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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Church of St Mary and St Nicolas
Spalding**

**Foul sewer trench for the new vestry
Archaeological Watching Brief**

**NGR: TF 2503 2242
Site Code: SPC98
LCNCC Accession No. 201.98**

Report for

Spalding Parochial Church Council

**LAS Report No. 328
November 1998**

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Contents

List of Figures	
List of Plates	
Summary	1
Introduction	1
Location and Description of the site	1
Background	1
Previous Work	1
Watching Brief	2
Burials	2
Other Features	3
Discussion	3
Acknowledgements	3
Reference	3
APPENDIX 1: Context Summary	
APPENDIX 2: Site Matrix	
APPENDIX 3: Pottery Identification by Jane Young	
APPENDIX 4: Contents of Site Archive	
The Figures	
The Plates	

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Location of St Mary and St Nicolas Church, Spalding.

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Fig. 2 Location of foul sewer trench.

Fig. 3 Plan of trench.

Fig. 4 A, East facing representative section in north end of trench. B, West facing representative section in south end of trench. C, East facing section of pit/ditch 103. D, East facing section of rubble filled hollow 107, in south end of trench.

List of Plates

Pl. 1 View looking South of machine digging trench.

Pl. 2 Fully excavated trench looking North.

Pl. 3 Fully excavated trench looking South.

Pl. 4 Excavated area for junction box.

Pl. 5 Skeleton SK1 (right tibia, left tibia and fibula).

Pl. 6 Skeleton SK2 truncating skeleton SK3 in turn cutting skeleton SK4 (not numbered).

Pl. 7 Skeleton SK5 (left and right femur and part of the pelvis).

Pl. 8 Skeleton SK6 (upper torso and skull of child or young adult).

Pl. 9 Skeleton SK7 (skull).

Pl. 10 Skeleton SK8 (skull).

Pl. 11 Skeleton SK9 (skull).

Pl. 12 Skeleton SK10 (left and right femur seen in section only).

Pl. 13 Skeleton SK12 (skull seen in section)

Pl. 14 North-east oblique facing section of Pit/Ditch 103.

Pl. 15 East facing section of limestone rubble layer 106.

Church of St Mary and St Nicolas Spalding

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the 26th and 27th of October while a foul sewer trench was being excavated for the new vestry at the Parish Church of St Mary and St Nicolas in Spalding. At least thirteen burials were disturbed in the part of the Churchyard affected by this work.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by the John D Lynch Partnership, on behalf of Spalding Parochial Church Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a foul sewer trench for the new vestry at the Parish Church of St Mary and St Nicolas.

Location and Description of the Site (Fig. 1)

The town of Spalding is located on the River Welland in South Lincolnshire. The town centre and market place lie on the west side of the river, whilst the parish church of St Mary and St Nicolas lies on the east.

The new vestry occupies the space enclosed by the chancel, transept and chapel and extends eastward as far as the buttress between the first and second bays of the chancel. The foul sewer was positioned in the south-west corner of the vestry and runs south to the boundary wall of the graveyard (Fig. 2). The graveyard is grassed over and reasonably level, apart from the area immediately adjacent to the church where the land rises gently towards a path (no. 2), which is orientated north-east/south-west.

Background

The building of the church began in 1284 and the first major addition was the chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury, built around 1315. Further modifications were made later in the same century. The churchyard was closed for burials in 1853 after concerns over its condition were raised.

A detailed description of the church and its location can be found in LAS report on the watching brief for the vestry (Moore, 1998).

Previous Work

An archaeological watching brief was carried out between 24th July and 5th August 1998 while the foundations were being excavated for a new vestry at the Parish Church of St Mary and St Nicolas in Spalding. At least thirty-five burials were disturbed in the part of the Churchyard affected by this work. The graves proved to

be relatively shallow and densely packed, with many of them intercutting one another. A masonry-lined, stone-capped vault containing a lead-lined coffin was uncovered, which necessitated modifications to the original design of the vestry footings. The work also afforded the opportunity to examine the foundations of parts of the church building (Moore 1998).

Watching Brief

On the 26th and 27th of October a 13" toothed bucket attached to a mini digger (Pl. 1) was used to excavate a foul sewer trench (Fig. 3, Pl. 2, 3) to a maximum depth of 1m below the surface and an archaeological watching brief was undertaken.

On arrival, an area had already been dug for the junction box (Pl. 4) and some disarticulated skeletal remains had been disturbed. However, no articulated skeletal remains appeared to have been disturbed and none were present within the section.

Burials

The remains of thirteen articulated human skeletons were recorded during the excavation of the trench, of which eight were situated within the first 10m south of the church, the other five being less than 30m south of the church. All the burials cut through a mid-yellowish brown clayey silt subsoil **101** (Fig. 4A) which contained pottery and tile (early 13th - 18th), a piece of lead and a flint microlith. Together with these remains was a large quantity of disarticulated human skeletal remains.

The sloping area between the church and path (no. 2) contained the highest quantity of both articulated and disarticulated human remains. The first, possibly articulated, skeleton encountered was the skull of **SK 13**, which was seen in the section below a gully 6m south of the church. The next skeleton along the trench was **SK1** (Pl. 5) which was slightly further south and consisted of the right tibia, left tibia and left fibula. Skeletons **SK2**, **SK3** and **SK4** (Pl. 6) located 7m from the church, overlay and truncated one other, **SK 2** being the latest burial in the sequence. Within the same area, **SK7** (Pl. 9) was exposed in the east facing section, and its depth of 0.50m below the surface may suggest that it was a later burial. Below the remains of **SK7** was a layer of pitch/tar, which was possibly used as some type of sealant within the grave. Slightly further along the trench adjacent to path (no. 2) were two more burials **SK5** (Pl. 7) and slightly deeper **SK8** (Pl. 10). It was noted that skeleton **SK5** was a different orientation compared to all the other burials found within the trench .

Within the area between path (no. 2) and (no. 3), the remains of three skeletons were uncovered. The upper body of a child or adolescent **SK6** (Pl. 8) with unfused humeral epiphyses was situated approximately 20m from the church, and adjacent to **SK10** (Pl. 12) which was seen in the east-facing section. Its depth of 0.54m below the surface suggests that it was a later burial than that of **SK6** (0.70m below surface) although this can not be clearly proven as **SK10** had been truncated by machining. Within in the grave fill **118** of **SK6** was an iron object, which was possibly part of the coffin furnishings. A skull **SK9** (Pl. 11) was exposed at the bottom of the trench, 16m from the north end. It was not excavated as it was below the level of the foul sewer pipe.

Two other skeletons were recorded south of path (no. 3). These included the skull of skeleton **SK11** which was situated below the level of the pipe and was therefore

left in situ and the skull of skeleton **SK12** (Pl. 13), which was seen in the west facing section of the trench 0.50m below the surface.

Other features

Two features were located in the southern end of the trench. A pit or ditch **103** (Fig. 4C, Pl. 14) was filled with a mid brown clayey silt **102** and contained a sherd of pottery (late 15th – 17th century) and, a limestone and brick rubble filled **106** natural depression **107** (Fig. 4D, Pl. 15) which lay above an area of possible made ground **104** (Fig. 4B), a friable mid brown silt. The nature and width of the trench made it impossible to determine the full extent of the features and therefore their function and shape are unknown. Below **104** was a mid grey brown clayey silt subsoil **105**, which may possibly be the same as **101**, but this can not be clarified due to the positioning of feature **103**.

Discussion

Due to the limits imposed by the width of the trench all the skeletons recovered were only partially uncovered and therefore not retained for detailed investigation because they were unlikely to yield much useful archaeological information.

The density of the skeletal remains, both articulated and disarticulated, appears to drop off sharply south of path 2, which may suggest a boundary or change in land use between the two areas during the medieval period.

The purpose of the pit/ditch to the south, as stated before, is unclear but the made ground may be evidence of the landscaping of the churchyard that was carried out in the nineteenth century.

The pottery finds recovered, although limited, were all of a similar date to the finds from the previous watching brief and therefore add little further information. The microlith although not significant, does suggest the presence of prehistoric activity within the area.

Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by John Lynch, on behalf of Spalding Parochial Church Council. LAS would like to thank the contractors for their help whilst the trench was being excavated. The watching brief was co-ordinated by Naomi Field, and carried out by Tobin Rayner. Jane Frost collated and produced the report.

Reference

Moore, R., 1998 *Church of St Mary and St Nicholas, Spalding: Foundations for the New Vestry. Archaeological Watching Brief*. LAS Report no 321.

Tobin Rayner
November 17th 1998

APPENDIX 1

Church of St Mary and St Nicholas Spalding (SPC 98)
Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Finds
SK1	Skeleton	Right tibia, left tibia and fibula.	
SK2	Skeleton	Ribs and left humerus and clavicle.	
SK3	Skeleton	Left and right tibia.	
SK4	Skeleton	Skull.	
SK5	Skeleton	Left and right femur and pelvis.	
SK6	Skeleton	Upper torso and skull of child/young adult.	
SK7	Skeleton	Skull.	
SK8	Skeleton	Skull.	
SK9	Skeleton	Skull.	
SK10	Skeleton	Left and right femur seen in section.	
SK11	Skeleton	Skull.	
SK12	Skeleton	Skull seen in section.	
SK13	Skeleton	Skull seen in section.	
100	Layer	Topsoil. Dark brown clayey silt.	
101	Layer	Subsoil. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	Pottery, Lead and Flint..
102	Fill	Fill of 103. Mid brown clayey silt.	Brick, Pottery and Nails.
103	Cut	Pit or Ditch.	
104	Layer	Made ground in south end. Mid brown silt.	
105	Layer	Subsoil in south end of trench.	
106	Fill	Rubble fill of natural hollow 107.	
107	Cut	Natural hollow.	
108	Fill	Fill of grave 109. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
109	Cut	Grave of SK1.	
110	Fill	Fill of grave 111. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
111	Cut	Grave of SK2.	
112	Fill	Fill of grave 113. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
113	Cut	Grave of SK3.	
114	Fill	Fill of grave 115. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
115	Cut	Grave of SK4.	
116	Fill	Fill of grave 117. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
117	Cut	Grave of SK5.	
118	Fill	Fill of grave 119. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	Fe Object.
119	Cut	Grave of SK6.	
120	Fill	Fill of grave 121. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	Pitch/Tar.
121	Cut	Grave of SK7.	
122	Fill	Fill of grave 123. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
123	Cut	Grave of SK8.	
124	Fill	Fill of grave 125. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
125	Cut	Grave of SK9.	
126	Fill	Fill of grave 127. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
127	Cut	Grave of SK10.	
128	Fill	Fill of grave 129. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
129	Cut	Grave of SK11.	
130	Fill	Fill of grave 131. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
131	Cut	Grave of SK12.	
132	Fill	Fill of grave 133. Mid yellowish brown clayey silt.	
133	Cut	Grave of SK13.	

APPENDIX 3

Pottery Identification by Jane Young

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Date
101	Tile	1		14 th - 15 th
101	TB	1	Jug	15 th - M18th
101	MEDX	1	Jug	E13th - L15th
102	BOU	1	Jar/Jug	L15 th - 17 th

Glossary of Fabric Codes

- TB** Toynton All Saints/Bolingbroke kilns: mid 15th/mid 18th centuries.
MEDX Medieval, non-local or uncertain origin: early 13th/late 15th centuries.
BOU Bourne fabric D: mid 15th - mid 17th centuries.

APPENDIX 4

Contents of Site Archive

A copy of this report,
Original site documentation
Context sheets
2 sheets of site drawings,
1 box of finds

Photographs:
LAS Film No. 98/125 Negs. 1-21

All the human skeletal remains have been deposited in the care of the church wardens, awaiting reburial.

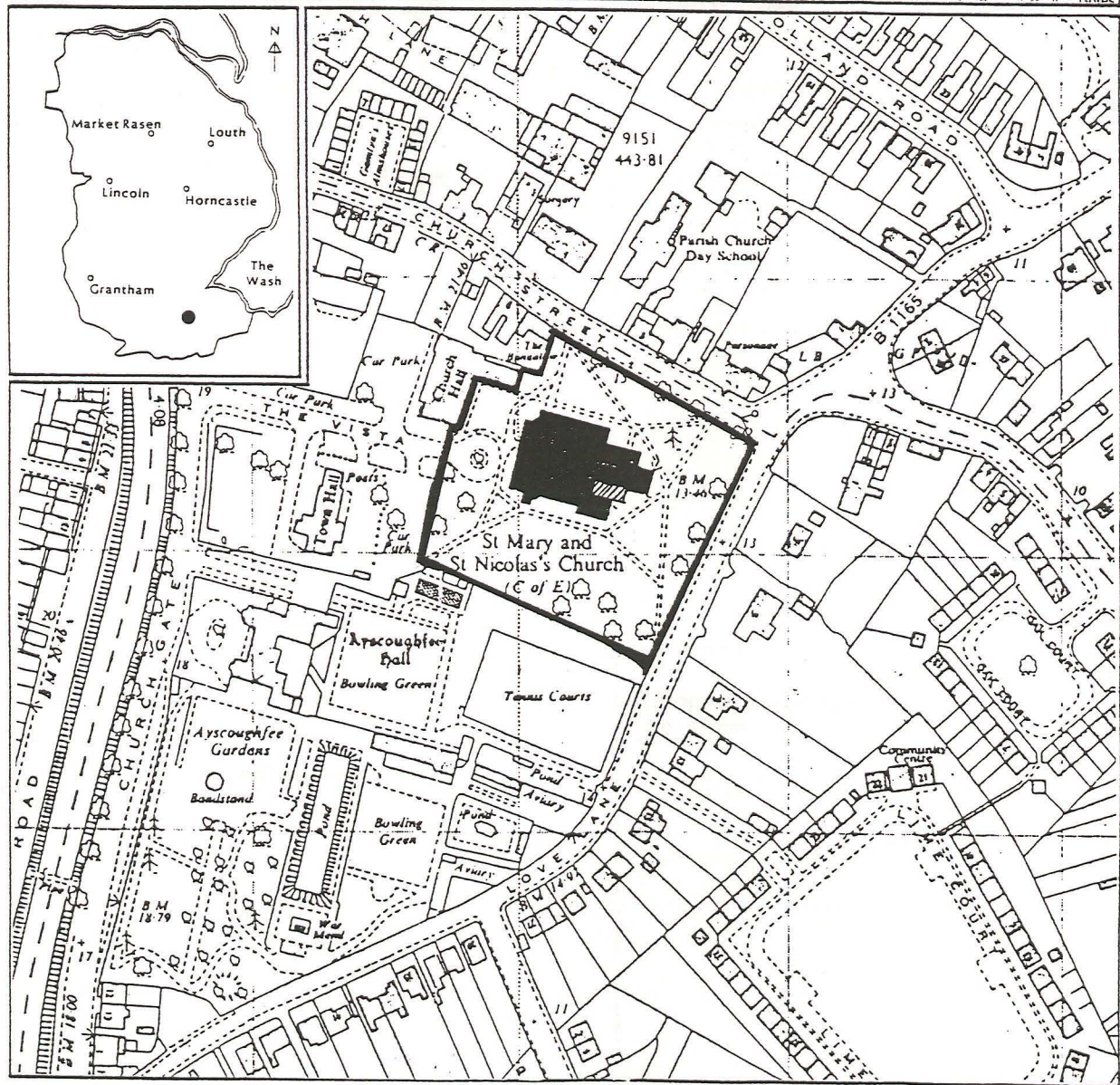
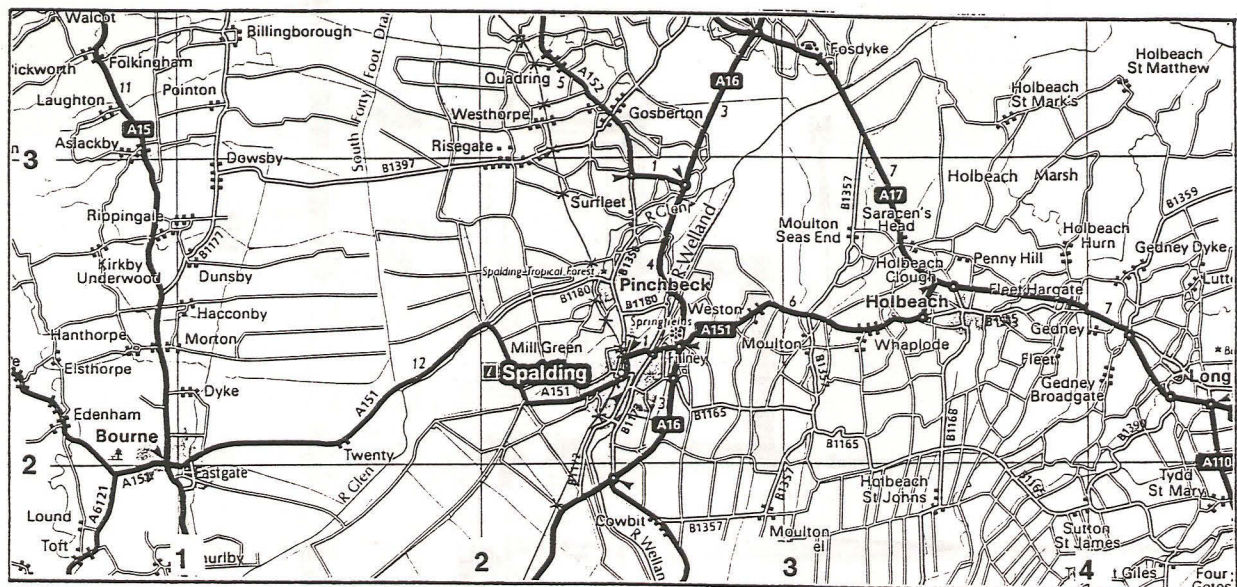


Fig. 1 Location of St Mary and St Nicolas Church, Spalding.
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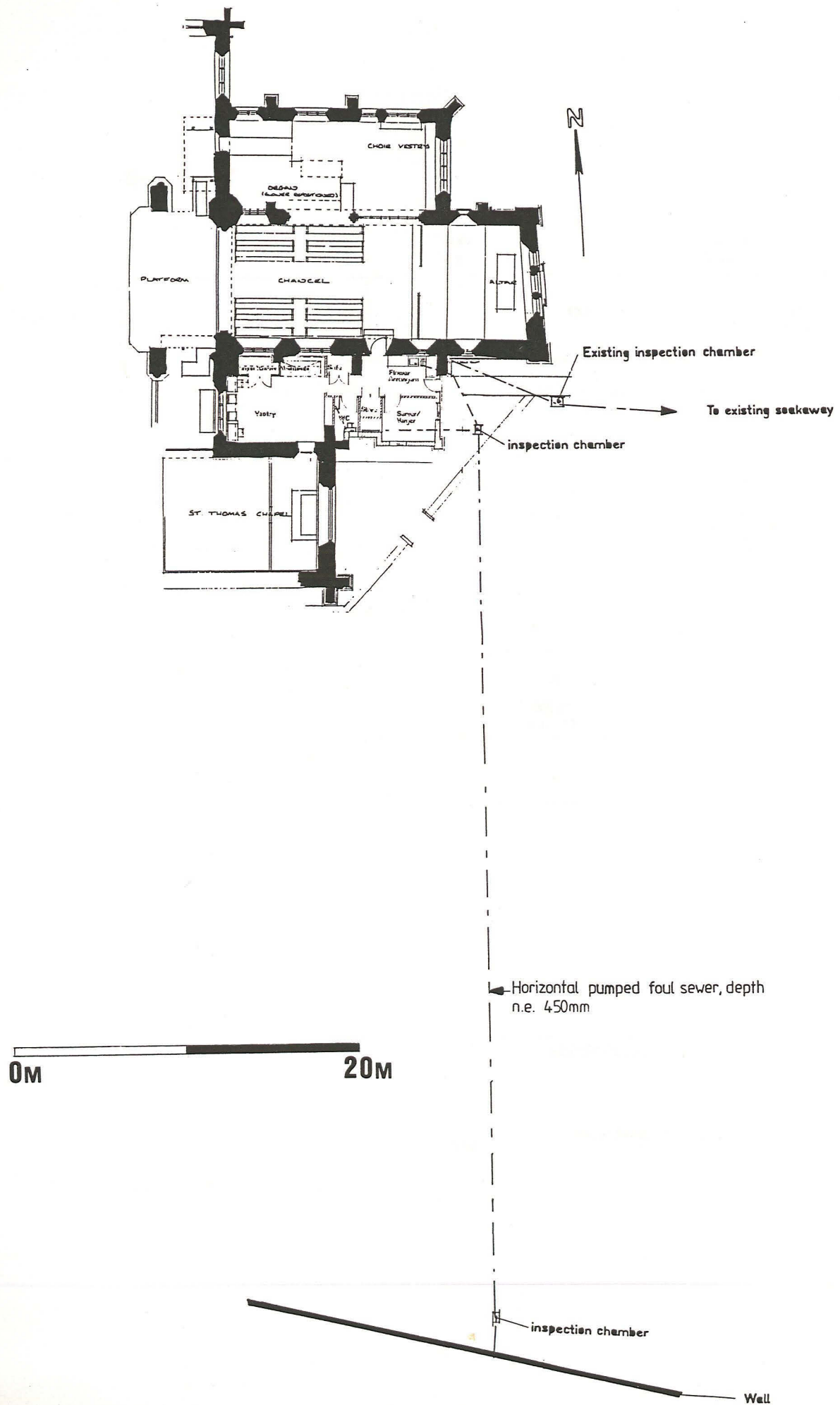


Fig. 2 Location of foul sewer trench.

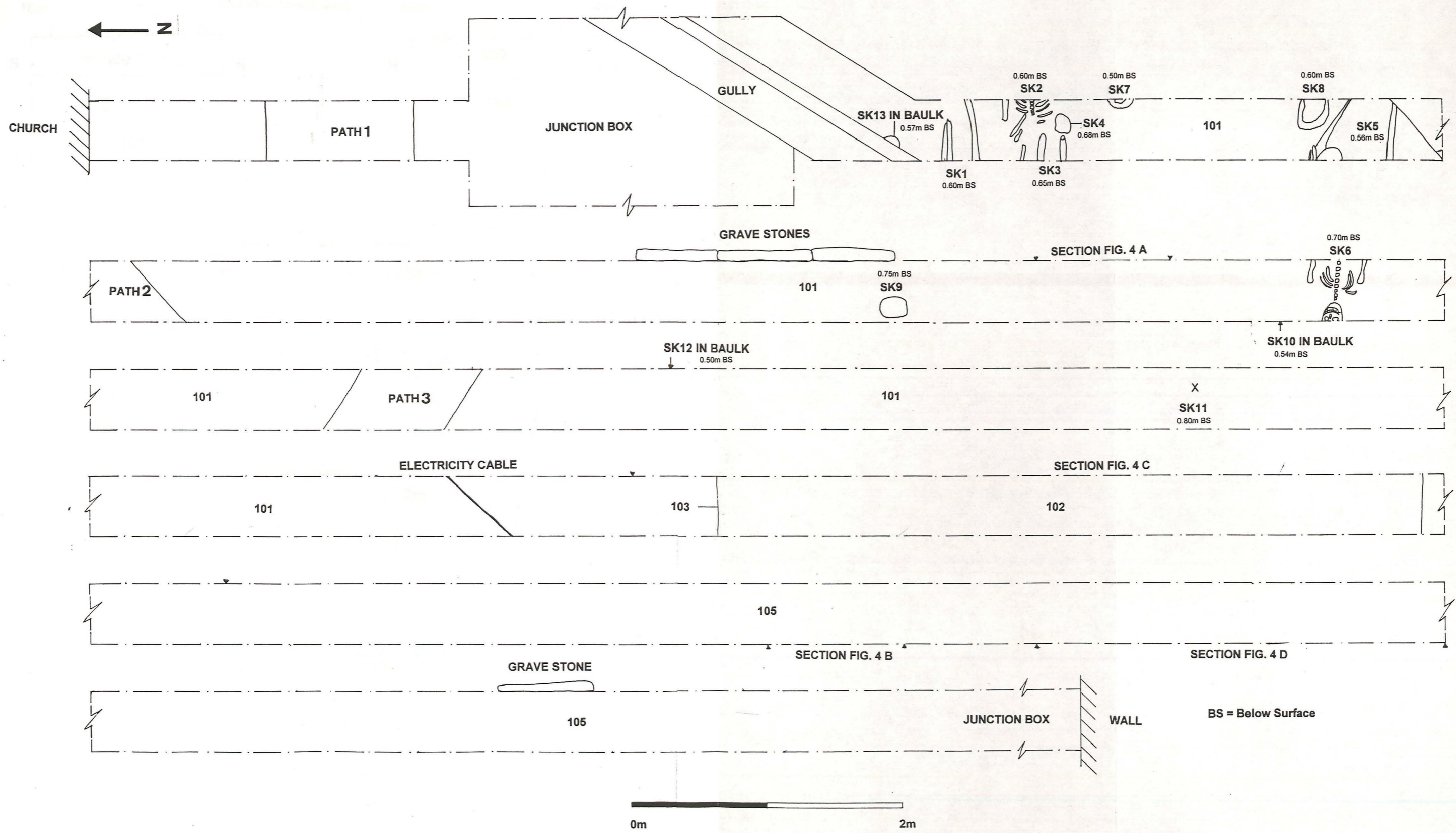


Fig. 3 Plan of trench.

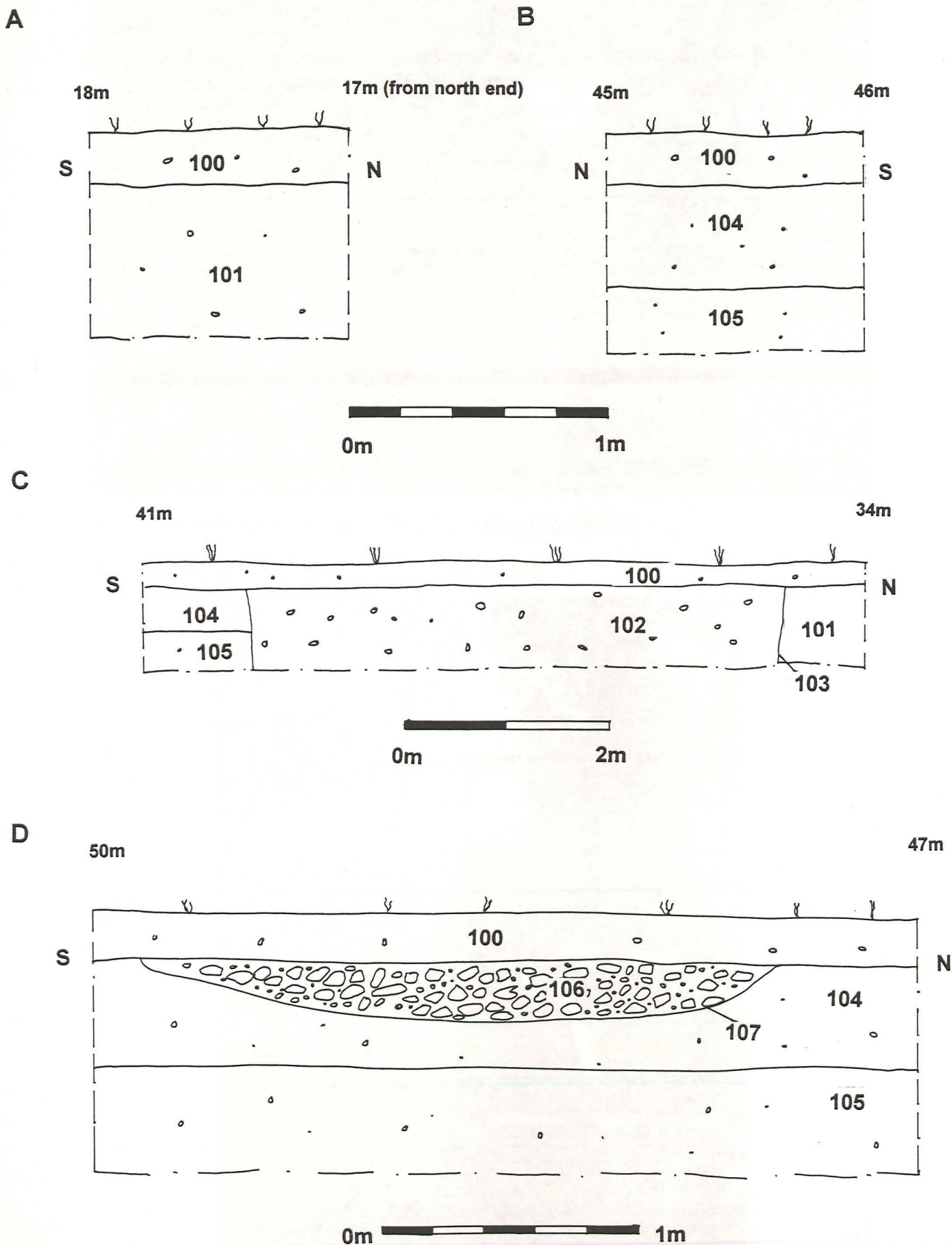


Fig. 4 A, East facing representative section in north end of trench. B, West facing representative section in south end of trench. C, East facing section of pit/ditch 103. D, East facing section of rubble filled hollow 107, in south end of trench.



Pl. 1 View looking South of machine digging trench.

Pl. 2 Fully excavated trench looking North.

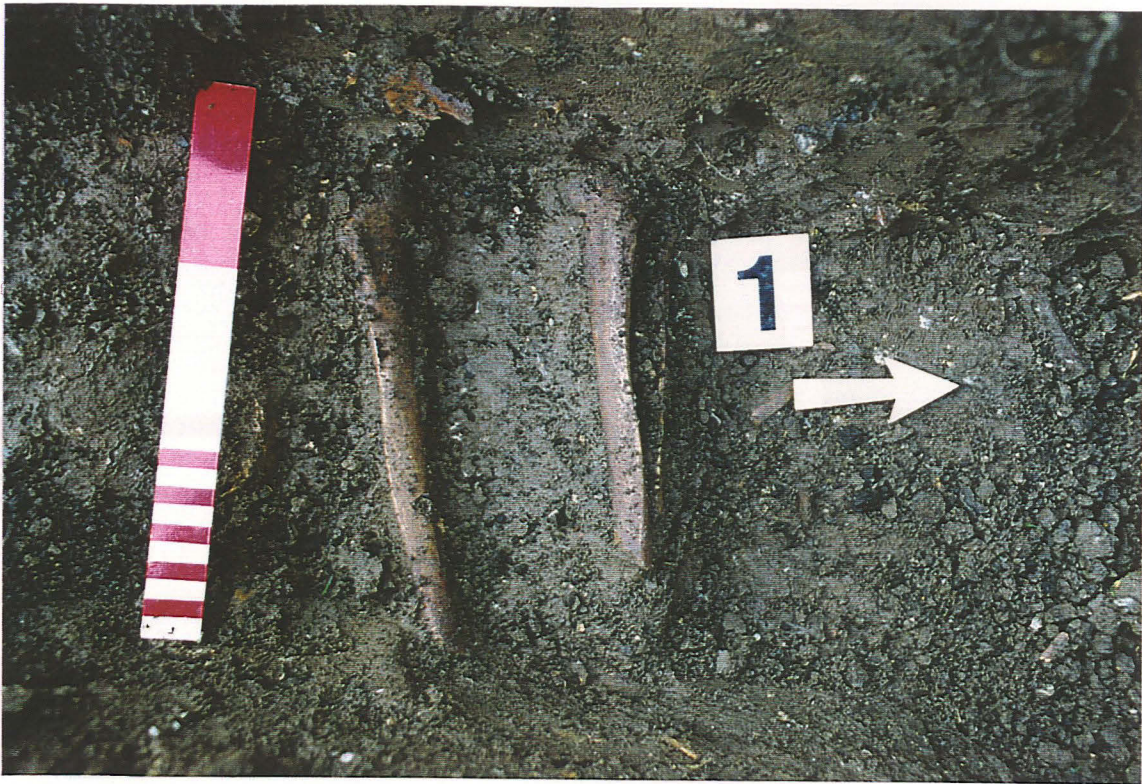




Pl. 3 Fully excavated trench looking South.

Pl. 4 Excavated area for junction box.





Pl. 5 Skeleton SK1 (right tibia, left tibia and fibula).

Pl. 6 Skeleton SK2 truncating skeleton SK3 in turn cutting skeleton SK4 (not numbered).





PI. 7 Skeleton SK5 (left and right femur and part of the pelvis).

PI. 8 Skeleton SK6 (upper torso and skull of child or young adult).





Pl. 9 Skeleton SK7 (skull).

Pl. 10 Skeleton SK8 (skull).





Pl. 11 Skeleton SK9 (skull).

Pl. 12 Skeleton SK10 (left and right femur seen in section only).





Pl. 13 Skeleton SK12 (skull seen in section)

Pl. 14 North-east oblique facing section of Pit/Ditch 103.





Pl. 15 East facing section of limestone rubble layer 106.