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4026**ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS, BOOKER SEEDS, BOSTON ROAD, SLEAFORD.**

The site is currently owned by Booker Estates, who wish to sell the site on to a developer with the view of constructing a residential development. The area covered by the site is, 10.52 hectares, of which approximately 2% has been exposed.

The site lies to the south of Boston Road, Sleaford, and is situated less than 500m to the south of excavations at Old Place and the 1989 excavation at Boston Road. A saxon cemetery lies a similar distance to the south-west.

research into the history of the site revealed that " Mareham Lane ", the main roman road from Bourne to Lincoln, crossed the site, north-south. Being so close to the known iron-age and roman centre of Sleaford it was hoped that we might uncover roman "strip" buildings lying to either side of the road. A search through the Aerial photographic collection, at Cambridge University revealed only the line of Mareham Lane. A initial geophysical survey of the site also proved negative as the ground conditions were not favourable.

The initial site investigation was based upon these known facts, and it was not until the excavation by machine of trial trenches, did the full archaeological significance of the sites potential come to light.

The insertion of the trial trenches revealed the line of Mareham Lane, which survives on the site at the north-end as a metalled surface, becoming a trackway further to the south. Later surfaces present, and the finds recovered from them, Suggests that Mareham Lane had been in use up until the late medieval period. Occupation in some form or other, occurs over the majority of the sites 10.52 hectares. Post-hole structures of probable medieval date have been recorded fronting onto Mareham lane, unfortunately the exact size and nature of these structures is not known. Ditches, running mainly parallel to the roman road have been recorded. Material recovered from these lead us to believe that they are of roman, saxo-norman and medieval date. Concentrations of post-holes have also been recorded suggesting structures relating to Mareham Lane, unfortunately no complete structure has been exposed. Although a possibly complete four posted structure recorded, is very similar in its dimensions to granaries recorded at Danebury and other parts of the country where they are iron-age in date.

Towards the south of the site, a large enclosure has been recorded. upon further examination this feature appears to be a large rectangular palisade enclosure. Pottery recovered from the fills of the many large close-set post-holes is well stratified and gives a reliable middle iron-age date for the enclosure's destruction/abandonment. The post holes have an average diameter of 0.50m and some appear to have been replaced, suggesting an established settlement. A possible entrance has been recorded lying on the eastern side of the enclosure, respecting and fronting onto a fore-runner of Mareham Lane. . The full extent of the enclosure is not known as only two of its sides have been exposed, these are approximately 40.00m in length. No evidence has yet been found for areas of occupation lying within the enclosure, this could lie under the un-excavated sections or could have been truncated by the many later features crossing the site. An

internal division of the enclosure has been recorded and this initially appears to have been constructed by the same method as the outer palisade, with large upright timbers set very close together.

Very few finds have been recovered from the site, though the surfaces of Mareham Lane have produced Roman and medieval coinage, a large quantity of iron nails as well as a near complete medieval iron spur.

No parallels are known for the site. Discussions with both, Peter Chowme and Andrew Fitzgerald have taken place, and both are of the opinion that, if iron-age, the site is not only unique to Lincolnshire but also to low-lying Britain and therefore is of great regional and national importance.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION, SLEAFORD.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY.

The above site lies less than 500m to the south of excavations at Old Place and the 1989 excavation at Boston Road. A saxon cemetery lies a similar distance to the south-west.

Up until the 1960's little was known about the iron-age occupation of Sleaford and its importance. When excavations at Old Place were undertaken and evidence of in excess of 5000 coin mould blanks were discovered, this was the largest find of its type in iron-age Europe. Dating evidence recovered showed the site to be late iron-age and suggested that the site grew in importance in the latter half of the first century B.C. Due to the small scale of the excavation, the Old Sleaford site revealed little of its size. No evidence was recorded for pre-roman structures. One theory for the presence of the coin moulds is that it was the site of an *Oppidum*, or tribal centre. More recent excavations at Old Place have yielded evidence of further iron-age and roman activity.

No evidence of saxon structures have been recorded, though Sleaford is the site of a large pagan cemetery, (see location plan). The presence of such a large cemetery suggests a related settlement existed in the immediate area.

Late saxon occupation again is slight. The extinct medieval church of St. Giles/ All Saints of Old Sleaford, has been discovered and is interesting in that it overlies part of the roman road.

THE SITE.

The site now under excavation, is owned by Booker Estates Plc, who wish to sell the site on for the purposes of constructing a residential development. The area of the site is, 10.52 hectares, of which approximately 2% has been exposed.

Our initial research into the history of the site revealed that "Mareham Lane", the main roman road from Bourne to Lincoln, crossed the site, north-south. Being so close to the known iron-age and roman centre there was a possibility of roman "strip" buildings lying to either side of the road. A search through the Aerial photographic collection, at Cambridge University revealed only the line of Mareham Lane. A geophysical survey of the site also proved negative as the ground conditions were not favourable.

The initial costing's for the sites investigation were based upon these known facts, and it was not until the excavation by machine of long trial trenches, did the full archaeological significance of the sites potential come to light.

Not only did the insertion of the trial trenches reveal the line of Mareham Lane, which survives on the site at the north-end in very good condition and appears to have been in use up until the late medieval period. but that occupation in some form or other, occurs over the majority of the site. Post-hole structures of probable medieval date have been discovered fronting onto Mareham lane, the exact size of these structures is not known. Ditch systems, running mainly parallel to the roman road have been recorded, datable material recovered from these lead us to believe that they are of roman, saxo-norman and medieval date. Other features uncovered have been, concentrations of post-holes again suggesting structures related to Mareham Lane. One in particular, a four post structure is similar to granaries recorded in other parts of the country where they are iron-age in date.

Towards the south of the site, a large enclosure has been recorded, (see enclosed sketch). This feature upon further examination appears to be a rectangular palisade enclosure. Pottery recovered from the fills of the many large close-set post-holes ~~is well~~ is well stratified and gives a reliable middle iron-age date for the enclosure's destruction/abandonment. A possible entrance has been recorded, lying on the eastern side of the enclosure, respecting and fronting onto a fore-runner of Mareham Lane. Evidence for iron working has been recovered, in the form of Iron slag. The full area covered by this enclosure is not known as only two of its sides have been exposed, these are approximately 40.00m x 40.00m long. No evidence has yet been found for areas of occupation within the enclosure, although this could lie under the un-excavated sections. An internal division of the enclosure has been recorded and this appears initially to have been constructed using the same method as the outer palisade, with large upright timbers set very close together. No parallels are known for the site. Discussions with both, Peter Chowme and Andrew Fitzgerald have taken place concerning the site, and both are of the opinion that, if Iron-age, the site is unique to low-lying Britain and therefore is of great importance, nationally.

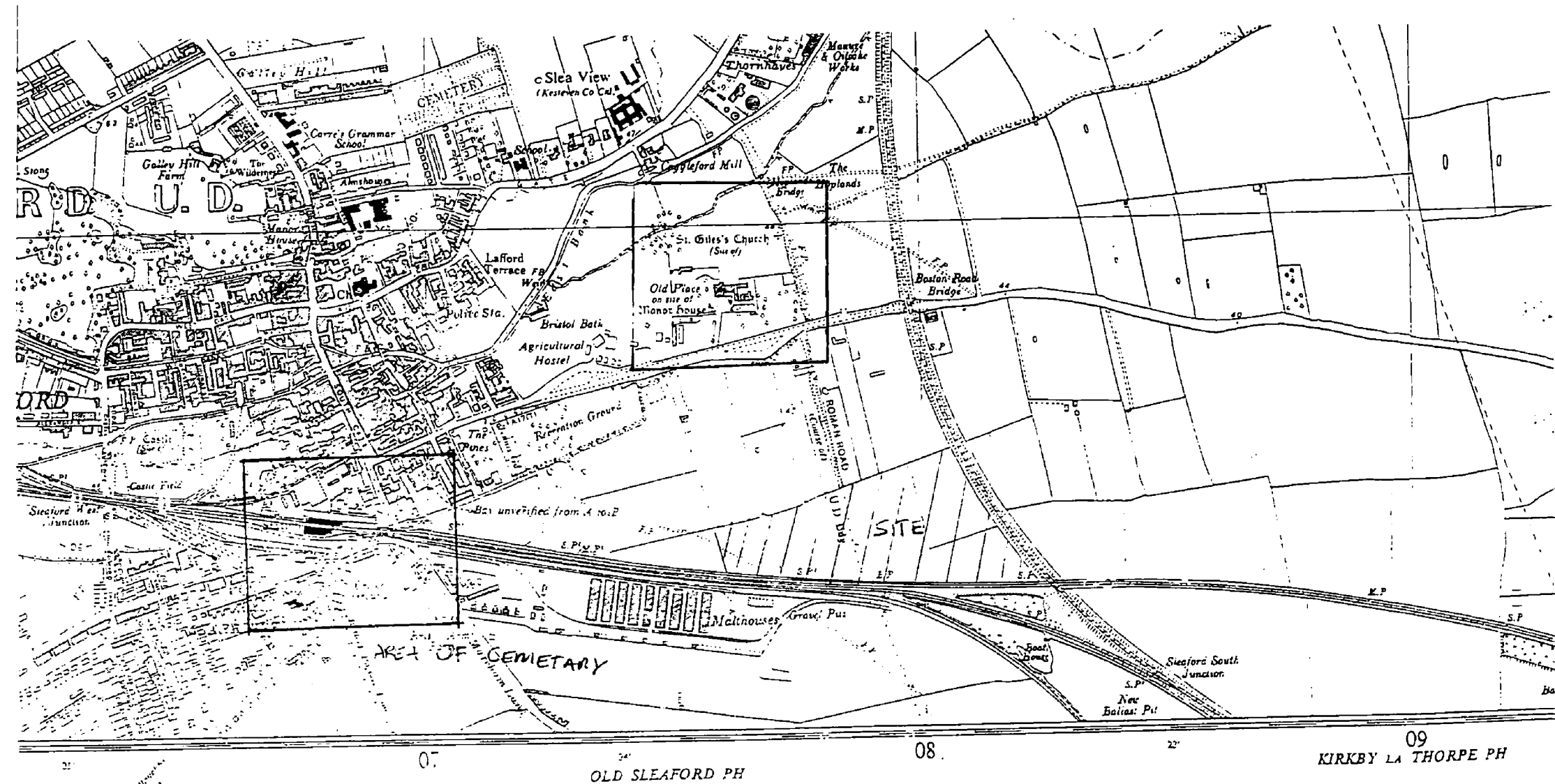
ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES.

The excavation of the site though begun in October has only recently started to reveal its full archaeological potential. Unfortunately our funded time on the site is coming to an end, with little hope of obtaining further funding from the owner of the site. The TLA, therefore requests that ~~the TLA~~ consider the funding of further excavations upon the site in order for us to achieve certain academic objectives.

- i), Understand the nature and significance of the Palisade enclosure, and it's relationship to both the Iron-Age mint at Old Place and to Mareham lane.
- ii), To understand the relationship between Mareham Lane and the ditches present upon the site.
- iii), To understand the other post-hole structures present and their relationships to each other and to Mareham Lane.
- iv), To reveal the extent of the occupation of the site and to phase this evidence into known periods of occupation.
- v), To reveal the interface between the metalled and un-metalled roman road/track and to determine whether this represents a formal entrance to the roman town.

The owner of the site has been approached for further funding, but it is unlikely that this will be forthcoming.

BOSTON ROAD, SLEAFORD, SITE LOCATION PLAN



OLD SLEAFORD PH

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KIRKBY LA THORPE PH

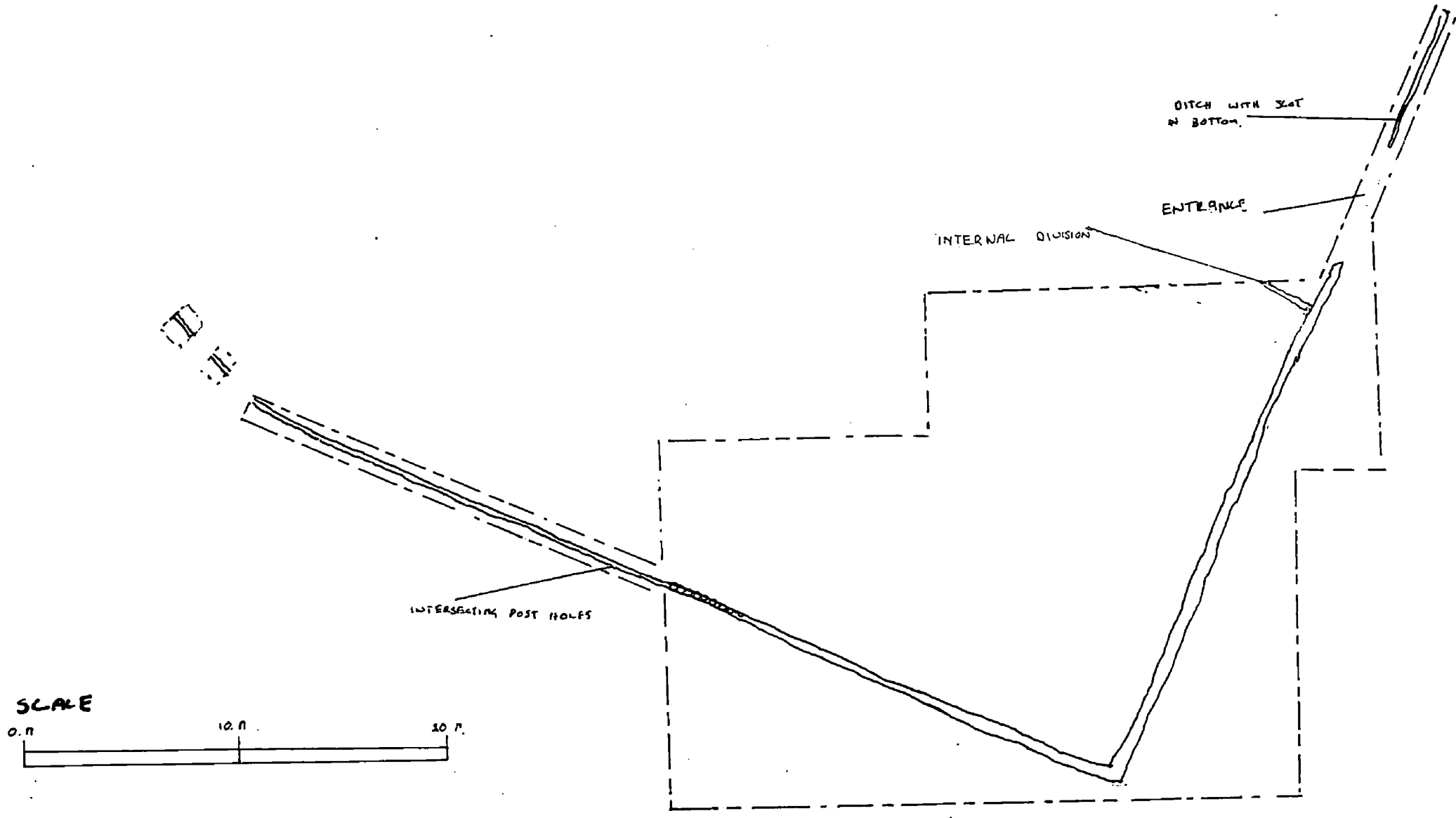
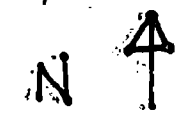
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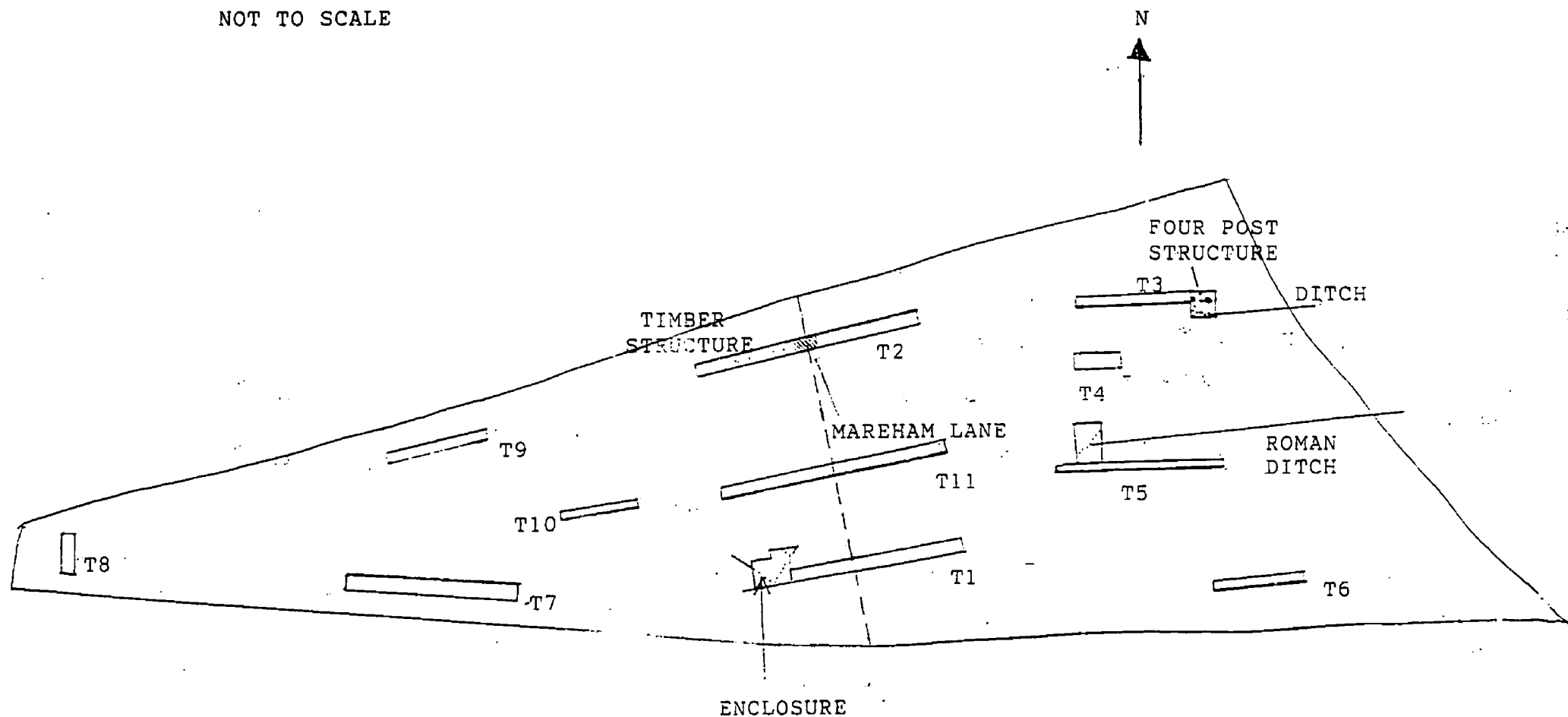
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BOOKER SEEDS SITE. BOSTON ROAD, SLEAFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE.

TRENCH 1. ENCLOSURE.



BOOKER SEEDS SITE
BOSTON ROAD, SLEAFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE
TRENCH LOCATIONS
NOT TO SCALE



All trenches contain archaeological features.