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FINAL REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
GEDNEY HILL VILLAGE HALL

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: H07/0211/99

BY

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COMMISSIONED BY:
KAREN BRADLEY

REFERENCE: SAS01/DB/9

OCTOBER 2001

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1.0 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken, on behalf of the client Karen Bradley, at the site of the proposed development of a new village hall in Gedney Hill village, Lincolnshire. Existing archaeological information suggests the use of the Gedney Hill area during the Romano-British Period, continuing into and through the Medieval with the foundation of Gedney Hill settlement and the Holy Trinity church.

Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the area, SHDC awarded planning permission for the erection of a new village hall and associated services on the stipulation that an archaeologist be present to monitor any ground penetrating works.

The results of the watching brief show that the development works have not made any impact upon archaeological layers.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning permission for the development of a new village hall and associated services at Gedney Hill village was granted by South Holland District Council (SHDC). In accordance with *Planning and Policy Guidance note 16* (PPG16), a condition was specified upon development that all works necessitating penetration of the ground surface should be monitored by an archaeologist. Following this brief, the developer, Karen Bradley, commissioned Soke Archaeological Services Limited to undertake an evaluation in order to assess the archaeological significance of the site. A copy of the project specifications, outlining the proposed archaeological strategy, is included in this report as Appendix E.

2.2 Definition of an Archaeological Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is a non-intrusive form of investigation, with the ultimate aim of assessing the presence, nature, and meaning of archaeological remains. The following is a statement provided by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), who describe an archaeological watching brief as being:

'...a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is the possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered

archive.' (IFA, 1999:2)

2.3 Topography, Geology and Soils

The proposed site for the new village hall lies within Gedney Hill village, at the junction between North Road and Lincoln's Avenue. Centred at NGR TF 338 113, the site is situated in a network of silt filled creeks, laid in marine alluvium during the Flandrian (Wyatt, 1992). This extensive roddon network covers most of the Fenland, with riverine Terrace Gravels being found along its edge.

Currently, the site is situated on the residential street, Broadgate Road, behind which is land used for agricultural purposes.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

A summary of the '*Archaeological background*' was provided in the Project Specification, and is included as part of this report in Appendix E. As previously noted, while no intrusive archaeological investigations have been carried out in the village, evidence from both surface finds and crop marks, included in the local Sites and Monuments Record, suggests there was substantial economic activity during the Romano-British Period. Furthermore, such activity appears to continue into the Medieval Period, with the development of a settlement at Gedney Hill (dated to 1066AD-1539AD, SMR 20527) and documented foundation of the Holy Trinity church (SMR 22297) at its centre.

Bearing in mind the site's proximity to the church, and hence the centre of the medieval settlement, it would seem probable that some archaeological indicator of human activity at Gedney Hill village exists. However, it is also likely that landscape developments preceding the necessity for archaeological investigation (pre-PPG16) may have destroyed any such information.

3.0 Project Aims

The archaeological aims and strategy of this work are outlined in the '*Aims and objectives*' section of the project specification (Appendix E), and adhere to the requirements of the brief set by LCC. The primary aim of this evaluation is to establish the character of any archaeological remains discovered, and to use this information to supplement existing knowledge of the nature of past human activity in and around Gedney Hill Village.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Timetable

Excavation for the proposed development took place in two stages, with constant archaeological supervision for all ground penetrating works. The initial stage involved the excavation of the

foundations for the new village hall, which commenced on Tuesday 9th May 2001 and lasted three days. Excavation for the foundations of the associated services took place on Tuesday 11th and Wednesday 12th September, 2001, lasting approximately half a day.

4.2 The Trenches

A total of three trenches were monitored, one each for the main building, the soak-away, and the septic tank. Excavation proceeded as normal with constant archaeological supervision in the event of exposure of any archaeological features. For the main building, this was carried out by a mechanical digger using an 800mm wide toothed bucket. Trenches for the soak-away and septic tank were excavated using a JCB with toothless bucket. A photographic record was taken during these proceedings, in regulation with standard practice. The spoil from each trench was also examined for finds.

Six profiles were recorded along the edge of the footings for the main building, each recorded at 1:10, as well as one for the septic tank. It should be mentioned, however, that due to the depth and instability of the latter trench, only a sketch profile was possible. Moreover the monitoring of this same trench was no longer feasible after a depth of 2.5 meters was reached, due to the seeping in of ground water. It was furthermore not possible to record any profiles from the soak-away, as the edges were battered. Scale plan drawings of the site as a whole were carried out at 1:50.

All archaeological features, including cuts, fills, and deposits, were recorded using Soke Archaeological Services Limited standard practice, as outlined in the *Project Specification* (Appendix E, section 4.5).

5.0 Results

The excavation of the main building proved to be archaeologically sterile. Two features were uncovered within the soak-away and septic tank trenches, [100] and [102]. The former was clearly observable in both the eastern and western sections of the septic tank trench, and in plan view in the soak-away trench. Composed of a dark grey clayey silt, this feature was initially interpreted as a rubbish pit dating to the earlier half of the last century, due to a small quantity of brick and 'marble neck' glass bottles found within it. However, it has come to light that this rubbish pit does, in fact, date to the 1960's, having been dug to contain building material after the demolition of a pre-existing building on the site (Michael Taylor, *pers comm.*). [102] was located at the eastern end of the soak-away trench. Its irregularity in shape, however, indicates it probably represents the remains of a natural phenomenon.

The deposits examined in the six profiles were recorded as follows:

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>
(1)	Very dark brown gravelly clay
(2)	Dark brown sandy clay. Modern Back-fill
(3)	Orangey yellow sandy silt
(4)	Grey clay with peaty inclusions
(5)	Orangey yellow redeposited clay

6.0 Conclusions

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the developer, Karen Bradley, in order to establish the presence and nature of archaeological remains which could be potentially damaged by the ground penetrating works. Observations made by the archaeologist have revealed that the works have not made any impact upon archaeological remains. The nature of what was found, however, does imply that any remains of archaeological value may have been destroyed by works on the site during the last century.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Soke Archaeological Services would like to thank Ms Karen Bradley for commissioning the project. David Britchfield, of Soke Archaeological Services Limited, co-ordinated the project. Maisie Taylor, of Soke Archaeological Services Limited, edited this report.

8.0 Personnel

Project Director: Francis Pryor MBE PhD MA FSA MIFA

Project Manager: David Britchfield BA (Hons)

Fieldstaff: David Britchfield
Michael Bamforth
David New BA (Hons)

Illustrations: Louisa New MA
Lavinia Ferrante di Ruffano BSc (Hons)
Michelle Ellis - Pate

9.0 References

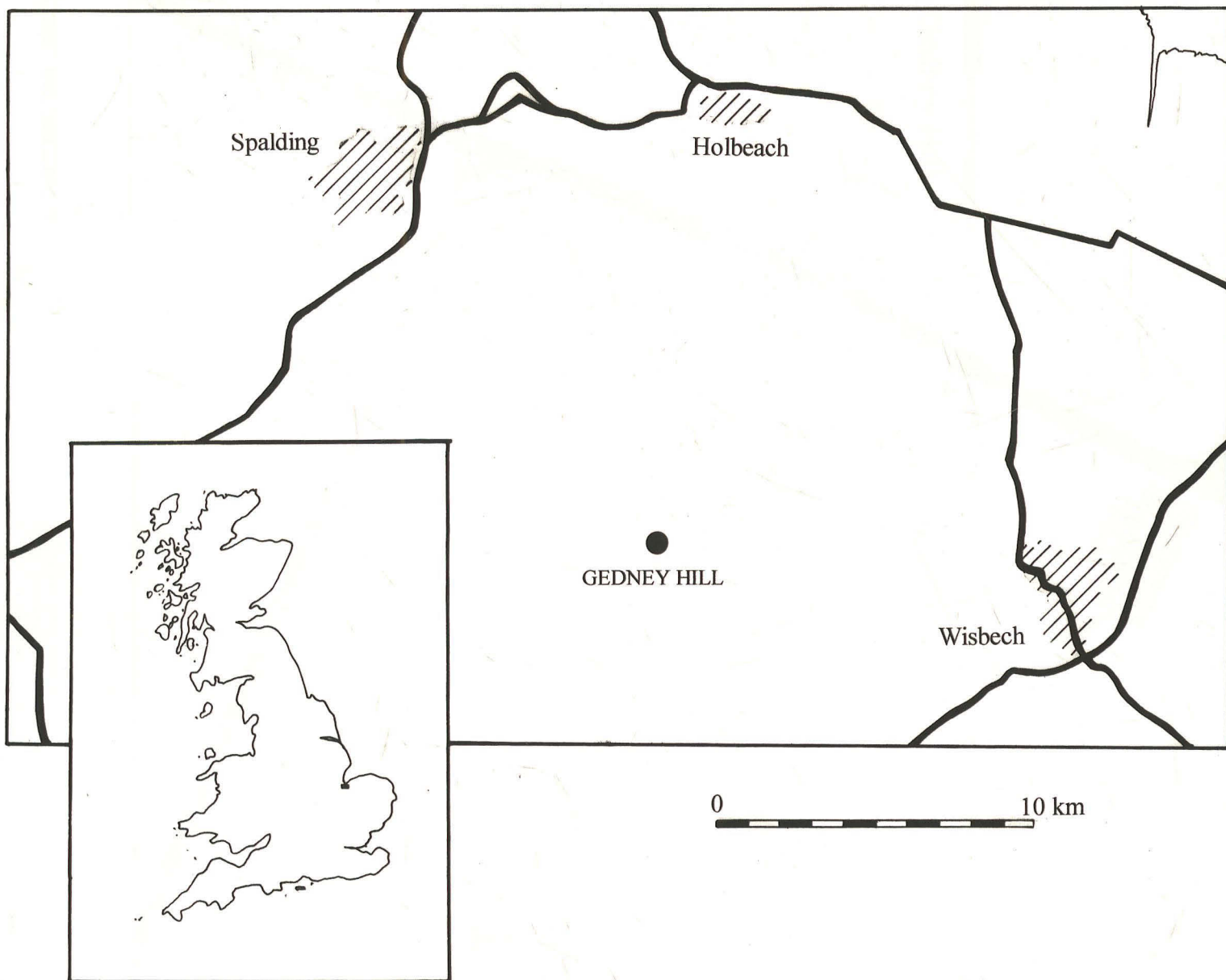
Hall, D (1996) *The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, Isle of Ely and Wisbech*. East Anglian Archaeology 79.

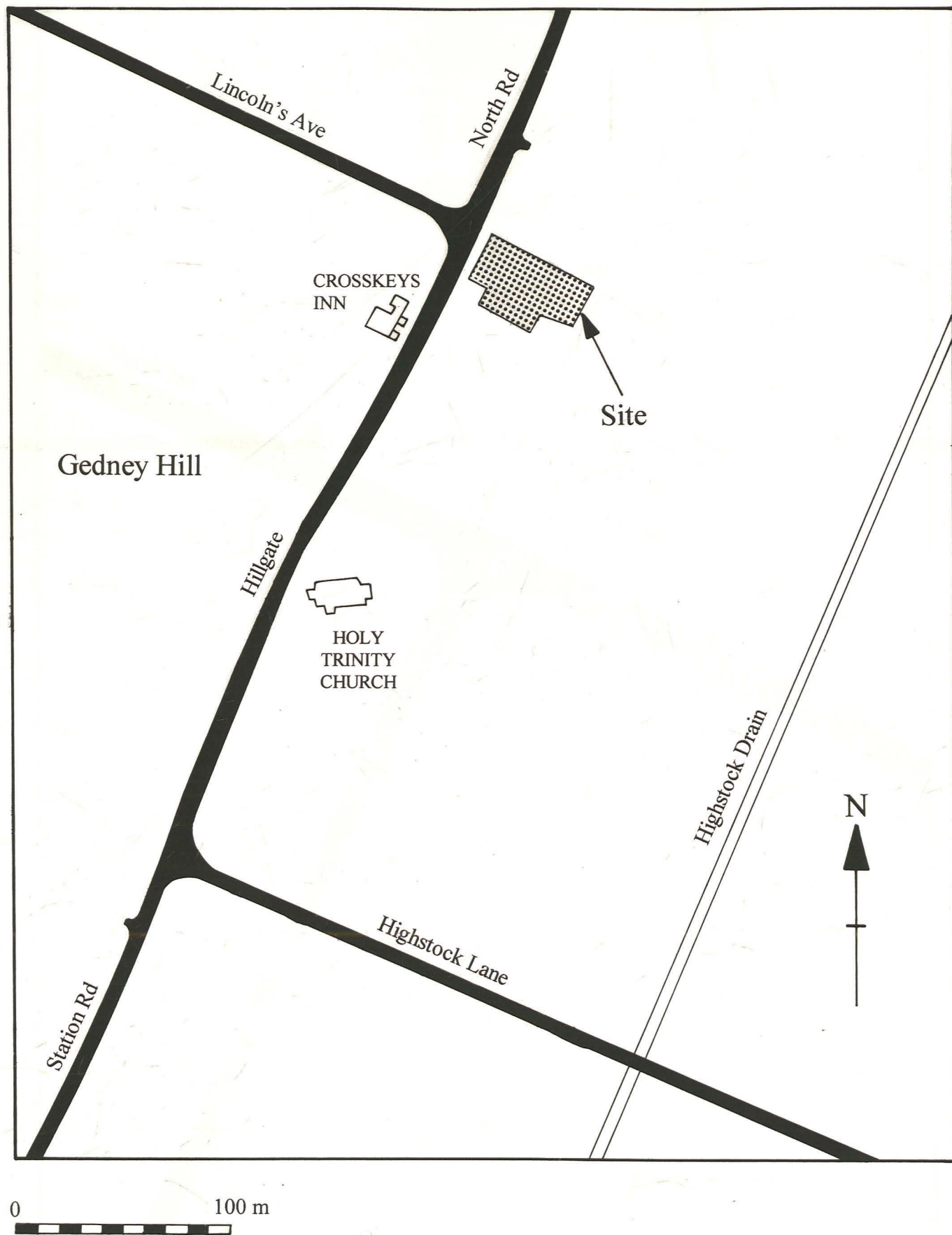
Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Phillips, C W (1970) *The Fenland in Roman Times* Royal Geographic Survey, Series No. 5

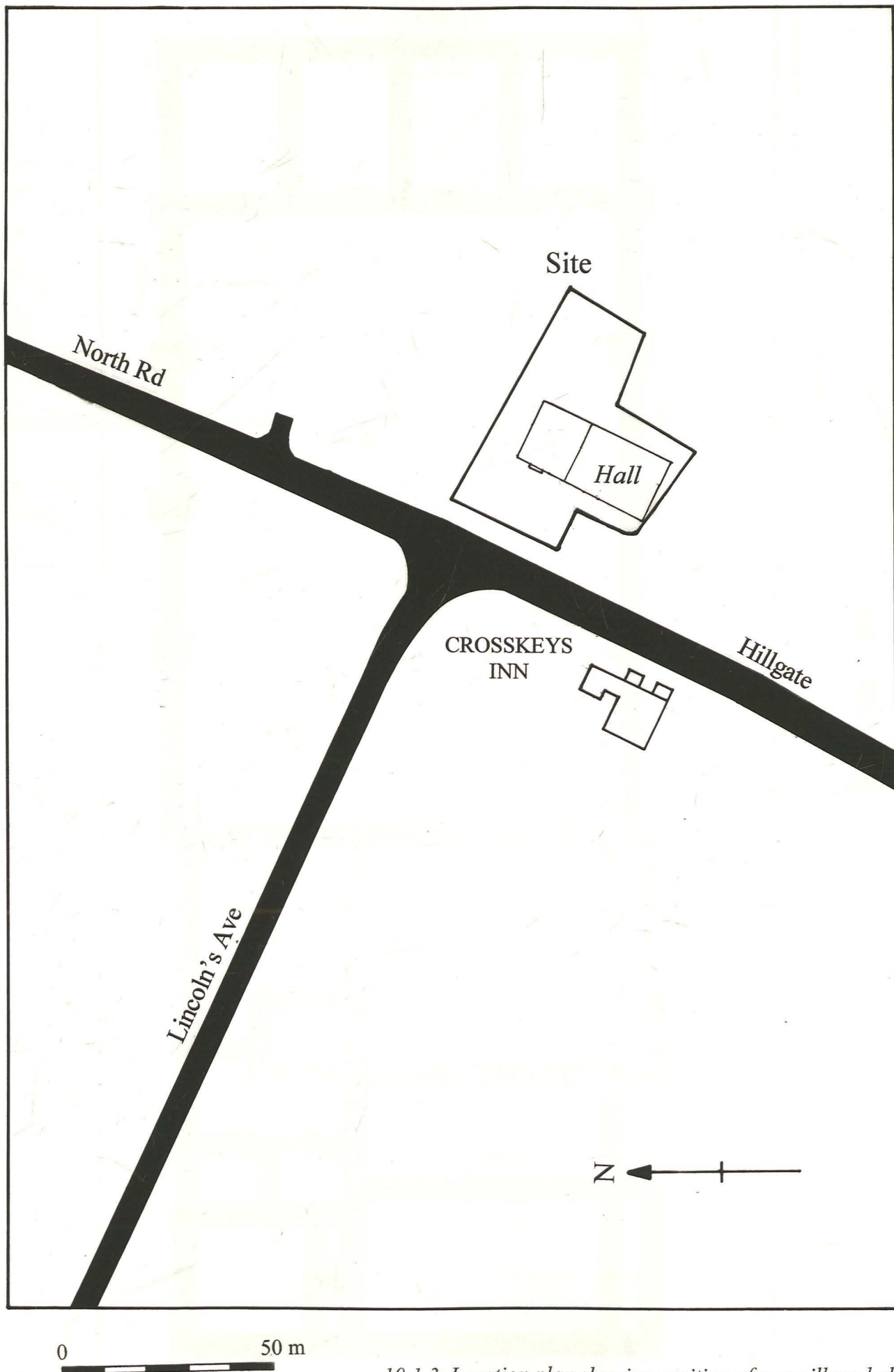
Wyatt, R J (1992) *British Geological Survey: Peterborough Sheet 158* Solid and Drift Edition, 1:50k Series. **Natural Environment Research Council.**

10.0 Appendices

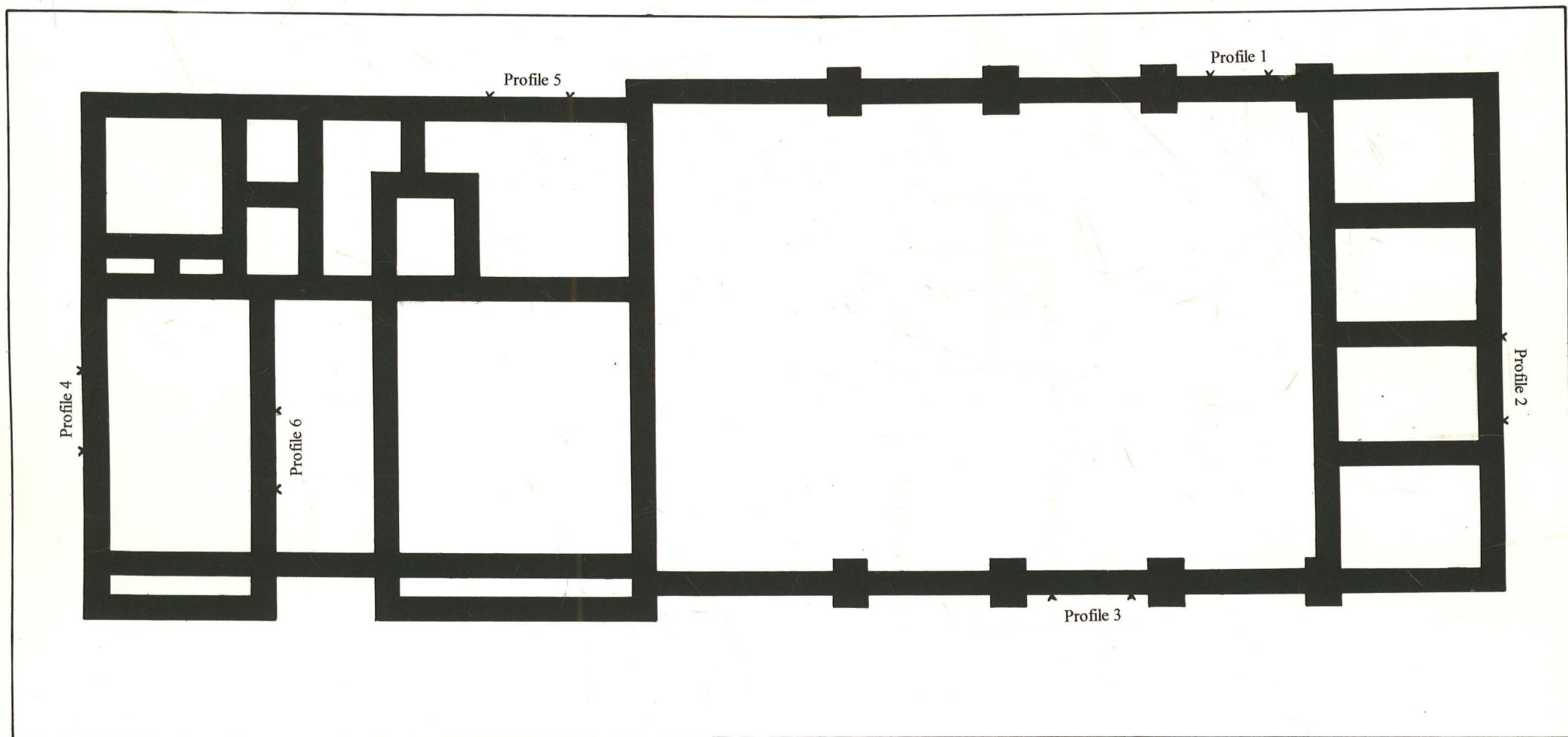




10.1.2 Site location plan



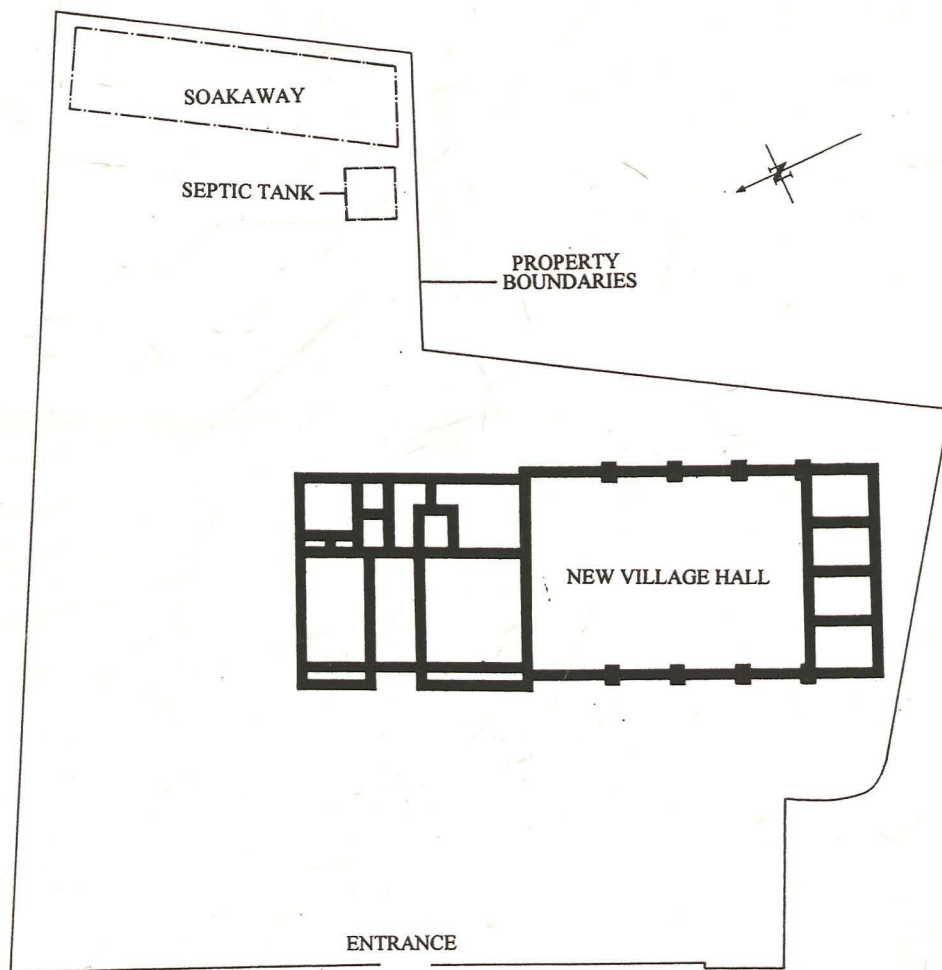
10.1.3 Location plan showing position of new village hall



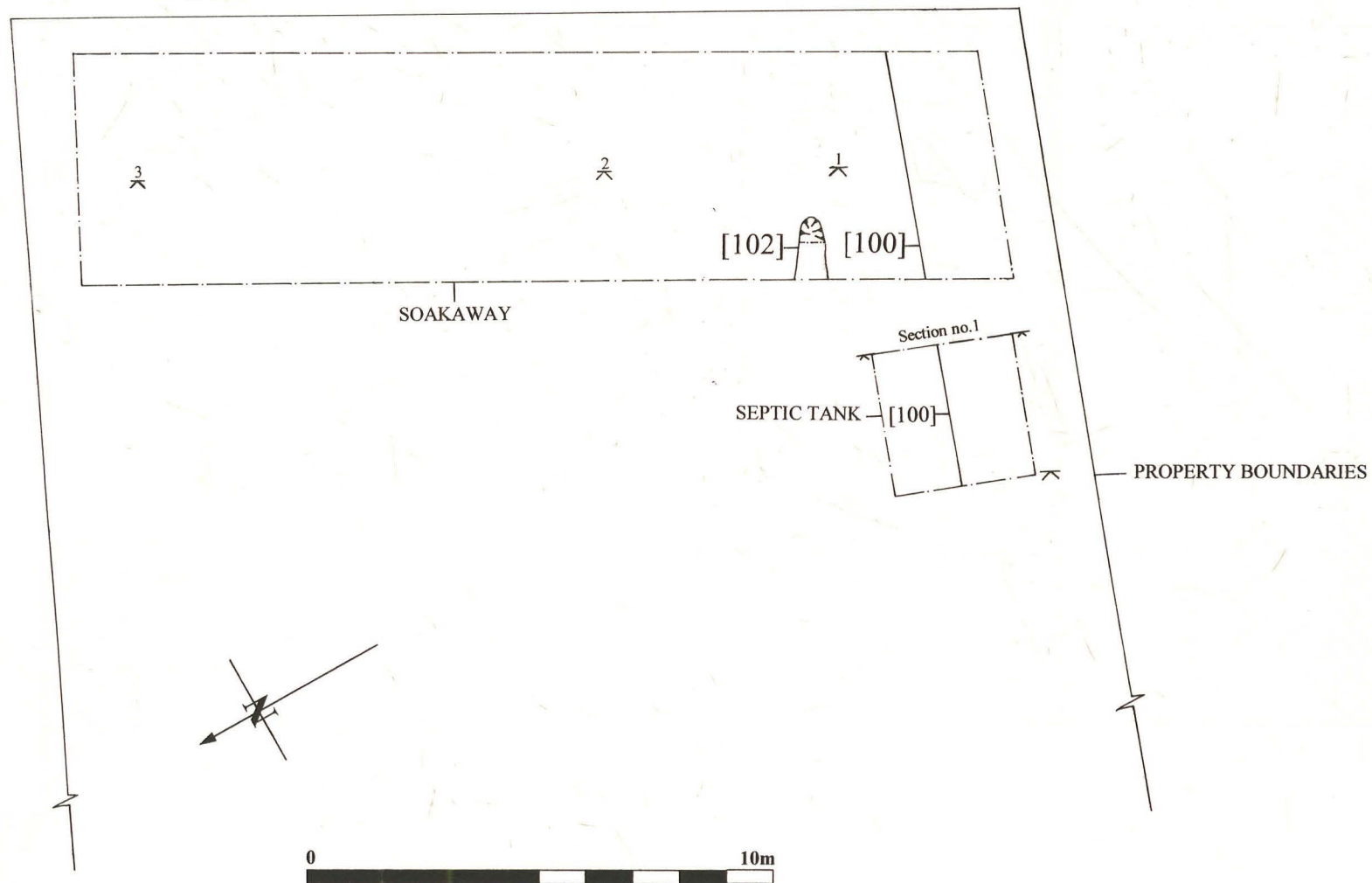
10.1.4 Plan of new hall foundations showing location of profiles

0 2.5m



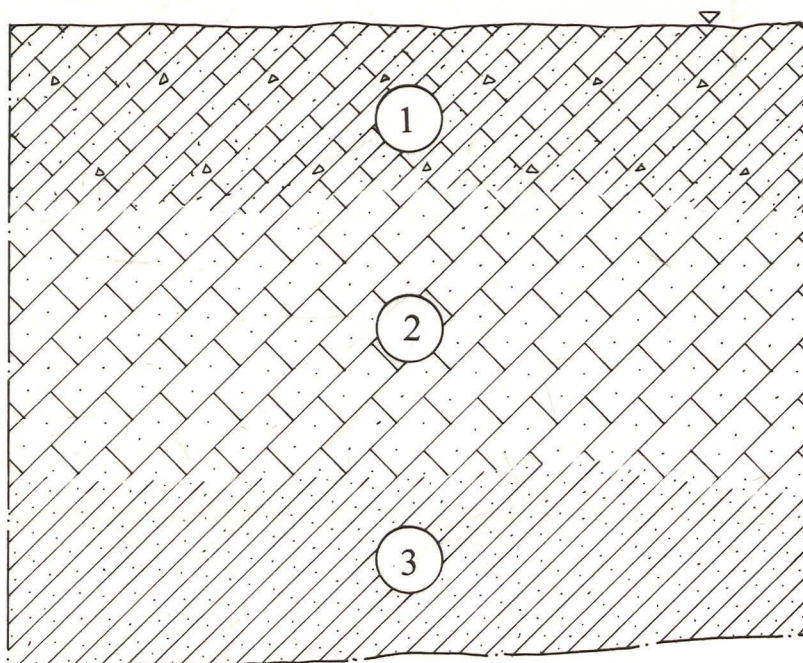


10.1.5 Site plan

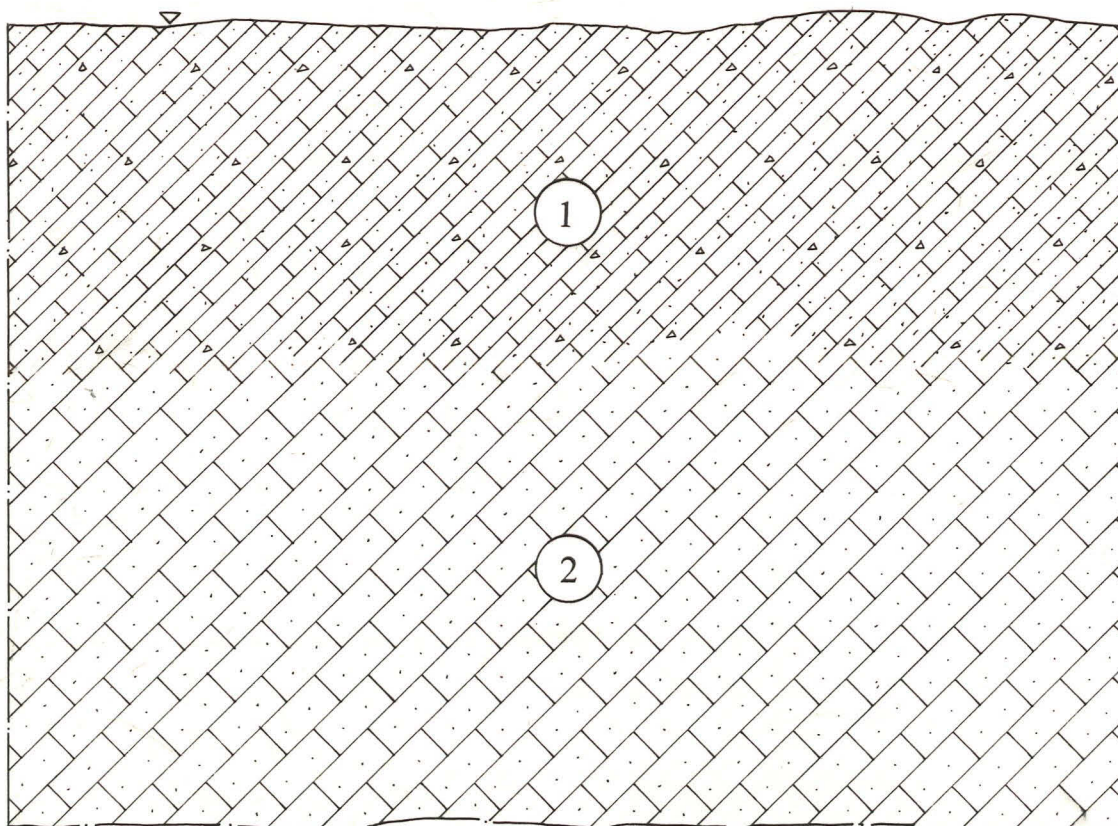


10.1.6 Plan of soakaway and septic tank

Profile 1

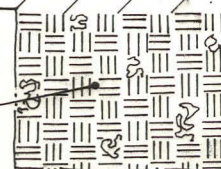


Profile 2

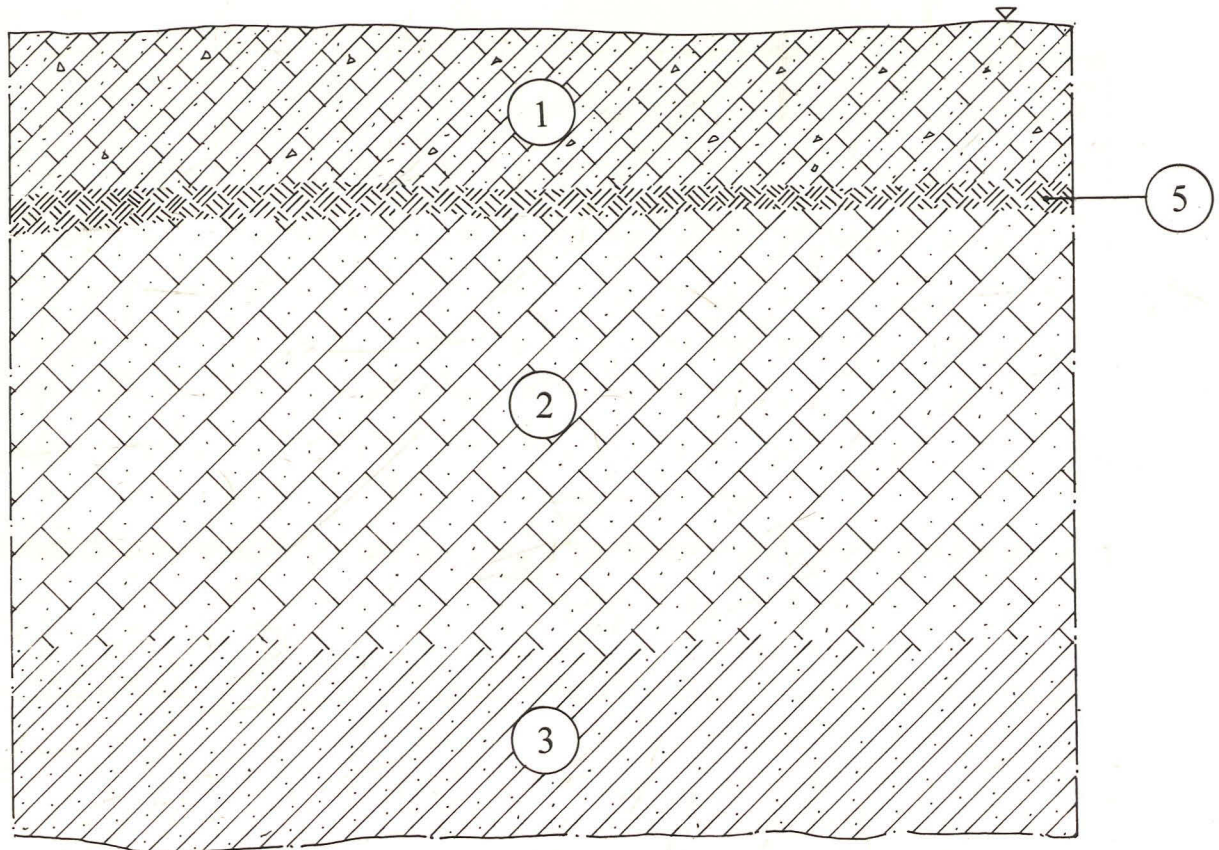


0 0.5 m

4

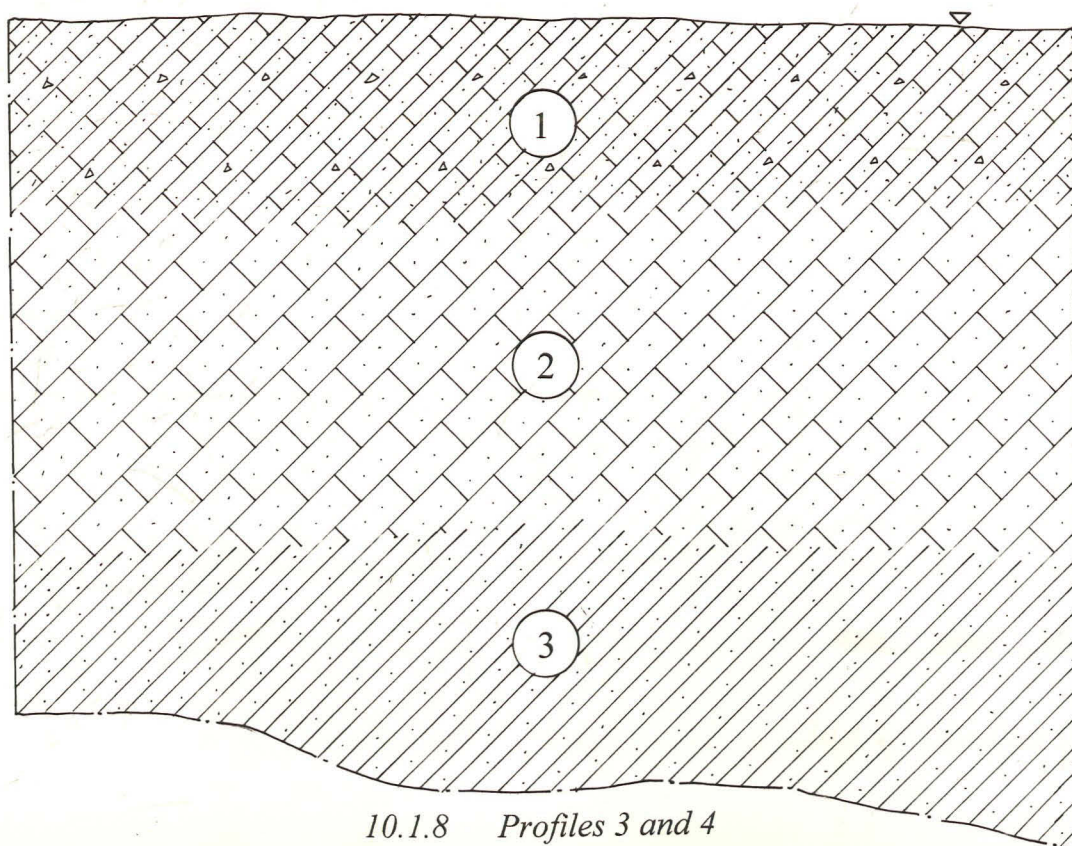


Profile 3

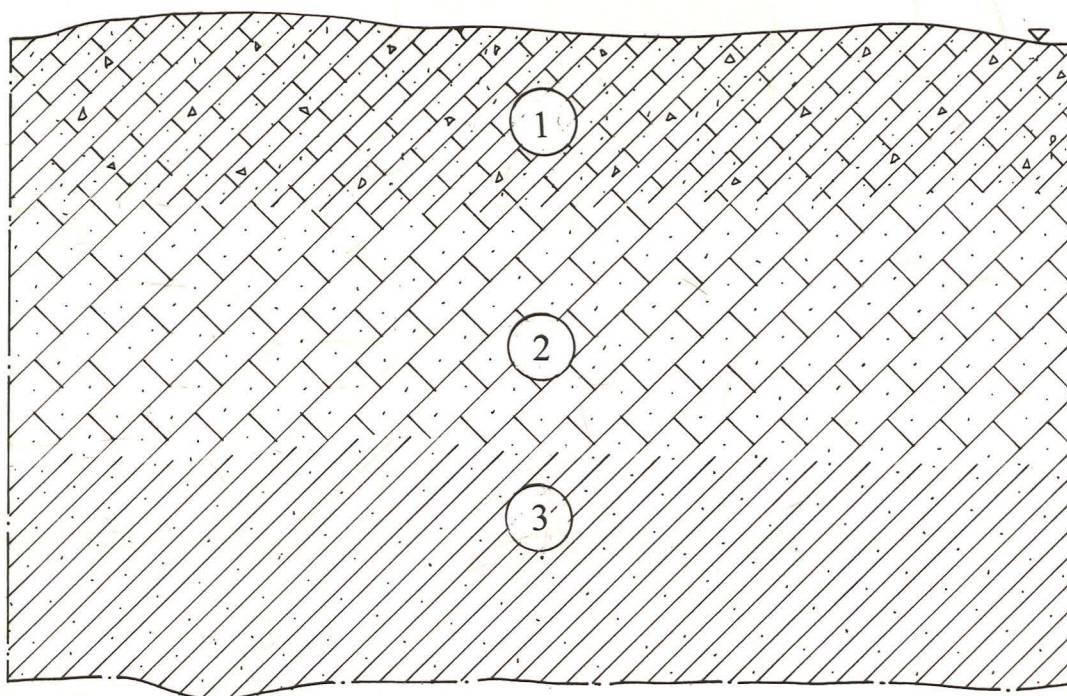


0 0.5 m

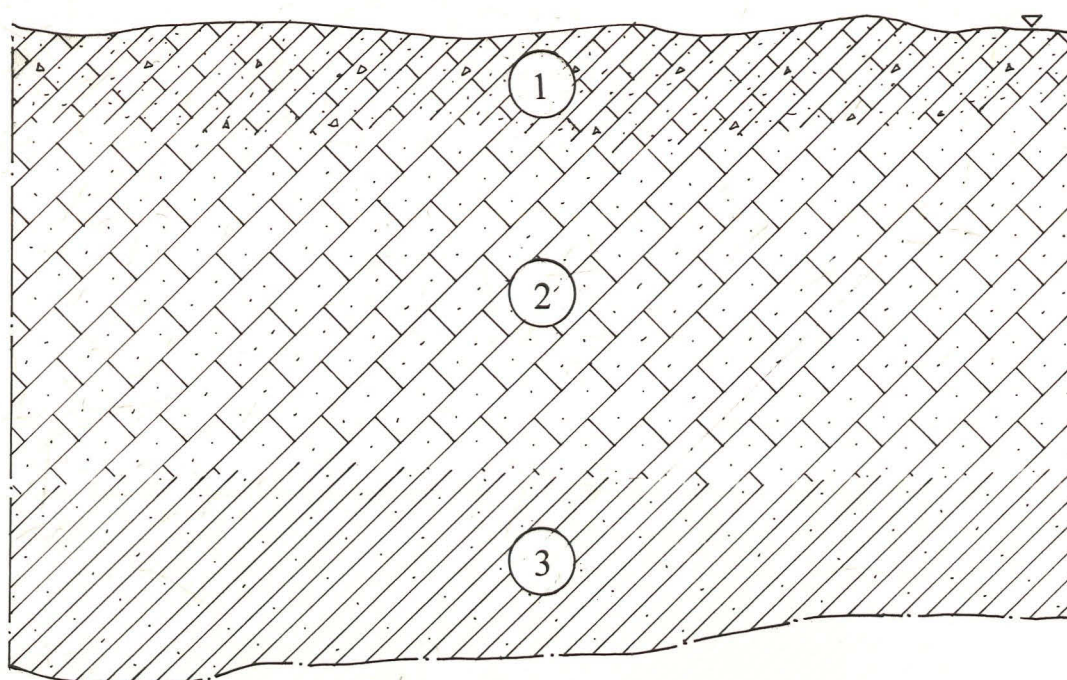
Profile 4



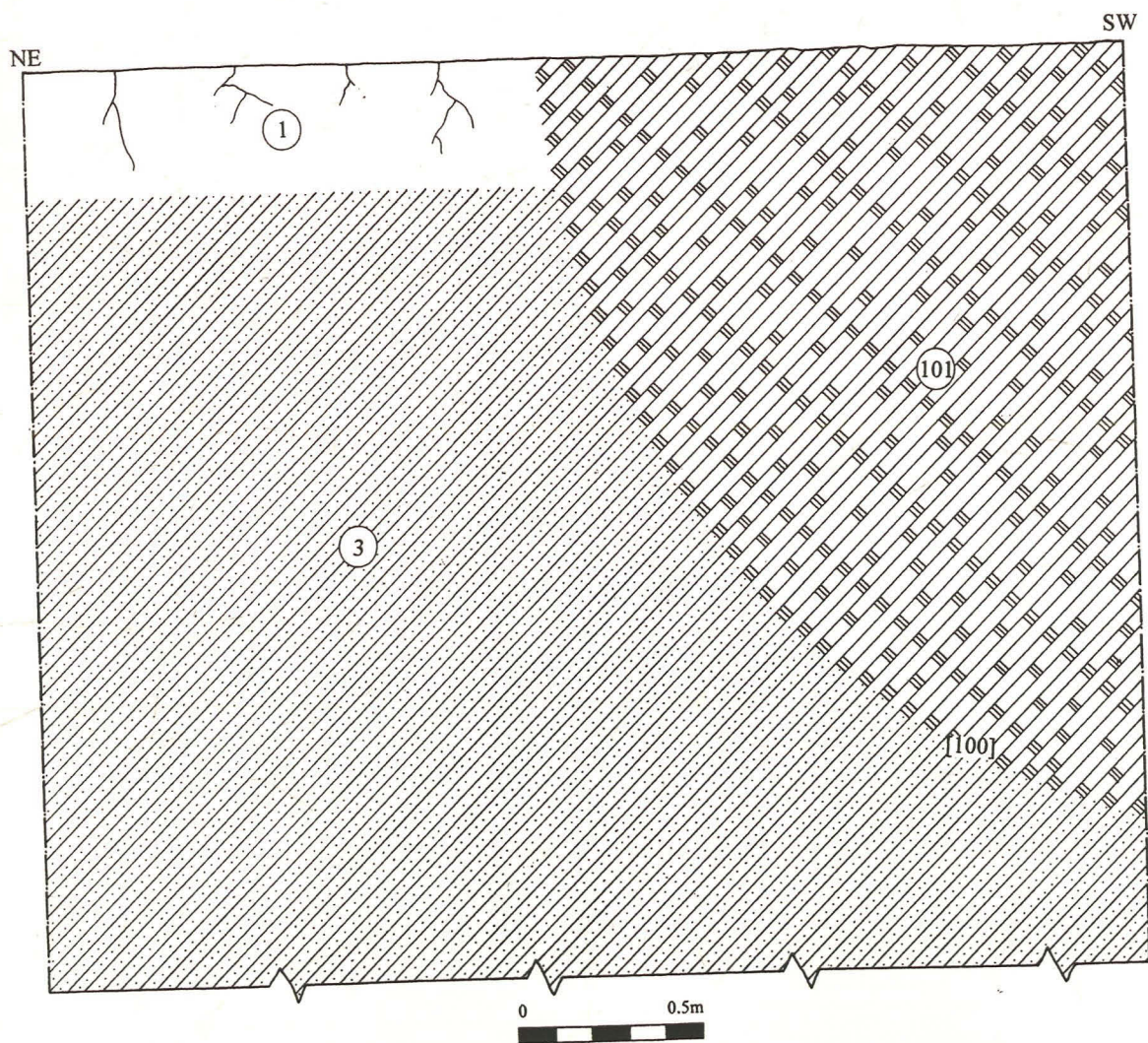
Profile 5



Profile 6



0 0.5 m



10.1.10 Section drawing of the septic tank trench, east-facing

10.1 Appendix A - Illustrations

The following appendix contains a series of location plans, profiles and sections which were recorded on-site.

Levels associated with these drawings are provided in Appendix D.

10.2 Appendix B - Plates

- 10.2.1 *Excavation of the foundations for the main building, facing east across the site*
- 10.2.2 *View of the main building foundations infilled with concrete*
- 10.2.3 *Typical view of one of the profiles, showing deposit (2) overlying (3)*
- 10.2.4 *Profile 4 showing deposits (1), (2) and (3) after the footing has been filled in with concrete*
- 10.2.5 *View of the soakaway being excavated with 'battered' edges, north-east facing.*
- 10.2.6 *Feature [102], west facing, interpreted as a natural feature*
- 10.2.7 *North-east facing view of the site, showing the septic tank trench being excavated*
- 10.2.8 *Section 1, south-eastern face of the septic tank trench*



10.2.1 Excavation of the foundations for the main building, facing east across the site



10.2.2 View of the main building foundations infilled with concrete



10.2.3 Typical view of one of the profiles, showing deposit (2) overlying (3)



10.2.4 Profile 4 showing deposits (1), (2) and (3) after the footing has been filled in with concrete



10.2.5 View of the soakaway being excavated with 'battered' edges, north-east facing.



10.2.6 Feature [102], west facing, interpreted as a natural feature



10.2.7 North-east facing view of the site, showing the septic tank trench being excavated



10.2.8 Section 1, south-eastern face of the septic tank trench

10.3 Appendix C - Context list

The follwing appendix contains the complete list of all contexts excavated, including feature [102] which was found to be natural.

Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Description	Interpretation
100	cut		Linear feature orientated west-east	1960's rubbish pit
101	fill	100	Dark grey clayey silt with occasional fragments of CBM and several 'marble neck' glass bottles.	single fill
102	cut		Irregular feature with very graded edges	Probable natural feature
103	fill	102	mid grey-brown sandy silt	single fill

10.4 Appendix D - Levels register

This appendix contains all levels taken, including those associated with plan 10.1.6

Levels Register

SAS/DB/9

BS	IS	FS	Instrument Height	Reduced Level	Remarks
1.20		1.6	4.93	3.33	From BM on church, 3.73m OD
1.26		1.72	4.99	3.27	Changepoint
1.25	1.84		4.98	3.14	Top of septic tank
	2.25		4.98	2.73	1 (Spot Heights in soak-away)
	2.25		4.98	2.73	2
	2.15		4.98	2.83	3

10.5 Appendix E - Project Specification

1.0 Introduction

The village of Gedney Hill lies approximately 15km south-east of Spalding, in the fens of South Holland District Council. The site for development is centred at NGR TF 338113, to the north of the 14th century Holy Trinity Church. Proposals have been made for the construction of a single unit, along with a septic tank and associated service trenches.

Due to the archaeological potential of this site, South Holland District Council has requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be carried out during any ground penetrating works. The aim of this watching brief will be to provide 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area or site on land or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed' (IFA 1994).

2.0 Archaeological background

Although there has not been any systematical archaeological excavations carried out in Gedney Hill, it is evident from sources such as Phillips (1970) that the possibility of archaeological deposits within the development area may exist. Phillips not only records the presence of cropmarks, but also the discovery of various Roman coins (1970: 303, SMR 22289, 22291). Similarly, a Roman bronze coin, attributed to the 2nd century, is recorded within the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR No. 22289), located at Mole Drove, approximately 300 yards to the east of the development area. As far as the recorded cropmarks are concerned, the frequency and distribution of sites to the SW and NW of Gedney Hill is incredibly dense. Although no cropmarks are recorded within the development area, there is evidence to suggest that the possibility of Roman field systems may exist. A Sites and Monuments Record describes 'ditched droves running NE and SE from Gedney Hill, apparently orientated onto the church. This suggests the church may be built on RB site' (SMR 22295).

The site in question lies approximately 100 yards to the north of Holy Trinity Church (SMR 22297), and thus within the medieval core of the village (SMR 20527). Although there are no other medieval listings within the Sites and Monuments Records, with the exception of the base plinth and shaft of a cross (SMR 22290), the possibility of medieval deposits should not be ruled out.

3.0 Aims and objectives

3.1 The aims of the watching brief will be to locate, record and interpret any archaeological features exposed during ground disturbance.

3.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be:

3.2.1 To determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered.

3.2.2 To determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered.

3.2.3 To recover dating evidence from any archaeological features.

3.2.4 To establish the sequence of any archaeological remains.

4.0 Methods

4.1 General considerations

4.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.

4.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practice issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

4.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1997, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 The initial stage of development is due to commence on the 9th May 2001, involving the excavation of the foundations, which is expected to last 2-3 days. Following the excavation of foundations, the septic tank and service runs will be excavated and are due to last approximately 1 day. Excavation will be carried out using a JCB, fitted with a toothed bucket, with an experienced Archaeological Supervisor monitoring of all phases of soil movement.

4.2.2 The trench sections will be observed regularly, to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed, and to record changes in geology. Plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10. Larger scale illustrations may be made, if necessary. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Soke Archaeological Services Ltd., pro-forma, context record sheets.

4.2.3 Any finds will be retained for later analysis.

4.2.4 Any deposits encountered that might be environmentally rewarding will be sampled accordingly.

4.2.5 A photographic record will be compiled throughout the watching brief and will consist of colour transparencies and black and white prints. It will also record specific stages of the watching brief, as well as the layout of archaeological features within each trench or area.

4.3 Metal Detecting

4.3.1 A metal detector will be in routine use, with all *in situ* deposits and spoil heaps detected regularly.

4.4 Palaeoenvironmental Sampling

4.4.1 If any palaeoenvironmental sampling is considered necessary, it will be carried out in accordance with Murphy and Wiltshire (1994).

4.5 Recording

4.5.1 All written records will be on Soke Archaeological Services Ltd, pro-forma, MOLAS based context sheets. All archaeological features will be recorded in single context.

4.5.2 Sections will be drawn at 1:10; plans at 1:20; trench location plans at a suitable scale for publication.

4.5.3 All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

4.5.4 All surveying levels will be tied into the Ordnance Datum.

4.5.5 Trenches will be surveyed using an EDM or equivalent.

4.5.6 All small finds will be 3D co-ordinated.

4.5.7 Photographs of any relevant sections or profiles will be taken during the watching brief. Working photographs will also be taken, in order to provide visual images of site conditions.

4.5.8 If any changes in recording methodology need to be adopted on site, LCC will be consulted prior to doing so.

5.0 *Post Excavation*

5.1 Stage 1

5.1.1 On completion of site operations, records produced during the excavation will be checked and ordered, to ensure that they form a uniform sequence constituting a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued.

5.1.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked, bagged and labelled in context. SAS staff will deal with waterlogged finds or deposits. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be processed by specialist consultants attached to SAS (see below).

5.2 Stage 2

5.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix, to determine the various phases of activity on the site (if required).

5.3 Stage 3

5.3.1 Dependent upon the amount of archaeology encountered on site, upon completion of Stage 2, a report detailing the findings may be forwarded to be included in Lincolnshire's Annual Archaeological Report, and a note presented to the editor of the journal of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. If necessary, a summary will be submitted to appropriate national journals: Britannia, Medieval Archaeology, or Medieval Settlement Research Group.

6.0 *Curatorial Responsibility*

6.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council. They will be given seven days notice in writing, before commencement of the project. Similarly, the Archaeological Officer will be informed upon completion of the project.

7.0 *Variations to the proposed scheme of works*

7.1 Variations to the scheme of works will only be made following confirmation of acceptance from the Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council.

8.0 *Staff*

The Project Director is Francis Pryor MBE, MA, PhD, FSA, MIFA; the Project Manager will be David Britchfield BA, HNC, OND. Any waterlogged deposits will be seen by Maisie Taylor BA, Cert Ed, MIFA. Medieval and Post Medieval pottery will be seen by David Hall. Dr. Charly French at Cambridge University will be consulted regarding soils, sediments and macrofossils. Dr. Malcolm Lillie and his team at the University of Hull, Wetland Archaeological and Environments Research Centre will provide environmental support on topics (such as pollen) which are not covered by Dr. French.

9.0 *Report and archive*

9.1 The evaluation report will be in accordance with Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage) guidelines.

9.2 The site archive will be temporarily held by Soke Archaeological Services Ltd. The documentation, finds, photographs and other records and materials generated during the watching brief will then be sorted and distributed to the City and Council Museum, Lincoln, for long term storage and curation.

10.0 *References*

Phillips, C. W, 1970 *The Fenland in Roman Times*. Royal Geographical Society Research Series: No.5

Murphy, P. and Wiltshire, P. (1994) - *A Guide to Sampling Archaeological Deposits for Environmental Analysis.*

11.0 Sites and Monuments Record - Data

<i>SMR No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
20524	Undated cropmarks.
20527	Medieval settlement of Gedney Hill.
22289	2nd Century Roman bronze coin, possibly Faustina II.
22290	High base, plinth and shaft of medieval cross.
22291	Bronze sestertius of Marcus Aurelius.
22295	Ditched droves running NE and SE from Gedney Hill, apparently orientated onto the church.
22297	Holy Trinity Church.
22255	Extensive cropmark complex, with possible settlement, droveroads, field systems and enclosures.