

*A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at Broadgate,  
Whaplode Drove, Spalding, Lincs.*

TF 319 133

Planning Application No. H23/1207/98

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## For:

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## **1.0 Summary**

*Site name:* Broadgate, Whaplode Drove, Lincs.

*Client:* Mr D Wheatly.

*Archaeological Contractor:* Soke Archaeological Services Ltd.

*Archaeological Project Director:* Francis Pryor MBE MA PhD FSA MIFA.

*Planning Application Number:* H23/1207/98.

*National Grid Reference:* TF319 133.

*Planning Authority:* South Holland District Council.

*Nature of Development:* Construction of a three bedroom private house and garage.

An application for planning permission was made to South Holland District Council by Mr D Wheatly, for the erection of a three bedroom dwelling, on the land between 2 and 6 Broadgate, located in Whaplode Drove, Lincolnshire. Acceptance was given subject to the condition that an archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground works.

Intensive archaeological monitoring during the excavation of the extension's foundations revealed a small refuse pit.

The pit was made up of one fill and contained finds dating to the Roman period, further enhancing our knowledge of the Romano-British field systems in the first millennium.

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Planning history and circumstances of the project**

A planning application was made by Mr D Wheatley (application number H23/1207/98) for the development of a two storey residential building at Whaplode Drove, in the parish of Whaplode, Lincs. South Holland District Council granted outline planning permission subject to the condition that an archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground penetrating works.

### **2.2 The client**

Mr D Wheatly, Holbeach, Spalding, Lincolnshire.



### 2.3 *Archaeological staff*

Project Director: Dr Francis Pryor MBA MA PhD FSA MIFA

Project Manager: David Britchfield BA (Hons)

Site Assistant: Michael Bamforth

### 2.4 *Project dates*

A one-day Watching Brief carried out on the 28th November 2000.

### 2.5 *Design brief specification*

South Holland District Council, Housing and Planning Services Department (02/1999).

## 3.0 *Background*

Whaplode Drove is located approximately 14km to the southeast of Spalding, in the administrative district of South Holland, Lincolnshire. The proposed development is situated within close proximity to the medieval centre of the village, 100m south of the church, at NGR TF 313138. The site lies in traditional fenland, situated between two existing houses, adjacent to Broadgate.

Whaplode Drove is an area of considerable archaeological interest, although little modern systematic archaeological work has been carried out in the area. There is strong evidence for Romano-British settlement surrounding, both Whaplode Drove and the neighbouring hamlet of Aswick Grange (NGR TF 313138). Roman tiles and other building materials were discovered, during work in the grounds of Whaplode church (SMR 22169), while, to the west of Aswick Grange, early 2nd/3rd century hearths and pottery were identified (SMR 22165). Perambulation of the surrounding area has also turned up large numbers of surface finds, including pottery and Roman coins (Phillips, 1970:300). Extensive evidence (in the form of cropmarks) of large, compact settlements and enclosures lie adjacent to Aswick Grange, surrounding three droves that form a T-junction. Intensive archaeological monitoring during a watching brief at Aswick Grange (Britchfield 2000), revealed that a ditch flanking a droveway, previously identified through aerial photographs, was present. The ditch consisted of a single fill which contained three pieces of Roman pottery. The first of these was a sherd of Nene Valley Grey Ware, accompanied by a piece of fine quality imported ware of Reanish Style, and one piece of low quality Late Iron Age or Roman Ware (2000:4.5).

A watching brief carried out on the route of a water pipeline, between Moulton Chapel and Whaplode, provided further evidence in the form of enclosure ditches, droves and

other settlement activity (Dymond, 1966).

As well as Roman activity, medieval evidence is also apparent. It is difficult to give an accurate date for the establishment of Whaplode Drove, although Hallam (1965) believes that 'the establishment of Aswick Grange near by in 1241-7 would encourage a hamlet to grow up' (1965:37). Hallam also describes the establishment of the chapel in a manorial hall, which 'can only be the church at Whaplode Drove' (1965:37). Aswick Grange was founded by Crowland Abbey, and was used for the collection of tithes.

#### **4.0    *The Archaeological Excavations***

##### **4.1    *Aims and objectives***

The aims of the watching brief were to locate, record and interpret any archaeological features exposed during ground disturbance. In particular:

- i)    To determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered.
- ii)   To determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered.
- iii)   To recover dating evidence from any archaeological features.
- iv)   To establish the sequence of any archaeological remains.

##### **4.2    *Project constraints***

Due to the weather conditions that preceded the fieldwork, i.e. heavy rain, water levels remained high within the foundations, obstructing the observation and recording of archaeological deposits. A small pump was introduced which alleviated the majority of the problem, but visibility was still inhibited.

##### **4.3    *Methodology***

Excavations commenced on the 28th November 2000, using a JCB fitted with a 0.75m toothed bucket. The foundations were dug down to a depth of approximately 1 m below the modern ground level, under constant archaeological supervision. All spoil



was subsequently inspected and metal detected for finds. Profiles were trowel cleaned to establish the stratigraphic relationship between the soil types, and were subsequently recorded and photographed.

#### 4.4 Results

All context numbers can be viewed in Table 1 (4.4.1) which gives brief descriptions and associated comments. The area that was excavated proved to be archaeologically sterile, with the exception of a small Romano-British pit [006]. This was dated by the pottery from its fill, (005). Although these were not the only finds to come from the watching brief, they were the only ones to be taken from an undisturbed stratigraphy. The only other feature to emerge was the cut of a modern drainage ditch. This was dated by the abundance of modern materials (drain remnants, brick and tile) and by the squareness of its cut.

The results section will, therefore, concentrate on the Romano British pit (Profile 5, Figure 5). This was approximately 0.5 metres in depth and diameter and filled with a black organic deposit. Its shape in plan cannot, however, be distinguished because it was partially obscured by the edge of excavation. It can be surmised, from its visible part, that it was sub-circular in its entirety. Very little else can be said of this feature except that it produced fragments of Romano-British tableware (this will be expanded upon in the finds section, 4.5).

The overall stratigraphy of the subject area was highly disturbed, comprising modern building materials and redeposited soils (Figures 4 and 5). As a result, it is impossible to draw any conclusions regarding stratigraphic layers later than the Romano-British period.

4.4.1 Table 1: Context Numbers and Associated Information

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Profile</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Munsell Colour</i>	<i>Associated finds</i>
(001)	1-5	Topsoil	-	-
(002)	1-4	Light Grey Silty Clay	2 Gley 7/2	-
(003)	1-5	Mid Orange Silty Clay	7.5YR 7/8	-
(004)	1 and 2	Grey Silty Clay	2 Gley 6/1	-
(005)	5	Fill of [006] - Black Organic Silt	2 Gley 2.5/5B	Figures 6-10
[006]	5	Cut of Romano-British Pit	-	Figures 6-10
(007)	3	Black Organic Silt	2 Gley 2.5/10BG	-
(008)	4	Black Organic Silt	2 Gley 2.5/10BG	-
[009]	4	Modern Drainage Cut	-	-



#### 4.5 *The Finds*

The Romano-British finds consist of five pot sherds which all came from the same context (the fill of [006], represented by profile 5). Although they differ in function, origin and quality, the sherds are all roughly of the same date (c. 2nd-3rd century A.D.).

Small Finds Number 1 (Figure 6) has a terracotta colour on the outside and is a darker brown on the inside. This was tentatively dated to the 3rd century and could not be identified as any particular vessel. It is a standard Nene Valley type.

Small Finds Number 2 (Figure 7) could not be identified with any certainty apart from stating that it was part of a Romano-British pot. It is, however, similar to Figure 6 in colour and wheel marks. It may, therefore, be another piece of Nene Valley Ware.

Small Finds Number 4 (Figure 8) is a darkish brown colour on the outside and a terracotta colour on the inside with a buff finish on both sides. This piece has been identified as part of a late 2nd-early 3rd century A.D. indented beaker.

Small Finds Number 6 (Figure 9) is Black Slip Ware and of a higher quality than the other finds. This, again, has been dated to the late 2nd century-early 3rd century and was possibly imported from Trier in Germany.

The last piece of pot is Small Finds Number 3 (Figure 10). This is also from the Nene Valley and is a fairly rich red-brown in colour. The sherd was identified as a rim piece from a funnel neck jug. This robust piece could not, however, be dated although it is probably 2nd/3rd century by association with the other sherds.

The remainder of the finds consisted of a mixture of Medieval pot, modern brick, post medieval/modern pot and an oyster shell. These all came from the upper stratigraphic layers which were highly disturbed. As a result none of these finds could contribute to an understanding of the site.

#### 5.0 *Discussion*

Overall, due to the highly disturbed nature of the stratigraphy, a chronological sequence could not be determined. The presence of a modern service/drainage trench ([009], Profile 4, Figure 5) so low down in the excavation further illustrates the level of disturbance. The only discernible feature, therefore, was the Romano-British pit. Although it has been dated to the 3rd-2nd century A.D by the pottery, its relationship with other features, e.g. a road, a building or a field system, cannot be determined. Nor does it give many clues to surrounding habitual human activity in the area.

## 6.0 Archive *1 - Introduction*

The documentation, finds, photographs and other records and materials generated during this watching brief will be sorted and distributed to the City and County Museum, Lincoln, for long term storage and curation.

## 7.0 References

Britchfield, D, (2000) *A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at Aswick Grange, Whaplode Drove, Lincs.* Soke Archaeological Services Ltd. Report No.: SAS00/DB/10.

Dymond. M., (1996) *Archaeological investigation along the route of a water pipeline between Moulton Chapel and Whaplode, Lincolnshire*, Archaeological Project Services (SMR 20388).

Page A. B., (1984) *Archaeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside, 1983*; Lincolnshire History and Archaeology; Vol. 19; pp 99-100.

Phillips C. W., (1970) *The Fenland in Roman Times*; The Royal Geographical Society; London.

Wood E. S., (1973) *Field Guide to Archaeology*; Book Club Associates.

Foster C. W., & Longley T., (eds) (1976) *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*. The Lincoln Record Society, Vol 19.

Hallam H. E., (1965) *Settlement and Society: A Study of the Early Agrarian History of South Lincolnshire*. Cambridge University Press.



## 8.0 *Appendix A. - Illustrations*

Figure 1. Regional plan

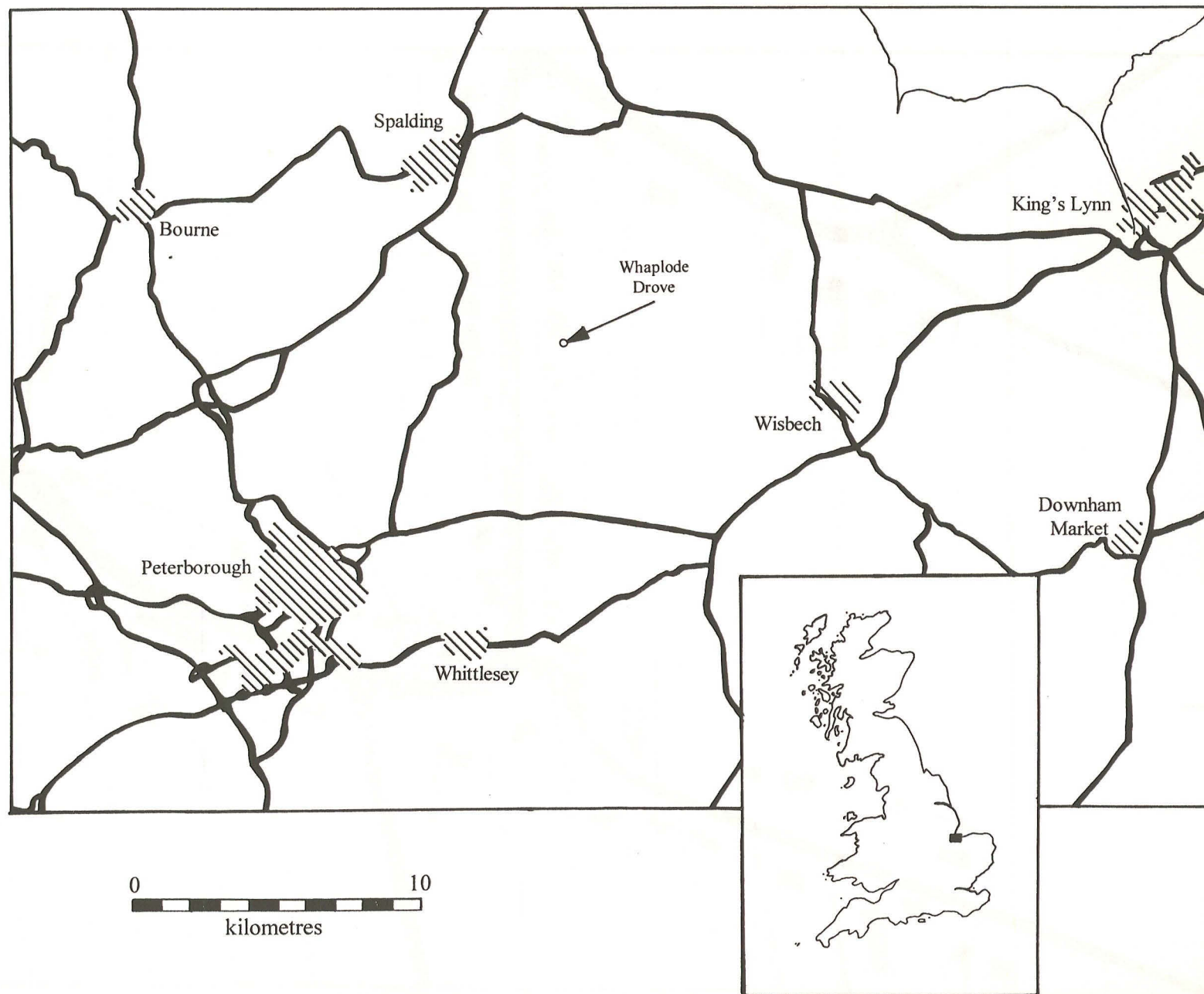
Figure 2. Site location plan

Figure 3. Site plan

Figure 4. Trench plan

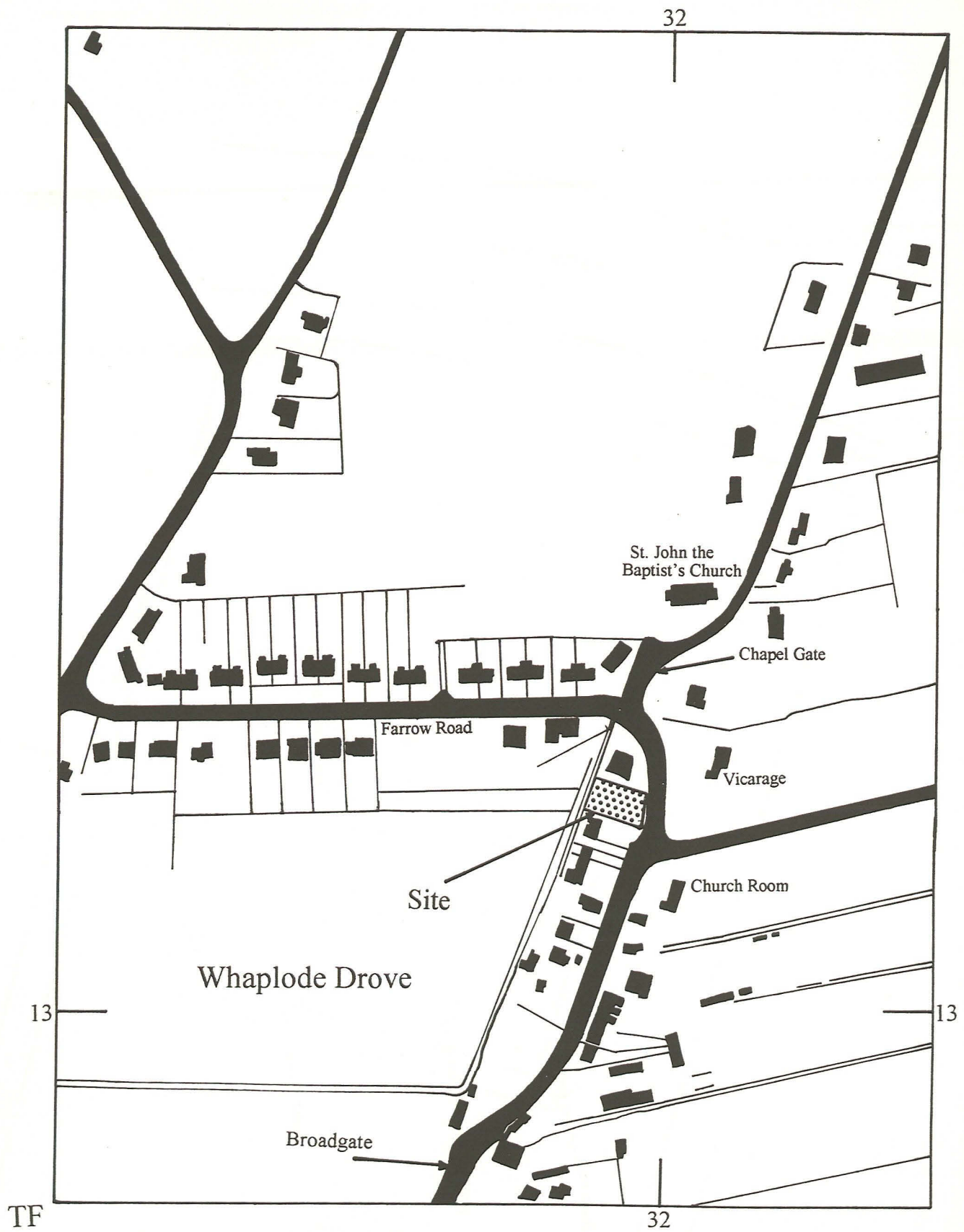
Figure 5. Profiles 3, 4 & 5

Figure 6-10. Pottery



*Figure 1 - Regional Plan*





*Figure 2 - Site Location Plan*

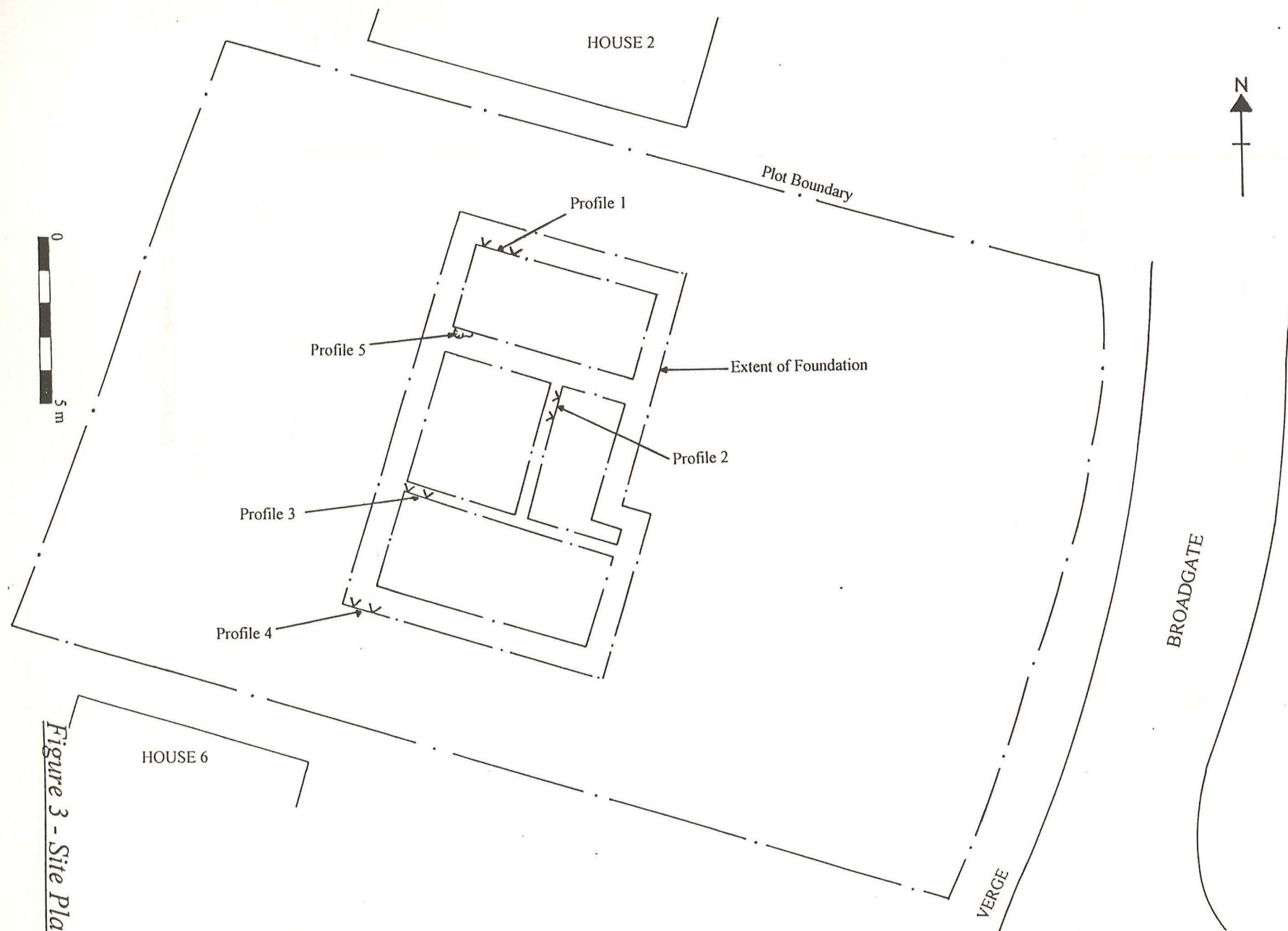
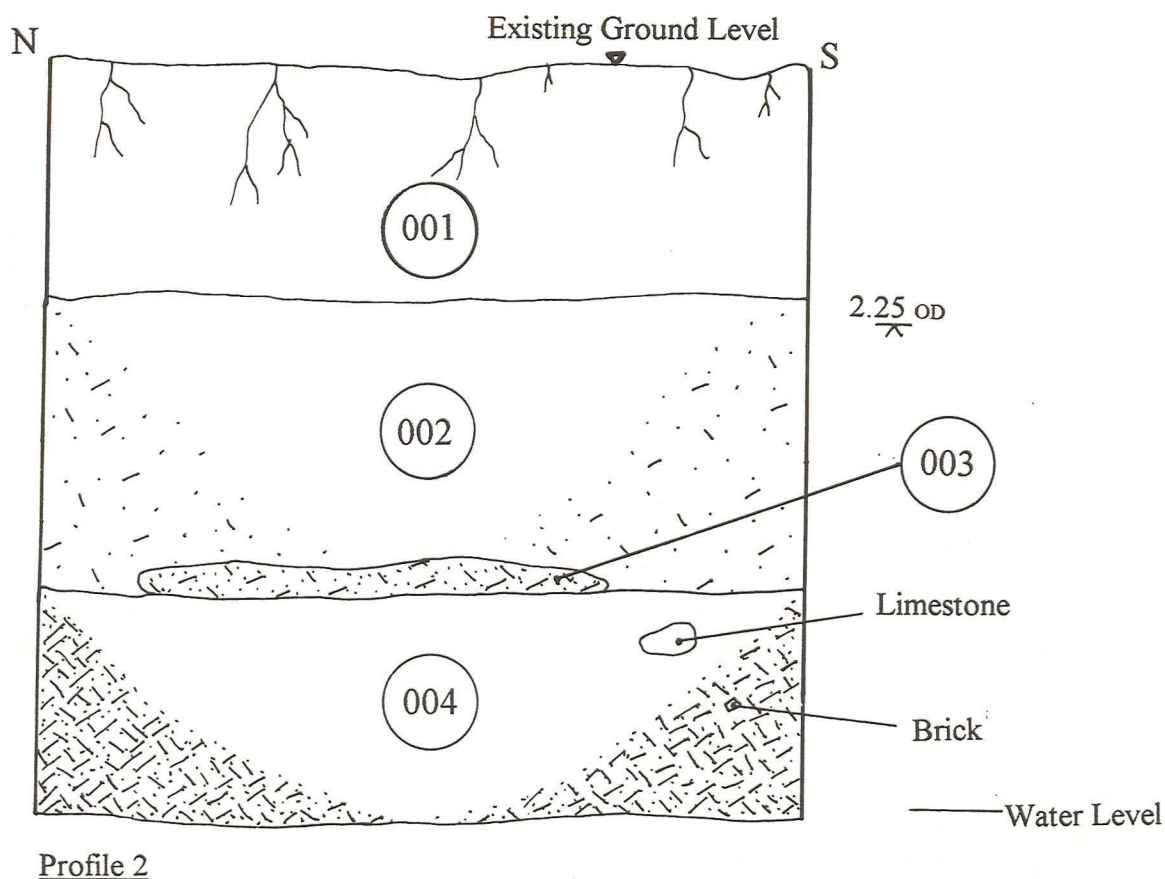
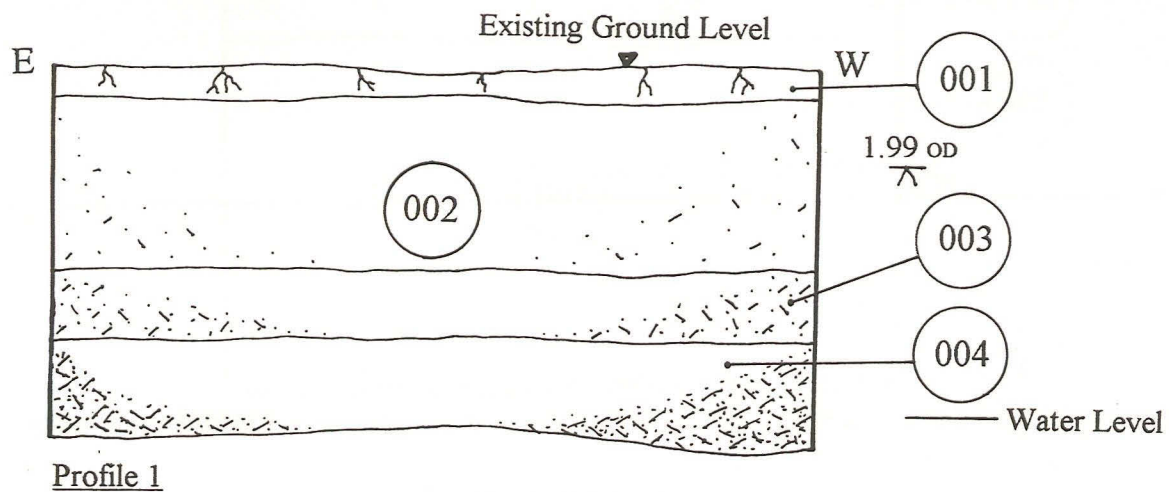


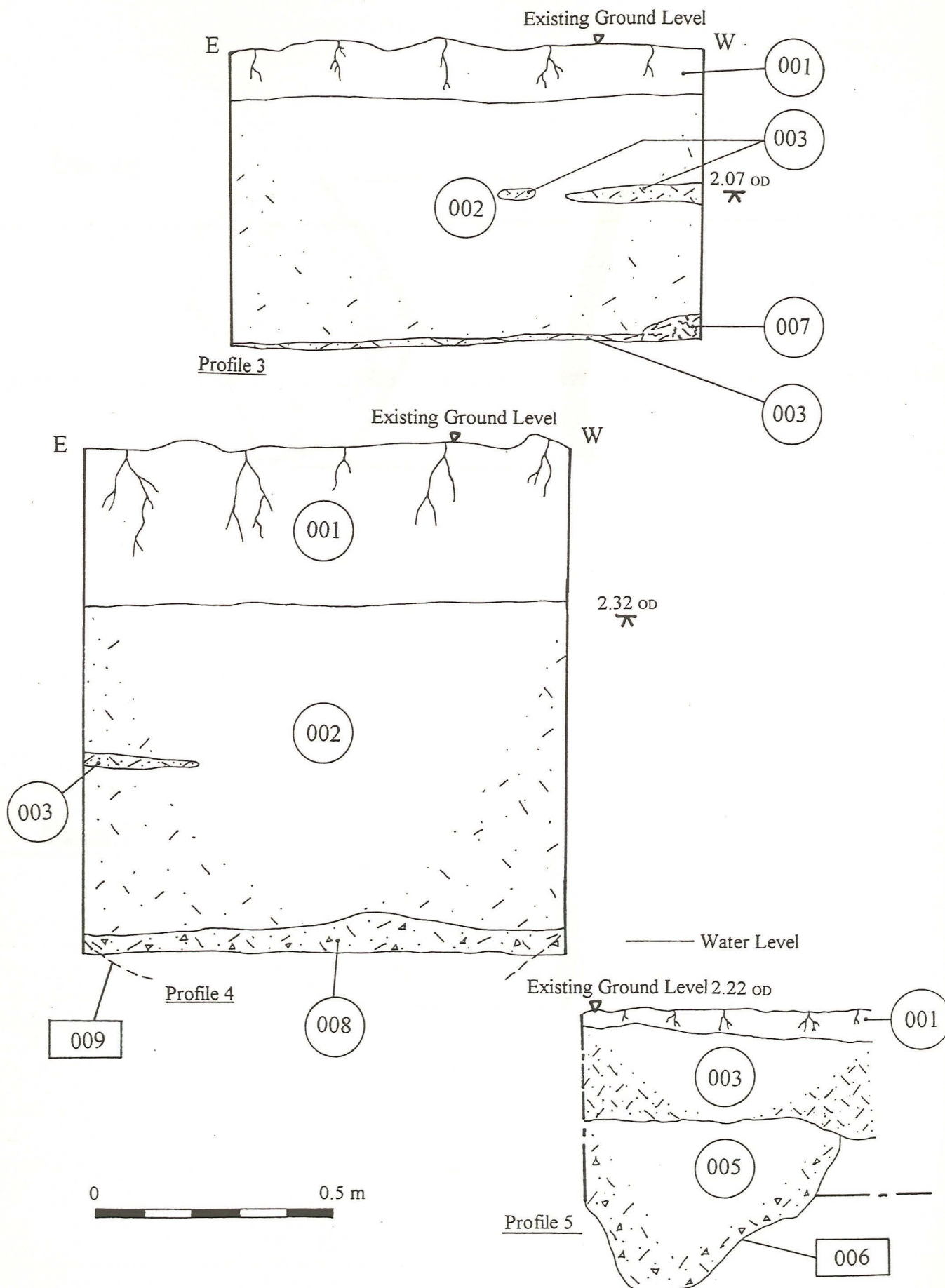
Figure 3 - Site Plan





0 0.5 m

*Figure 4 - Profiles 1 & 2*



*Figure 5 - Profiles 3, 4 & 5*



Figure 6

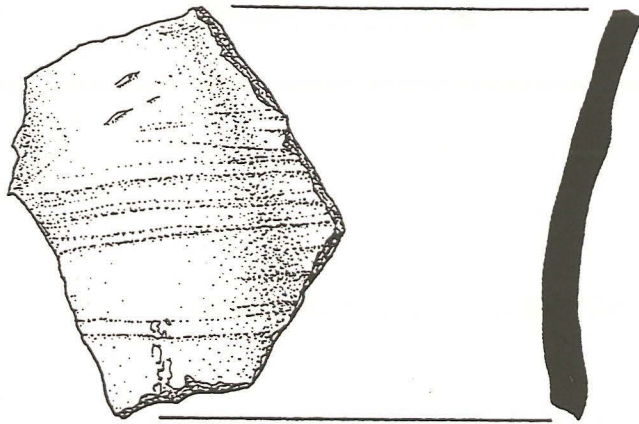


Figure 7

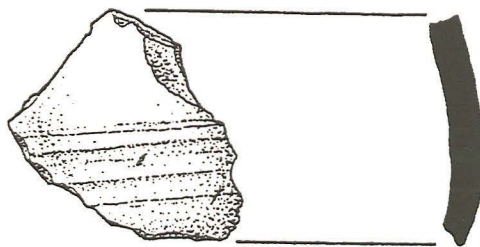


Figure 8

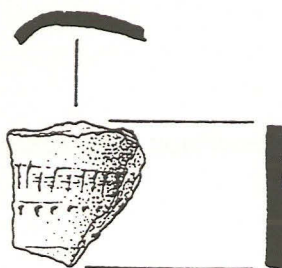


Figure 9

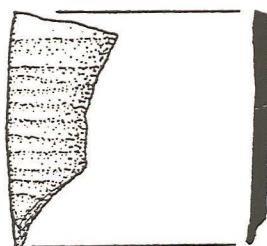
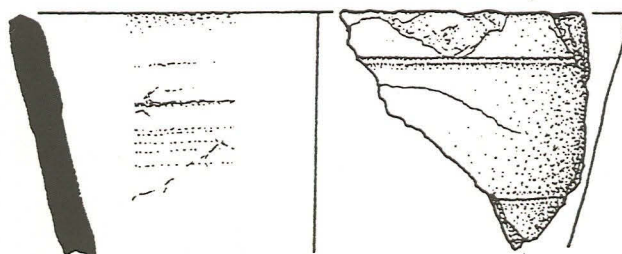


Figure 10





**9.0    *Appendix B. – Plates***

Plate 1. – Site from the southeast & northwest

Plate 2. – Profiles 1 & 2

Plate 3. – Profiles 3 & 4



*From the southeast*



*From the northwest*

*Plate 1 – Site from the southeast and northwest*





*Profile 1*



*Profile 2*





*Profile 3*



*Profile 4*