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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Lindsey Court Horncastle  
Enhancement Scheme Phase II  
Archaeological Evaluation**

**NGR. TF 2598 6956**

**Site Code: HLC 98**

**LCC Acc No: 205.98**

**Prepared for**

**East Lindsey District Council**

**January 1999  
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Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section

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? part of 5/086/0604/97  
The Warehouse?

**Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out as part of the above scheme. The area was heavily disturbed by modern services and associated trenches and there was nothing of Roman date remaining. The evaluation failed to locate the south-east bastion of the Roman walls.*

**Introduction**

East Lindsey District Council commissioned Lindsey Archaeological Services to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Lindsey Court, prior to resurfacing and enhancement of the area.

The aims of the investigation were to

- record the true alignment of the east wall.
- locate the fourth bastion.
- provide information for educational and presentation purposes.

**Archaeological Background**

The Roman walls at Horncastle are of late 3rd-4th century date and, apart from a similar walled area at Caistor, are unique in Roman Britain. Although it is suspected that the walls had a military function, little has been discovered to determine their use. Excavations in 1978, beneath the National Westminster Bank, in the Market Place located pits and gullies of 3rd-4th century date, but the site was too small to enable a full assessment of their character and function (Field and Hurst 1983).

Archaeological observation during the recent renewal of the footpath running north of the Library along Lindsey Court located the chalk raft, recognised elsewhere in the town as the base for the Roman wall foundations (Field and McDaid 1996). It was only prior knowledge of the wall alignment and its method of construction, which allowed confident interpretation of the surviving deposits because foundations for the Vine and Tap pub, which was demolished in 1968, had caused considerable disturbance in the area. Horizons were particularly difficult to identify in a narrow machine-dug trench (which could not be left open overnight for safety reasons). It was hoped that more satisfactory results might be obtained further east.

The area east of Lindsey Court is one of the few remaining open areas lying within, and adjacent to, the Roman wall circuit and it was hoped it would be



possible to examine the relationship between remains inside the walls and the defences themselves. Bastions survive at three corners of the enclosure and a south-east bastion has always been assumed to have existed, but its position has never been recorded or noted, even in antiquarian literature. It was hoped that investigation would locate the position of the lost bastion.

### **Method**

The area investigation comprised a wedge-shaped piece of ground immediately west of Robert Bell and Co. measuring a maximum of 9.4m x 7.2m. The existing path surfaces, stones/tarmac were removed using a JCB supplied by the contractors. The remainder of the overburden was removed under archaeological supervision using a JCB with a toothless bucket.

### **Results**

#### Trench 1 (5.4m x 1.8m)

The positioning and size of this trench was restricted by the presence of a gas pipe at the southern end, an electricity cable to the east, and an active sewer pipe to the west.

This trench was located approximately 3.5m west of the building occupied by Robert Bell and Co. (Fig. 2). Modern deposits comprised a surface layer of grey brown silty sand **101**, 0.2m deep, below was a pinkish-grey brown silty clay 0.7m deep **104**. This overlay the undisturbed natural yellow gravel **105**.

Running across the trench, approximately 1.33m from its north end was a ceramic pipe (**102**) dug from the existing ground surface to the base of the trench. This was a sewer pipe, still live, and presumably joining the large sewer running along the western side of the trench. The only finds retrieved from this trench were modern brick fragments.

The proximity to the main sewer running north-south along the west side of the trench caused the trench side to collapse, preventing full recording. It is likely that the west side of the trench was within the cut of the sewer trench and little of significance was lost.

#### Trench 2 (3.8m by 1.8m)

This trench was located 0.26m west of Trench 1. Its positioning was constricted by the sewer pipe to the east, a gas pipe to the north and the limit of area to be resurfaced to the west.

The upper layer was a dark greyish black silty clay **106**, below which was a brown sand and gravel **107**. This, in turn, overlay a dark grey brown silty clay **108** and a mid-grey brown silty clay **109**. All of the above materials contained recent building debris to varying extents. Natural undisturbed gravels were uncovered at the base of the trench at a depth of between 1m at the southern end of the trench and 1.30m at the north end. There were no finds of archaeological significance

retrieved from this trench.

### **Discussion**

The trenches contained modern deposits to a depth of more than 1m which lay directly over the natural gravels. There was no evidence of the south-east bastion revealed during the excavation but the substantial depth of modern disturbance may mean that it had been destroyed. The chalk raft that was located during the Phase 1 watching brief of the enhancement scheme was not located in either of these trenches.

The projected line of the wall could not be investigated due to the presence of an electricity cable to the north, although it is unlikely that any of the wall remained due to the depth of modern disturbance.

### **Conclusion**

Unfortunately, the area under investigation had been so heavily disturbed that no evidence for the Roman wall or its south-east bastion survived. While the weight of evidence from previous archaeological investigations suggests that this is indeed the location of the fourth bastion its precise position must remain conjectural.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS would like to thank David Boyson, Conservation Officer at East Lindsey District Council for co-ordinating the project and the contractors for their co-operation on site. The site work was carried out by Sue Farr and Mark Williams. The report was edited by Naomi Field and collated and produced by Jane Frost.

### **References**

Field, F. N. and Hurst H., 1983 'Roman Horncastle', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* vol 18, 47-90.

Field, F. N and McDaid, 1996 *Lindsey Court Enhancement Scheme. Archaeological Watching Brief*. Report for East Lindsey District Council, LAS Report No. 201

### **Contents of Site Archive**

1 sheet of drawing film with original drawings  
1 sheet of drawing film with inked drawings  
1 context register  
9 context sheets  
Film number 98/111 neg. Nos 00-24

Mark Williams  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
January 18<sup>th</sup> 1999



## APPENDIX 1

**Lindsey Court Horncastle**  
**Site Code: HLC 98**  
**LCNCC Accn No: 205.98**

### Context Summary

Context No	Type	Description
100	L	Dark grey brown sand silt
101	L	Dark grey brown sand silt
102	C	Modern sewer trench
103	F	Black silty clay
104	L	Grey brown silty sand
105	N	Yellow gravel
106	L	Dark grey silty clay
107	L	Orange brown sands and gravels
108	L	Grey brown silty clay
109	L	mid grey brown silty clay







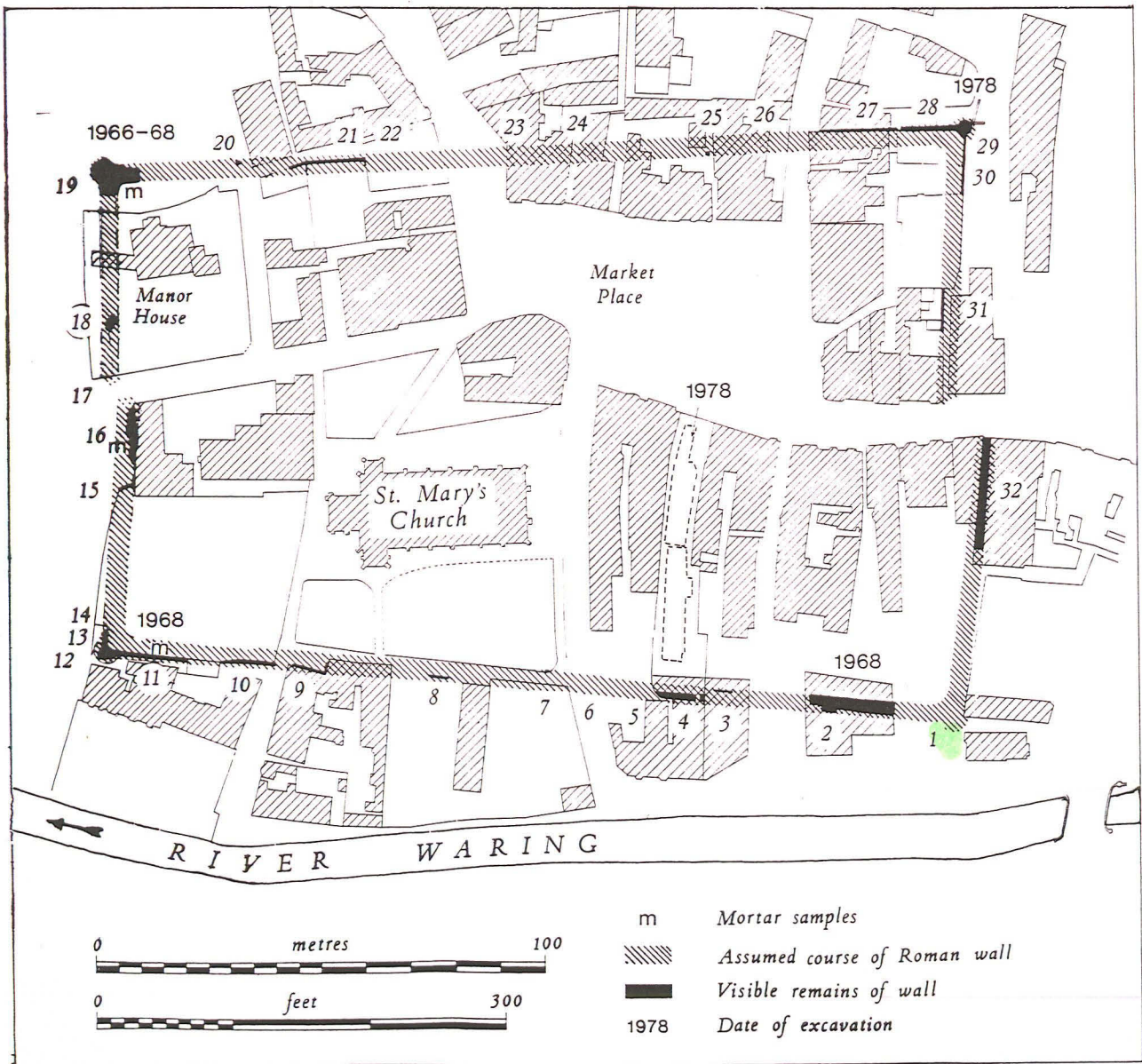
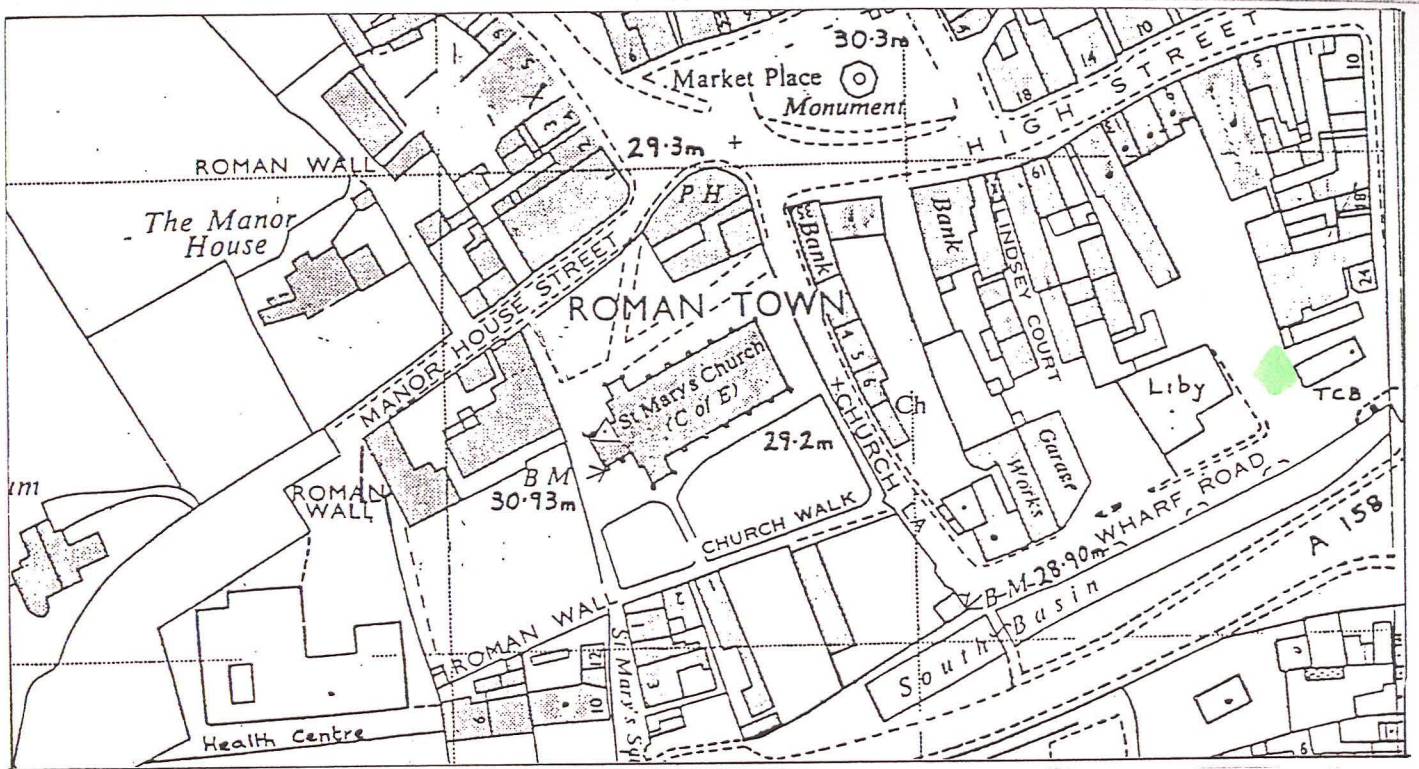


Figure 1b) Lindsey Court Enhancement Scheme, Phase II. Location plan. Reproduced from the OS 1:250 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright (reduced scale). c) Roman wall circuit (M.Clark)



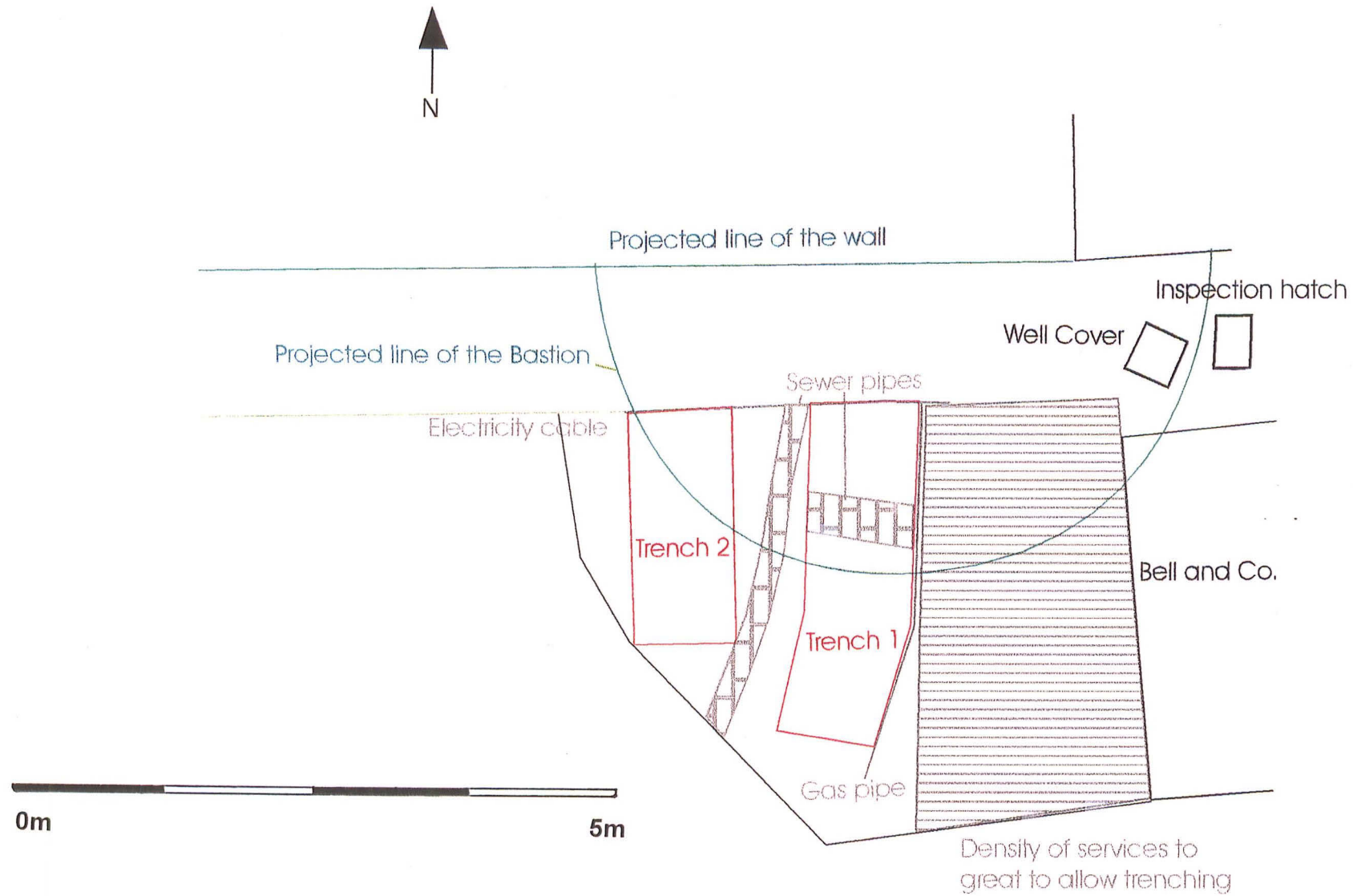


Figure 2 Trench locations

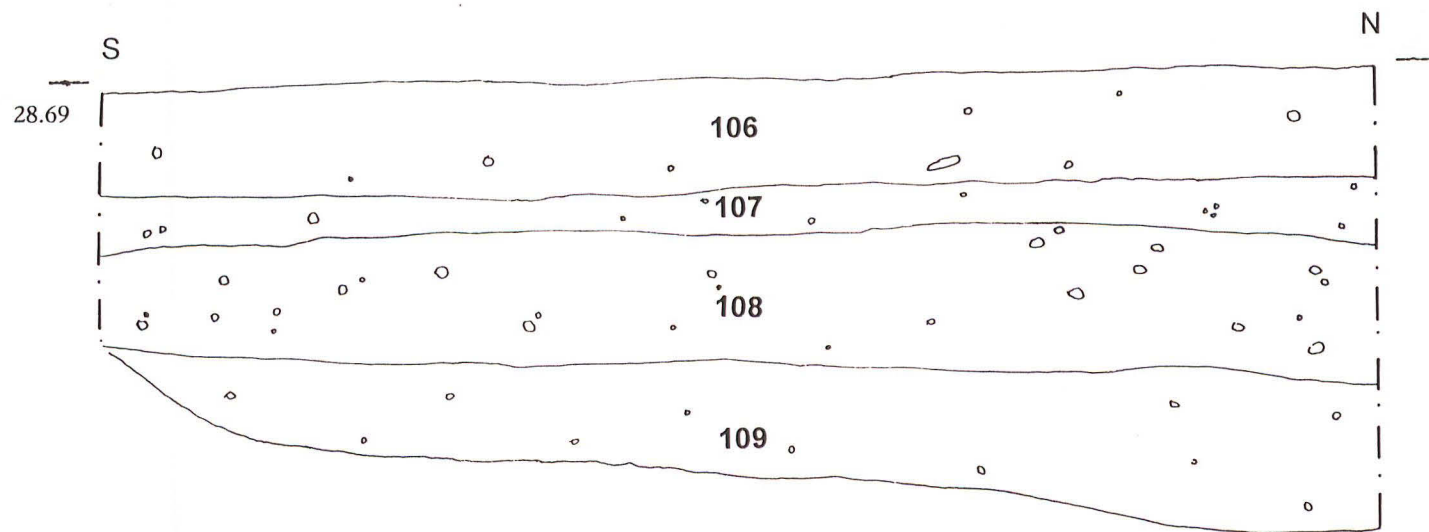
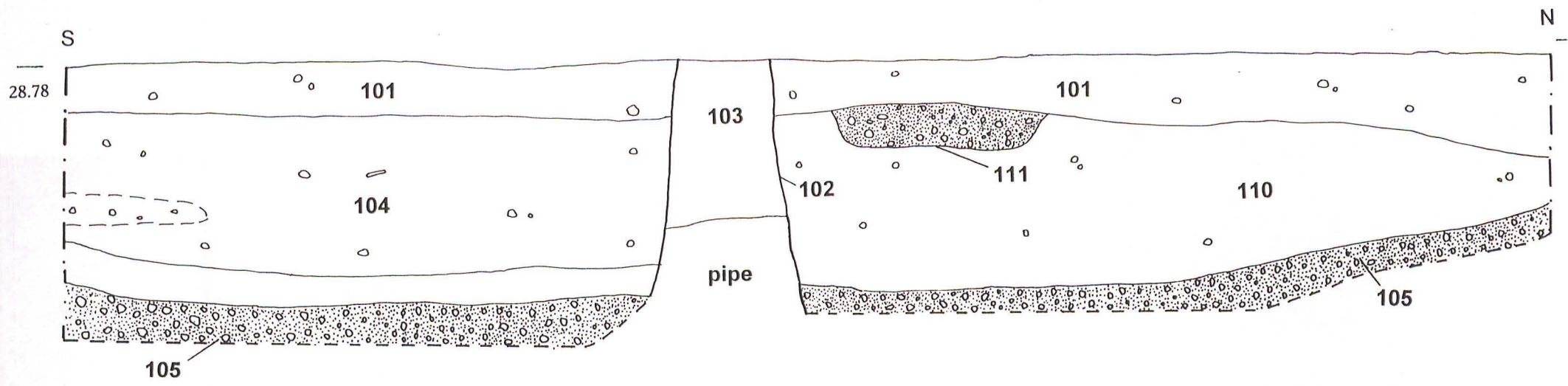


Figure 3 a) Section of Trench 1 b) Section of Trench 2





**Pl. 1 Location of area of investigation looking south**

**Pl. 2 Base of Trench 1 showing live sewer pipe and modern make up layers.**







**Pl. 3 Section of Trench 2 modern make up deposits**

**Pl.4 Base of Trench 2 showing the undisturbed gravels.**

