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Archaeological Evaluation
at
Westlode Street, Spalding,
Lincolnshire
by
Heritage Lincolnshire
on behalf of
The Land and Building Consultancy.

Introduction

Between the 13th-24th July 1992, Heritage Lincolnshire undertook an archaeological evaluation of the proposed site of a new police station in Spalding, on behalf of the Land and Building Consultancy of Lincolnshire County Council (Fig. 1). The proposed development site, (National Grid Reference: TF 2508 2299) which had formerly been a school, lies north of Westlode Street, east of The Green, and to the rear of the Queen's Gate Hotel (Fig. 2).

Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken to assess the extent, nature, degree of survival and date of any archaeological remains which were present on the site. The evaluation was specifically designed to locate any surviving evidence of the castle which is supposedly located in the area, along with any associated medieval occupation.

Archaeological and Historical Setting

In June 1992 a desk top study of the site was commissioned by the County Archaeological Officer. The study established that the site of Spalding Castle may lie in the vicinity of the proposed development. Furthermore, it was likely that the castle was founded within an existing settlement, the southern boundary of which was delineated by the river West Lode, the culverted course of which forms Westlode Street. The site was, therefore, likely to provide evidence of remains associated with the castle, in addition to evidence of medieval settlement.

The Site

At the time of the evaluation, the site was derelict and littered with debris from the demolition of the school. The northern end of the site was covered in rough grass. The areas forming the playground still had a tarmac surface. The site lies at a height of c. 5.30m OD to the south and c. 3.73m OD to the north.

SUMMARY

Between the 13th-24th July 1992, Heritage Lincolnshire, on behalf of the Land and Building Consultancy, undertook an archaeological evaluation of the site of the former school on Westlode Street, Spalding (NGR ^{TF}2508 2299), in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of 5 trenches and a geophysical survey to the north of the site.

The evaluation was undertaken to establish the extent of surviving features associated with Spalding Castle and the nature of other evidence for medieval occupation present on the site.

It was found that the construction of the school had caused considerable destruction of the archaeological deposits. The surviving archaeological deposits consisted of what have been interpreted as fluvial deposits formed by the river West Lode and dump deposits containing 10th-14th century pottery. Additionally, at the southern end of the site, in an area not destroyed by the school foundations, cut features containing 10th-12th century pottery were located.

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Methodology

The brief for the archaeological work was set by the County Archaeological Officer, and consisted of the excavation of 5 trial trenches nominally 2m x 10m randomly spaced across the site (see Fig. 3 for trench layout). The trenches were restricted to a maximum depth of 2m to prevent de-stabilising the foundations of the new building, and to comply with safety regulations. A geophysical survey was undertaken in an area of rough grass to the north of the site, prior to the excavation of Trench 5.

All the trenches were excavated by machine to the level at which archaeological layers were encountered. Due to the depth of modern overburden the sides of some trenches were battered to enable safe working.

Each archaeological feature (pit, post-hole, deposit etc.) was allocated a unique number and was described and recorded on pro-forma record sheets. Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and a photographic record compiled where appropriate.

The depositional sequence for each trench was compiled during post-excavation analysis from the field data, plans and sections. The finds were analysed and the pottery spot-dated.

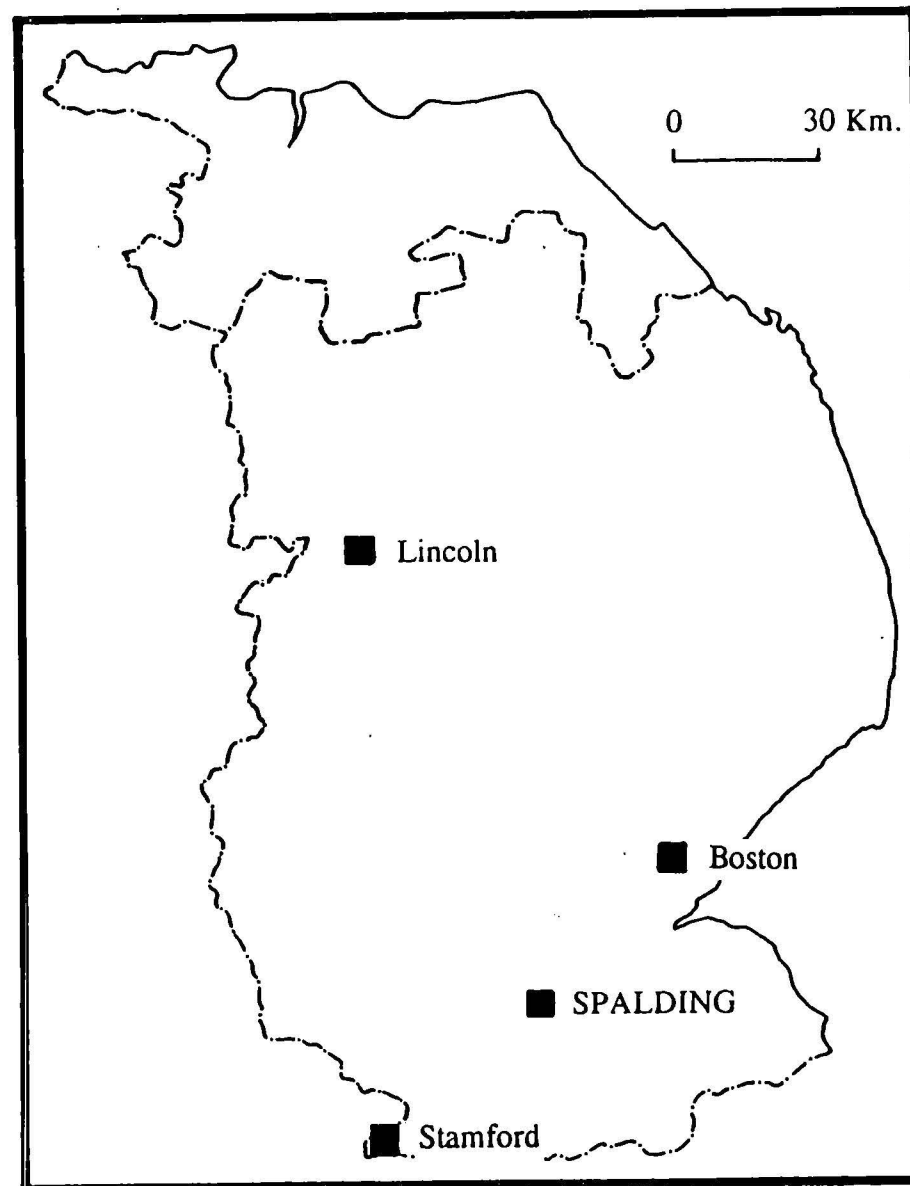
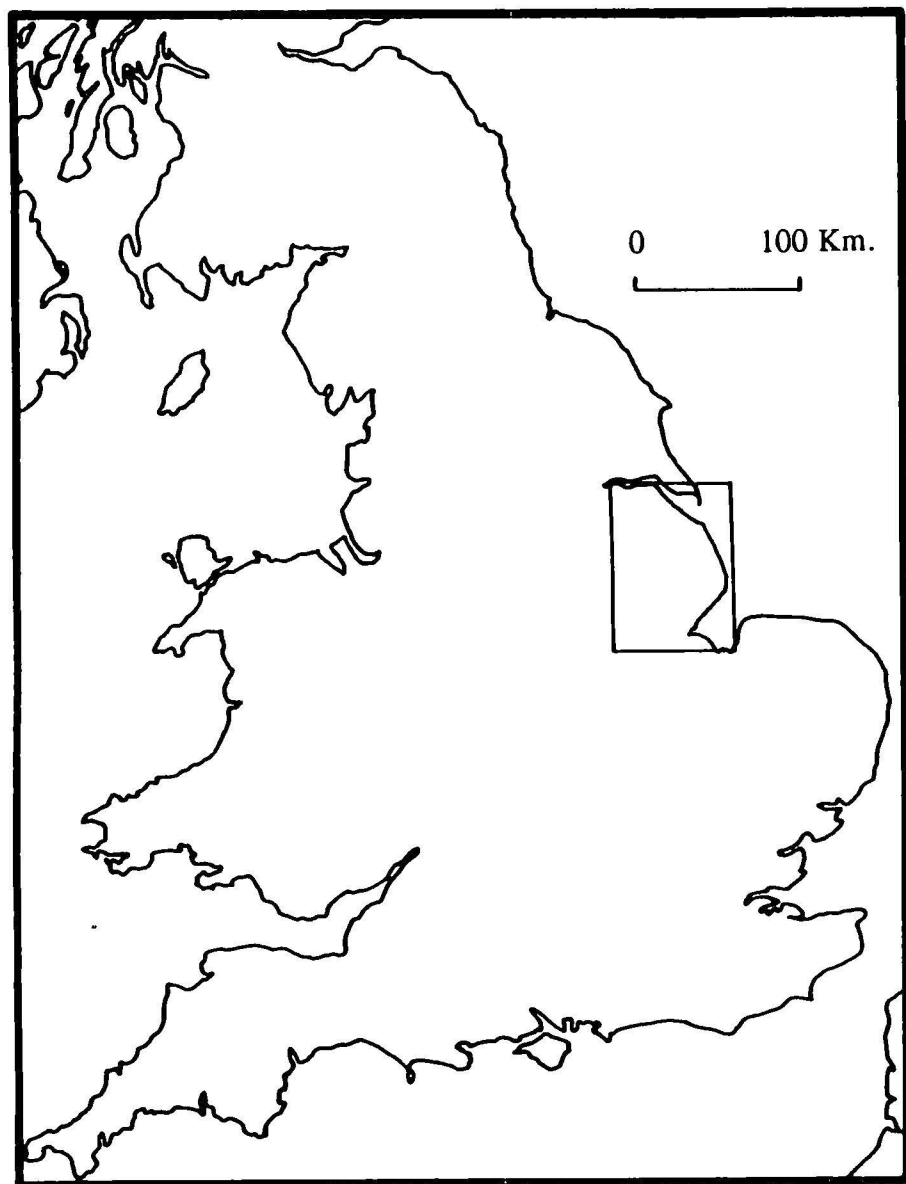


Figure 1: Location of Spalding.

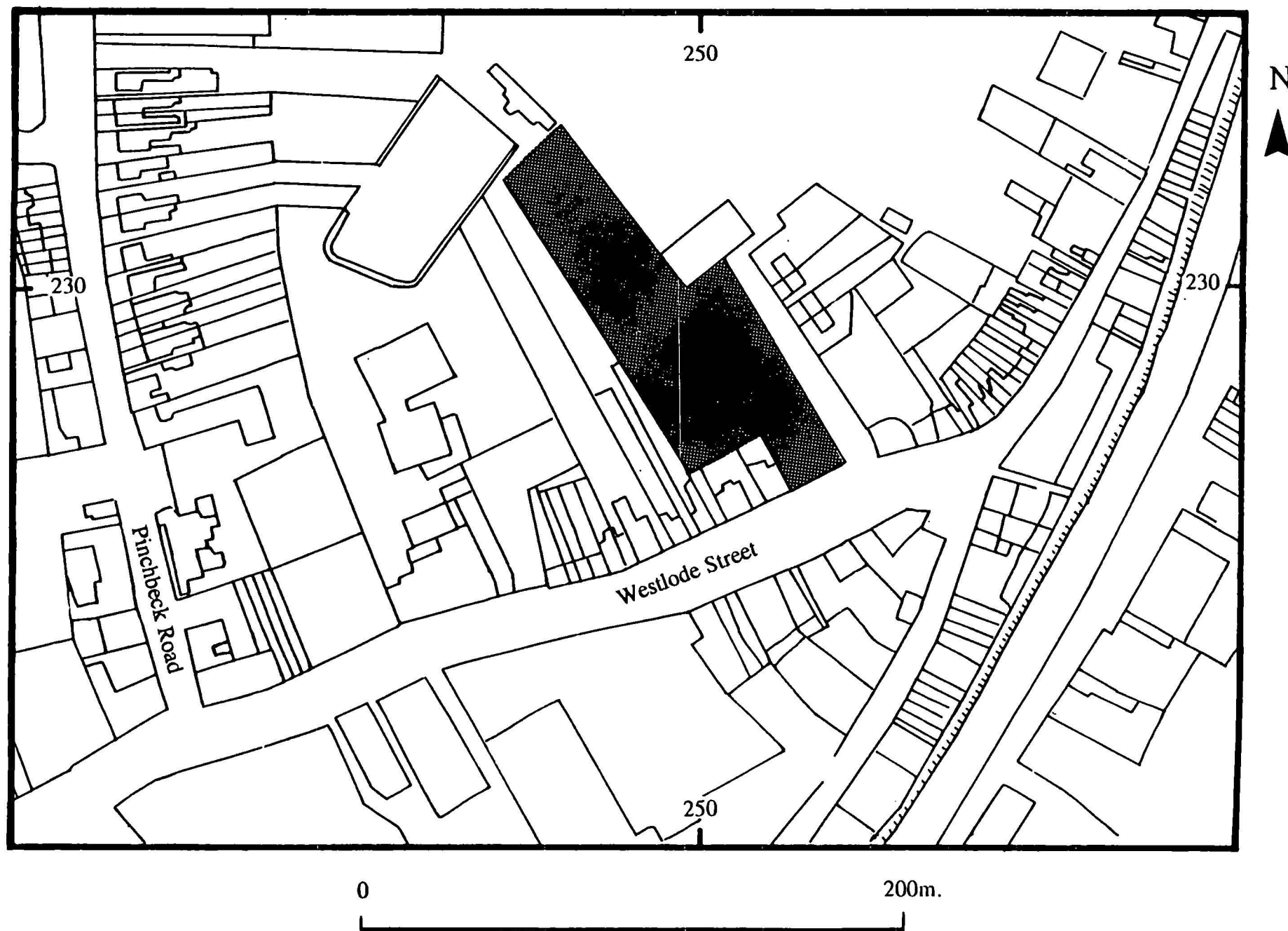


Figure 2: Location of site.

Evaluation Results

TRENCH 1 (Fig. 4).

Trench 1, (9.7m long and 1.5m wide), was orientated north-south and situated 28m north-west of the hotel. The modern ground surface lay at 4.23m OD with the limit of excavation at 2.87m OD. Remains of a wall [068], foundation [072] and construction trench [070] were "T" - shaped in plan, and aligned north-south. This wall, and its associated construction features, had removed any other archaeological deposits in this trench.

It was not possible to record the full sequence of deposits in the southern end of the trench because of flooding during the evaluation. No finds were recovered from any of the deposits excavated.

Five phases of activity were identified:

Phase 1: (level of excavation to 3.81m OD).

The earliest deposits were extensive dump layers (or possibly fluvial deposits) [74/75], [73], and [67] which extended from the base of the trench to a level of 3.81m OD.

Phase 2: (3.81m-4.11m OD).

Discrete dump layers [66], [71] and [65].

Phase 3: (4.10m OD).

Construction of walls probably associated with the former school.

Phase 4: (4.11m OD).

Demolition of the school walls.

Phase 5:

Tarmac layer forming the modern ground surface.

Interpretation:

No archaeologically significant features were located in Trench 1. The construction of the school had caused considerable disruption resulting in the removal of any archaeological features which may have been located in the trench.

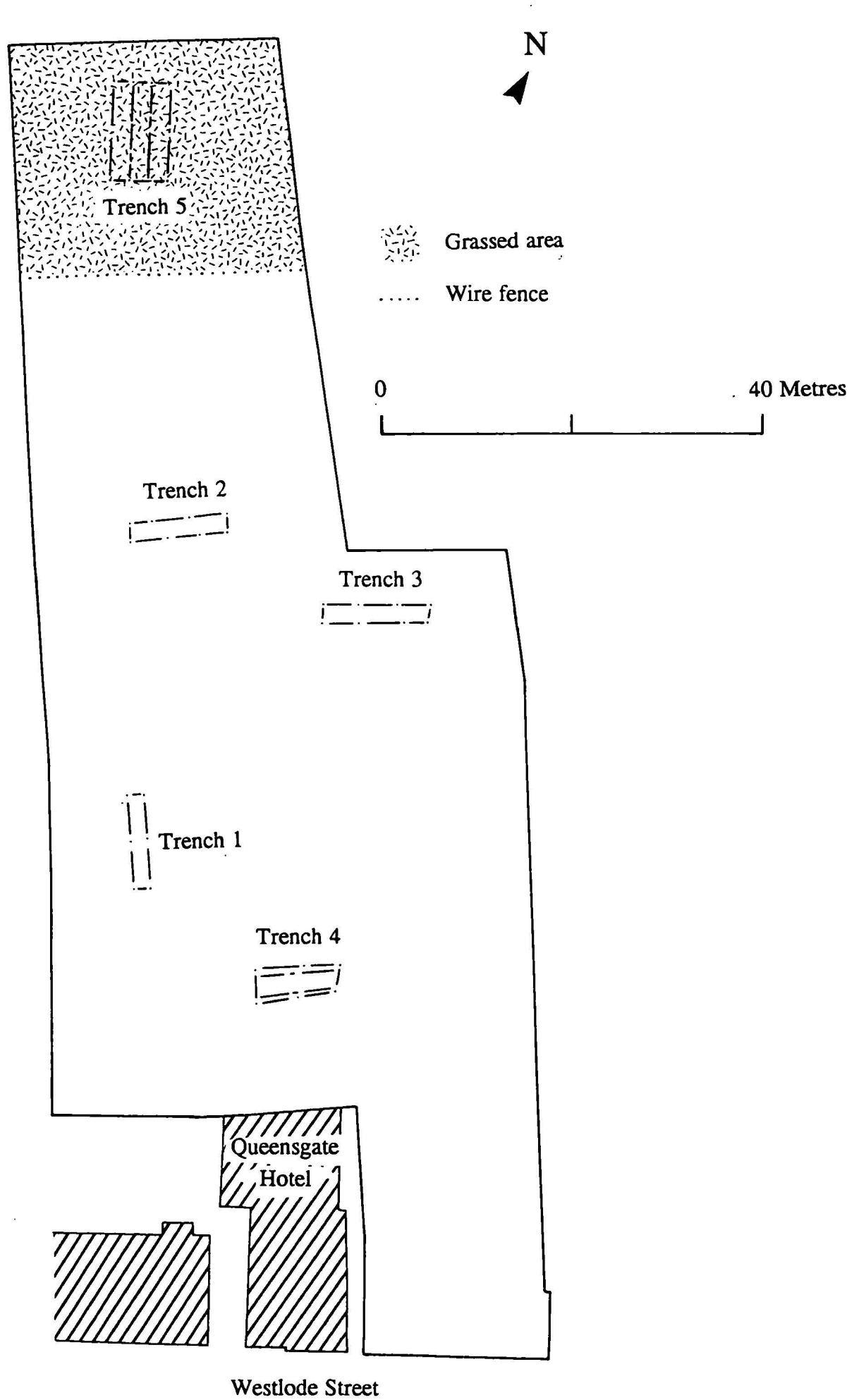


Figure 3: Location of trenches. - 6 -

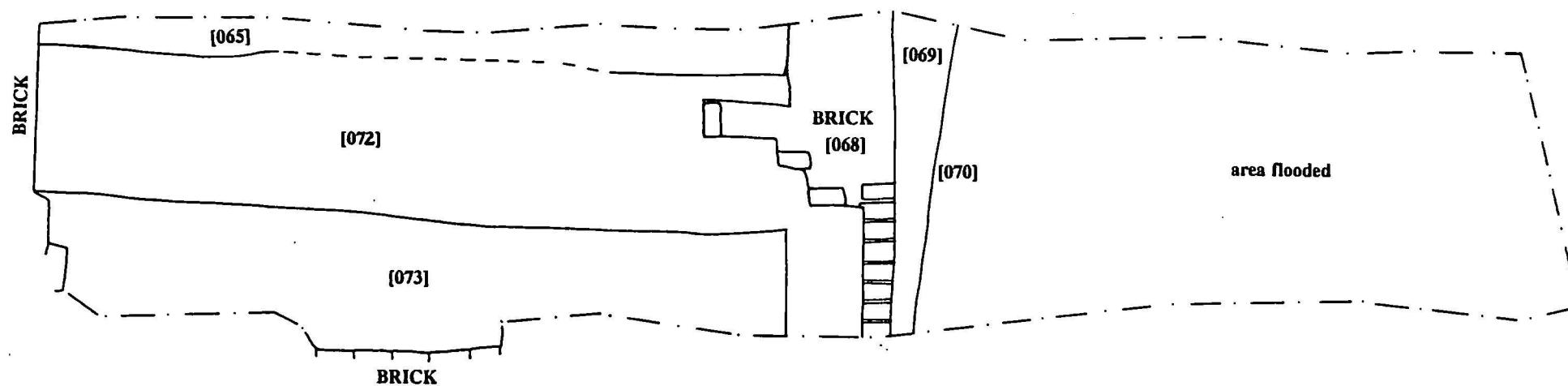


FIG.4 PLAN OF TRENCH 1



TRENCH 2

The trench was situated 60m north-west of Queens Gate Hotel, and orientated east-west for 9.10m. The modern ground surface of the trench lay at 3.99-3.91m OD with the base of excavation at 2.65m OD. A sondage 1.81m long and 1m wide was hand excavated at the west end of the trench to a depth of 2.01m OD. Eight phases of activity were identified, the deposits from each phase extending across the entire area of the trench.

Phase 1: (to 2.91m OD)

The earliest deposit [09] consisted of a light yellow-brown silt clay, above which was a light brown clay silt [08] with occasional flecks of ceramic building material. Layer [08] contained seven sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 10th-14th centuries (see Appendix 1) but all these sherds may be redeposited material as both [09] and [08] appear to be fluvial in origin.

Phase 2: (2.91m-3.31m OD).

Two features, recorded in section only, were observed cutting into the light brown clay silt [08]. These were a gully [17] orientated north-south and filled with dark grey-brown clay silt containing occasional fragments of brick, tile and charcoal fragments, and a post-hole [13], filled with a deposit similar to the fill of the gully.

Phase 3: (3.31m-3.71m OD).

This phase represents further dump or fluvial deposits sealing features [17] and [13], and defined by three substantial homogenous layers [07], [06], and [05]. Pottery from [05] and [06] ranged in date from the 14th-19th century (see Appendix 1) and is probably residual.

Phase 4: (3.71m - 3.91m OD).

Layers [04] and [03] were substantially more mixed, with greater quantities of inclusions than in Phase 3 deposits, and probably represent a phase of deliberate dumping. Layer [04] consisted of a layer 55mm thick containing frequent fragments of tile, charcoal and industrial waste with fragments of post-medieval pottery. Layer [03], a light brown clayey silt containing frequent tile, charcoal and mortar fragments, marked the end of this phase.

Phase 5

This phase was defined by the construction of two red brick walls which ran east-west along the north-facing section of the trench. Wall [18] sat on an orange gravel foundation [19], whereas wall [20] sat on a concrete foundation [21]. The walls butted each other

and were probably trench built as no foundation trench cut was noted. It was, therefore, not possible to establish the relative dating of the walls.

Phase 6: (4.03m).

The upstanding walls of the school were demolished and levelled.

Phase 7: (4.03m OD).

The foundation trench fill for wall [18] was cut by a ceramic drain, and two concrete blocks were placed at the eastern end of the trench, probably forming anchor points for an upstanding structure.

Phase 8

Tarmac was laid down to form the modern ground surface.

Interpretation.

The presence of medieval pottery in layer [08] could indicate the presence of archaeological features dating to the medieval period. However, it is possible that the pottery may be residual and that the deposition of [08] is, therefore, later in date. Phases 2 to 8 are, from dating evidence, post-medieval, and represent phases of natural fluvial deposition and deliberate dumping.

TRENCH 3 (Fig. 5).

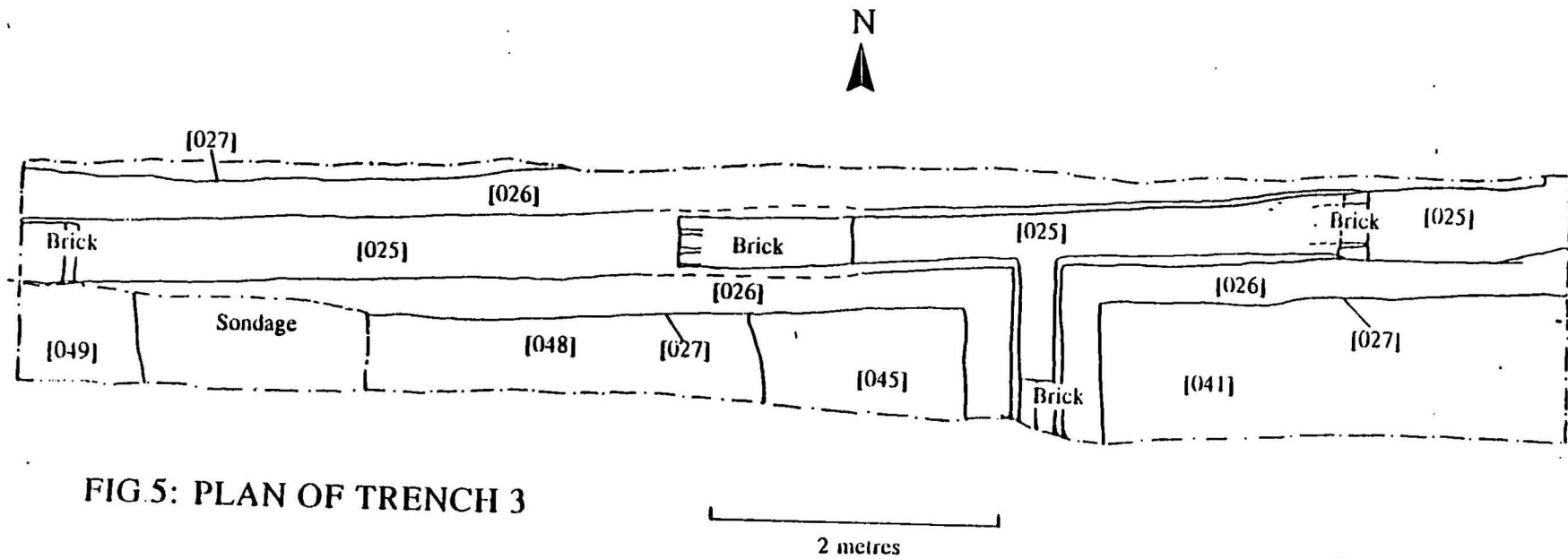
The trench was orientated east-west and situated towards the north-eastern boundary of the site. It was 10.94m long, 1.5m wide, with a sondage sunk at the western end to a depth of 2.07m OD below modern ground level at 4.16m OD. Foundations of the school buildings ran east-west and north-south across the whole trench, thus destroying any archaeological evidence.

Five phases of activity were identified:

Phase 1: (from base of excavation to 3.15m OD).

The earliest phase represented in this trench consisted of four large homogenous deposits [49], [45], [38] and [29], which were probably the result of deliberate dumping. Above [38] and [29] (noted in section) lay [28/37], a dark greyish brown silt containing 18th century clay pipe fragments. The deposition of the layers must, therefore, be post-medieval or later in date.

Phase 2: (3.15m - 3.75m OD)



In contrast to Phase 1, a series of less extensive and thinner layers [47], [46], [43], and [42] was noted in the north-facing trench section only, lying east of cut [27]. They were indicative of deliberate dump deposits with abundant inclusions of charcoal, mortar and crushed ceramic building material. The lowest layer in this phase, [47], contained a clay pipe-stem and a sherd of Staffordshire slip ware, both 17th or 18th century in date. Deposition of layers in this phase must therefore lie in the post medieval period or later.

Phase 3: (3.75m OD).

This phase represents the construction of the former school walls. The wall foundation cut was straight sided and flat based, running east-west and north-south forming a "T" shape. Wall [25] consisted of red brick and yellow mortar, with the foundation cut backfilled with a light brown sandy silt [26], which was seen in both plan and section. A mid-yellowish brown clayey silt fill [50], which lay above fill [26] in cut [27], was noted in the north-facing section only. A straight sided, flat based cut [086] of unknown function, containing a yellowish silt with many fragments of brick, mortar and charcoal, was noted in the south-facing section only.

Immediately south of the trench limits and just below the present ground surface, there appeared to be another wall running parallel to [25]. The straight-sided cut [40], and fill [39], seen in the west-facing section, may represent the foundation cut and backfill for this wall. If this is the case, then it could be inferred that cut [40] may represent an earlier stage of construction, as foundation trench [27] can be seen cutting fill [39] in the south-facing section.

Phase 4: (3.75m-4.01m OD)

This phase was represented by the destruction and levelling of the wall [25], and the subsequent rubble layer [30] lying over the southern part of the trench.

Phase 5: (ground level).

A layer of tarmac 80mm thick was laid on the north side of the trench only, over make-up layer [34].

Interpretation

Any archaeological remains in Trench 3 have been destroyed by the foundation cuts of Phase 3. The large dump deposits of Phase 1 probably represent deliberate dumping and finds from this phase may, therefore, be residual. They indicate only that the layers were deposited in the post-medieval period or later. The walls of Phase 2 represent those of the former school.

TRENCH 4 (Fig. 6)

The trench was orientated east-west, was 6.7m x 1.5m, and lay 13m north of the hotel. The modern ground level was 4.61-4.70m OD with the limit of excavation at 3.16m OD. A small sondage 3.47m long was sunk at the east end of the trench to a depth of 2.92m OD. Six phases of activity were identified.

Phase 1: (2.92m-3.12m OD in sondage).

The earliest deposit in the trench was layer [80], a yellowish brown silt with orange mottles, possibly of fluvial origin.

Phase 2: (3.12m OD in sondage).

Two features [77] and [79] were cut into layer [80], and were sample excavated. [77] was a straight sided, squarish feature 0.50 x 0.50m (exposed) and 0.20m deep, which lay under two trench edges. It was filled with a light grey brown silty clay [76] containing 1 sherd of unidentifiable shelly ware. Feature [79] was a possible pit or butt end of a ditch. It was 0.90m by 1.40m (exposed), and extended under the southern trench edge. It had straight sides 0.35m deep and contained a dark grey brown fill [78] with orange mottles. Four Stamford ware sherds (10th-12th centuries), and one unidentifiable piece of fired clay were retrieved from [78].

Phase 3: (3.12-3.36m OD).

A dump layer [63] of dark brown silty clay was observed in both section and plan sealing [77] and [79]. It contained 8 sherds ranging in date from the 10th-14th century along with 2 other ceramic fragments, one of which is probably modern (see Appendix 1). These finds may be residual, or the occurrence of the brick fragment may be intrusive. Deposit [61] lay above [63] and consisted of a mid-brown clayey silt containing frequent charcoal, mortar and brick fragments.

Phase 4

Brick wall [59] was constructed on a yellowish brown hard mortar base. It ran east-west along the north-facing section. No cut for the wall could be seen in section. A concrete foundation for another wall was noted at a similar level in the south-facing section. The walls formed part of the former school.

Phase 5: (4.06m OD)

Destruction and levelling of the walls.

Phase 6: (modern ground level)

Demolition debris covering the whole of the trenched area.

Interpretation

Phases 1-3, lying below 3.12m OD, comprised deposits and features containing medieval pottery, although these may be residual, or the modern brick fragment in [63] intrusive. The proximity of features [77] and [79] to the West Lode may represent medieval activity associated with possible occupation along the river frontage. Phases 4-7 represent post-medieval and modern dumped deposits, with the walls in Phase 5 associated with the former school.

TRENCH 5

There was little evidence for the former land-use in the grassed area towards the northern half of the site. Therefore, a resistivity survey was carried out to establish whether archaeological remains were present.

The survey revealed a great deal of building disturbance, natural geological variations and a linear feature running approximately north-south across the area (Fig. 7). Trench 5 was located to investigate the linear feature.

The trench was orientated north-south, and was 10.4m long and 2m wide, with additional 1m steps to the west and east sides. A 2m x 2m sondage was sunk at the southern end of the trench to a depth of 1.95m OD, in order to establish the nature of the deposits. The modern ground surface lay at 3.73-3.81m and the limit of excavation outside the sondage was 1.20m deep.

Two phases of activity were identified. No finds were retrieved from the deposits.

Phase 1

The earliest phase comprises a series of river silt deposits [56], [55], [54], [57], [58], and [53]. A band of blue grey clay [55], and the orange mottles in [56] and [58] were indicative of water-logging over long periods of time.

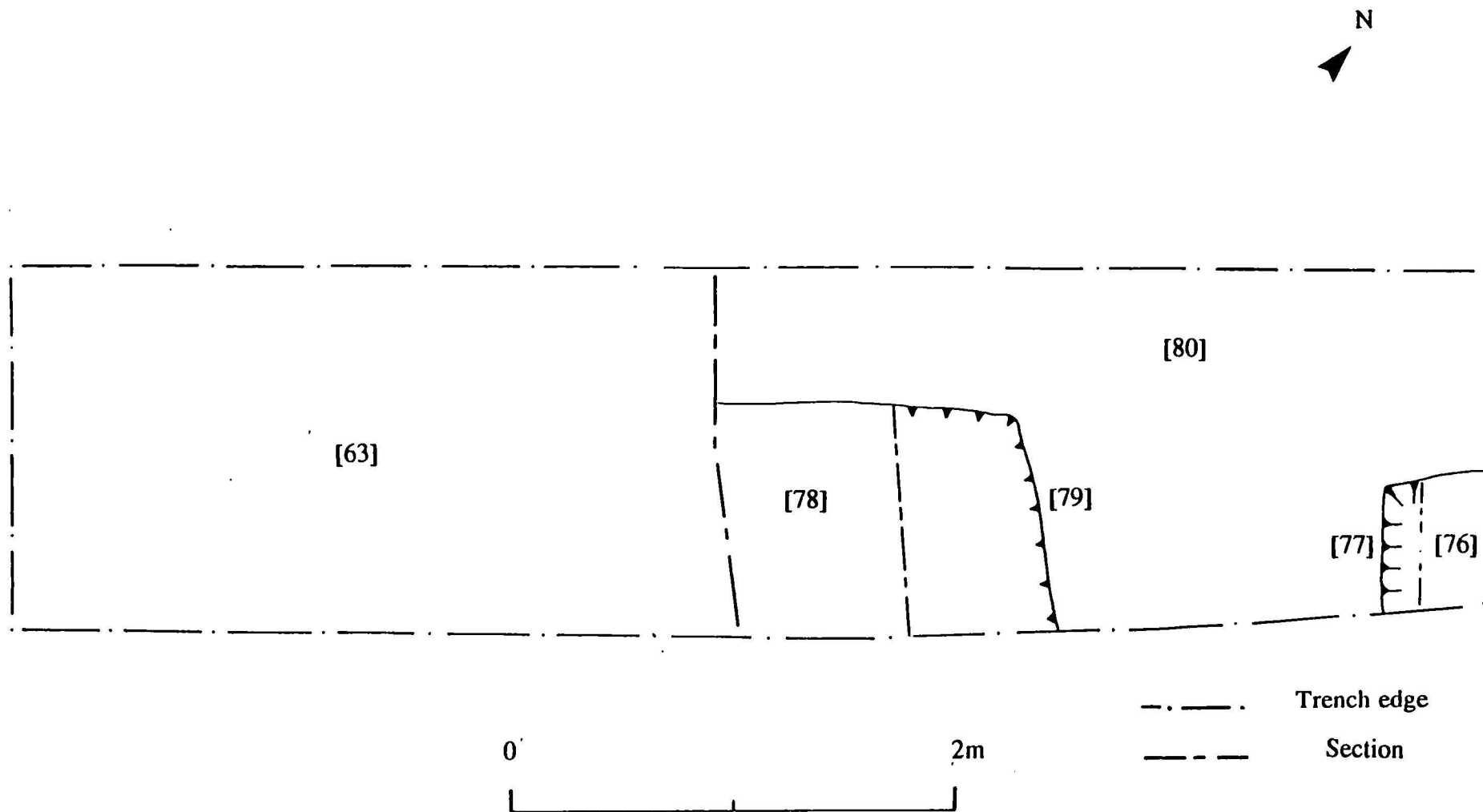


Figure 6: Trench 4, features [77] and [79].

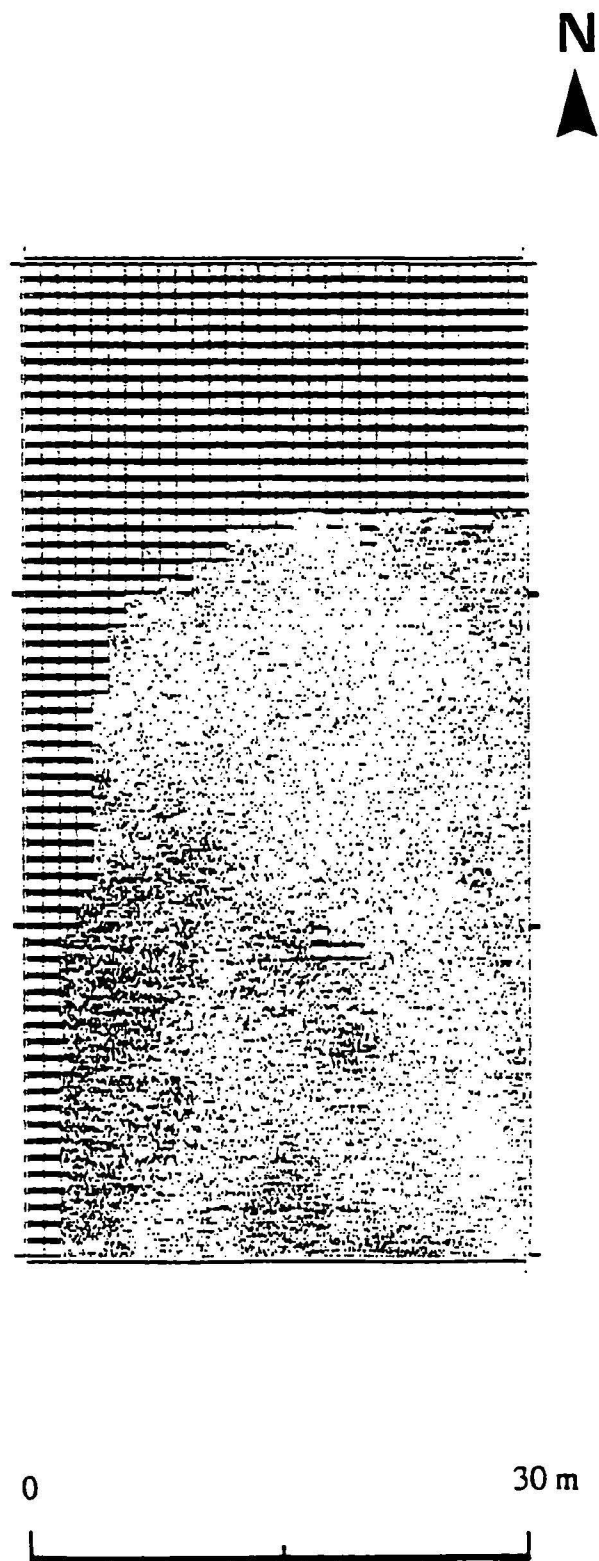


Fig. 7: Resistivity Plot

Phase 2

Natural sub-soil and topsoil deposition.

Interpretation

No archaeological deposits were found. The linear anomaly was interpreted as being the sequence of clay and silts seen in the sondage.

Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation established the following:

- 1) No evidence for the existence of Spalding Castle was found within the limits of the evaluation on the site
- 2) There is evidence for flooding of the river West Lode. This is demonstrated by silt deposits with no occupational material
- 3) Several layers contained medieval pottery ranging in date from the 10th-14th century. These layers clearly derive from medieval occupation in the area but the material may be re-deposited by later earth-moving activities.
- 4) The disturbance to the archaeological sequence, caused by the construction of the school buildings, is considerable. The evaluation was limited to a 2.00m depth with the result that it is not possible to comment on the survival of archaeological deposits below this limit. Trench 4 did produce archaeological deposits in the lower layers.

In conclusion, the assessment established that there were no significant archaeological remains to a depth of 2m in Trenches 1, 2, 3, and 5, and that features of archaeological interest, indicative of medieval activity, were found at 3.50m OD in Trench 4. It must be stressed, however, that archaeological remains may be encountered below the 2m assessment limit.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, Heritage Lincolnshire recommend:

- 1) In the light of the archaeological evidence from Trench 4, it is recommended that ground works 2m below the present ground level (given in the introduction to each trench) should be monitored by archaeologists . Towards the southern half of the site, and in the vicinity of Trench 4, ground work not monitored by archaeologists should be limited to 3.50m OD.
- 2) The medieval remains noted in Trench 4 may suggest occupation along the frontage of the West Lode. Should there be future development of the area south of the new police buildings (the area is at present, proposed as a car-park and was, therefore, not evaluated), it is recommended that an archaeological evaluation should be carried out to determine the extent, and state of preservation of the archaeological remains.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to:

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APPENDIX 1

Pottery type and dating.

The late Saxon Stamford ware and early medieval wares (Stamford ware, some shelly and splashed glaze wares) noted below are interesting in that they are rare. The only other Stamford ware from Spalding was found nearer the town centre during excavations in 1988.

Context	Description	Date
05	1 clay pipe stem 1 sherd of cream ware	c. 18th Century late 18th Century
006	3 white salt glaze sherds 1 Bourne D ware sherd 1 medieval sherd 1 black ware (very small) sherd	mid 18th Century 16th century 14th century 19th century
008	3 Stamford ware, glazed sherd 1 splash glaze sherd 1 Grimston (Norfolk) bowl rim 1 Bourne A ware sherd 1 medieval sherd - possibly burnt.	10th-13th century ? 13th century 14th century 14th century 14th century
026	1 Blackware rim	18th or 19th century
028	2 clay pipe stems and 1 bowl	18th century
035	1 Bourne D type sherd	16th century
039	1 clay pipe stem	early 19th century
044	1 Staffordshire slip ware, posset pot.	17th century
047	1 Staffordshire type slip ware dish 1 clay pipe stem	17th or 18th century late 17th or 18th
063	2 Stamford ware sherds 2 shelly ware, one unusual rim with external rouletting	10th-13th century 12th-13th century

063	2 sandy ware sherds	13th century
	2 Bourne type sherds	14th century
	1 soft fired clay fragment (? briquetage)	unknown
	1 compressed brick fragment.	modern
076	1 shelly ware - unidentified.	unknown
078	1 fired clay - unidentified, possibly been under water.	unknown
	4 Stamford ware sherds, various fabrics and appearances.	10th-12th

APPENDIX 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Abbreviations:

l = light; y = yellow; b = brown; bl = black; g = grey
cbm = ceramic building material; frags = fragments

Context	Description	Interpretation
<u>Trench 1</u>		
064	tarmac	school playground
065	rubble, brick frags.	demolition debris
066	b. silty clay	fluvial
067	g. silty clay	fluvial
068	brick wall, east-west, turning north.	school wall
069	g. silty clay	fluvial
070	cut, straight sides	cut for foundations [072].
071	yb. silty clay	fluvial
072	yb. coarse mortar	foundations for [068].
073	gb. gravelly clay	fluvial
074	b. silty clay	fluvial/ dump?
075	b. silty clay	fluvial
087	destruction of walls [068]	
088	red brick rubble	demolition debris.
<u>Trench 2</u>		
001	building rubble	modern demolition
002	bl. tarmac	school playground
003	lb. clayey silt, tile, charcoal frags.	dump
004	bl. coke and charcoal, cbm.,	make-up for [002]
005	yb. silt, cbm., white mortar fragments.	fluvial
006	gb. silt with crushed cbm., and charcoal.	fluvial

Trench 2 (continued)

007	gb. silt with charcoal and cbm. frags.	fluvial
008	b. clayey silt with cbm. frags.	fluvial
009	yb. silty clay	fluvial
010	gb. clayey silt, cbm. frags.	fill of [011]
011	cut, straight sides, flat base.	gully?
012	gb. clayey silt	fill of [013]
013	cut, straight sides, flat base	gully?
014	grey/white concrete	fill of [084]
015	grey/white concrete	fill of [085]
016	gb. clayey silt, cbm. and charcoal frags.	fill of [017]
017	cut, straight sides, flat base	gully, same as [013]
018	brick wall	school wall
019	reddish brown sandy mortar	foundations for [018].
020	brick wall, English cross bond.	school wall
021	g. concrete	foundations for [020]
022	gb. silty clay, cbm., charcoal frags.	fill of [023]
023	cut	modern drain-pipe
024	deleted	
082	cut	for foundation [019]
083	cut	for foundation [021]
084	cut	for [014]
085	cut	for [015]
089	destruction of wall [018]	
090	destruction of wall [020]	

Trench 3

025	brick wall, east-west	school wall
026	fill of [027]	fill
027	foundation cut	for wall [025]
028	gb. silt, charcoal, cbm. frags.	dump layer
029	gb silt, charcoal, cbm. frags	dump
030	rubble	dump
031	yb. clayey silt	fill of cut [027]?
032	yb. clayey silt	dump
033	by. silt.	fill of [086]
034	g. silt, cbm. and mortar	make-up for tarmac

Trench 3 (continued)

035	gb. silt, cbm., mortar, charcoal frags.	dump
036	gb. silt, cbm., mortar, charcoal frags.	dump
037	gb. silt, charcoal, cbm. frags.	dump. Same as [028]
038	gb. silt, charcoal, cbm. frags.	dump.
039	yb. silt, cbm. and charcoal frags.	fill of [040]
040	foundation cut for wall [025]	
041	yb. silty clay	dump
042	b. clayey silt, cbm, charcoal frags.	dump
043	b. clayey silt, cbm, charcoal frags.	dump
044	gb./db. silty clay, cbm., charcoal, mortar frags.	dump
045	yb. silty clay, cbm. frags.	dump
046	gb. silt, cbm., charcoal frags.	dump
047	gb silt, cbm., mortar,	charcoal frags. dump
048	b. clayey silt	dump
049	b. silty clay	dump
050	yb. clayey silt	upper fill of [027]
086	cut, straight sides, flat base	cut for [033]

Trench 4

059	brick, English cross bond	school wall
060	rubble	demolition debris
061	b. clayey silt, mortar, charcoal frags.	dump
062	yb. concrete	foundation for [059]
063	b. silty clay	dump?
076	gb. silty clay	fill of [077]
077	cut, rectangular	human activity
078	gb. silty clay	fill of [079]
079	cut, sub-rectangular, concave base	human activity
080	yb. clayey silt, orange mottles.	dump/fluviol?
081	foundation cut for wall [059]	

Trench 5

051	g/b. silt	topsoil
052	yb. silty clay	subsoil
053	orange grey silty clay	fluvial
054	orange-brown silty clay	fluvial
055	blue/grey clay	fluvial
056	b. silty clay, orange mottles.	fluvial
057	b. sandy silt	fluvial
058	b. silty clay, orange mottles	fluvial