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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Metheringham Mains Replacement Scheme
Archaeological Monitoring**

**NGR: TF 0620 6146 - TF 0735 6120
Site Code: MMR 97
LCNCC Museum Accn No. 245.97**

Report prepared for

Anglian Water Services Ltd

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Contents

Lists of Figures and Plates

Summary 1

Introduction 1

Archaeological Background 1

The Watching Brief 1

Albert Avenue 2

Prince's St 2

Princess Margaret Avenue 3

High St 3

Middle St 4

Drury St 4

West of Manor House 4

Conclusion 5

Acknowledgements 5

Reference 5

Archive Summary 5

The Figures

The Plates

Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Metheringham. Based on the 1953 OS 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. (LAS Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 50424A).

Fig. 2 The pipeline route, showing area monitored and the location of observations noted in the text (Based on the 1:2500 plan supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd [dwg. no. 9740678/01, Copyright reserved]. (LAS Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 50424A).

Fig. 3 O. S. 1:2,500 map of Metheringham, showing core of medieval settlement around High Street, Middle Street and Drury Street and moat at Hall Garth (built over in the 1960s). Surveyed 1887, revised 1904. (Reduced scale.)

Plates

Pl. 1 Prince's Street, west of Princess Margaret Avenue. View looking west towards the Sleaford Road (B1188). Observation point 4 showing grey-brown clay/silt beneath road makeup of crushed limestone, probably part of a former watercourse.

Pl. 2 Prince's Street, general view looking east towards High St, observation point 8 in foreground.

Pl. 3 Observation point 8, Prince's St, close-up.

Pl. 4 Junction of Prince's St and High St, looking east. Note medieval cross to right of JCB

Pl. 5 North end of High St, looking north, showing brick culvert, observation 10, just below machine bucket.

Pl. 6 Observation 10, close-up of brick culvert, truncated by modern road surface.

Pl. 7 General view looking south along High St.

Pl. 8 High St, view looking north from the Market Cross (observation 14), showing numerous services crossing the pipe trench

Pl. 9 Observation 14, close-up looking north showing limestone beneath modern road surfaces.

Pl. 10 Market Cross, next to observation 14, showing no disturbance to its setting.

Pl. 11 Observation 15, next to Library, showing grey fill of feature crossing the trench, looking south.

Pl. 12 Observation 15, close-up of feature containing grey fill.

Pl. 13 High St, observation 16, opposite old school, showing small ditch or pit on right hand side of trench, filled with grey-brown clay, looking south.

Pl. 14 Middle St, observation 18, showing limestone beneath road surface, looking west.

Pl. 15 Drury St, observation 19, near doctors' surgery, looking south.

Pl. 16 Observation 19, close-up of limestone beneath road surface.

Pl. 17 Observation 20, west of Manor House, showing dark brown silty clay beneath road surface.

Pl. 18 Observation 21, looking east, showing continuation of organic silty deposits.

Pl. 19 Observation 22, looking west, showing limestone rubble deposit, a possible wall.

Pl. 20 Observation 22, close-up looking north-east, showing possible limestone wall.

Pl. 21 Observation 24, limestone-filled depression.

Pl. 22 View from Drury St looking north, showing undulation in fenceline between the ivy-covered trees, marking depression at observation 24, possibly a former watercourse.

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Summary

A watching brief during trenching for a replacement water main identified little of archaeological significance. A former natural stream channel was recorded at the west end of the village, in Prince's St and in the village centre, small gullies of unknown date were observed in High Street, as well as Victoria, or later, brick culverts. Close to the Manor House, at the south eastern edge of the village, several features containing black organic silts may have been infilled watercourses, possibly associated with the moated site which was formerly located immediately to the north.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd in January 1997 to conduct an intermittent watching brief of trenching for a replacement water main in Metheringham, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The first inspection visit was made on 27th January 1997. Further visits were made until 18th June 1997 when monitoring was concluded; a total of 18 visits was made.

Archaeological Background

There is little evidence of prehistoric or Roman settlement in the area around Metheringham village, although Romano-British finds have been found near the junction of Prince's Street and Princess Margaret Avenue. Since no further finds of this date were forthcoming during the watching brief it is not possible to tell whether they represent evidence for Roman occupation or if the discoveries were just stray finds.

It is clear that the modern village of Metheringham developed in the Anglo-Saxon period and the Domesday Survey of 1086 records that there were two manors (estates) centred on Metheringham which included a church, arable land, meadow and woodland Foster and Longley 1976 (entries 13/35; 31/18; 59/19; 68/4). There was also property belonging to an estate in Branston, which included land and two mills, and further land and a third mill belonged to an estate in Waddington. The focus of the medieval settlement and its Saxon precursor is presumed to have centred on the church and the moated site to its east. Little of the ancient street layout can be detected today because the village has expanded greatly since the end of the Second World War, with new housing estates being created in all directions. However, earlier Ordnance Survey maps provide evidence to show that High Street and Middle Street were at the centre of the settlement with Drury Street forming a link between the village and the manor to the south east (Fig. 3).

The Watching Brief

The watching brief was carried out at intervals during the contractors' trenching programme. Only certain zones along the pipelaying route had been highlighted for archaeological monitoring by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council

(highlighted in yellow on Fig. 2). Part of the scheme was laid using moling techniques, with infrequent small access holes. Elsewhere, the 1m deep trench was examined from ground level and a series of observations recorded. Numbers have been assigned to these observations for recording purposes, and correspond with the numbers in the text (Fig. 2).

Albert Avenue

The replacement main along Albert Avenue, and within the housing estate between Lincoln Road and Prince's Street, was directionally drilled with small access holes at intervals before monitoring began.

Prince's Street

1. At the western end of the replacement main, the sequence of deposits between Sleaford Road and Highfields Rise consisted of a 0.20m thick layer of tarmac (the modern road) overlying limestone bedrock.
2. The road runs downhill towards the village centre. East of Highfields Rise, the tarmac surface covered a 0.05m thick limestone makeup layer. This sealed a grey/brown clay deposit 0.75m thick, with limestone bedrock 1m from the surface. The clay appeared to be an undisturbed subsoil.
3. Between the junction with Albert Avenue and no. 62 Prince's St, the tarmac surface was bedded on 0.1m of slag in addition to an underlying 0.05m thick layer of limestone. This covered the clay deposit seen at 2, with limestone bedrock at 1m below ground surface.
4. On the west side of the junction between Prince's Street and Princess Margaret Avenue the clay deposit, seen at points 2 and 3, was 0.40m thick and overlay a sandy material, 0.25m thick. This was interpreted as the western limit of a former watercourse, which must have flowed approximately north-south, along the natural dip in the ground.

The sand, in turn, overlay more brown clay, which continued beyond the base of the excavated trench (Pl. 1). The water table was reached at 1.20m below the modern street level. The clay deposit overlying the sand probably represents a natural filling of the depression with hillwash. The eastern edge of the former water channel was encountered just beyond the other side of the road junction.

5. Between nos 60 and 50 Prince's street a brown clay, similar to that seen in observations 2 and 3 was recorded.
6. Outside 48 Prince's Street, the modern road lay directly above limestone bedrock with no intervening clay deposit.
7. 70m east of 6, the grey/brown clay deposit was recorded again, possibly filling a natural undulation in the limestone bedrock, which continues to dip towards High Street.

8. Outside the veterinary surgery, (no. 8) the tarmac and road makeup overlay a loose, weathered limestone (Pls. 2 and 3) which continued as far as the junction with High Street (Pl. 4).

Princess Margaret Avenue

9. The replacement main around this housing estate was also directionally drilled. Close to no. 5, at the north end of the road, brick rubble was visible in the clay deposit between the road and the trench base. This is likely to represent a relatively modern localised disturbance associated with construction of the estate.

High Street

10. At the northern end of High Street, close to the junction with Lincoln Road, a brick culvert was exposed in the trench (Pls. 5 and 6). A 19th century horseshoe was recovered from material beside this culvert.
11. South of the Lloyds Bank building, the modern road and limestone-bedding layer overlay a layer of limestone with limestone bedrock beneath. Various existing services crossed the trench here and the upper limestone may represent redeposited material within a relatively recent feature (Pl. 7).
12. A possible feature, 1m wide at the trench base, cut the limestone bedrock close to the hairdresser's. No evidence for the date or function of this ditch or pit was apparent.
13. Opposite the video shop (close to the war memorial), the limestone bedding for the road sealed a brick structure identified as probably 20th century in date, and probably another culvert. The stone bedding layer is therefore almost certainly contemporary with the modern tarmac street and is not an earlier road-metalling surface.
14. The solid limestone was observed past the war memorial and the medieval cross (Pls. 8 -10). There was no disturbance to the setting of the cross, which is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the 1979 *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act*.
15. Along High Street the trench cut through yellow limestone bedrock beneath the tarmac road and up to three limestone-bedding layers. Opposite the library entrance, a clay-filled feature about 3m long was cut across by the trench. On the north side of this was the concrete capping for a sewer pipe, suggesting that the feature was either the backfilled trench for installation of that sewer, a ditch (of unknown date), or a natural stream channel which had been used when the sewer was constructed. At the base of the trench, small pieces of limestone were seen but the feature was deeper than the trench and not fully excavated (Pls. 11 and 12).
16. Opposite the Old School a 2m wide ditch or pit was revealed, cutting through the limestone bedrock. The feature had been loosely backfilled with grey-brown clay. There were no associated finds (Pl. 13).

17. Where the trench cut across a driveway east of no. 38 High Street a 2m wide, shallow feature was visible in the trench face. The 0.5m deep north - south aligned gully contained a black and grey soil fill. There were no finds.

Middle Street

18. The road overlay limestone bedrock the entire length of this street (Pl. 14). The name of Pitt's Farm, at the east end of the road, may derive from former quarries exploiting the stone in the close vicinity.

Drury Street

19. The pipe trench along this street cut through the tarmac and crushed limestone makeup over mixed layers of clay (Pls. 15 and 16).

West of Manor House

20. An un-named road links Drury Street with Station Road, passing to the north of the Manor House. Immediately SW of the entrance to Manor House the tarmac road and its yellow crushed limestone bedding covered a very dark brown silty clay. The ground here was wet, with water seeping into the trench base (Pl. 17).
21. The dark clay continued to the west of 20. A 0.05m thick black organic layer was seen 0.85m below the road surface, sealing a cream-coloured flood silt deposit which extended below the trench base. Another band of the cream-coloured silt was present west of this, sandwiching the black organic layer. The upper light silt layer was sealed by 0.2m of road and bedding (Pl. 18).
22. West of a field gate opposite a barn, a possible limestone wall foundation was recorded, apparently aligned at 45° to the road. This feature was 1.75m wide and cut through all the silty deposits below the road makeup (Pls. 19 and 20).
23. To the west of wall 22, the tarmac road surface and its limestone bedding covered a 0.3m thick layer of limestone which thickened to a maximum of 0.50m as the trench travelled westwards. It overlay the silt deposit. This flood material ended about 14m west of the gate on the south side of the road.
24. Opposite the westernmost barn, the trench crossed a depression in the ground, 1.7m wide, which had been filled with limestone and brick rubble (Pl. 21). The dip is still visible above the ground and visible in the fenceline flanking the road (Pl. 22).
25. A probable former watercourse crossed the road west of, and roughly parallel with, the depression at 24. The road surface and its bedding sealed 0.3m of tenacious brown, slightly sandy clay, beneath which was 0.45m of very dark brown sandy clay which extended beyond the trench base which was 1m from the road surface.

No watercourses are recorded on available maps of this part of Metheringham, but the 1904 OS map marks a large moat in the vicinity of the present Chaplin Close, with branches running south towards the road (Fig. 3). The western and eastern sides are plotted as extending to the south, either enclosing a further area or

channelling water elsewhere. These could be leading towards no longer extant features such as manorial fishponds, and the wet channels beneath this lane could possibly be artificial and medieval in origin. Various streams are recorded in fields to the east and north of the observed anomalies.

Conclusion

The watching brief identified nothing of archaeological significance except west of Manor House. The trench was too narrow and shallow to permit the features here to be fully understood, but it seems likely that they represented backfilled water courses, at least some of which were man-made.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful for the co-operation received during this project, especially from Anglian Water Services Ltd (Project Engineer Paul Renshaw), Mr Greasley from Crawshaw Robbins and the teams involved in the mains laying. Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy provided access to information from the Lincolnshire County Council SMR.

The report was written by Naomi Field and Geoff Tann. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Naomi Field and Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
December 1998

References

Foster, C. W. and Longley T., 1924, reprinted 1976, *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, Lincoln Record Society, vol.19.

Archive Summary

annotated copies of plans supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd
clean copies of pipeline route supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd
correspondence

photographs: colour prints, LAS films

Film No. 97/11/ negs. 0-6 and 16-30
 97/13 negs 10-13 and 34-37
 97/47 negs. 0,4-5, 13-24
 97/64 negs. 24-26

Plates

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Pl. 4 Junction of Prince's St and High St, looking east. Note medieval cross to right of JCB

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Pl. 6 Observation 10, close-up of brick culvert, truncated by modern road surface.

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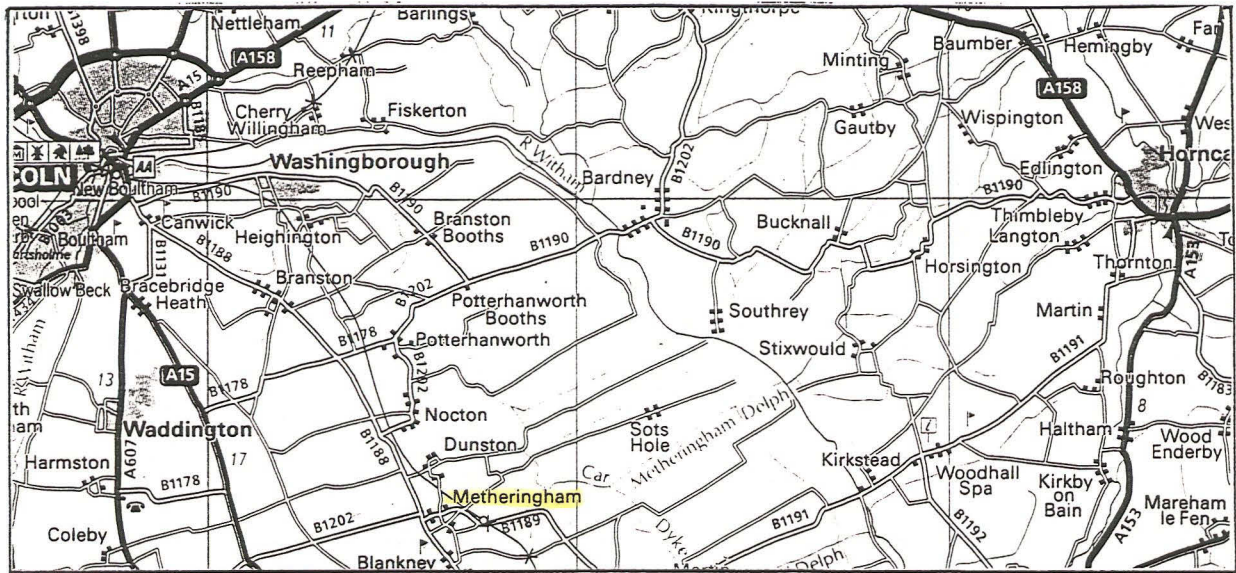


Fig. 1 Location of Metherringham. Based on the 1953 OS 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. (LAS Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 50424A).

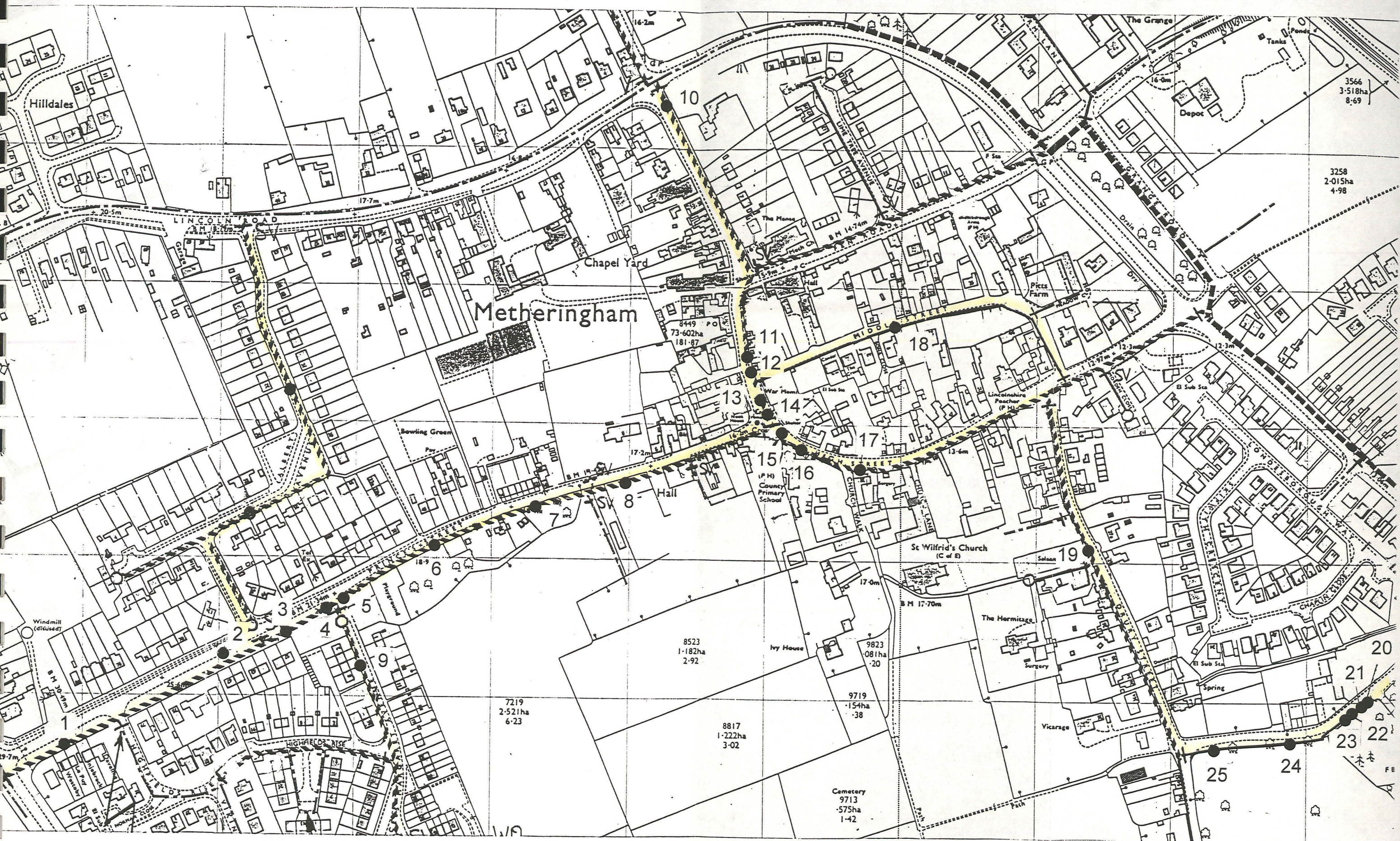


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