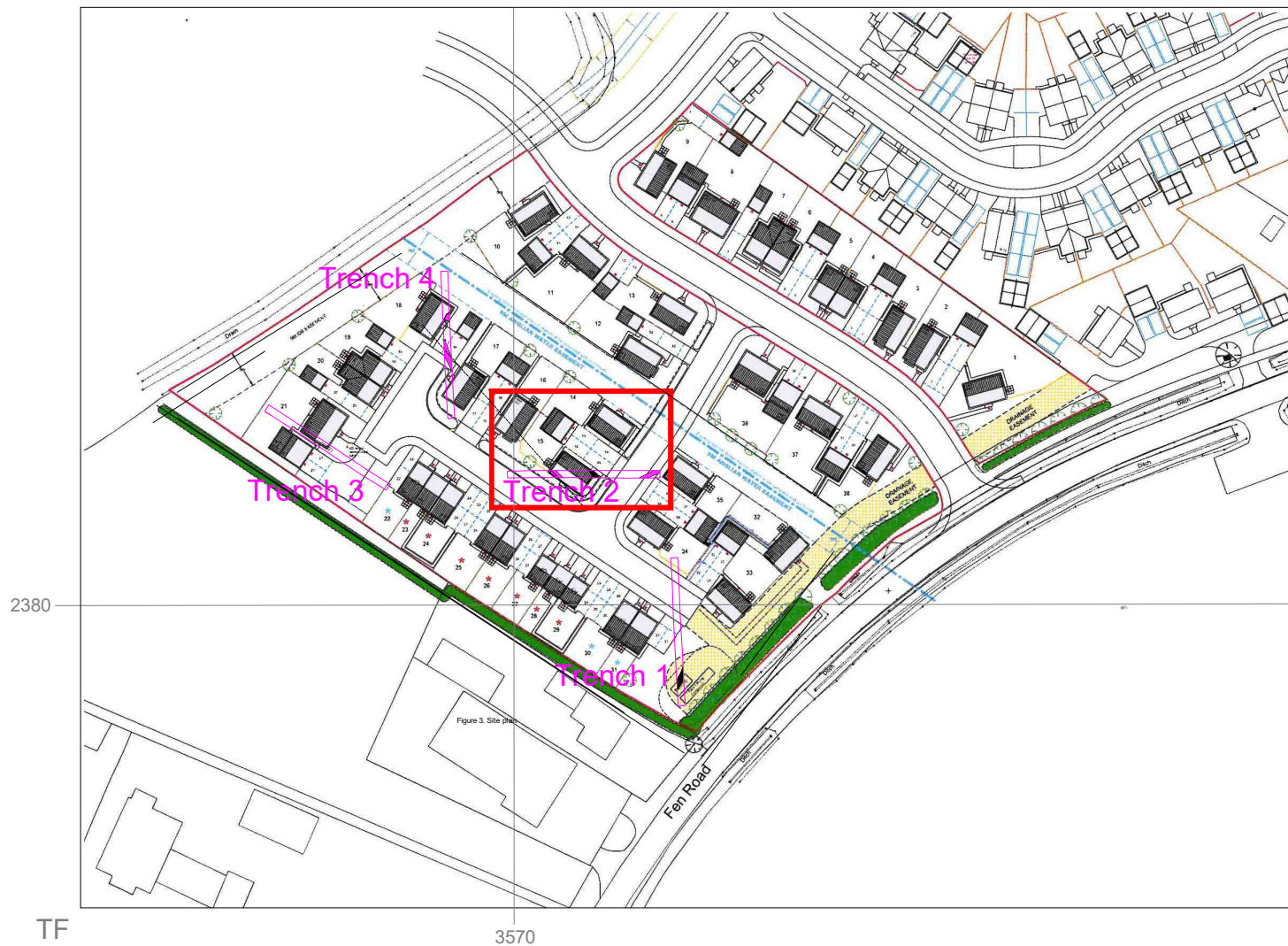


Figure 2. Site location plan



0 50m



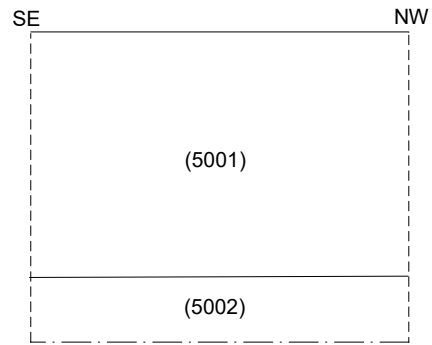
Area shown on Fig. 4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES		
Project Name: Fen Road, Holbeach HBFR22		
Scale 1:1500	Drawn by: MJP	Report No: 7/23

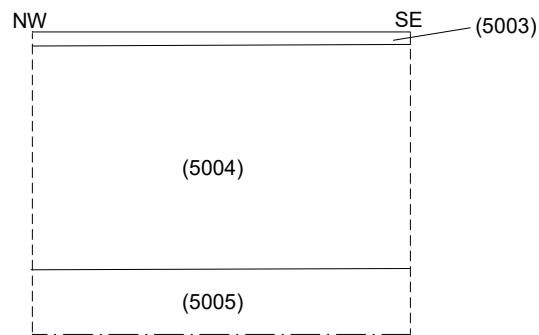
Figure. 3. Site plan showing evaluation trenches



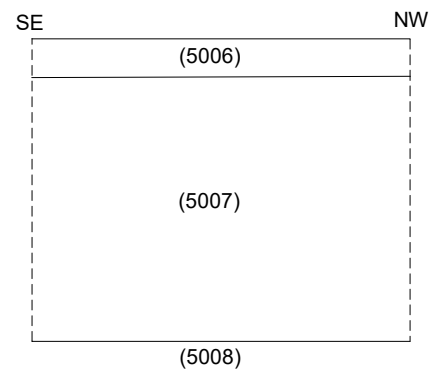
Figure 4. Plan of monitored plots



Section 7



Section 8



Section 9



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES		
Project Name: Fen Road, Holbeach HBFR22		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by:MJP	Report No: 7/23

Figure 5. Representative Sections



Plate 1. Pre-machining view of Plot 14, looking northwest



Plate 2. Plot 14, representative Section 7, looking southwest



Plate 3. The completed Plot 14 footings, looking southeast



Plate 4. The completed Plot 15 footings, looking northwest



Plate 5. Plot 15, representative Section 8, looking northeast



Plate 6. Pre-machining view of Plots 14/15 garage, looking north



Plate 7. Plots 14/15 garage footings, representative Section 9, looking southwest

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Area	Description	Interpretation
5000	Plot 14	Ground disturbed by building works, repeated movement of dumpers	Disturbed ground
5001	Plot 14	Friable mid yellowish brown sandy silts with moderate brownish red mineralisation, lensing towards base, 0.65m thick	Alluvial silt
5002	Plot 14	Firm mid blueish grey silty clay with cockle shell lensing, at least 0.17m thick	Natural clay
5003	Plot 15	Ground disturbed by building works, repeated movement of dumpers, 40mm thick	Disturbed ground
5004	Plot 15	Friable mid yellowish brown sandy silts with moderate brownish red mineralisation, lensing towards base, 0.59m thick	Alluvial silt
5005	Plot 15	Firm blueish grey clay, at least 0.17m thick	Natural clay
5006	Plot 14/15 garages	Ground disturbed by building works, repeated movement of dumpers, 0.1m thick	Disturbed ground
5007	Plot 14/15 garages	Friable mid yellowish brown sandy silts with moderate brownish red mineralisation, lensing towards base, 0.7m thick	Alluvial silt
5008	Plot 14/15 garages	Firm blueish grey clay	Natural clay

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

CLAY PIPE

By Denise Buckley

Introduction

One clay pipe stem, weighing 3.3g, was recovered during archaeological investigations at Fen Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire. The material was recorded in February 2023.

Analysis of the clay pipes followed the guidance published by Davey (1981) and the material is detailed in the accompanying table. Dating was taken primarily from the bore size using the Harrington scale.

Condition

The clay pipe is in average condition, being quite abraded.

Results

Table 1, Clay Pipes

Context no.	Bore diameter /64"					NoF	W(g)	Comments	Date
	8	7	6	5	4				
5000		1				1	3.3	Stem only. Soft fabric; heavily abraded. Discard.	1650-1680
Totals						1	3.3		

Summary and Recommendations

A single heavily abraded stem dating to the mid to late seventeenth century was recovered from disturbed ground (5000). As a single stem with no discerning marks, apart from dating evidence the clay pipe is of no further potential and has been discarded.

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
5000	Mid to late 17 th century	Date on clay pipe

ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
LHJ	Lower Handle Join
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
PCRG	Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group

TR	Trench
UHJ	Upper Handle Join
W (g)	Weight (grams)

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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.
Briquetage	A coarse ceramic material used to make evaporation vessels and supporting pillars used in extracting salt from seawater.
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, <i>e.g.</i> [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> 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).
Geophysical Survey	Essentially non-invasive methods of examining below the ground surface by measuring deviations in the physical properties and characteristics of the earth. Techniques include magnetometry and resistivity survey.
Intrusive	Artefacts of later date found in deposits that must pre-date them are said to be intrusive. Such intrusive artefacts will usually be small and have worked down in the soil through cracks, or by root, worm or rodent action. Intrusive artefacts will generally be isolated and be distinctively later than a larger assemblage of earlier artefacts, for example, a single 19 th century pottery fragment found in a large collection of medieval ceramics in a refuse pit.
Layer	A layer is 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
Old English	The language used by the Saxon (<i>q.v.</i>) occupants of Britain.
Ridge and Furrow	The remains of arable cultivation consisting of raised rounded strips separated by furrows. It is characteristic of open field agriculture.
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, Denmark and adjacent areas. Divided into Early (AD 410-660), Middle (AD 660-900) and Late Saxon (AD 900-1066).

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
13	Context record sheets
1	Section record sheet
4	Daily record sheets
1	Photographic record sheet
2	Sheets of scale drawings

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: 2022.4

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: HBFR 22

OASIS record number archaeo11-513306

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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Summary for archaeol1-513306

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol1-513306
Project Name	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording on land at Fen Road, Holbeach, Lincolnshire
Sitename	Land at Fen Road, Holbeach
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	4567
Planning Id	H09-1027-22
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeological Project Services
Project Dates	04-Jan-2023 - 06-Jan-2023
Location	Land at Fen Road, Holbeach NGR : TF 35700 23840 LL : 52.7950665427291, 0.011136272784023 12 Fig : 535700,323840
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Lincolnshire District : South Holland Parish : Holbeach
Project Methodology	Monitoring and recording was carried out on Plots 14 and 15 of the development.
Project Results	Monitoring was limited to Plots 14 and 15 as the ground had been disturbed so badly by machine tracks that it was decided that archaeological features would be difficult to discern.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Lincolnshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Mark, Peachey
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire;