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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF A DEVELOPMENT AT  
RED LION STREET,  
BICKER,  
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For  
Mr and Mrs B Graham

October 1994



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

LINCOLNSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
17 OCT 1994  
CITY AND COUNTY  
MUSEUM

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a single dwelling house and detached garage on land adjacent to Red Lion Street, Bicker. The watching brief monitored the excavation for the foundations.*

*Development at Red Lion Street affects an area containing archaeological remains dating from the Anglo-Saxon to the Tudor period. Finds of Saxon pottery represent the earliest known occupation of the area. The church of St Swithin and occasional finds of medieval pottery represent medieval occupation of the area. Tudor settlement is represented by the Red Lion Inn, built in 1665, and the nearby Morley cottages of 16th century date.*

*Rubbish pits and boundary or drainage ditches were revealed cutting the natural silts. Some of these features contained pottery dating from the 13th century onwards. Other finds included building material and slag that perhaps indicated that a saltern (salt-making site) was located in the vicinity. A silt deposit indicated that flooding had interrupted use of the site in the 13th century. Modern topsoil provided the present ground surface.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

On the 26th September 1994, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new house and garage (Application number B04/0325/94) on land adjacent to Red Lion Street, Bicker, Lincolnshire (NGR TF 225 374). The work was commissioned by Mr & Mrs B. Graham, and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services in

accordance with a brief set by the Boston District Community Archaeologist.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Bicker is located 9km southwest of Boston and 14km north of Spalding, in the civil parish of Bicker, Boston District (Fig. 1). Red Lion Street is situated 0.5km south of Bicker village centre (Fig. 2). The site and the surrounding area are relatively flat lying at approximately 4m OD. Local soils are the Agney Association calcareous alluvial gleys (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 121).

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

Red Lion Street is located in an area of archaeological activity dating from the Anglo-Saxon to the Tudor period. Anglo-Saxon activity is represented by finds of pottery *c.* 250m to the southwest (B04/013) and stonework located at St Swithin's church 450m to the northwest (J.Bonnor *pers comm*).

Medieval occupation of Bicker is represented by the early 12th century church of St Swithin about 450m to the northwest and occasional finds of medieval pottery from the village (B04/010, B04/014). Finds of medieval pottery and saltern slag (from salt making processes) have been found 400m to the southeast. Salt making was an important industry in this area and took place along Bicker Haven to the east, a waterway that silted up during the 17th century.

Tudor occupation is represented by the Red Lion Inn (dated 1665) and the much altered 16th century Morley Cottages (Pevsner and Harris, 1989), both close to the site.

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Trenches were excavated to a depth of about 60cm using a mechanical excavator. The sides of the trenches were then cleaned and examined to identify any archaeological features. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description. Natural geological deposits were also recorded. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at a scale of 1:50. Locations of drawn sections appear in Figures 4 and 5.

### 5. RESULTS

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. Three phases were identified:

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Medieval deposits
Phase 3	Modern deposits

#### Phase 1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits throughout the site are well represented by light brown silts, observed in both area A and B (14 and 46). A greenish silt layer (9), 0.3m thick, was observed above 14, in the northernmost trenches of area A (Fig. 6, Section 2).

#### Phase 2 Medieval Deposits

A large oval feature (23), *c.* 2.6m across, was observed cutting into the phase 1 silts at the south side of area A. Interpreted as a pit, this feature had a fill of mid brown silt that contained 13th-14th century Bourne ware pottery.

Approximately 3m west of this pit was a linear cut (26). Oriented north-south and *c.* 0.9m wide, this is interpreted as a ditch. A second linear feature (31) was observed at the west side of area A. This cut, which was *c.* 2.5m wide and aligned roughly northeast-southwest, is also interpreted as a ditch.

Sealing these ditches and pit, and visible over much of area A, was a mid-brown silt deposit (13, 24 and 27), between 0.13 to 0.28m thick (Fig. 6, Sections 3 and 4). This deposit is considered to have had an alluvial origin but possibly subsequently became a topsoil.

Four features were observed cutting into this silt layer. A possibly linear cut (12) was seen (Fig. 6, Section 3) along the northern edge of area A. Tentatively interpreted as a ditch, this feature was filled with silt and rubble (10 and 11). Close to this ditch an apparently circular cut (16) was noted. Measuring *c.* 1.3m across, this is considered to be a pit (Fig. 6, Section 4).

Two oval features (21, 29) were also cut into the silt layer. Both are considered to be pits and were filled with a brown silt. Fragments of Toynton All Saints ware pottery of 13th century origin were recovered from pit 21.

A further nine features, six of them in area A, the remainder in area B, were also recorded. These were observed cutting the primary natural silts, though in areas where

the medieval silt deposit was not present.

A rectangular cut feature (18), measuring 1.9 by 0.6m was located along the eastern boundary of area A (Fig. 7 Section 5). Considered to represent a pit, this contained a fill (17) with finds of ceramic building materials, including possible handmade bricks. In addition, fragments of slag that may be associated with salt making processes were also recovered.

Five more features were located in area A. Two linear cuts, one (2) possibly aligned east to west and the other (6) oriented north-south, were observed (Fig. 4). These are considered to represent ditches or gullies. Sherds of Toynton All Saints ware of indeterminate medieval date were recovered from feature 6. An oval cut (8), interpreted as a pit, was also noted (8). Two circular cuts (4, 33), each *c.* 0.2m in diameter (Fig. 4), were observed towards the northwestern part of area A. These are interpreted as postholes.

Area B (Fig. 5) produced three cuts (35, 37 and 40). All were irregular in shape and detailed measurements were not obtained owing to the narrow width of the foundation trenches. Feature 35 appears to have been sub-rectangular, *c.* 0.8 by 0.7m in size, and filled with a dark brown silt (34). Cut 37 (Fig. 8, Section 10) was shallow and filled with a reddish brown silt (36), that contained large quantities of ceramic material, possibly demolition debris. The extent of cut 40 (Fig. 8, Section 12) was not determined, though this feature had been filled with a number of silty layers (41, 42, 43 and 44). All three cuts (35, 37 and 40) are interpreted as pits.

### Phase 3 Modern deposits

Modern deposits are represented by a topsoil of dark greyish brown silt (45)

covering the entire area. A drainage pipe was also observed in the base of the trench in area B (Fig. 5)

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural silt deposits (Phase 1) across the site represent soil build up over many years and probably have an alluvial origin.

Medieval deposits (Phase 2) represent human activity in the area, most probably refuse disposal. These disposal activities were apparently interrupted by a flooding episode, probably during the 13th century. This inundation deposited a thick layer of silt that covered over two ditches and a pit.

Subsequently, the silt deposit served as a ground surface and disposal activities reclaimed the area. Several pits and ditches were dug into the surface of this silt layer. A variety of waste materials was recovered from the pits, thereby identifying their use for rubbish disposal. By contrast, the ditches are more likely to be associated with drainage, or functioned as boundaries, and perhaps have an agricultural origin.

Slag from salt making processes was found, though the ashy deposits normally associated with salterns was absent. However, the presence of the slag would suggest that a saltern may be located nearby.

In addition to the pits and ditches, a pair of postholes, signifying some indeterminate structural activity, were also observed.

Modern deposits (Phase 3) were represented by a service trench and topsoil that constituted the present ground surface.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at Red Lion Street, Bicker show a sequence of natural to modern deposits. Medieval remains indicate that the site functioned as a refuse area, probably within field or property boundaries. Flooding, that probably occurred in the 13th century, interrupted the occupation of the area. However, this hiatus appears to have been short-lived and the area was soon reclaimed for rubbish disposal purposes. A service pipe and the present ground surface represented modern use of the site.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project services wish to thank Mr and Mrs B. Graham for funding the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Dave Start edited this report. Hilary Healey commented on the pottery. Jim Bonnor, the Boston District Community Archaeologist provided information from the relevant parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes  
Site Assistant: Chris Moulis  
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hodge, C.A.H. Burton, R.G.O. Corbett, W.M. Evans, R. and Seale, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. 13* (Harpenden)

Pevsner, N and Harris, J., 1989 *Lincolnshire, The Buildings of England*, (2nd ed, revised Antram, N)

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed with B are the primary reference numbers used by the Boston District Community Archaeologist.

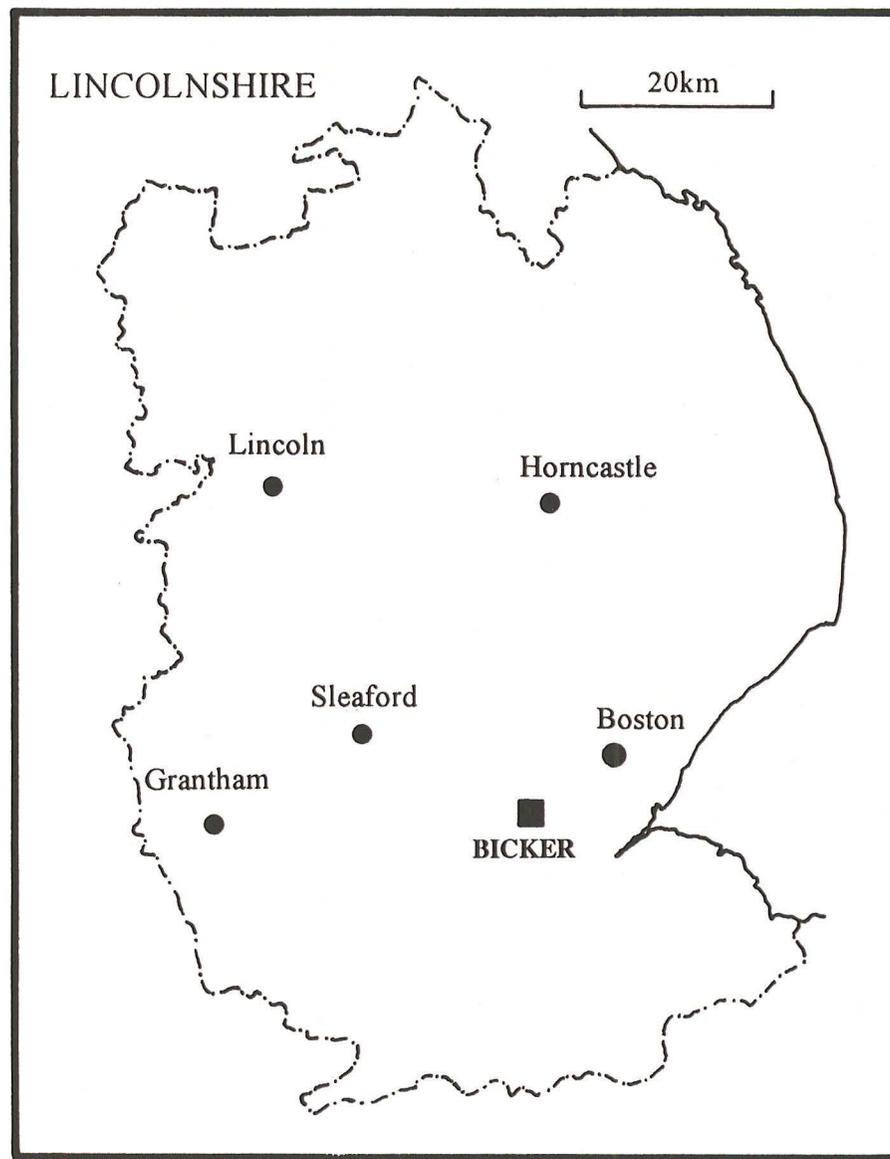
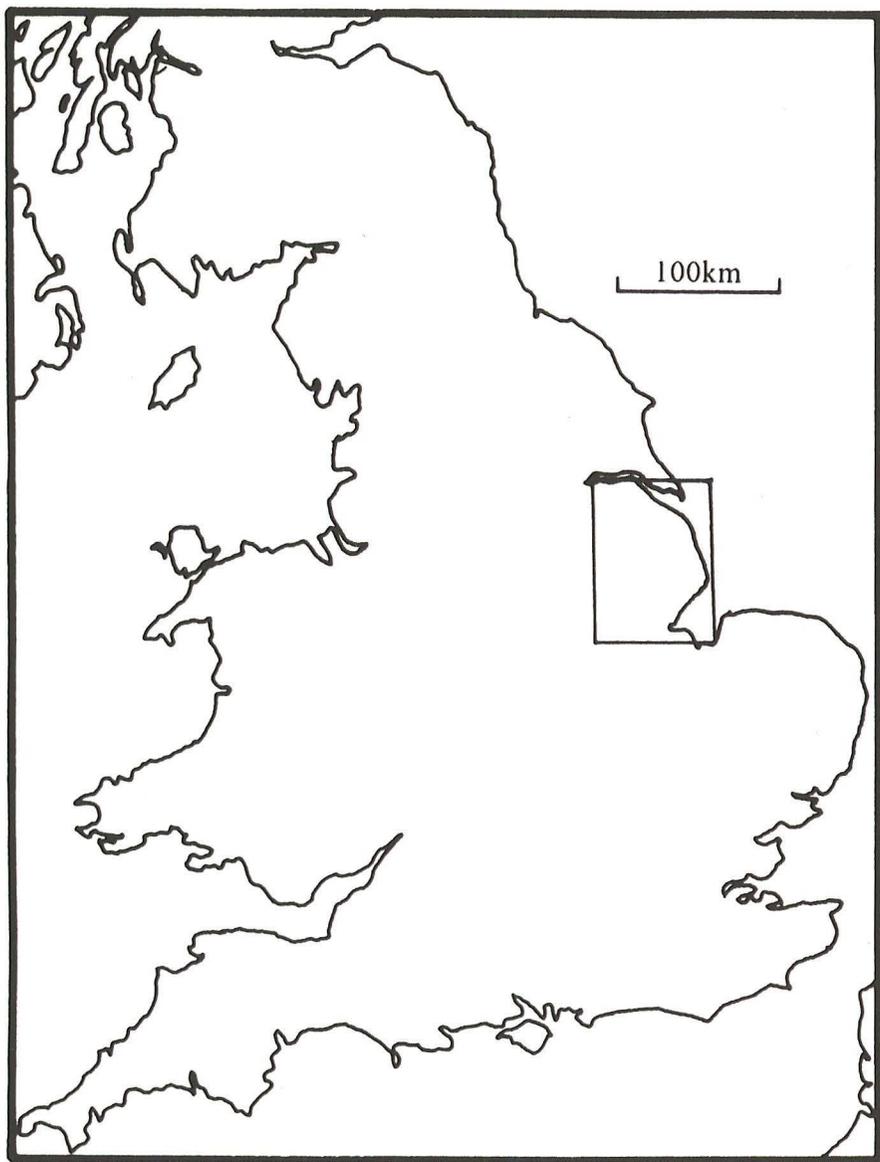
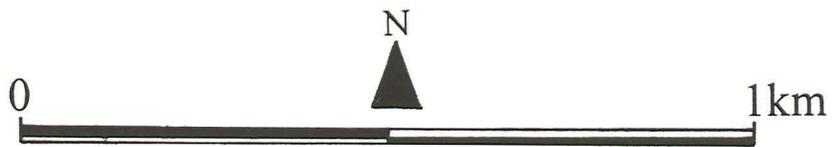
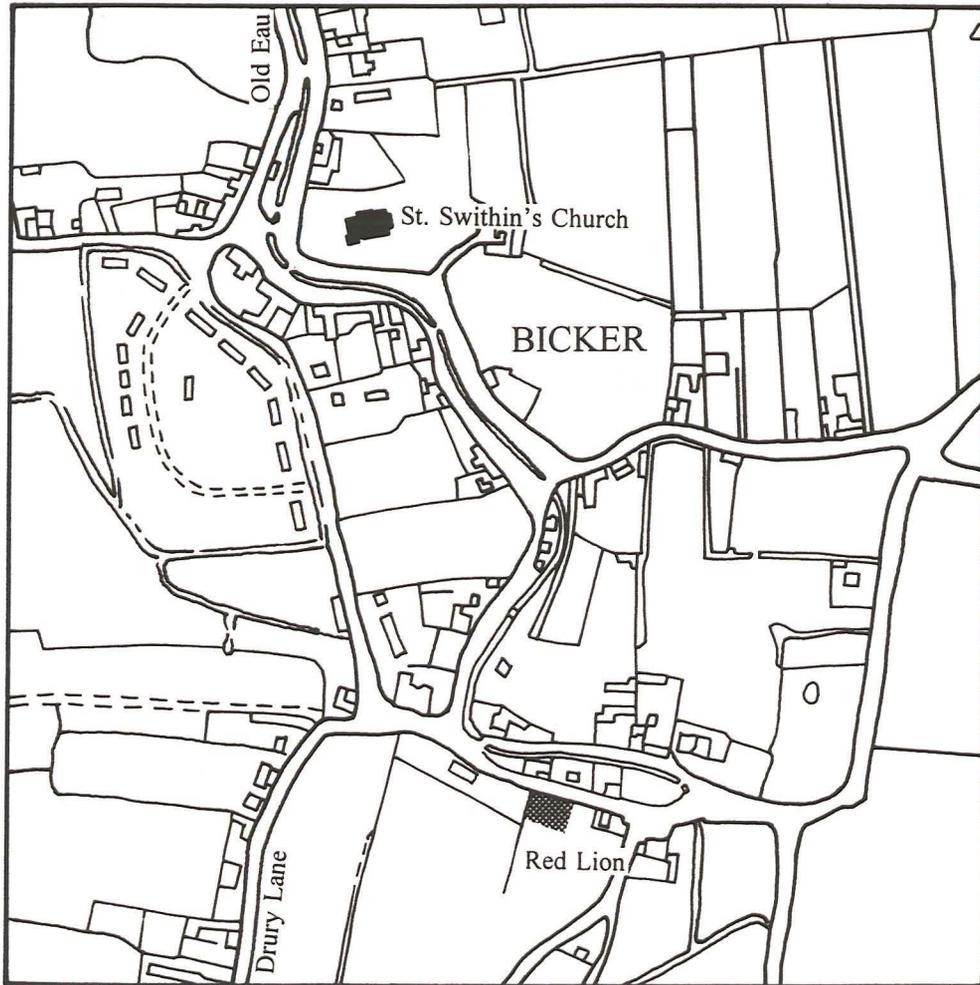


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



 Area of Development

Fig. 3 Area of Development

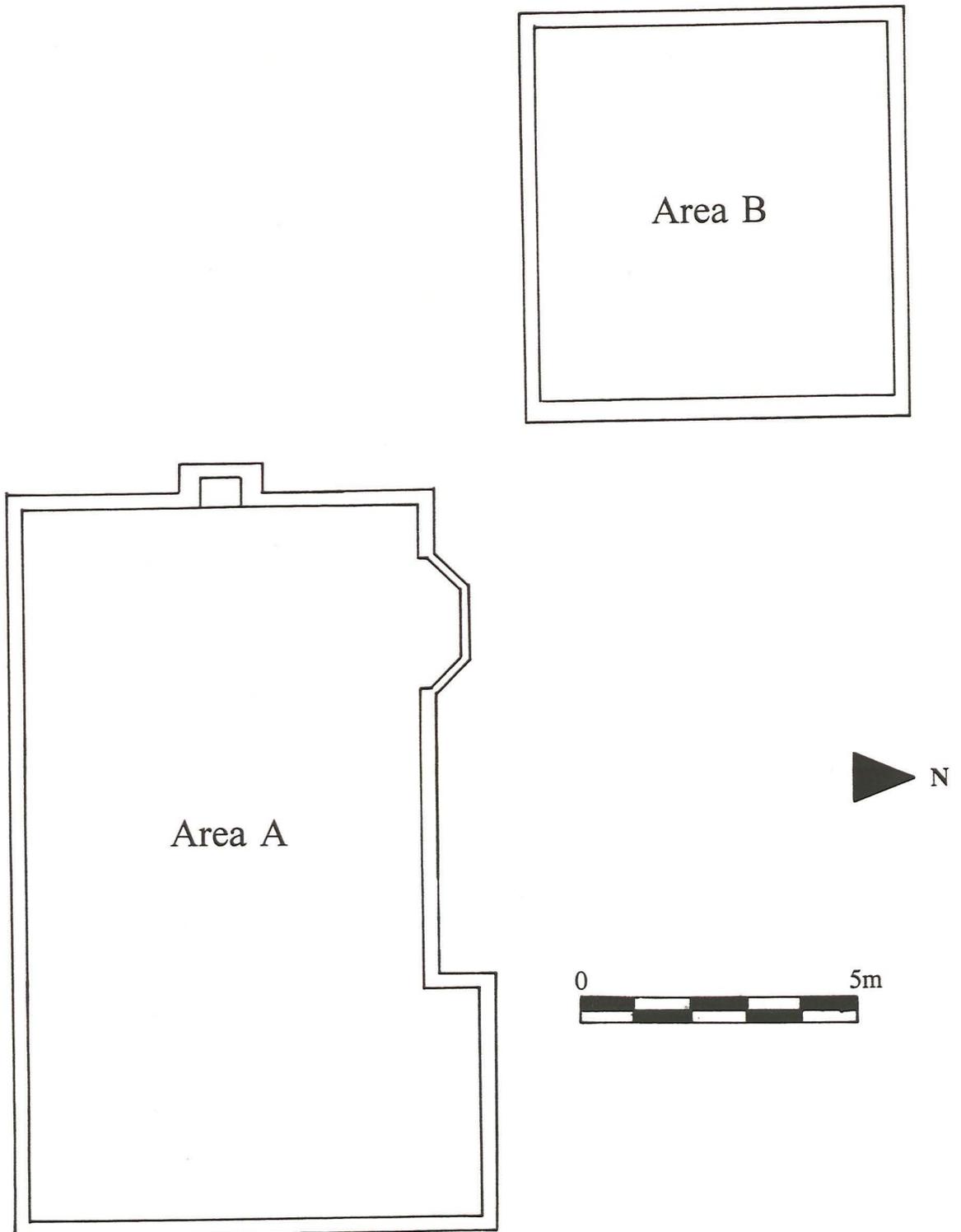
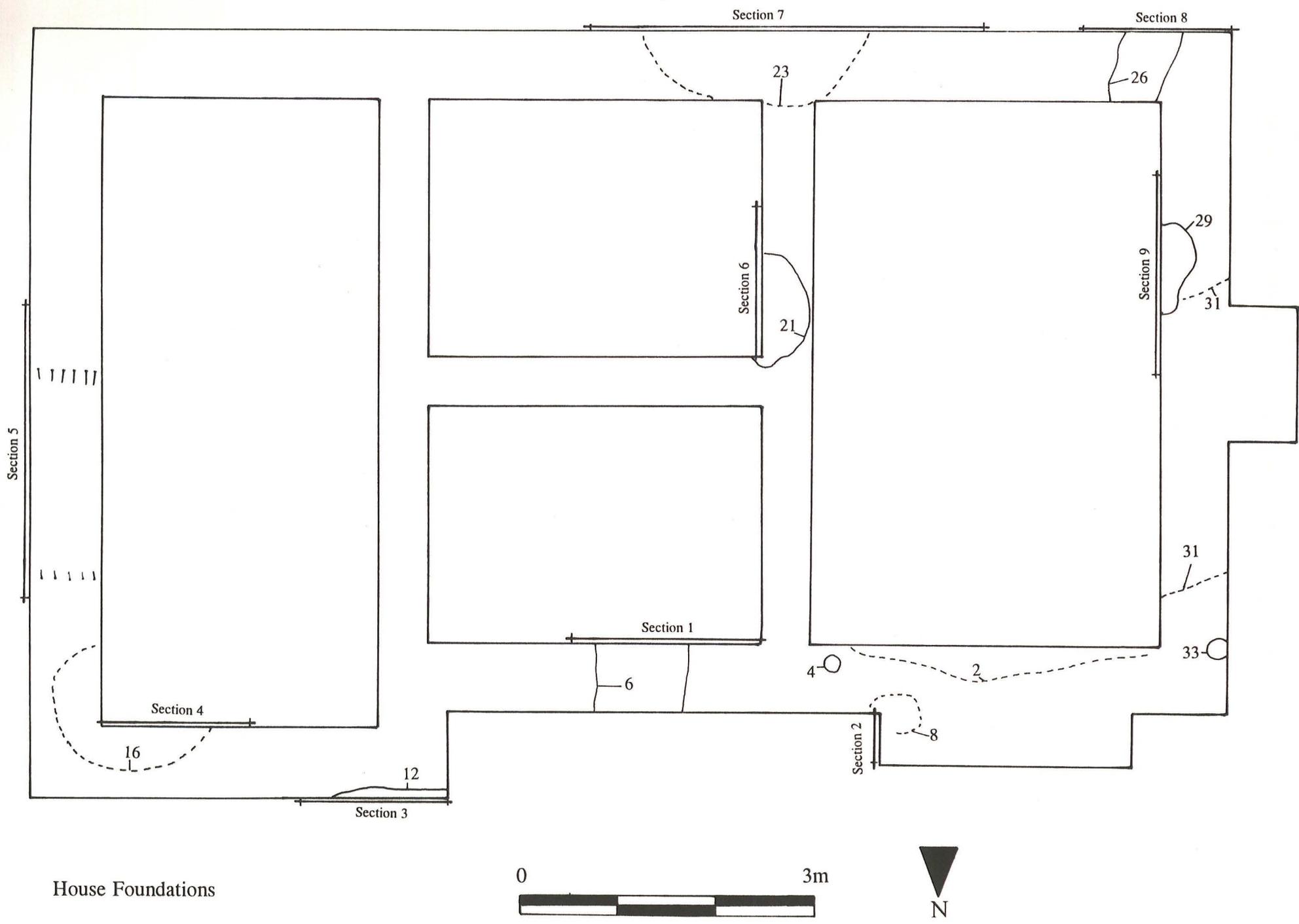


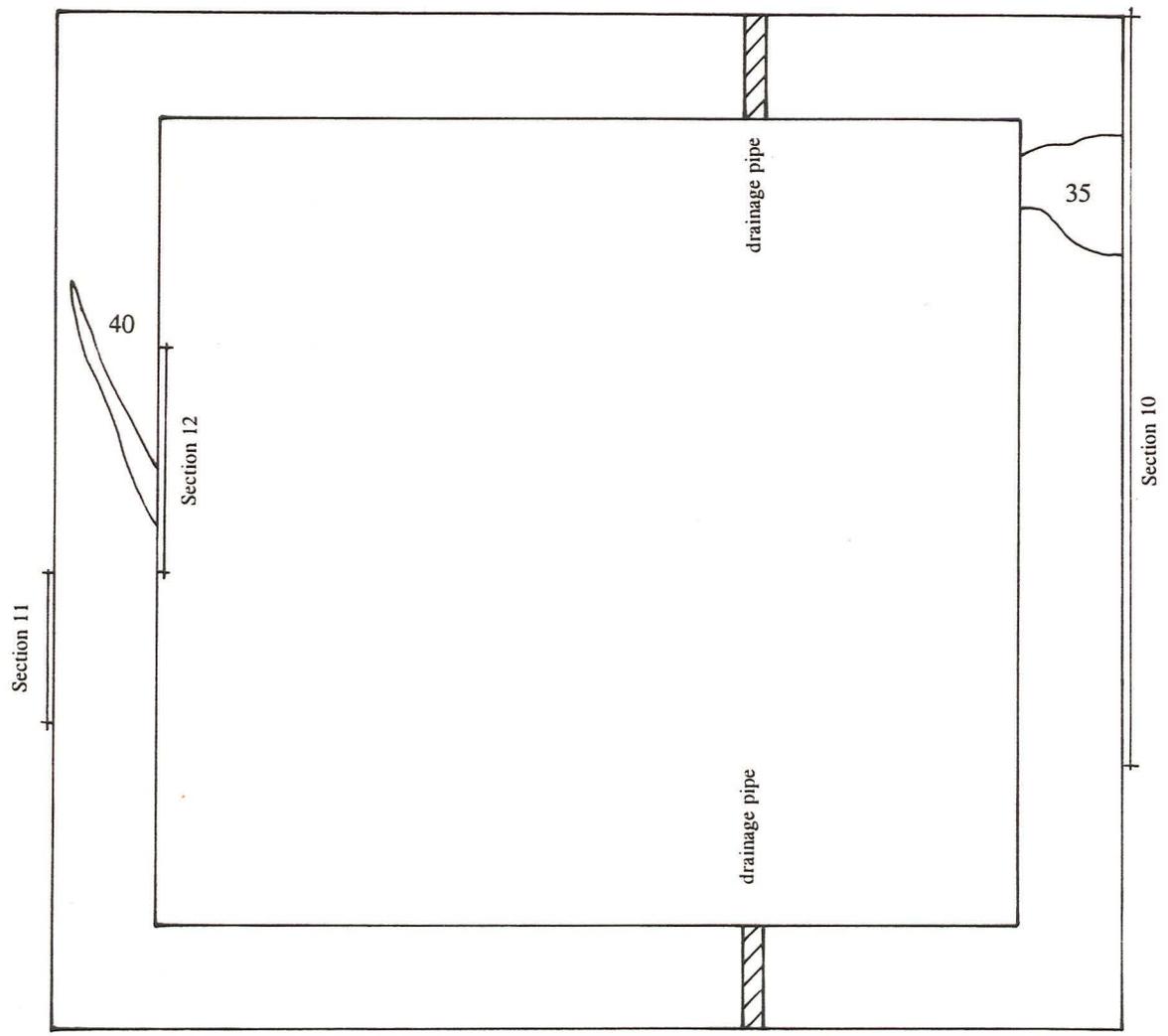
Fig. 4 Plan of Area A,  
showing Locations of Sections and Archaeological Remains



House Foundations

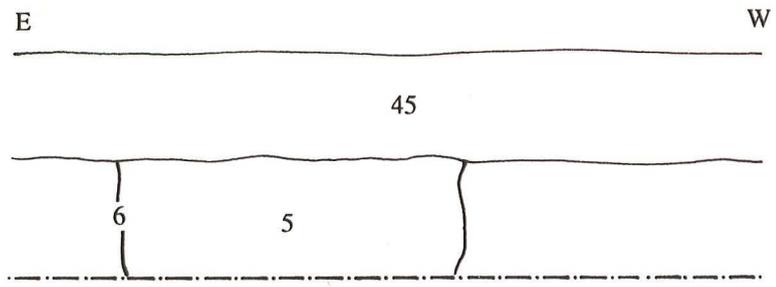


Fig. 5 Plan of Area B,  
showing Locations of Sections and Archaeological Remains

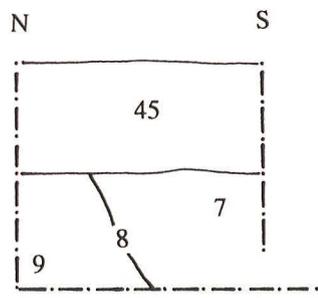


Garage Foundations

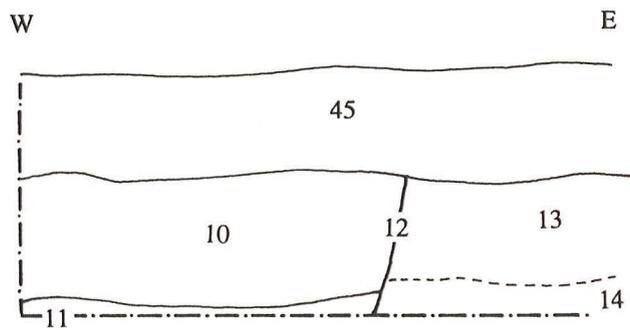




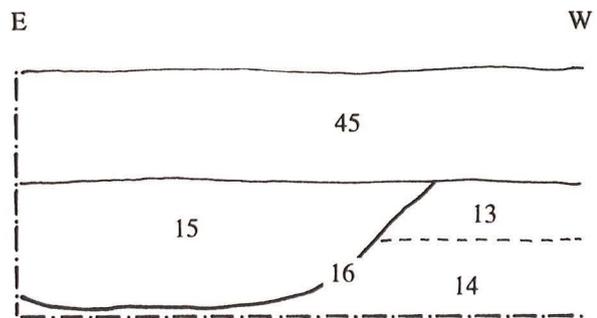
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

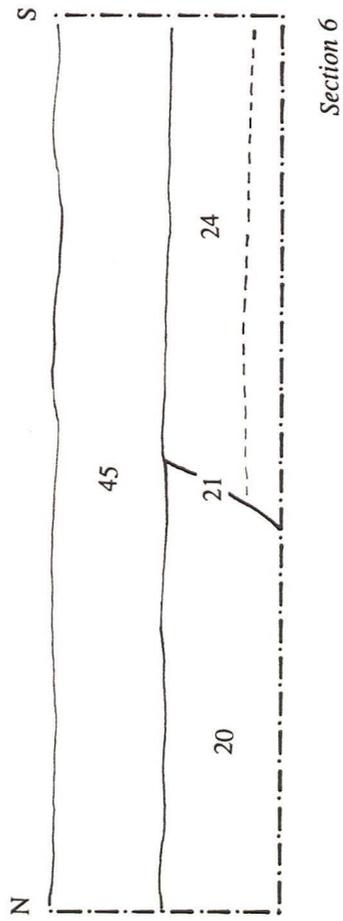
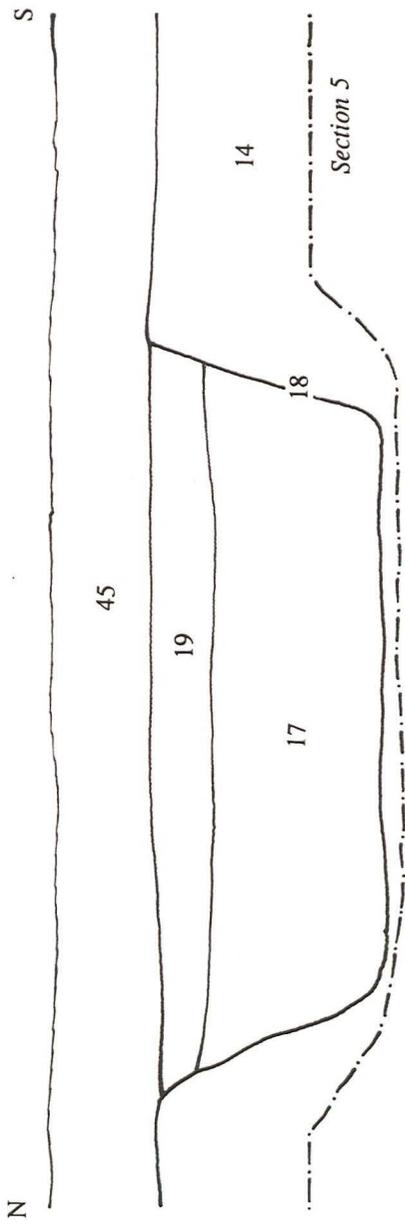


Section 4



Fig. 6 Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4

Fig. 7 Sections 5 and 6



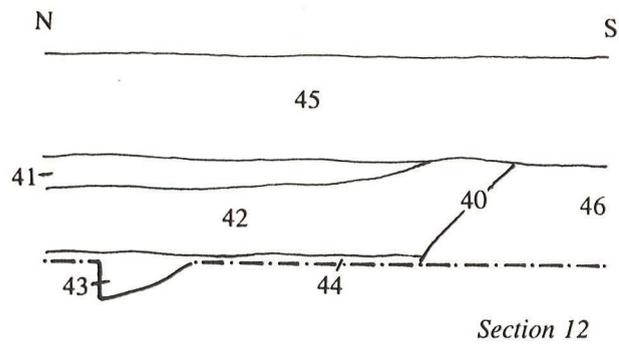
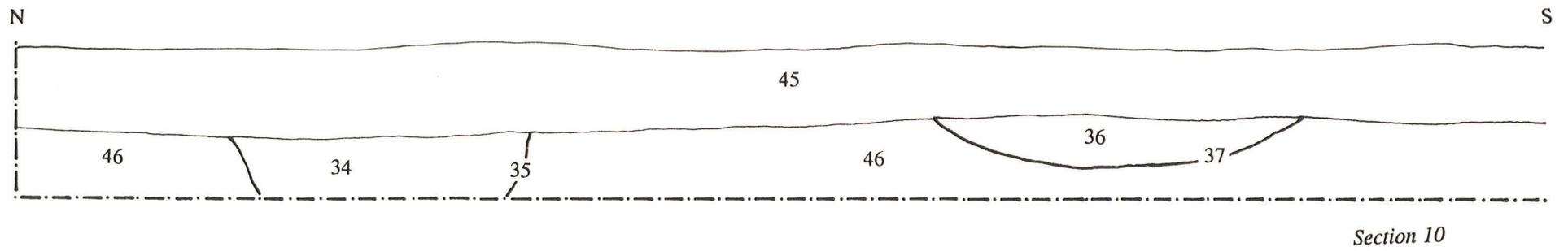
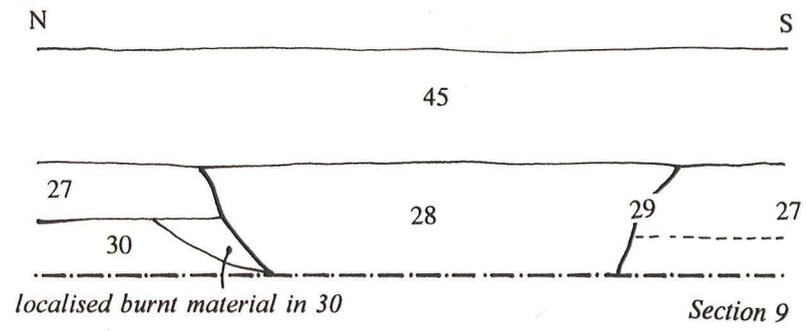
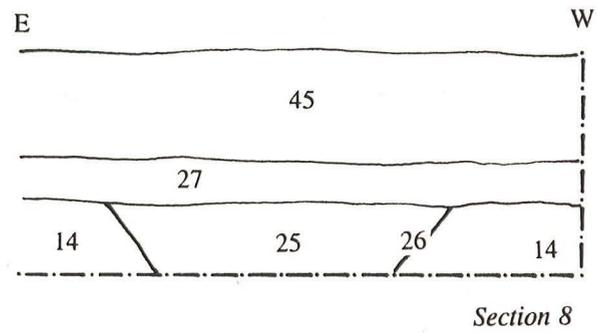


Fig. 8 Sections 8, 9, 10 and 12

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Context Summary.**

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
1	Brown silt	Fill of cut 2
2	Linear cut	Possible ditch or pit cut
3	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 4
4	Circular cut, 0.2m diam	Cut for posthole
5	Mid brown sandy silt	Fill of cut 6
6	Rectangular cut	Cut for pit
7	Dark brown silt	Fill of cut 8
8	Sub-rectangular cut 0.55 by 0.7m	Cut for a small pit
9	Greenish silt	Natural deposit
10	Dark brown silt	Fill of cut 12
11	Mid brown silt with rubble	Fill of cut 12
12	Uncertain cut, possibly linear	Cut for pit or foundation trench
13	Mid brown silt	Possible buried soil
14	Light brown silt	Natural deposit
15	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 16
16	Circular cut c. 1.3m diam	Cut for small pit
17	Red brown deposit	Fill of cut 18
18	Rectangular cut, 1.9 by 0.6m	Cut for pit
19	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 18
20	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 21
21	Oval cut, 1.2 by 0.7m	Cut for pit
22	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 23
23	Sub-circular cut, 1.6 by 0.8m	Cut for pit
24	Mid brown silt	Possible buried soil
25	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 26

26	Possible linear cut, 0.4m wide	Ditch cut
27	Mid brown silt	Possible buried soil
28	Mid brown silt	Fill of cut 29
29	Rectangular cut	Cut for pit
30	Mixed silt deposits	Fill of cut 31
31	Rectangular cut	Cut for pit
32	Dark brown silt	Fill of cut 33
33	Circular cut, 0.3m diam	Cut for posthole
34	Dark brown silt	Fill of cut 35
35	Sub-rectangular cut, 0.8 by 0.7m	Cut for pit
36	Reddish brown silt	Fill of 37
37	Shallow irregular cut	Cut for pit
38	Light brown silt	Possible natural deposit
39	Mid grey silt	Natural deposit
40	Uncertain cut, width 0.6m minimum	Possible pit cut
41	Light brown silt	Fill of 40
42	Greyish brown silt	Fill of 40
43	Light brown silt	Fill of 40
44	Mid grey silt	Fill of 40
45	Dark greyish brown silt	Topsoil
46	Light brown silt	Natural deposit

## APPENDIX 2

### The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 46 . . Context records
- 2 . . . Photographic records
- 9 . . . Scale drawings
- 2 . . . Stratigraphic matrices
- 1 . . . bag of finds

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 144:94

A.P.S. project code: BRL94