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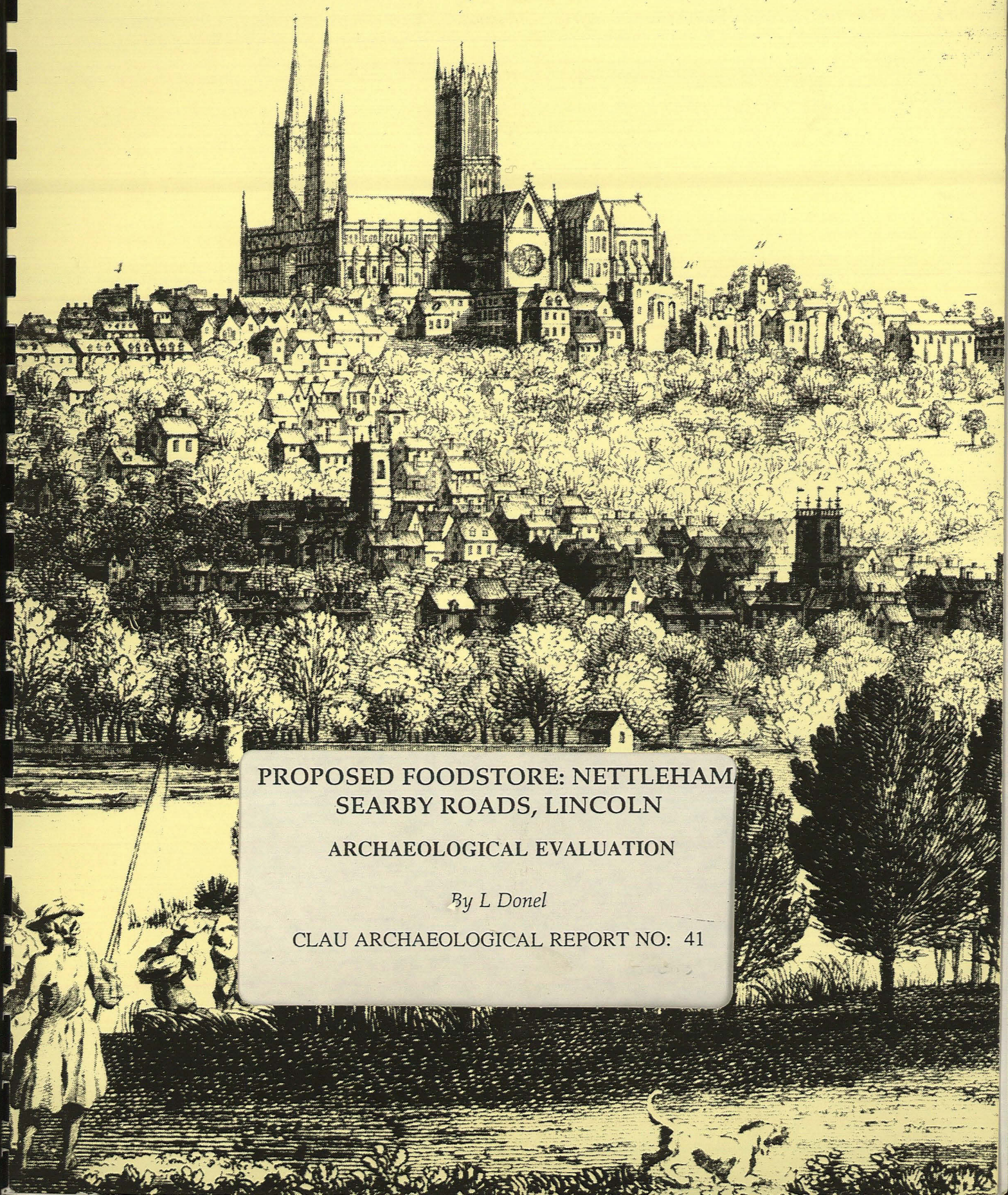

PROPOSED FOODSTORE: NETTLEHAM/SEARBY ROADS, LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

By L Donel

CLAU ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT NO: 41

A Report to Bridgemanors Ltd

March 1993

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a response to recommendations contained in the preliminary archaeological assessment and the conditions of the planning approval subsequently granted by Lincoln City Council, the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit was commissioned by Bridgemanors Limited,on behalf of Safeway PLC to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation prior to development on land between Nettleham Road and Searby Road,Lincoln.

The evaluation was carried out by means of three trenches excavated and recorded in the period 11th.-18th January 1993.

This document summarises the results of the investigation and proposes a strategy for the further recording of archaeological remains on the site in accordance with the recommendations outlined in DoE *Planning Policy Guidance 16* (PPG 16) published in November 1990.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. The Unit, its members and employees cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance the terms of the Unit's Articles of Association, the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA),Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991) and the IFA Draft Standard on Archaeological Desk-Based Studies.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location and Topography

The Site, located at NGR SK 9880 7370, lies approximately 2km northeast of the Roman city, in an area of gently undulating ground at the junction of Nettleham and Searby roads (Fig.1).

From a level of c.45m OD at Nettleham Road in the southeast the Site slopes gradually down to c.41m OD at the junction of a hedged/fenced property boundary in the north-west. Part of the Site facing Nettleham Road is presently occupied by structures and other facilities of a British Telecom Depot. The remainder of the Site lies vacant and is overgrown with grass, weeds and a few small trees. The irregular surface and weed-covered mounds on this part of the Site indicates that dumping and some ground disturbance has taken place in recent years. Hardcore is known to exist over part of this area. Prior to construction of the BT Depot and later development in the area the land was mainly used for arable cultivation.

The northwest corner, and lowest part of the Site, lies approximately 35m southeast of the natural springhead and its associated watercourse, now a ditched drain, known as the Roaring Meg. Much of this lowlying area is known to have been marshy and waterlogged until recent years (See Fig.2).

The known line of a Roman aqueduct bisects the Site in a generally north-south direction (Fig.2)

The earliest known documentary evidence for the existence of the Roman aqueduct dates from 1700 when it is mentioned in a letter by Abraham de la Pryme to Dr Gale, the Dean of York, in which he comments '' There hath indeed been a small canal, or Roman aqueduct or pipe, discovered about a mile on this side Lincoln, about a foot underground and of about a foot square in cavity, of Roman brick and tile, and plaistered within, conveying water from a certain spring there, unto the city, but I am sorry that I can give you no better an account of it''. Soon after the aqueduct is mentioned by William Stukeley in his ITINERARIUM CURIOSUM and shown in very vague terms on the map drawn by Joseph Banks in 1722 (Fig.3).

The next major reference occurs in the ADVERSARIA written by Thomas Sympson in about 1740. In the summary of his description he states '' There must have been some contrivance for raising the water a good deal above its natural level before it would run to Lindum; the spring being evidently lower than the town: indeed there are some traces of a tower, or some such building, at the end of the aqueduct by the spring which one may suppose to have had a reservoir on its top for that purpose''.

3.0 PREVIOUS INVESTIGATION

Although interest in the aqueduct had been expressed certainly since the beginning of the 18th century, real archaeological investigation began in 1950 after part of a large section of the pipeline was exposed and subsequently destroyed by a mechanical excavator during the construction of the Ermine Estate housing scheme (Fig.4).

Initial work in the 1950s was carried out by Hugh Thompson and F.T.Baker; subsequent work was undertaken by the Lincoln Archaeological Trust in the area now occupied by Ceres House and by Ken Wood at various locations along Nettleham Rd.

4.0 TRIAL TRENCH EXCAVATION

4.1 Objectives:

Using the information produced by the assessment report to establish locations for investigation, trial trench excavation was carried out to;

a) Identify the stratigraphic sequence, depth, nature and survival conditions of any archaeological remains in the area of proposed development.

b) Assess the importance of any remains encountered.

c) Assess the nature and quality of preservation of organic deposits which could contain evidence of early environmental conditions.

d) Assess the probable impact of development on surviving remains and recommend modifications to development design which would enhance the in situ preservation of remains or, where this proves impractical to:

e) Assess the potential and possible need for further archaeological excavation or recording prior to, or during, the construction phase; recommend the appropriate course of action and provide designs and cost estimates for such work.

4.2 Methodology

Three trial tenches were mechanically excavated in locations shown in Fig.1. Positioned to ensure safe working clearance from existing structures,the selected locations were designed to provide optimum coverage of the proposed development. Two of the trenches were enlarged to create a larger area for investigation.

Detailed records and descriptions of the stratigraphic sequence of deposits and archaeological features were made,all dimensions being taken from present ground surface and subsequently related to Ordnance Datum levels. Each trench was photographically recorded by oblique angle and overhead colour transparencies and black and white prints. Artefactual material was collected for analysis and dating. A marker was left in the hedge line to identify the position of the Roman aqueduct. The trial trenches were subsequently backfilled (using excavated spoil) and consolidated.

4.3 Site Evaluation

Trench I

The trench, 20m x 2m x 300-400mm, ran E-W. As natural was found to be very close to the surface, the trench was very shallow. Two modern rubbish/ash pits were cut into the natural. However, there was no evidence of any earlier activity in this area (Fig.1).

Trench II

This N-S trench (43m x 2.5 x .3 - 1.7m) was sited parallel to and 1.5m away from the British Telecom perimeter fence. It was hoped that this trench would identify the line of the aqueduct at the E. edge of the site as well as give information about the nature and depth of stratigraphy in the area (Fig.1).

The earliest layer uncovered in this trench was a light grey clay with limestone inclusions(105) which lay approximately at a depth of 1.2 m from the surface. This was sealed by a medium compact orange brown clay with frequent limestone fragments(106).It is possible that (106) may be a redeposited natural layer. Sealing (106) was (104) a medium compact orange brown sandy soil which was, in turn, in this trench, sealed by topsoil(100).

There was no definite evidence in the trench for the aqueduct. A few stones were uncovered lying above (105) which may represent the lowest course of stones of a pier base, but the nature of the stratigraphy showed that the area had been considerably stripped any features sometime in the past 30 years,leaving no evidence of early activity.

The trench was subsequently widened in order to provide a larger area for investigation. No evidence of the aqueduct or any other early activity was located.

Trench III

Trench III was excavated in order to:

1) identify any reamins of the Roman aqueduct and any associated features.

2) identify any remains of ditches seen in aerial photographs of the field adjacent to the N of the site which might have extended into the area under investigation.

The trench, 25m x 2.5m x 350mm, was set at right angles to trench II, running parallel to the present day hedge line. It was hoped that this trench could be continued westwards along the hedge line in order to incorporate an environmental test pit to be excavated near an area of possible marsh. However, the area had been badly disturbed by dumping which blocked access for the machine and made hand excavation to any depth impractical in this situation. As the information would be too difficult and dangerous to access and possibly inconclusive if obtained,it was decided that the test pit should be abandonned (Fig.1).

The earliest layer identified in this trench was a possible natural subsoil (105). This layer consisted of a compact light grey clay with limestone fragments which was sealed by (103) part of the base of the aqueduct and cut by the 1950 excavation trenches (109,110,111,112).

The remains of the aqueduct consisted of two to three courses of stone which made up one pier base. Directly to the south of the base was a mix of stone,mortar and tile debris,probablt foundation material, which had been seen and recorded in the 1950s. There was no further strong evidence for the aqueduct although some stone scatters occurred on what would have been its line (Fig.5).

Both the aqueduct and the 1950s excavation trenches showed distrubance to the SE. It was quite evident that this disturbance had involved the stripping of the topsoil sometime in the past thirty years.

Two ditches were seen in the S. facing section of Trench III. However, they both cut the topsoil but did not disturb any earlier layers. It is quite possible that they are a modern drainage feature and do not relate at all to the possible ditches seen in the aerial photographs (Fig.6).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The assessment of impact is highly site specific and demands a responsible and accurate approach. Of the various critera to be considered, the `importance' of remains within a local, national and international context and potential loss or damage by volume of archaeological deposits, are probably the most significant. Professional judgement plays a major part in establishing degree of impact and developing a suitable Resource Management Strategy.

It is never envisaged that archaeological investigation via dispersed trial trenches will produce conclusive evidence of ancient occupation or land use.However,the results,when correlated with the existing archaeological record,related archive research and anticipated scale of development disturbance can be used to develop an appropriate strategy for possible further archaeological evaluation or recording.

In this case the results of the trial trench investigation indicate that stratified archaeological remains probably occur below a depth of 350mm. However, the investigation has also shown that much of the archaeological material has been considerably disturbed in the past thirty years leaving few remains of the aqueduct which was originally recorded in the 1950s.

Indications of any other activity have been restricted to two possible ditches cut into the present topsoil which would indicate a modern date for these features.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further investigation of the archaeology of the site are based upon:

a) The existing documentary and archive record for the area, including the results from previous archaeological investigations at and in proximity to the Site.

b) Our current understanding of the design, arrangement and probable time-scale of the proposed development.

c) The probable extent of ground disturbance to be caused by construction works and the shallow depth of known remains on or near the site.

d) The principal assessment criteria contained in PPG16, including the 'importance' of remains known or thought to exist, the policy of preservation *in situ* and the alternative of preservation by record i.e. excavation.

e) Our professional judgement on the merits of any possible remains, which should be seen as an aid to formulating stategy and not the only viable judgements that could be made.

The evaluation has demonstrated that of the three aqueduct pier bases and other evidence found intact in the 1950's within the Site area only one pier base still remains, together with a section of intervening baulk. We recommend that consideration be given to preserving these elements in situ if at all possible.

Although the evidence from other trenches proved to be archaeologically negative the survival of remains within the area presently occupied by the BT Depot is unknown. In view of the proposed lowering of ground level in this area we recommend an archaeological watching brief be maintained during all contractors' groundwork activity in order to record any remains which may be encountered.

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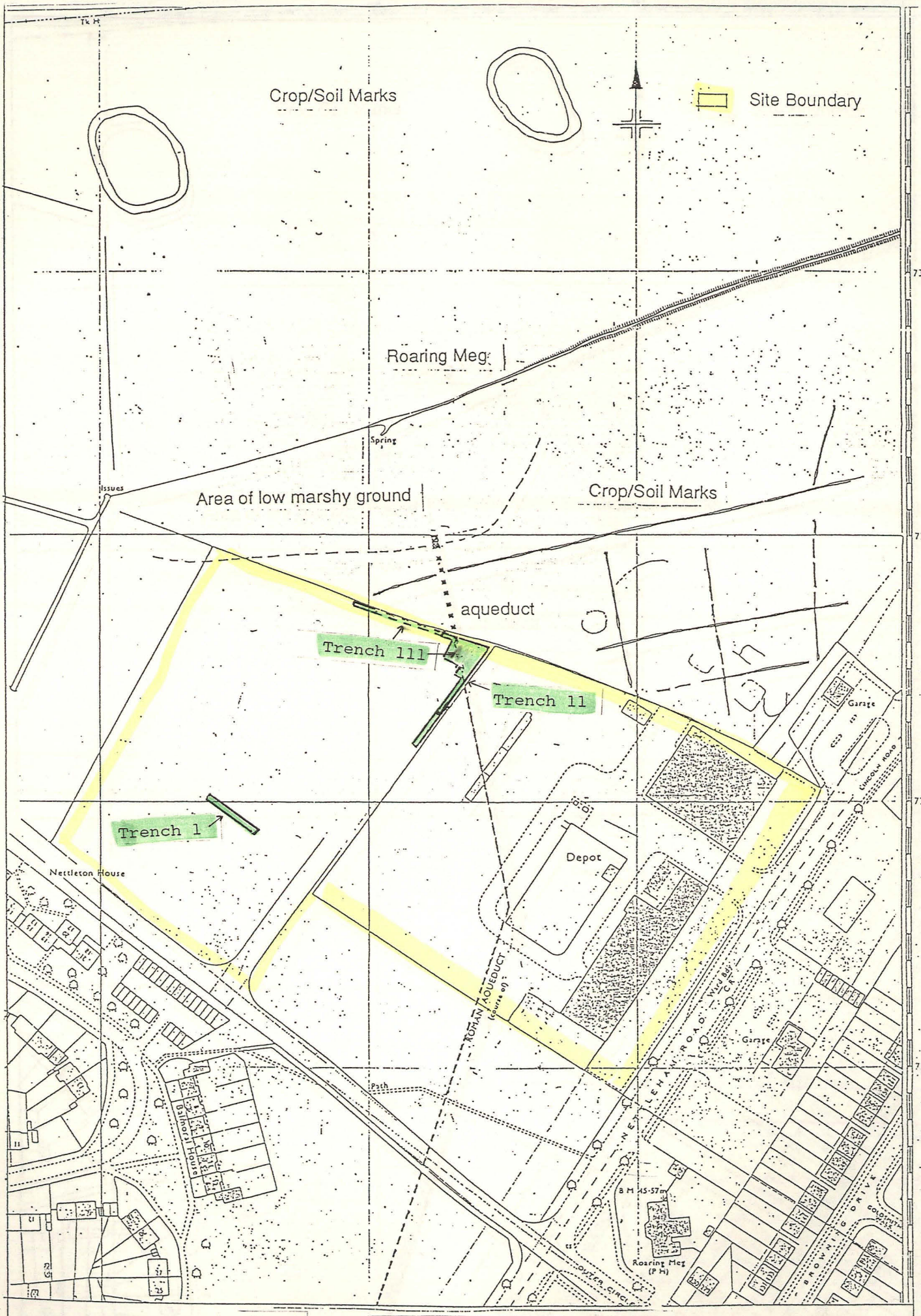

Fig.1 - Plan of trenches

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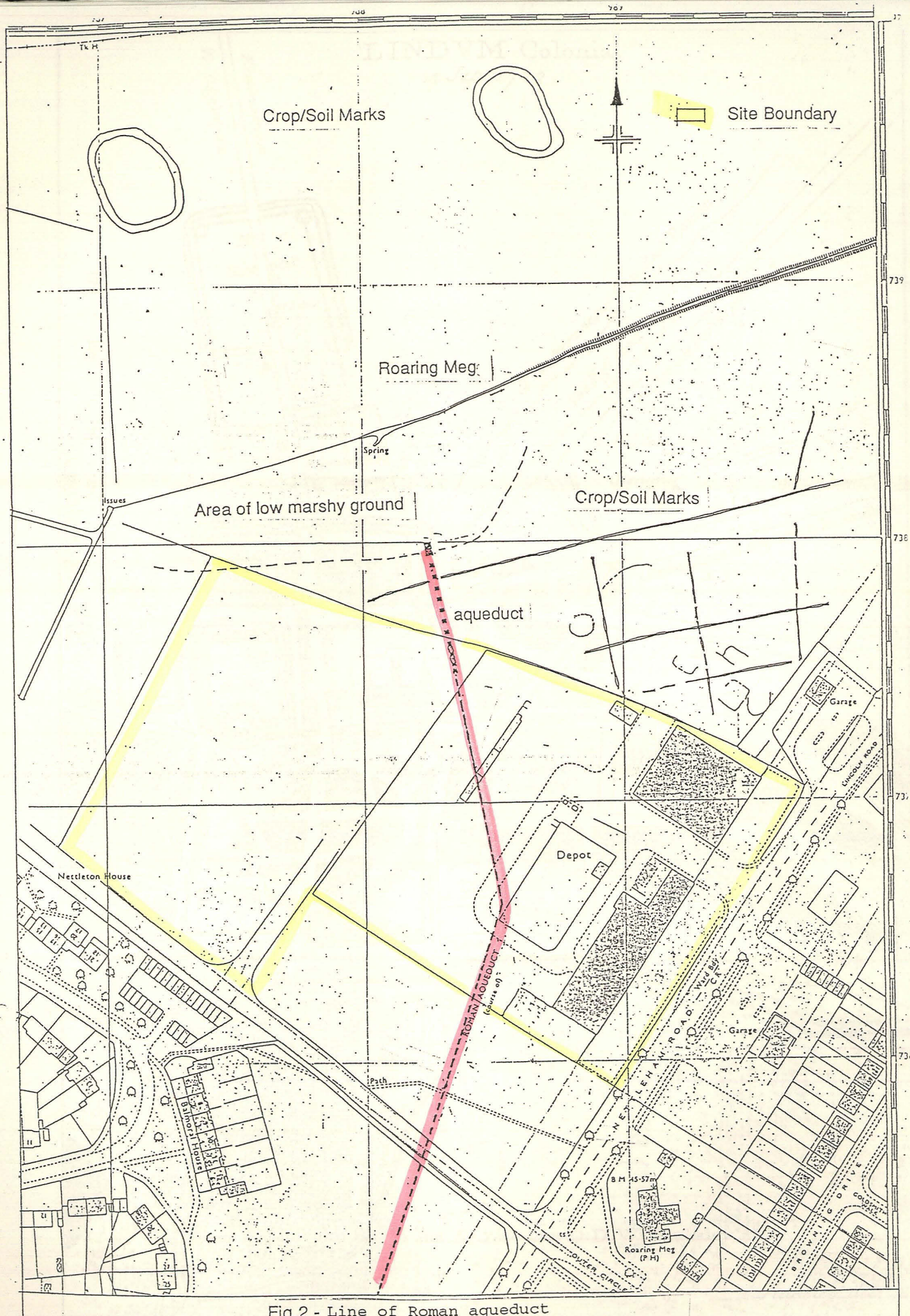

Fig.2 - Line of Roman aqueduct

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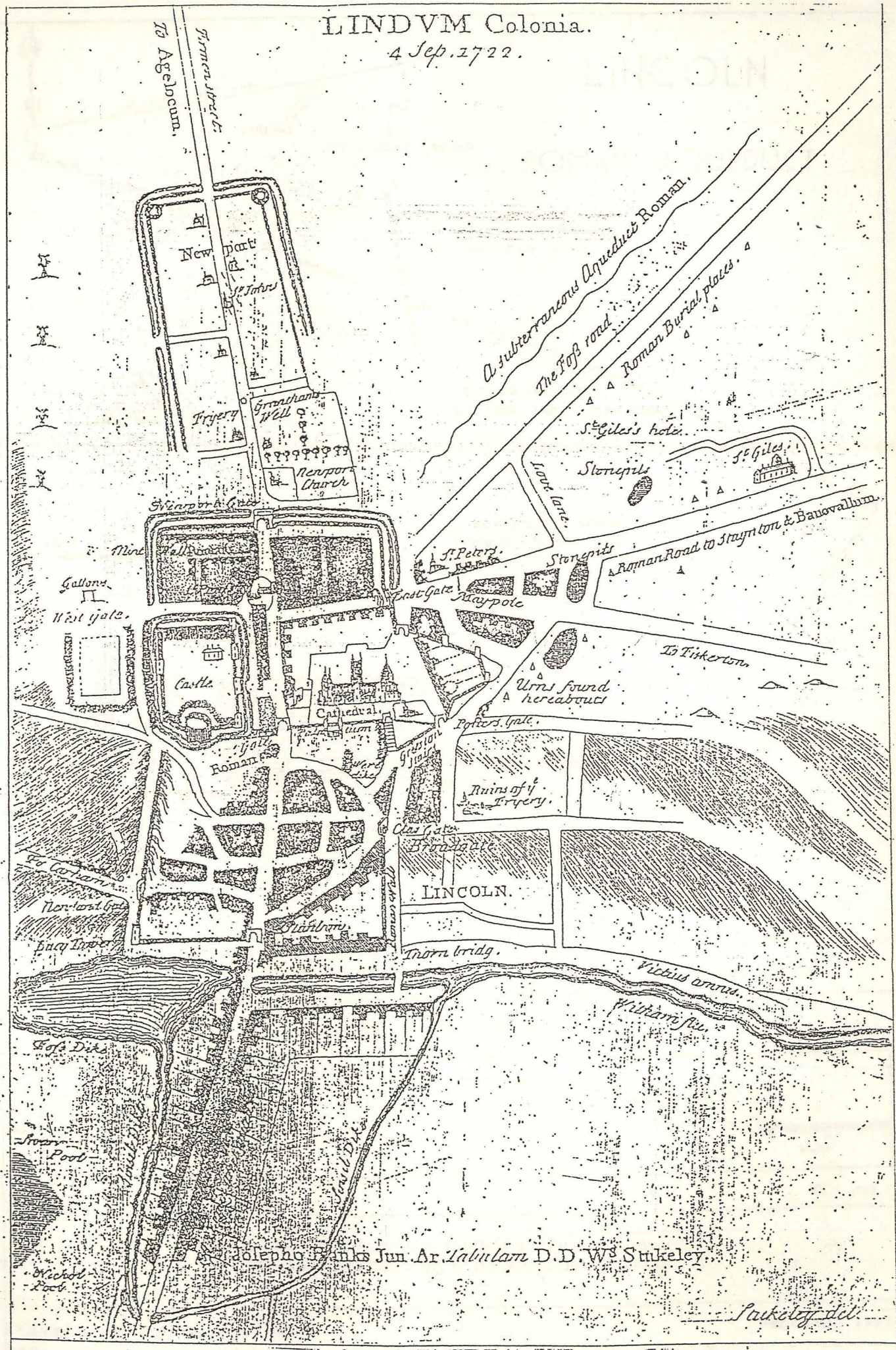

Fig.3 - Joseph Bank's 1722 map showing aqueduct

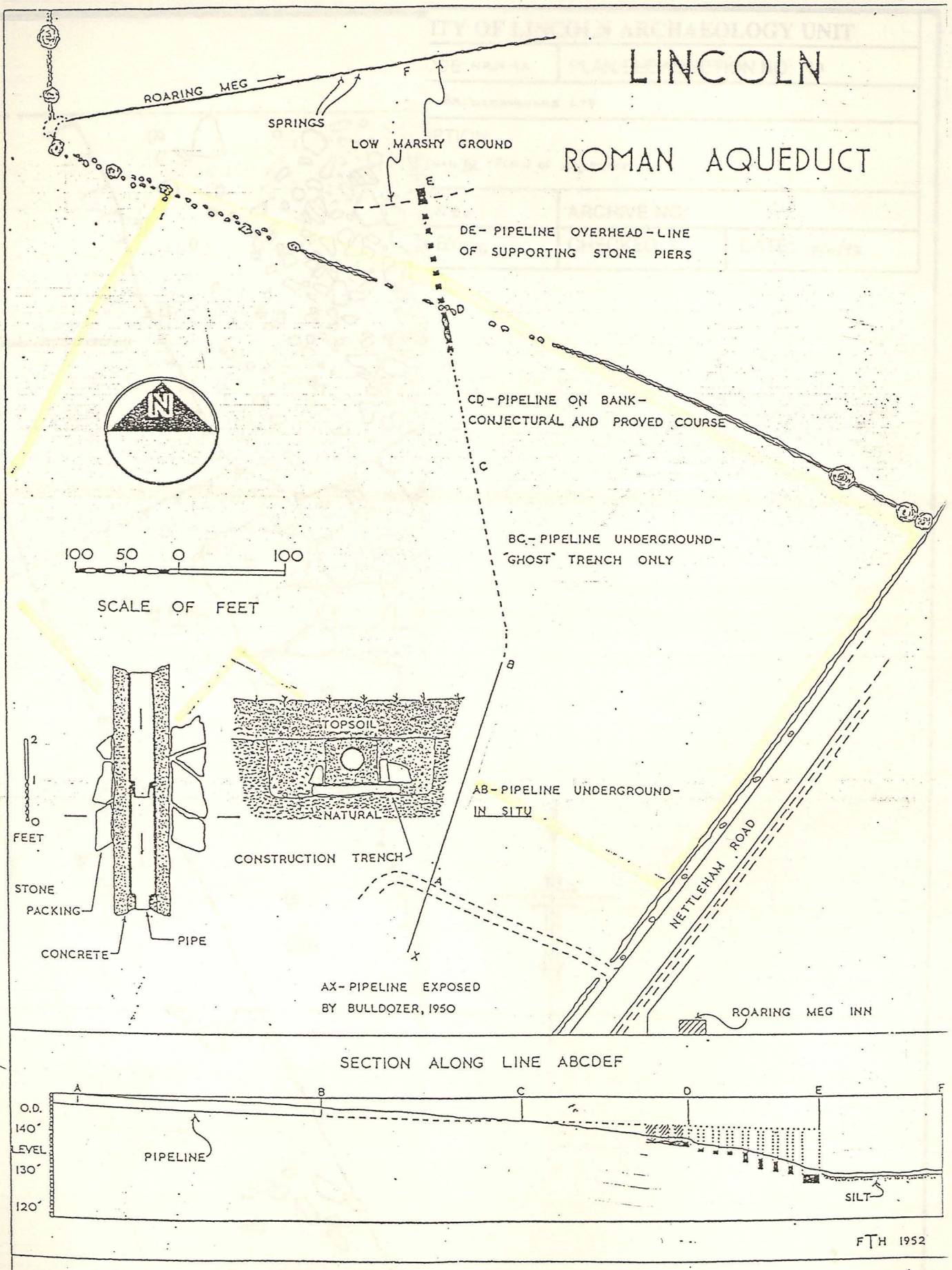

Fig.4 - Plan and section of 1950-52 excavation showing approximate boundary of proposed development

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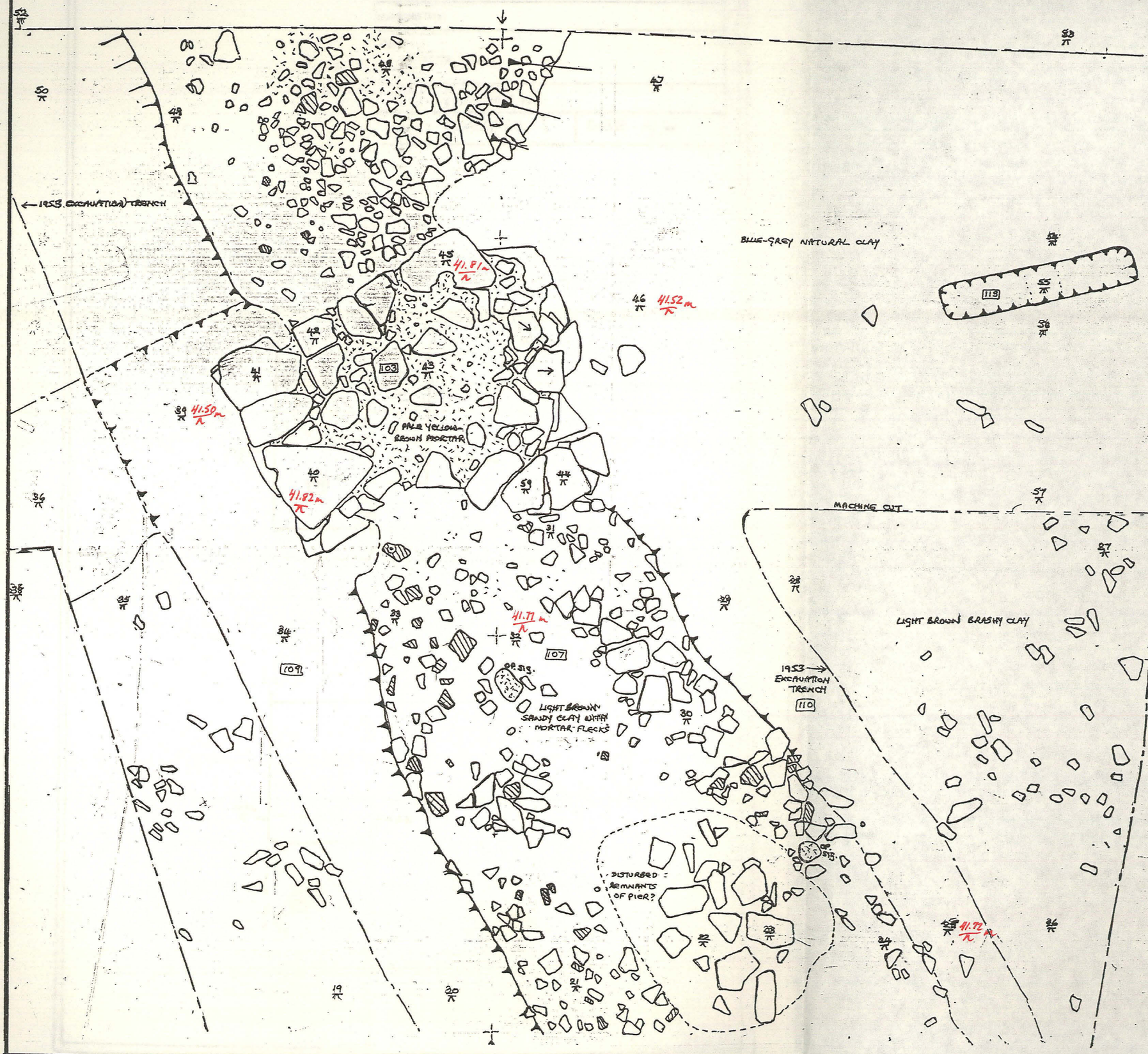

Fig.5

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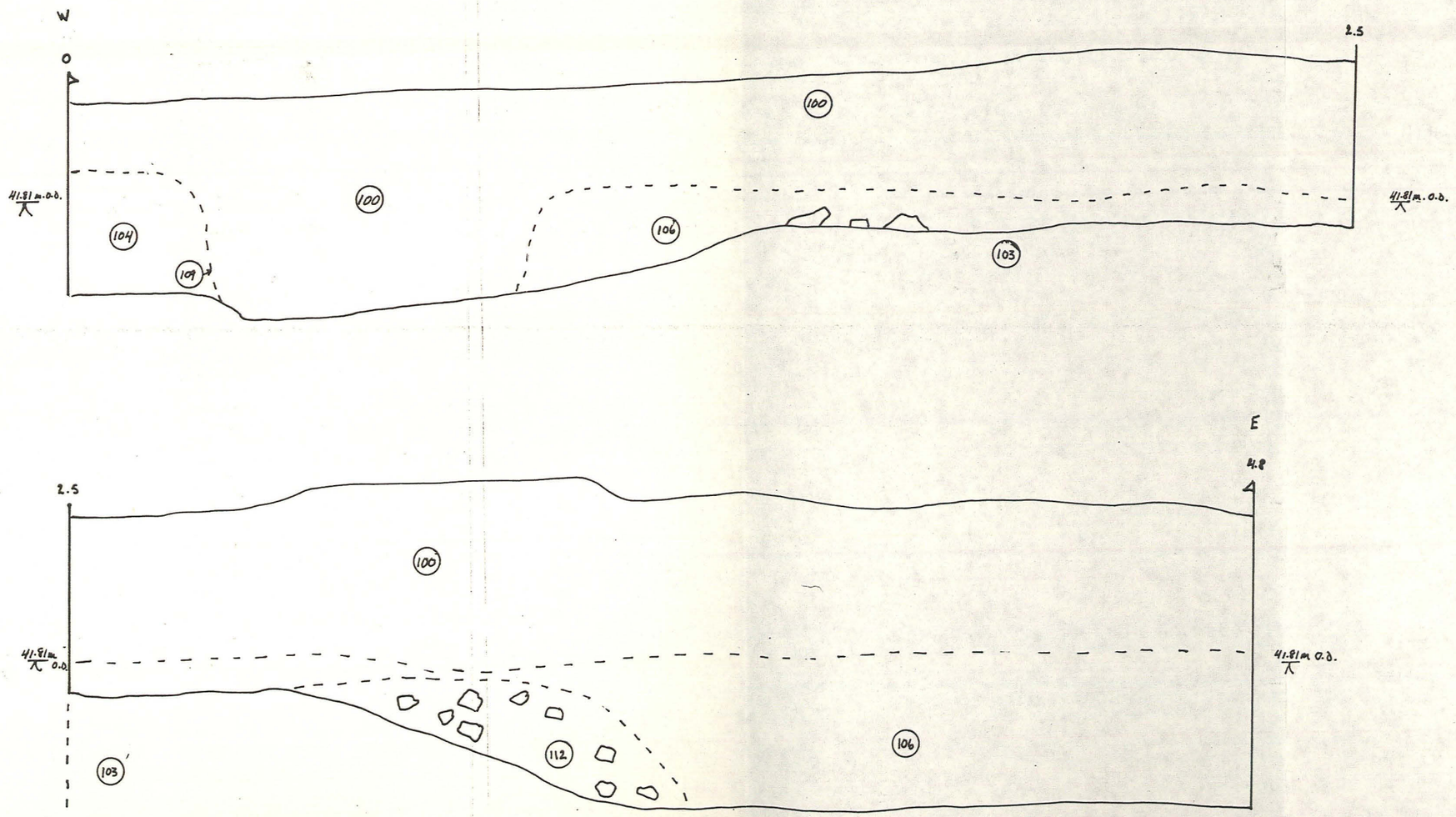

Fig.6