

*A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at Aswick Grange,
Whaplode Drove, Lincs.*

Planning Application No. H23/0595/00
Accession No. 2000.174

By
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1.0 *Summary*

Site name: Aswick Grange, Whaplode Drove, Lincs.

Client: Mr R Grundy.

Archaeological Contractor: Soke Archaeological Services Ltd.

Archaeological Project Manager: Francis Pryor MBE MA PhD FSA MIFA.

Planning Application Number: H23/0595/00.

National Grid Reference: TF313138.

Planning Authority: South Holland District Council.

Nature of Development: Extension to a private house.

An application for planning permission was made to South Holland District Council by Mr R Grundy, for the development of an extension to an existing modern house, located in Aswick Grange, 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 that a ditch flanking a driveway, previously identified through aerial photographs, was present. The ditch 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 R Grundy (application number H23/0595/00) for the development of a single storey residential extension at Aswick Grange, 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 R Grundy, Aswick Grange, Whaplode Drove, Lincolnshire.

2.3 *Archaeological staff*

Project Director: Dr Francis Pryor MBA MA PhD FSA MIFA

Field Archaeologist: Paul Westron BSc (Hons)

2.4 *Project dates*

A one-day Watching Brief carried out on the 31st July 2000.

2.5 *Design brief specification*

South Holland District Council, Housing and Planning Services Department (05/2000).

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 to the west side of the medieval centre of the village, at NGR TF 313138, located at the junction of Mill Drove and Assendyke, in front of the modern farm (Hallam, 1965, Foster *et al*, 1924). The site lies in traditional fenland, surrounded by a number of mature trees and hedges. The area is relatively flat, but the modern building and garden is positioned on a slight natural rise, which has been built up further by modern levelling.

Whaplode Drove is an area of considerable archaeological interest, although little modern systematic archaeological work has been carried out in the area. Extensive evidence of large, compact settlements and enclosures lie adjacent to site, surrounding three droves that form a T-junction, under or possibly adjacent to Aswick Grange. Roman tiles and other building materials were discovered during work in the grounds of Whaplode church (SMR 22169), while further to the west of the site, 2nd/3rd century hearths and pottery have been 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).

Aswick Grange was founded by Crowland Abbey between 1236-47, and was most probably used for the collection of tithes. A modern house now occupies the land, although part of the medieval moat is still visible (SMR 22164).

In summary, Aswick Grange is situated within an area of intensive Roman occupation, confirmed by aerial photographs and surface finds. A watching brief carried out on the route of a water pipeline, between Moulton Chapel and Whaplode, provides further evidence in the form of enclosure ditches, droves and other settlement activity (Dymond, 1966).

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*

The only constraint encountered was the depth of the excavated foundation. At 2.2m, examination of the deposits had to be carried out at ground level, in order to comply with health and safety regulations.

4.3 *Methodology*

Excavations commenced on the 31st July 2000, using a JCB fitted with a 0.75m toothed bucket. The foundations were dug down to a depth of approximately 2.2m below the modern ground level, under constant archaeological supervision. All spoil was subsequently inspected and metal detected for finds. Profiles were trowel-cleaned, in order to establish the stratigraphic relationship between the soil types. These were subsequently recorded and photographed.

4.4 *Results*

Due to the depth of the excavation, the features and contexts had to be observed from the baulk edge, complying with health and safety regulations. Two fills (001 and 002), and one cut ditch (003), were clearly visible overlying the 'natural' (004), and will be described separately (see figure 5, and plate 2 for soils profile).

Context (001) was the made up ground surface and consisted of a good quality silty loam, deeply disturbed by tree roots and voids from animal burrows. A large assemblage of modern (19th – 20th century) pottery was visible within this layer, along with the remains of rabbit, cow and sheep

bones. This layer was approximately 1.3m in depth, and seemed to be present across the entire plot.

Context (002), a buried soil horizon and the primary fill of the ditch [003], was present in a layer across the full length of profile 1. This silty clay had inclusions of charcoal, sparse sub-angular gravel, and Roman pottery. The presence of slightly finer particles, in the base of the ditch, suggested that the silting up was relatively slow.

Ditch [003], aligned west/east, was not fully exposed due to the depth of the foundations. It is, however, possible to estimate a total depth of approximately 900mm below the natural geology (004). At 2400mm in width, the ditch contained only one fill (002), and possibly represents a small sample of the ditches that edge either side of a driveway.

4.4.1 Context numbers

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Profile</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Associated finds</i>
(001)	1	A good quality silty loam topsoil, with inclusions of root and small deposits of stone.	Pottery and bone (post-medieval)
(002)	1	A silty clay with inclusions of charcoal, sparse sub-angular gravel, pottery and bone. Only fill of [003].	Pottery (Roman)
[003]	1	Ditch.	-
(004)	1	Natural.	-

4.5 Finds

Context (001) contained a large assemblage of modern pottery, dating to the late 19th/early 20th century, along with a small collection of bone. The majority of this bone represented two rabbits, with the remaining made up of cow and sheep remains. The assemblage was too small and in a poor state of preservation, to draw further conclusions. It is, however, evident that these bones are either contemporary with, or post-date the associated pottery.

Context (002) 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.

4.5.1 Table of finds - Pottery

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>No. of Sherds</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>
(001)	2	Green glazed, small jar	107	Early-Mid 20 th century
(001)	4	White glazed, earthen ware bowl/jar	133	20 th century
(001)	4	Blue and white, willow patterned, earthen ware plate	70	Early-Mid 20 th century
(001)	2	Blue and white earthen ware bowl	17	Early-Mid 20 th century
(001)	1	Buff and blue glazed, earthen ware bowl/plate	14	Early-Mid 20 th century
(001)	1	Brown and white glazed, earthen ware bowl/jar	16	Late 19 th century
(001)	1	Dark brown 'Lustre ware' rim sherd from bowl/jar	37	Early 20 th century
(001)	1	Decorated jug handle, dark brown glazed, coarse earthen ware.	42	Early-Mid 20 th century
(001)	1	Brown glazed, coarse earthen ware jar/bottle	31	20 th century
(002)	1	Nene Valley Grey Ware	29	Roman
(002)	1	Reanish Ware	32	Roman
(002)	1	Late Iron Age/Roman Ware	37	LIA/Roman

5.0 Confidence Rating

Excavation was carried out in both bright and cloudy, cold conditions. Morale of all those involved was very high.

6.0 Discussion

The ditch under Aswick Grange fits into the picture that has been emerging off the landscape around Whaplode Drove. Aerial photography and previous work have provided evidence for a series of droves and field enclosures, as well as settlements in the area surrounding the site. Phillips (1970) provides further evidence, in the form of cropmarks, to suggest that one such feature runs diagonally across the site at Aswick Grange. From the northeast, this would appear to be a single ditch, possibly representing a boundary (1970:Map 9, centred on TF315141), although it is entirely plausible that it is associated with a the droveway to the southwest (1970: Map 9, TF 311138). Unfortunately, due to existing buildings, ground cover and depth of deposits, it is difficult

to provide an absolute definition of feature [003]. However, the alignment, the finds from (002), and the depth and dimensions of [003] would suggest that all three of these features are related.

In summary, the foundations have affected a small area of a potential driveway, and provided important information on the date, depth and type of deposits that lie beneath the site. Due to the nature of the watching brief, it is difficult to be as precise as one would like, however, the exact nature of feature [003] may become more perceptible, if further work is carried out within the area in the future.

7.0 *Archive*

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.

8.0 *References*

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.

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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.

9.0 *Appendix A. - Illustrations*

Figure 1. Regional plan

Figure 2. Site location plan

Figure 3. Site plan and proposed foundation layout

Figure 4. Trench plan

Figure 5. Soils profile

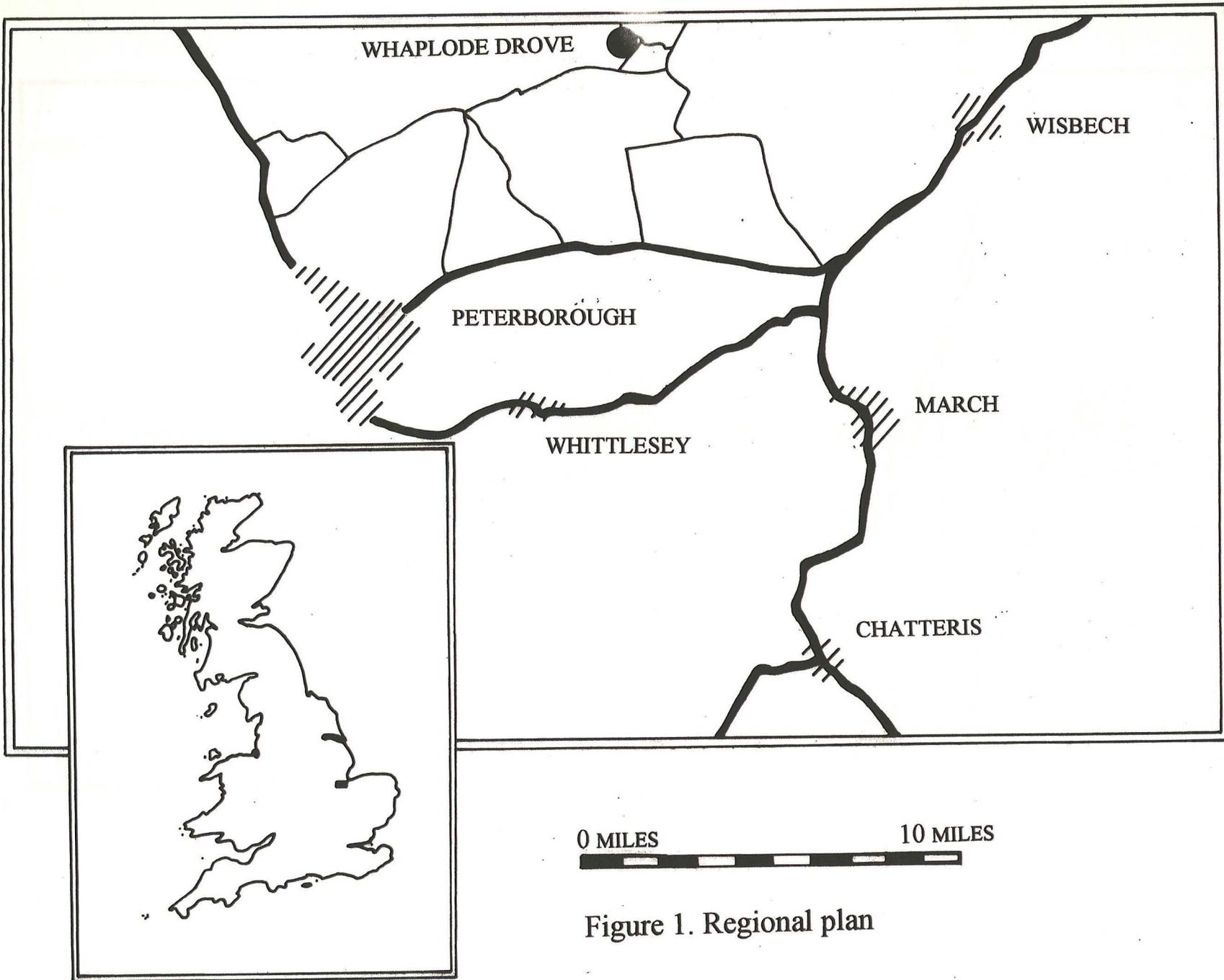


Figure 1. Regional plan

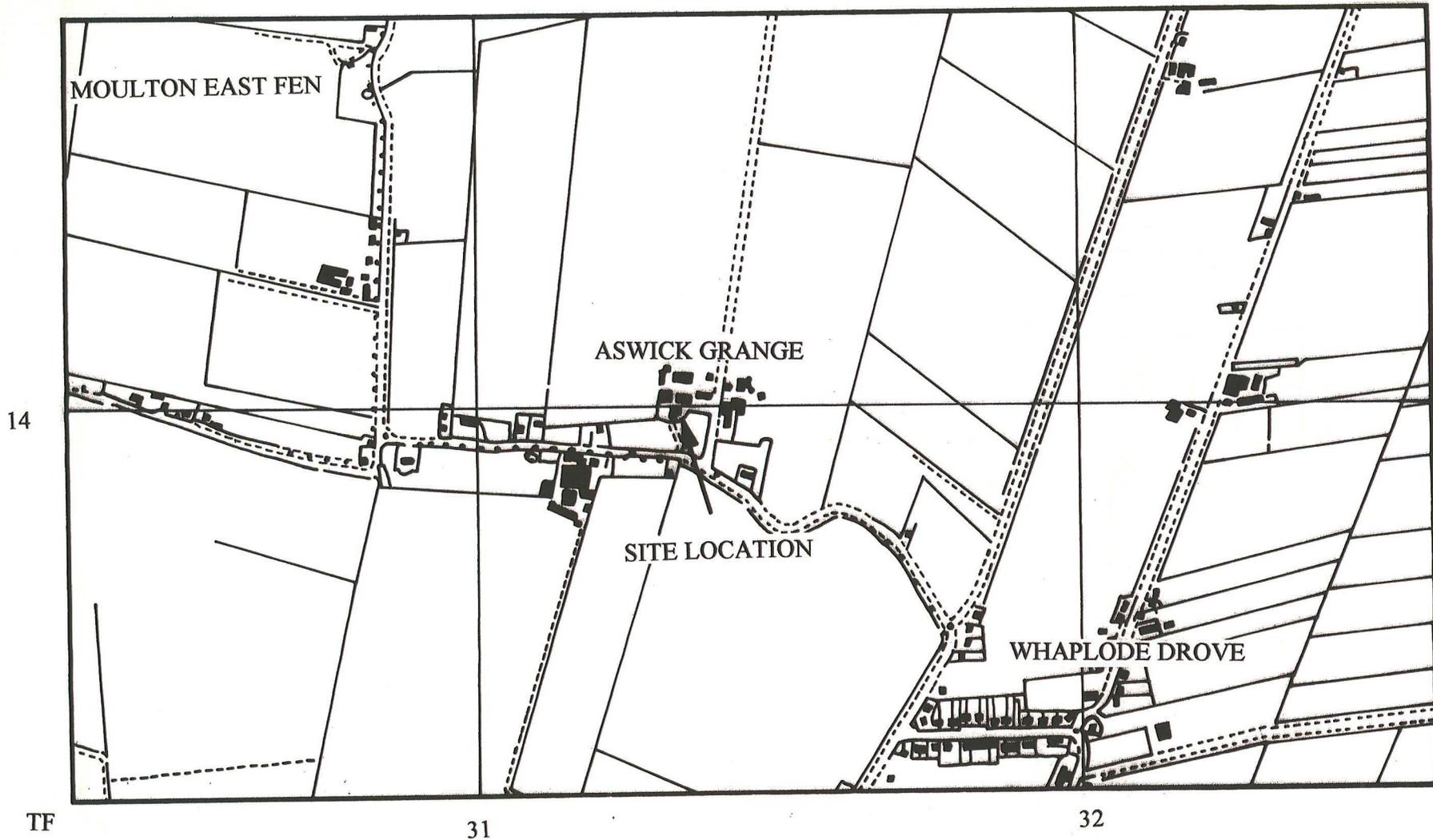
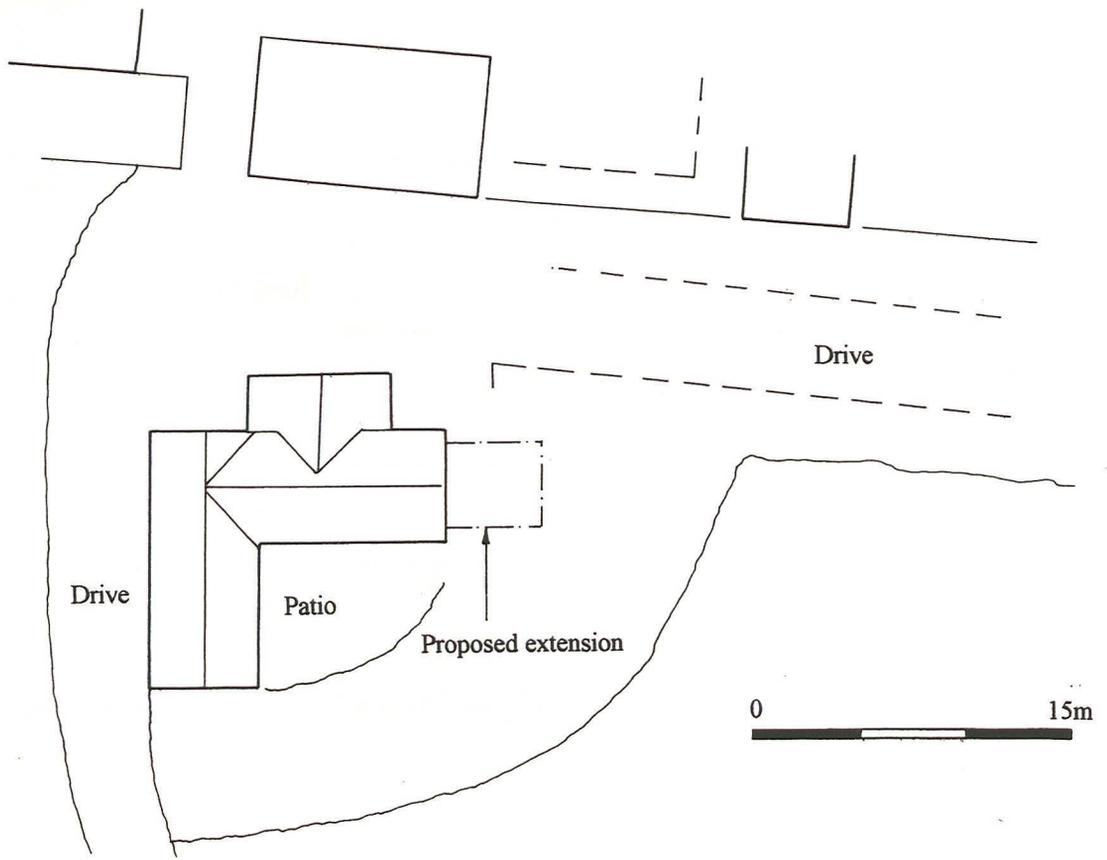
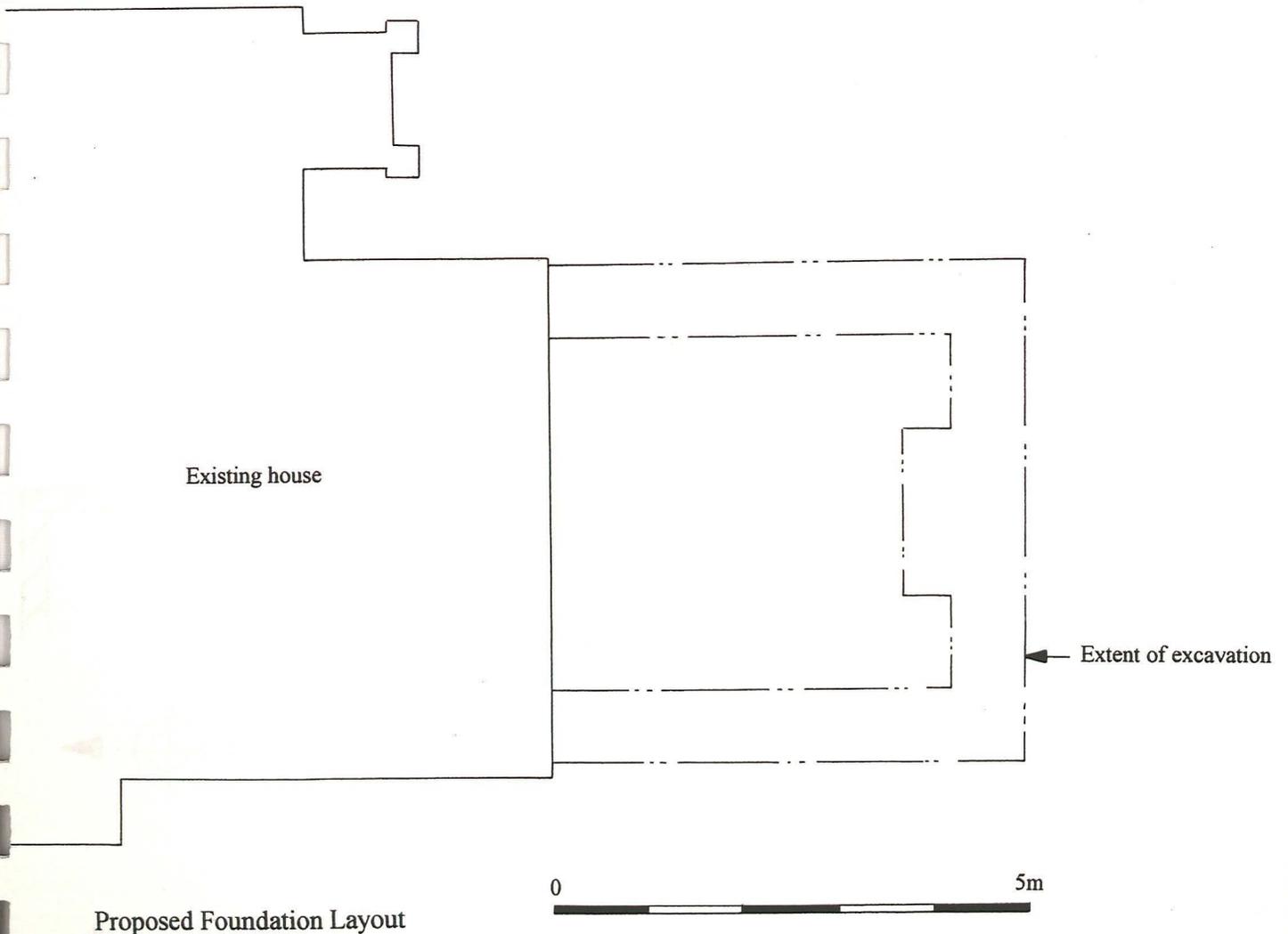


Figure 2. Site location plan



Site Plan



Proposed Foundation Layout

Figure 3. Site plan and proposed foundation layout

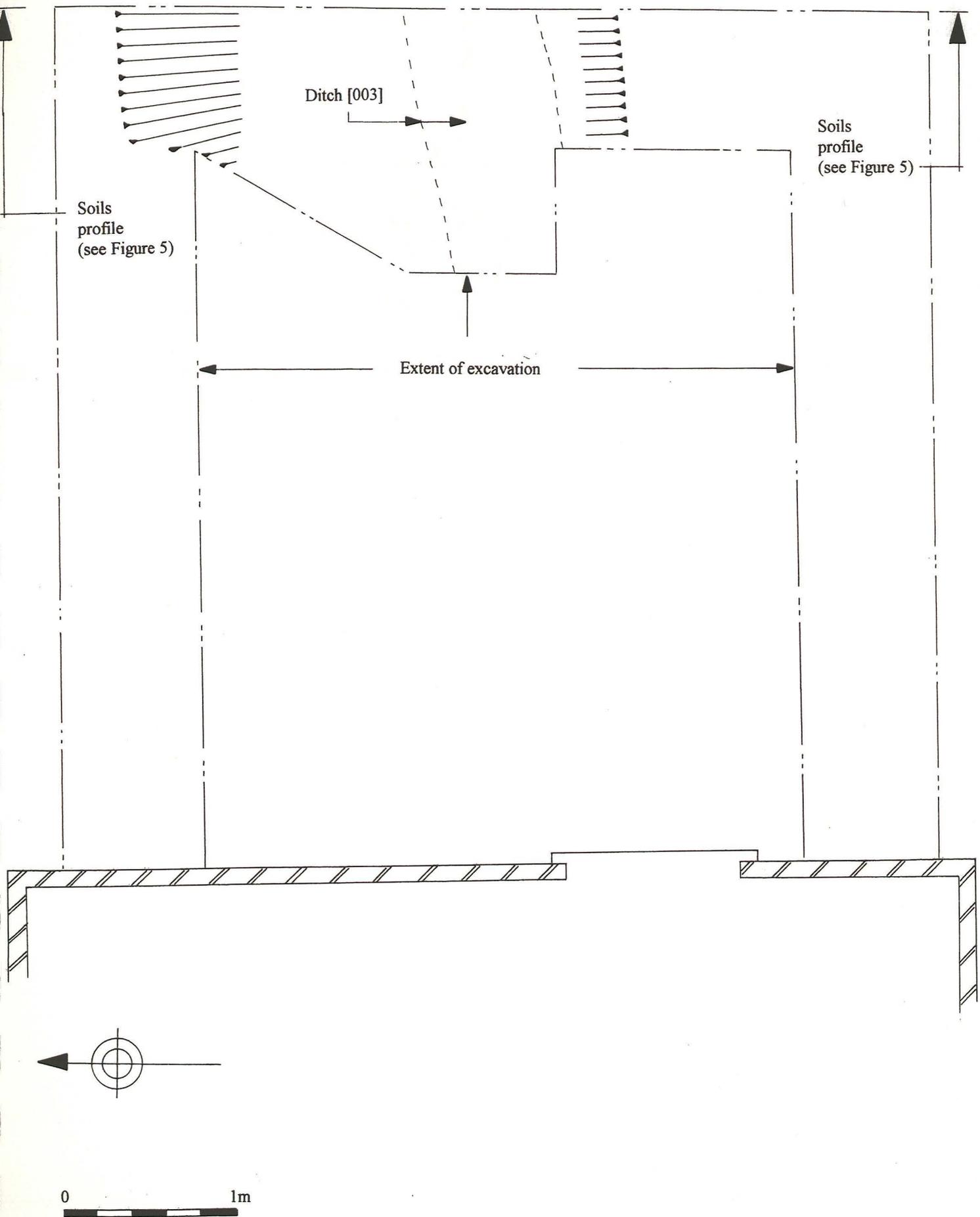


Figure 4. Trench plan

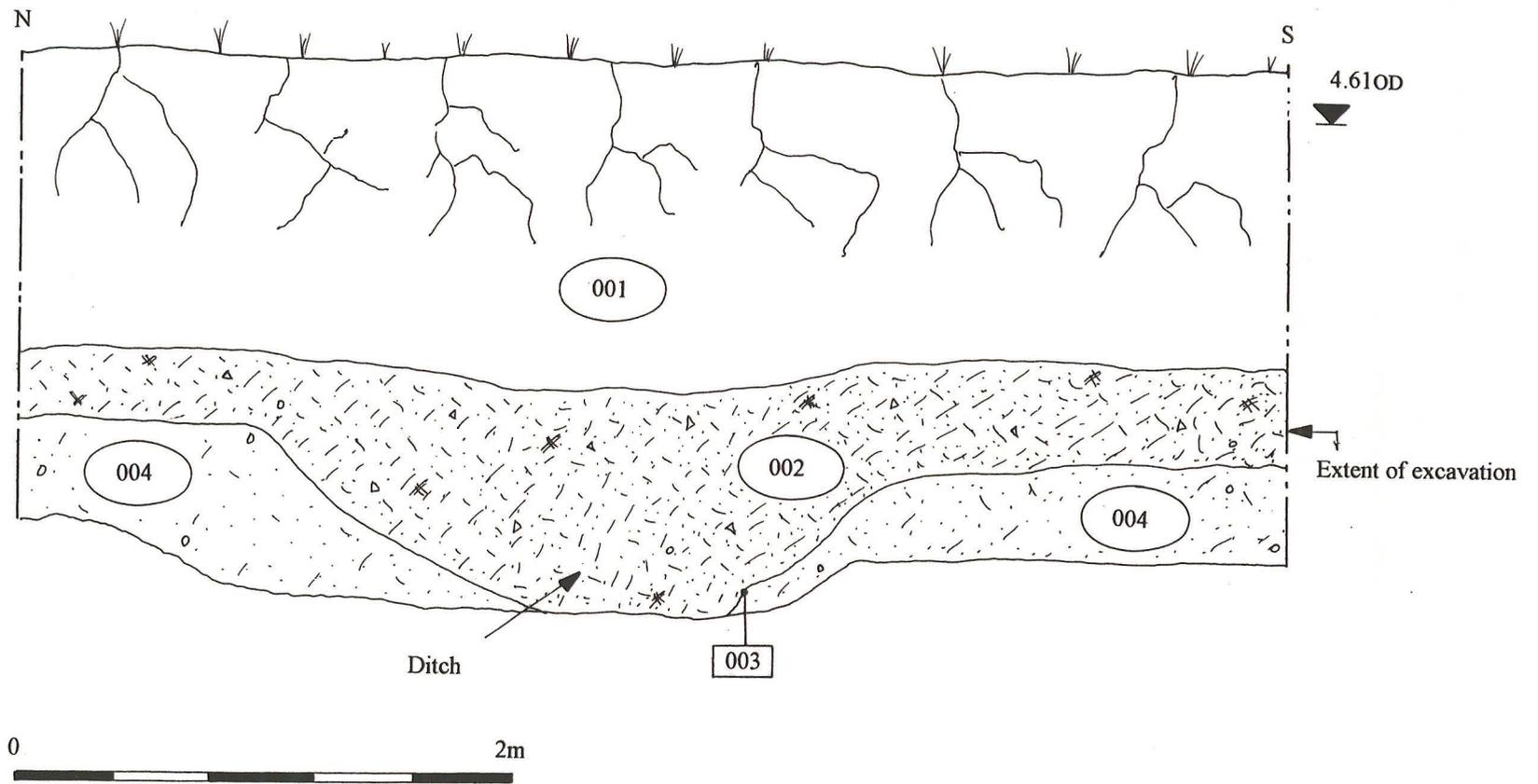


Figure 5. Soils profile

10.0 Appendix B. - Plates

Plate 1. Site layout looking towards the northwest

Plate 2. Ditch [003]



Plate 1 - Site layout looking towards the northwest

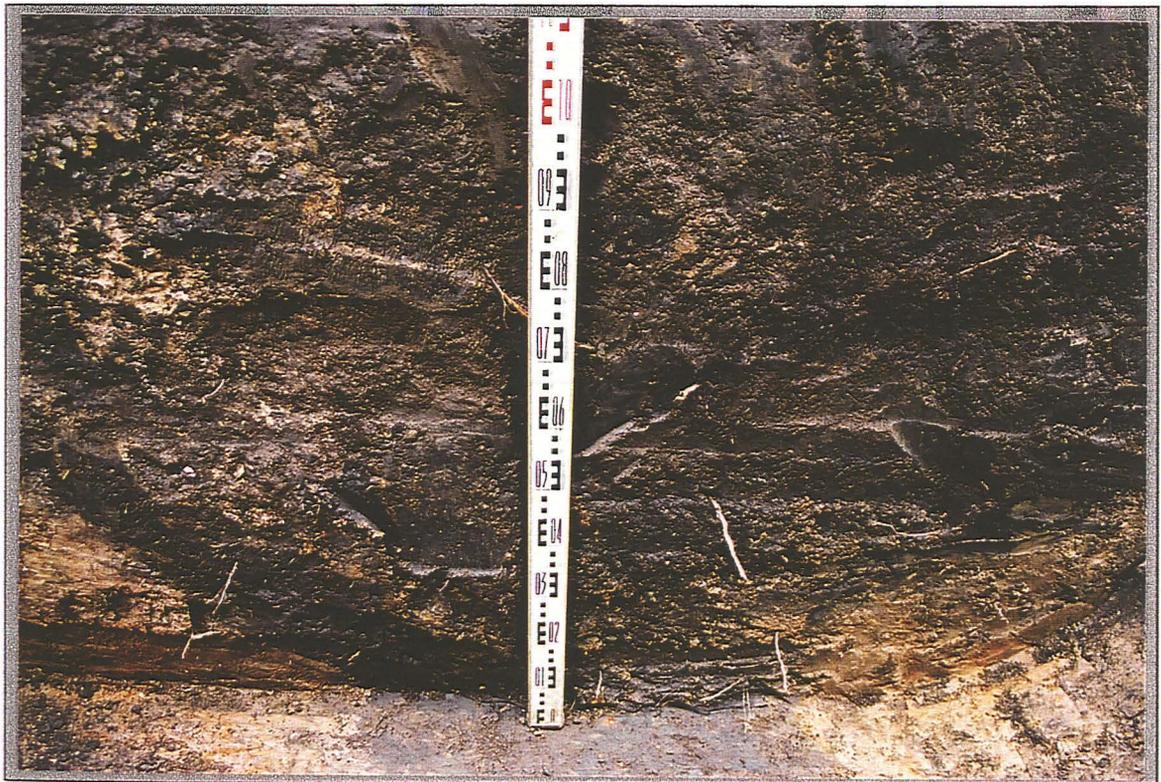


Plate 2 - Ditch [003]