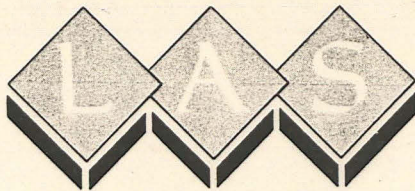


ELI 545

SLI 5329

PRN 52201 92/1



OSGODBY HOUSE, MAIN ST, OSGODBY
Archaeological Watching Brief

LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

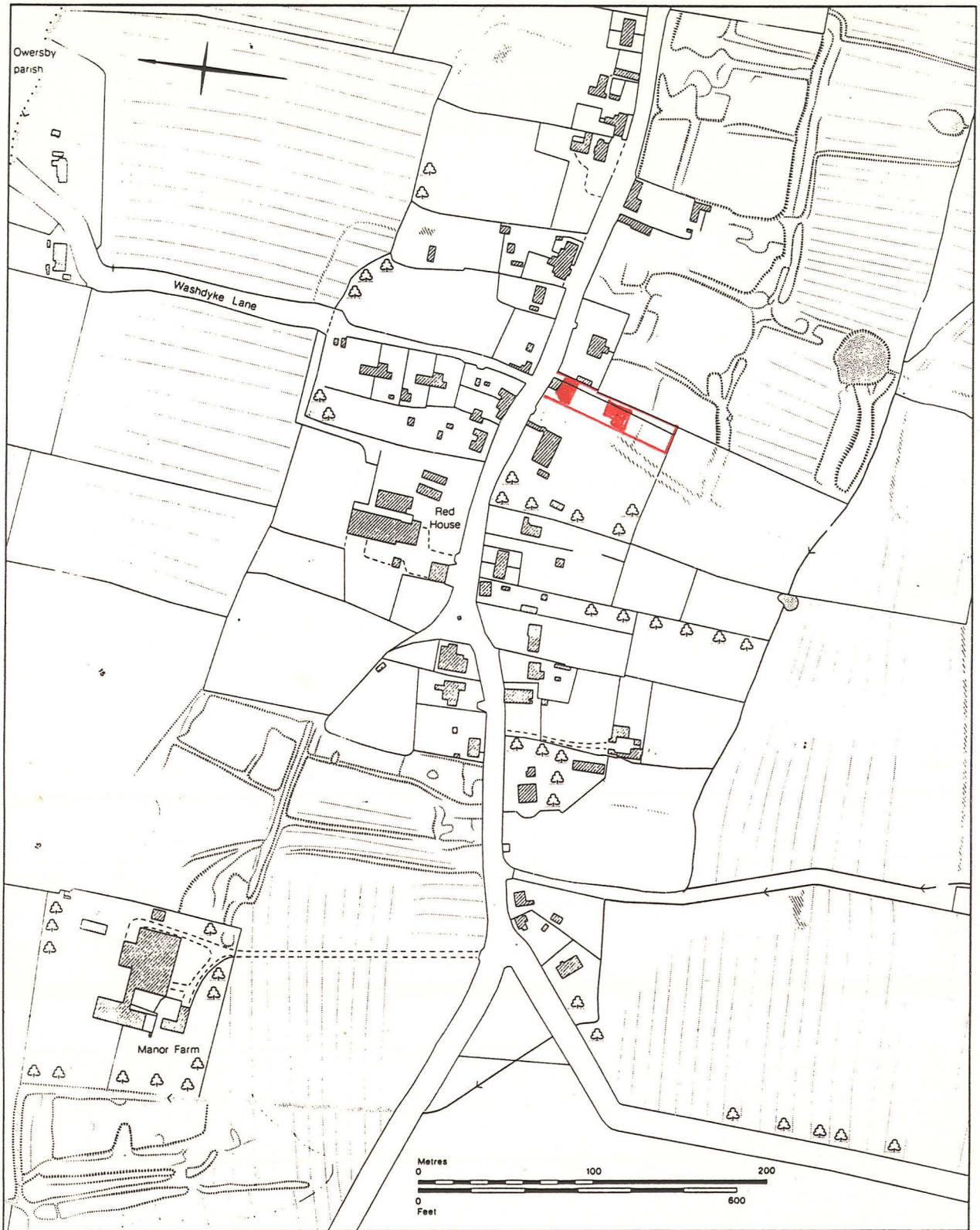


Fig.1 Osgodby village earthwork survey (RCHM) with location of site marked in red.

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OSGODBY HOUSE, MAIN ST, OSGODBY Archaeological Watching Brief

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was kept during ground preparation and foundation and service trenching for a new detached house on land east of, and once belonging to, Osgodby House. The work was carried out by Lindsey Archaeological Services on behalf of the County Archaeological Officer.

Photographs referred to in the text are prefixed with the letter P and may be found in the accompanying album.

Background

The development site lies opposite Washdyke Lane and to the east of the Green. The land also included an access road which overlies medieval earthworks, leading from the Main St through to the fields east and south of Osgodby House. The fields, which are under pasture, contain further earthwork remains of the medieval village and its surrounding ridge and furrow. A survey of the settlement remains was carried out in early 1980s (Fig. 1) (Everson et al 1991, 145). This shows that the development site was in the heart of the medieval village.

Results

1. Parking Area (Fig.2)

An area c. 12.50m x 7.50m at the front of the plot and close to Main St was levelled for a parking space. (Demolition of the existing garage and construction of a new one has been deferred until a later date.) The ground slopes steeply at this point and the cleared area cut into the orchard to the south. The ground was lowered by 0.45m to the north and west but a maximum of 1.10m was removed on the south side of the plot (P1).

The soil had been disturbed before and contained quantities of 18th-20th century pottery and clay pipes. These were not collected. There was also a small quantity of animal bone, including at least two ?recent burials of pets.

The soil clearance reached the natural orange sand and several features were visible at this level. These comprised a ditch (1) running west-east c. 1.50-1.70m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.24m (P2,3,4). At its east end was a large patch of very dark grey-brown sand (2) (P5). It was not possible to investigate this feature because it lay across the site access. It was at least 5.50m in length and its east side ran beneath the east boundary wall of the development site. It also ran beneath the south-east corner of the garage and part of its profile was revealed when a service trench was dug (P6).

An oval post-hole (3) was found within this feature, which measured 0.36 x 0.30m and was at least 0.30m deep (P7,8). It is possible that feature 2 was a large rubbish pit but the absence of pottery and bone finds which would have been

expected, and the presence of a substantial post-hole suggests that it might have been a grubenhaus (a sunken floored hut, typical of the Saxon period).

Very few finds were made in this area, the most important of which was a large rim sherd of a hand-made jar. This vessel has been identified as being early-mid Saxon and most probably late 7th century in date. Its fabric was tempered with greensand and is of a previously unknown type, although its form is reminiscent of pottery found at Maxey (Cambs.). Further investigation of this vessel together with other material from the site will be undertaken as part of the East Midlands Anglo-Saxon pottery project funded by the British Academy.

2. The House Area (Fig.3)

The house is positioned c.32m south of the street frontage and c. 18m south of the parking area. It covers an area c.14m x 11m, extending across almost the full width of the plot. The turf was stripped to a depth of c.0.20m before the foundation trenches were dug.

During the machine trenching a few pottery sherds were found in the topsoil zone where no individual features could be identified (P9). These were in a shell-tempered fabric typical of the Lincoln Kiln type of 11th century date.

Only the deepest features could be identified, when their fill contrasted with the orange and white natural sand. The system of foundation trenches allowed only a conjectural correlation between the features which were only observed in the sides of the trenches. These are shown on Fig.3 and comprised several ditches or gullies, a large pit (7) and a possible smaller pit (17). **The most interesting of these was the pit 7** which contained pottery sherds from several early Saxon vessels dating from the late 6th-7th centuries.

Only a limited amount of recording could be carried out because the foundation trenches were very narrow, so it was not always clear whether features located in the sides of the trenches were related to others nearby. Fig.3 shows an interpretation of some of the features.

Features located in the foundation trenches

5 Ditch E-W. Rounded base, surviving width 0.50m, originally perhaps up to 1.30m wide (P10,11).

6 Ditch NE-SW. V-cross-section with slightly convex sides. Bottom of ditch below trench bottom. Minimum width 1.20m. Dark brown soil fill (P12).

7 Pit. Parallel sides aligned roughly N-S. Possibly sub-rectangular with radiused ends. Near vertical, slightly concave, sides. Minimum length 2.50m, minimum width 3.25m, minimum depth 1m. Very dark brown fill. The base of this

feature lay 0.60m below the footings trench. The fill had to be removed for structural reasons, and was part-excavated by hand. The full surviving height was c.1.20m (P15-23).

This pit may have been a cess pit also used for disposal of domestic rubbish. Contents included large quantities of animal bone, some with evidence of butchering and several sherds of late 6th-7th century Saxon pottery.

8 Ditch? E-W. Unclear

9 Ditch NE-SW. Part of or adjoining 6. Concave sides, rounded base. Width of north section c.1.10m, surviving depth 0.40m. Dark brown fill (P12-14).

10 Pit? Shape uncertain. Minimum 1x 1.25m. Contained several large animal bones

11 Ditch N-S. Minimum width 0.95m, minimum recorded length 3.25m. V-section, flat base (P24).

12 Ditch N-S. Minimum width 0.40m, minimum length 2.75m. Parallel to, and possibly cut by, ditch 11. U-section (P24).

14 Ditch N-S. Width 0.50m, minimum length 1m.

15 Pit? shape uncertain. c.2.50m wide. Contained animal bones

16 Ditch/pit? unclear feature

17 Small pit? Width 0.70m

Discussion

Everson (1991) proposed a development of the village layout based on the surviving medieval earthworks together with the documentary evidence. He argued that the core of the village may have been west of Osgodby House, incorporating the triangular green. He further suggested that the regular plots of land east of Osgodby House were a planned addition to the original settlement. The development site is located at a critical point, at the junction of these two elements, with the most westerly regular plot boundary running through the site.

The pottery evidence from the watching brief suggests that the early Saxon settlement extended at least as far as Washdyke Lane but may have shrunk a little before expanding again at a later date. The small survey area and the few finds mean that interpretation can only be provisional but there is a gap in finds from the late 7th to the 11th century and it may be that the regular plots of land which survive as earthworks may and identified by Everson as a planned element in the village may be an expansion over an area of the settlement abandoned 300 years earlier.

Conclusion

Much housing development in villages comprises infill of small plots of land between existing houses. It is clear from the watching brief at Osgodby House that even small-scale archaeological work of this sort can throw light on village origins and development as well as producing artefacts which are important in their own right.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Jane Young (Post-Roman Pottery Researcher) at the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit who identified the pottery and recognised its importance. Thin-section samples have been taken from sherds for further scientific analysis.

Reference

Everson, P.L., Taylor, C.C. and Dunn, C.J. Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, HMSO, London 1991

Naomi Field and Mick Clark
June 18th 1992

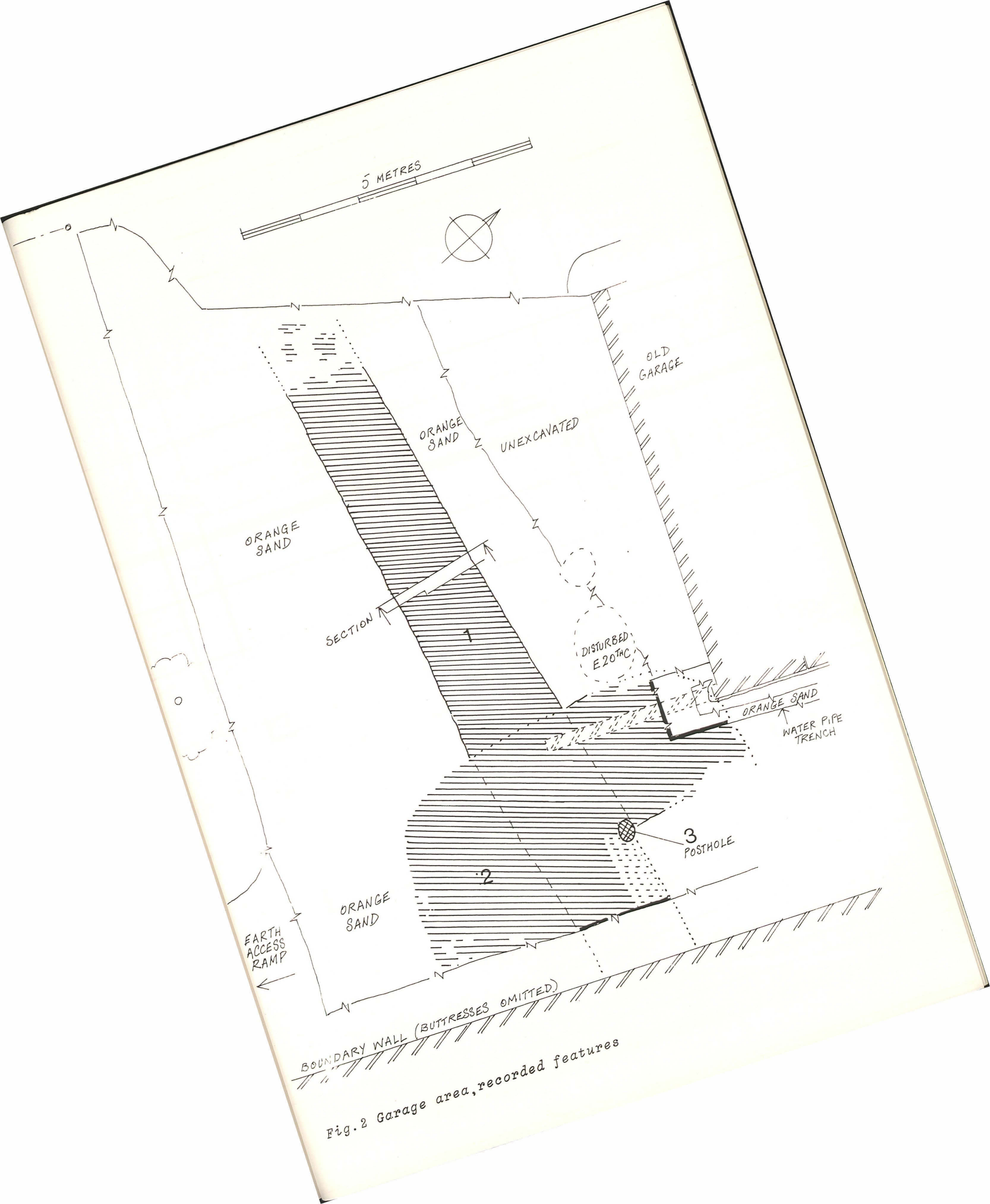


Fig. 2 Garage area, recorded features

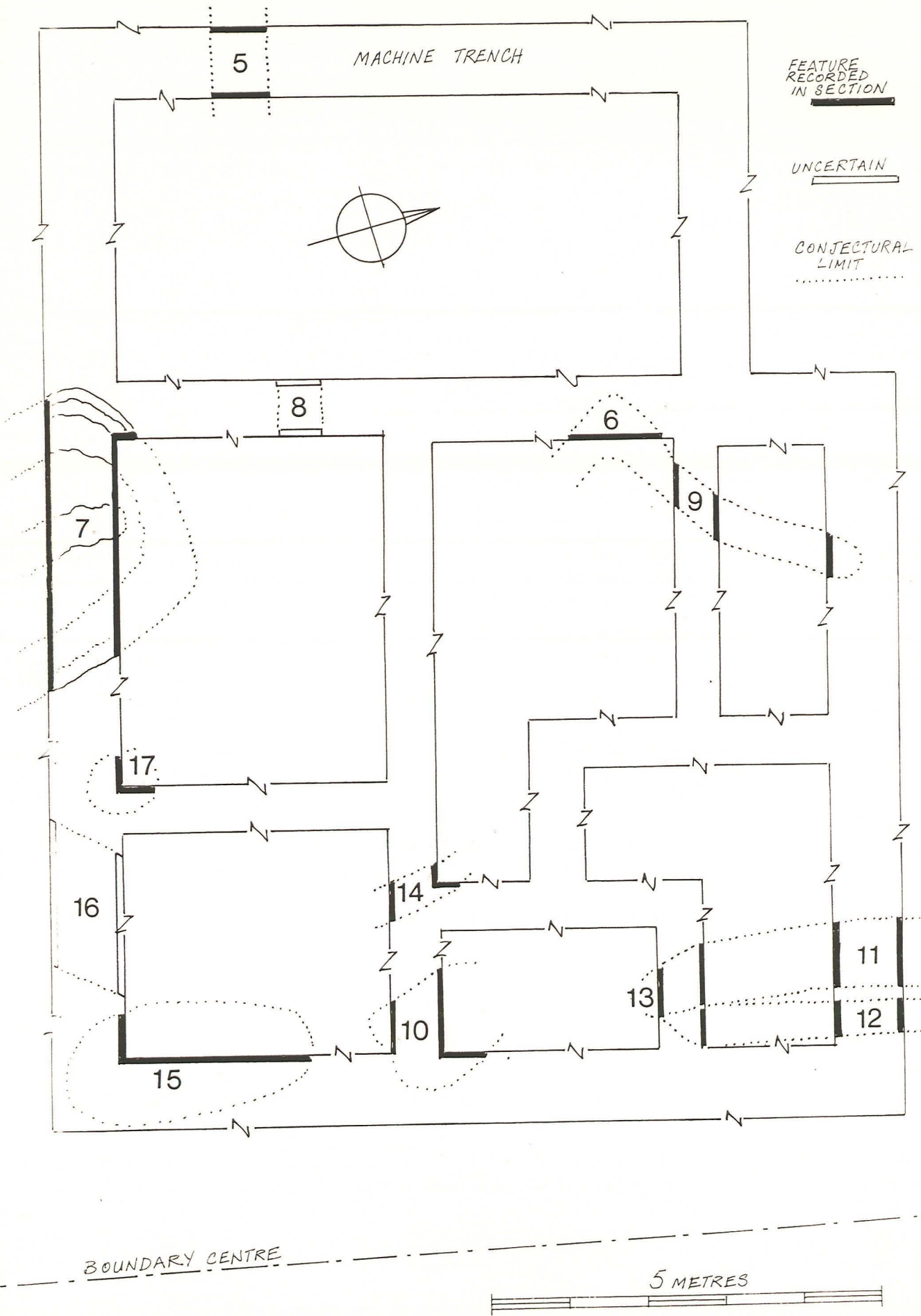


Fig.3 House foundations, recorded features