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Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
Horseshoe Yard, Crowland,  
by  
Heritage Lincolnshire  
  
on behalf of  
C & B Construction Ltd.,  
during August - September 1991.

## SUMMARY

On the 30th August and 3rd September 1991, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Horseshoe Yard, Broadway, Crowland, Lincolnshire (N.G.R. TF 237100) by Heritage Lincolnshire on behalf of C and B Construction Ltd., during the excavation of foundation trenches for a residential unit.

The foundation trenches exposed a series of deposits datable to the end of the nineteenth century and interpreted as the remains of a builder's yard, and debris from a recently demolished petrol station.

No evidence of occupation prior to the nineteenth century was located.

Sealed by the nineteenth century archaeology were three deposits of clay and a layer of peat. This sequence overlay undisturbed gravel, which is thought to form the Bronze Age land surface.

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## Introduction

On the 30th August and the 3rd September 1991, an archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on behalf of C and B Construction Ltd., at Horseshoe Yard, Broadway, Crowland, Lincolnshire (T.F. 237100) by Heritage Lincolnshire (see Fig. 1). The aim of the work was to establish the extent and significance of any surviving archaeology during the excavation of foundation trenches for a residential unit. Prior to redevelopment the site was used as a petrol station and had been a builders yard before that.

The town of Crowland exists on the north-east promontory of a gravel peninsula surrounded by fen deposits. Very little is known about the town's archaeological history before the establishment of Crowland Abbey.

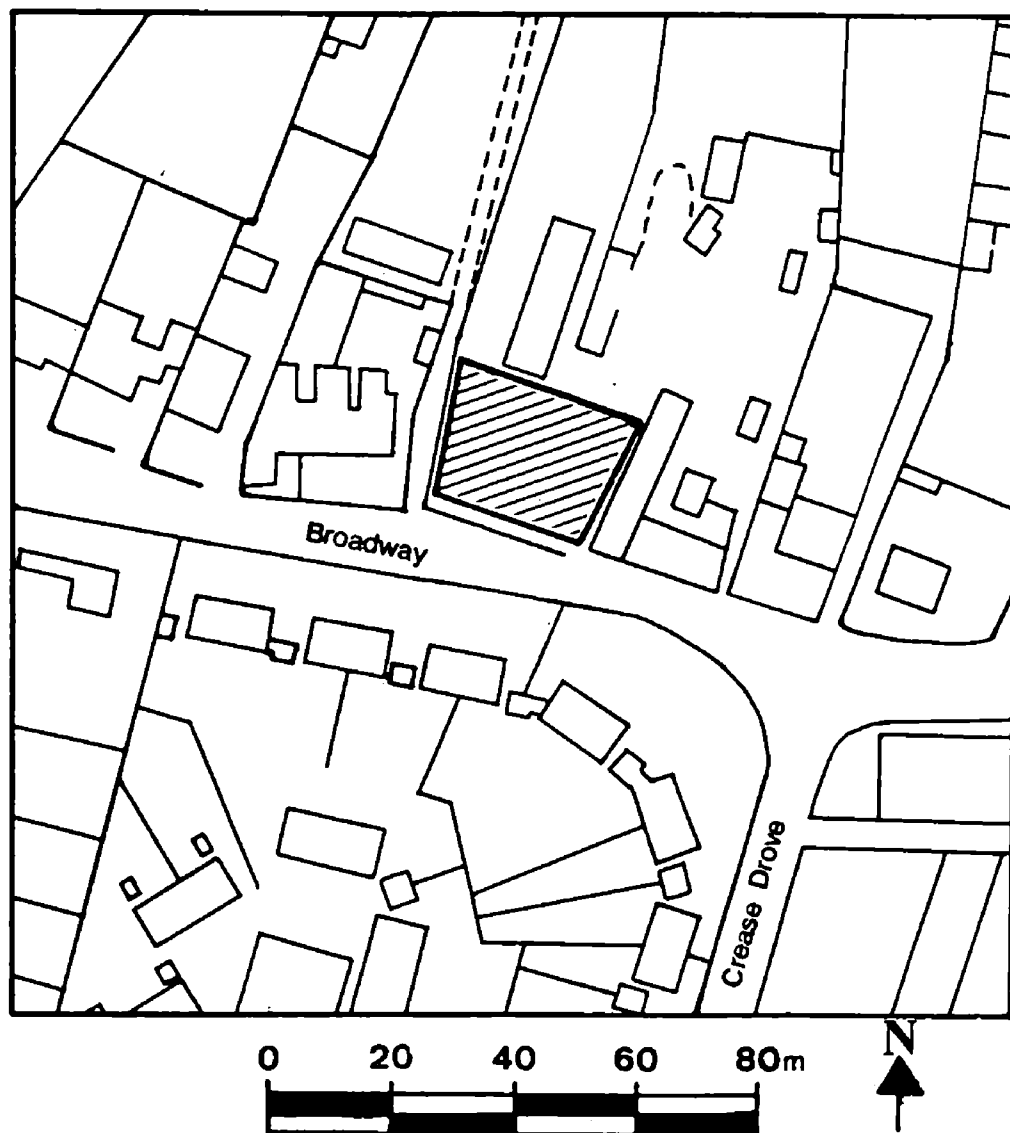
The earliest evidence of human activity in the area is neolithic, in the form of stone axes, other flint implements and a few sherds of early prehistoric pottery. During the early Bronze Age a barrow cemetery was constructed along the axis of the peninsula after which the area became unsuitable for human habitation and it is not until the arrival of St. Guthlac in 716 A.D. that the area now occupied by the modern town once again saw human activity.

^ Roman?

The period following St. Guthlac's arrival saw the beginnings of the formation of the town of Crowland, associated with the establishment of the Benedictine Abbey. Crowland became an important economic, religious and political centre for the area. However, after the dissolution of the abbey in 1536, Crowland's importance in the fens rapidly diminished.

Post war housing and industrial developments now surround the abbey and obscure most of the historic and archaeological features of the town. Crowland is well known for its ruined abbey and the unusual, triangular medieval bridge but otherwise little evidence survives of the town's rich medieval heritage. It is therefore, important that every opportunity is taken to investigate the archaeological stratigraphy revealed in modern foundation or service trenches.

**FIG. 1**  
**SITE LOCATION**



### Archaeological Methodology

The recording of the archaeology took the form of:

- 1). a unique number and written description of each archaeological context.
- 2). a section drawing at 1:10 scale.
- 3). a photographic record.

### Watching Brief Results

Section 1, located in the south-eastern part of the site (see Fig. 2) revealed four archaeological and five natural contexts, [001] to [004] and [005] to [009] respectively. (See Fig. 3).

Layer [001] was 0.41m thick and comprised fragments of tile, brick and Type 2 ballast (crushed granite). Beneath [001] lay [002], a layer of crushed tile fragments 0.02m thick which in turn overlay [003], a layer of grey-brown sandy silt 0.10m thick containing inclusions of pea-gravel. Layer [003] sealed layer [004], a hard black deposit comprising 90% crushed cinder fragments and 10% tile and pottery fragments. Layer [004] was 0.15m thick. The pottery included in [004] has been dated to approximately 1890.

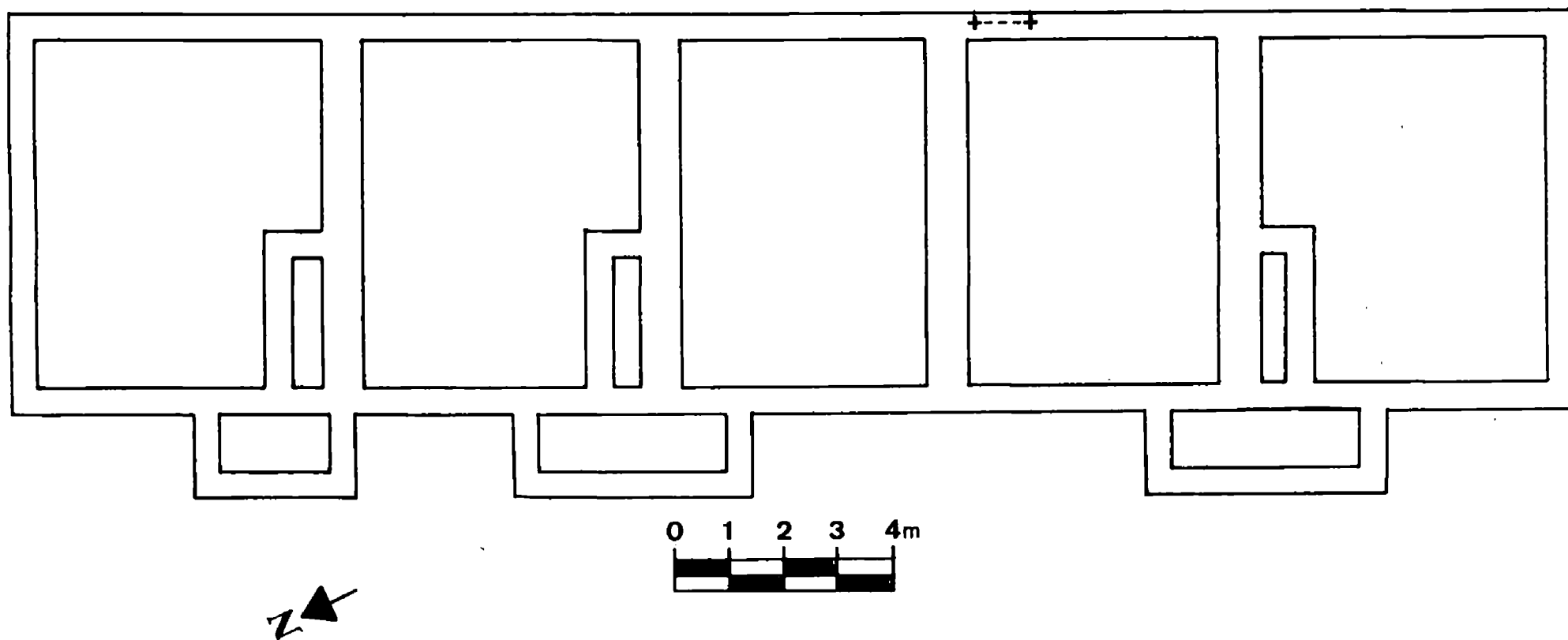
Beneath [004] lay [005], a stiff dark grey, silty clay 0.09m thick which sealed [006] a firm grey clay 0.38m thick. [006] overlay [007] a thin layer (0.15m) of soft dark brown peat, beneath which was [008] a 1.20m layer of light grey sandy clay. Finally this sealed a grey coarse gravel [009], of which only the surface was revealed, 2.50m below the present ground surface.



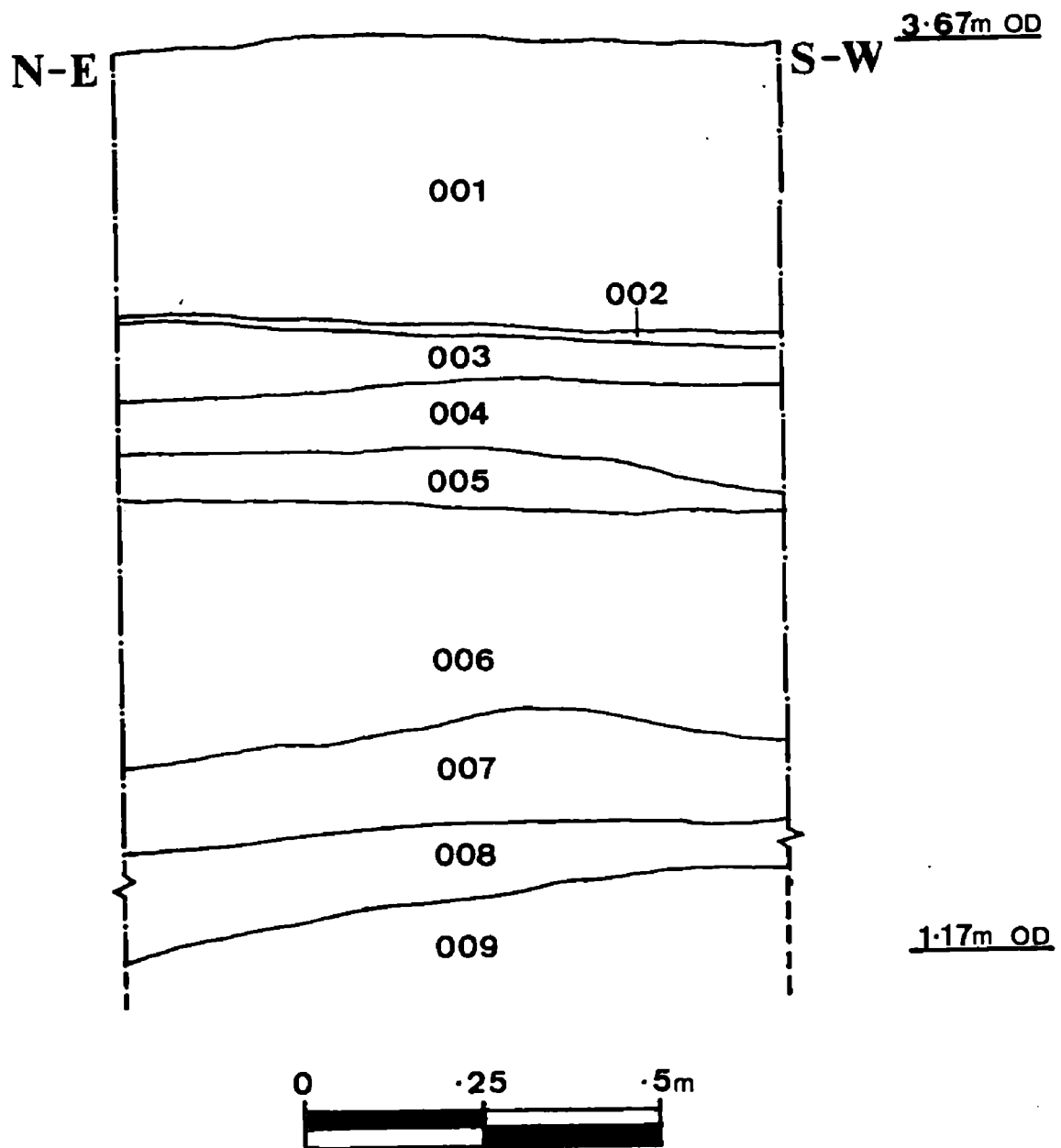
The stratigraphic sequence revealed by section 1 was representative of the whole site. Therefore, only this section was recorded.

**FIG. 2**

**FOUNDATION LAYOUT - SHOWING POSITION OF SECTION 1**



**FIG 3**  
**SECTION 1**



## Conclusion

Archaeological contexts [001], [002] and [003] probably represent all that is left of the petrol station which once occupied the site, [001] representing the remnants of demolition debris. [004] may be the remains of the original surface of the builders yard. Because of the clear distinction between [004] and [005], it is likely that the surface of [005] was removed, along with any existing top soil during the construction of the builders yard.

The layers of clay [005], [006] and [008] and of peat [007], cover the gravel which formed the original early Bronze Age land surface. The clay and peat were probably deposited during episodes of flooding - some of them sustained.

### Acknowledgements

Heritage Lincolnshire would like to thank the following for their assistance with the archaeological work: C and B Construction Ltd., for funding the watching brief and post-excavation analysis; Mr. Arthur Chapman for his ready help on site; Miss Hilary Healey for dating the pottery; Mr. Tom Lane for making available his work on the history of Crowland and the site team who undertook the work.

*As not mentioned elsewhere in the document*

### Bibliography

Hayes, P. P., and Lane, T., Lincolnshire Survey: The South-West Fens in East Anglian Archaeology No 65 (Forthcoming).