

Archaeological Watching brief
at
the junction of Station Road
and Villa Lane, Swineshead,
Lincolnshire
by
Heritage Lincolnshire
on behalf of
Mr D. Hudson

July 1992

SUMMARY

On the 20th July 1992 Heritage Lincolnshire undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at the junction of Station Road and Villa Lane, Swineshead, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF ~~23204125~~). The watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches, prior to the construction of a single storey dwelling.

TF 23143 41216

The watching brief revealed a single 'pit' type feature lying on the west side of the site. No finds were recovered from its fill. The location of the pit suggests that archaeological occupation of unknown date may lie to the west.

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INTRODUCTION

On the 20th July, 1992, Heritage Lincolnshire undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at the junction of Station Road and Villa Lane, Swineshead, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF 23204125) on behalf of Mr D. Hudson, the site owner. The work was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches prior to the construction of a single storey dwelling.

The purpose of the watching brief was to establish the depth, nature, survival and extent of archaeological deposits uncovered during the excavation of foundation trenches for the new dwelling.

METHODOLOGY

Following machine excavation of the foundation trenches, the sides of the trenches were cleaned by trowel to expose the archaeological deposits. Each archaeological feature or layer was recorded individually and given a unique record number. The records consist of a written description of each feature and layer, 1:20 section drawings and a photographic record.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

Swineshead is situated on low lying land about 9 km west of Boston. Sea level changes and, from the medieval period, land drainage have had an enormous impact on the history of the area. There may have been some use of the area in prehistoric times although the only recorded find is a stone axe (at TF 2320 4125 but the location is somewhat dubious).

During the Iron Age (c. 700 BC to AD 43) it is probable that the area was covered by the sea and uninhabitable. Falling sea levels during the Roman period allowed the land to be brought back into use and there is evidence (in the form of cropmarks on aerial photographs) of Roman farming about 400m north-west of the site. At this time (2nd-4th centuries) Swineshead was probably a low island surrounded by fen.

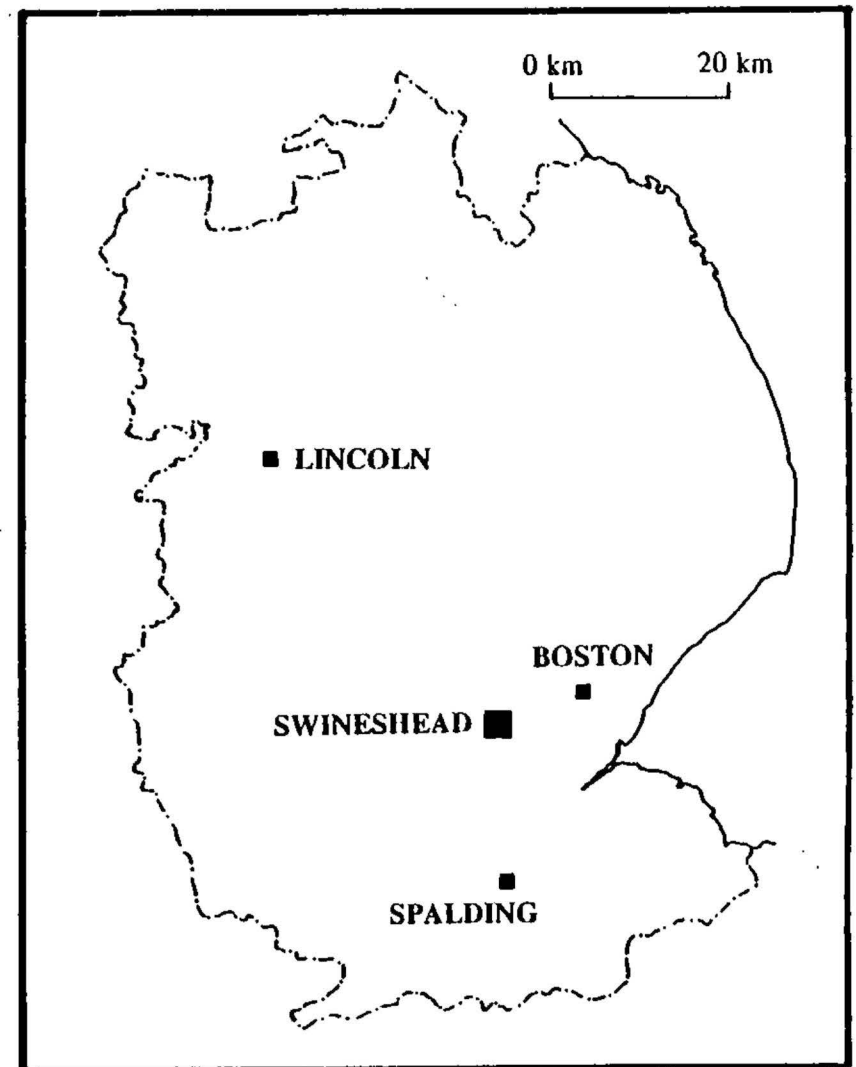
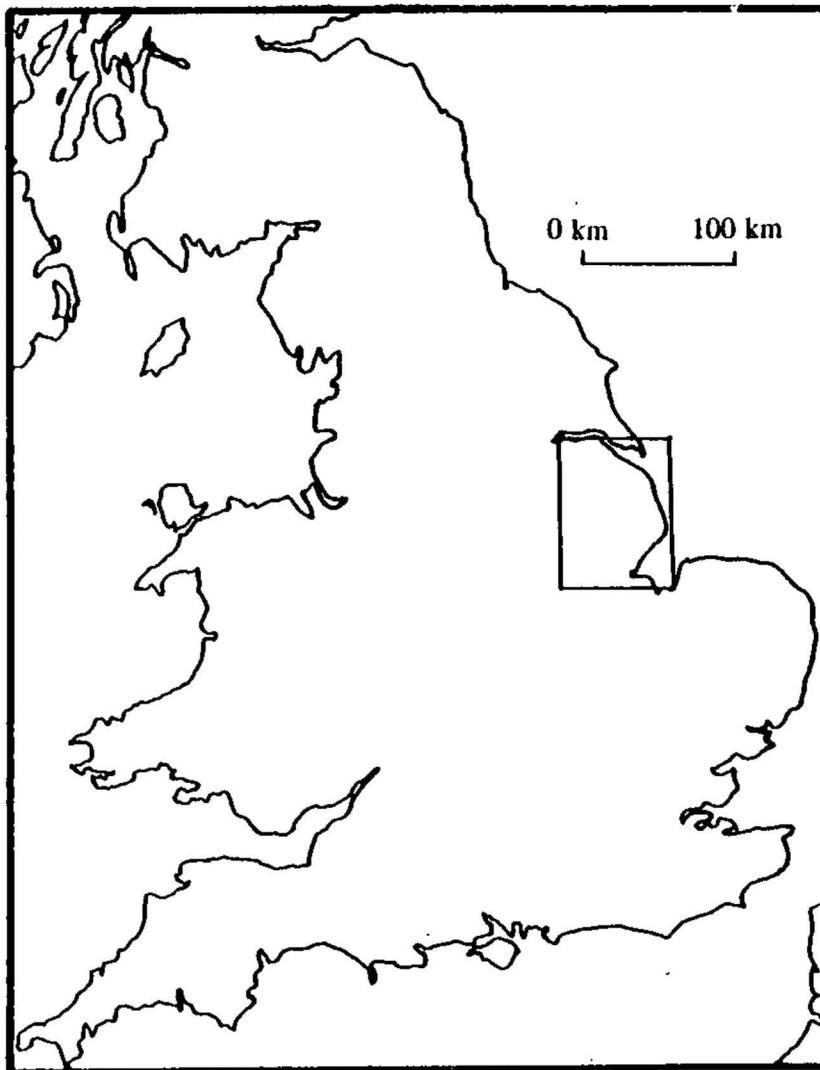
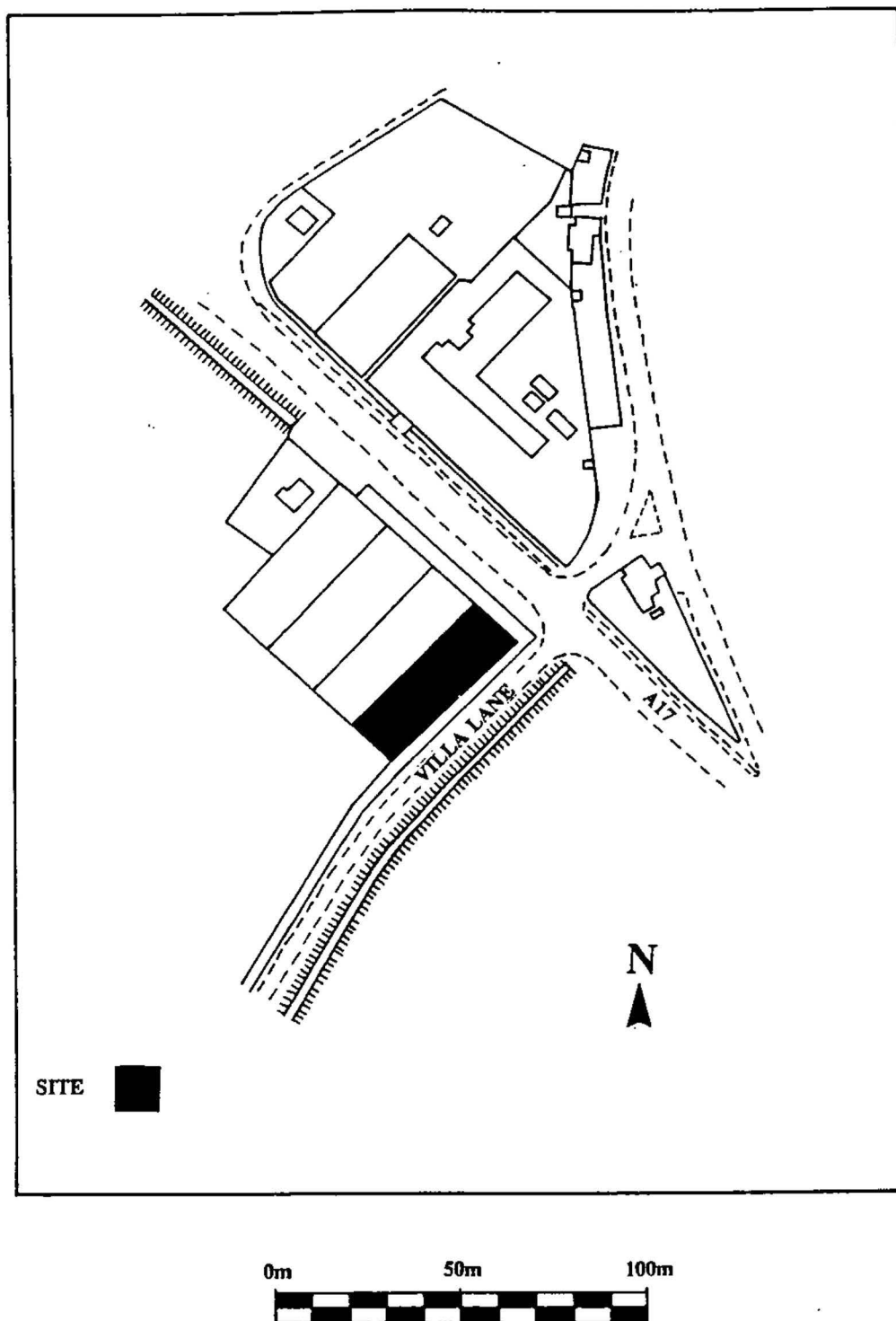


FIG.1 GENERAL LOCATION PLAN

FIG.2 SITE LOCATION PLAN



The place-name is first recorded in the 7th century in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle as *Swines haefed* and is thought to mean "the source of the Swin" although other derivations such as "Pig Hill" and *Svein's Hill* are possible. Despite the Saxon attribution of the name, no Saxon finds are recorded from the area and it has been suggested that a rise in the water table in the years following the Roman occupation made the area uninhabitable once again.

Swineshead is not mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) although, surprisingly, two localities within the modern parish, Stenning and Drayton, are included. The name occurs in the Pipe Rolls of 1230 as *Swynesheued*.

A Cistercian abbey was founded at Swineshead in 1148 and remained in use until its suppression in 1536/7. No visible remains of the abbey survive today.

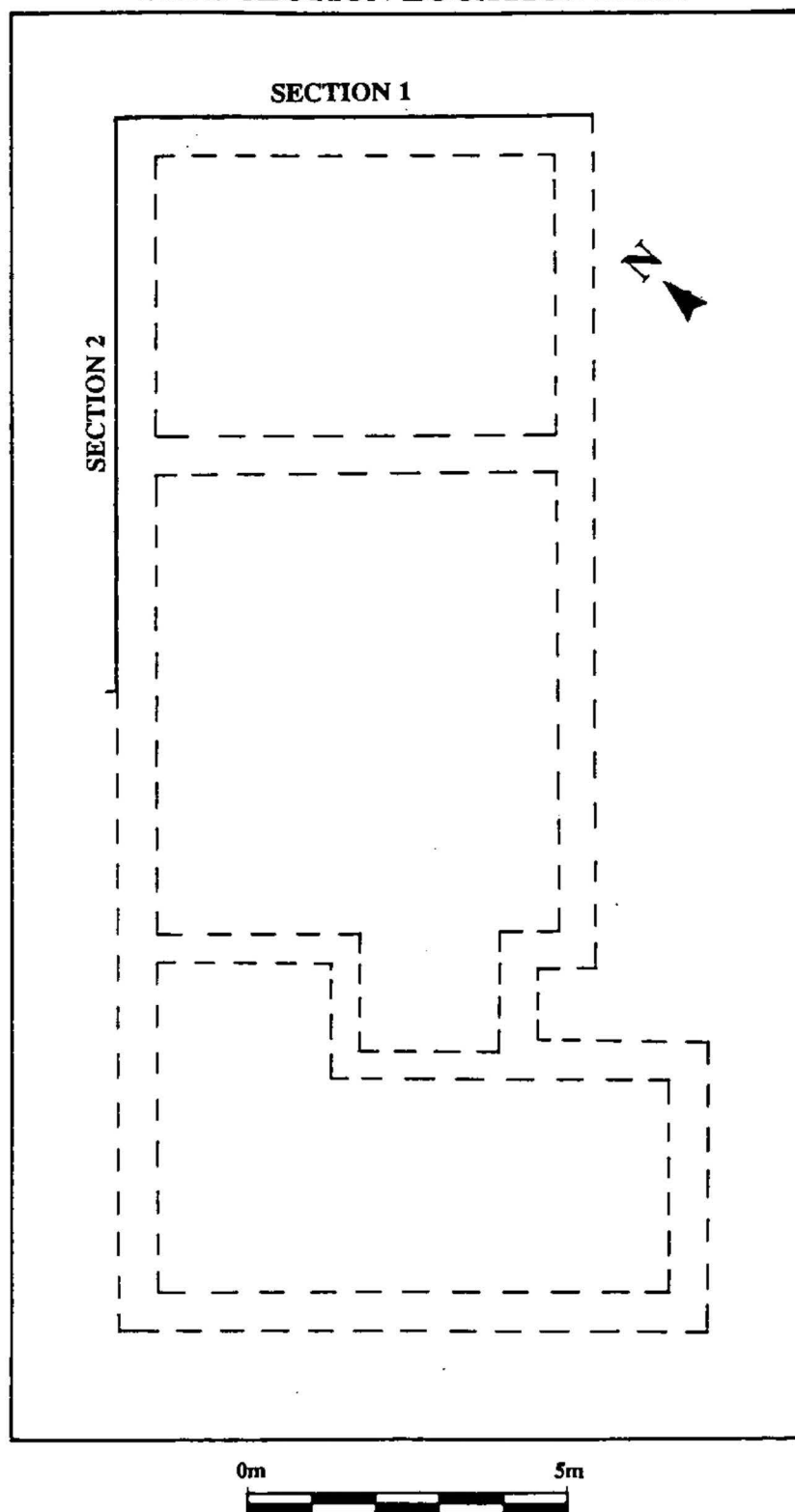
WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

The earliest deposit recorded was a friable yellow-brown silt [003], interpreted as natural fen silt. The deposit was recorded in both sections and was found to have a fairly level surface where it was overlain by top soil. Where it was overlain by the deposit of brown clay [002], the upper surface of the natural was gently undulating. The undulation in the natural may be the result of disturbance during the deposition of [002].

An archaeological feature [005] was observed approximately mid-way along section 2 cut into [003]. The feature, [005], did not appear in the opposing section and was, therefore, either the terminal end of a ditch or, more likely, a small pit. In profile the feature was a gentle "U" shape, 1.80m wide and 0.30m deep. The feature contained a single fill, [004], of reddish-brown silt, which contained no finds.

As mentioned above, the natural silt was in part overlain by a deposit of brown clay, [002]. This deposit was present on the north, south and east of the site. At its maximum extent the deposit was 0.40m thick, as recorded in section 1, and was found to taper towards the west. Deposit [002] is likely to represent material dumped on the site during the excavation of the ditch to the east.

FIG.3 SECTION LOCATION PLAN



A topsoil, [001], with a maximum thickness of 0.30m, sealed the deposits described above.

CONCLUSIONS

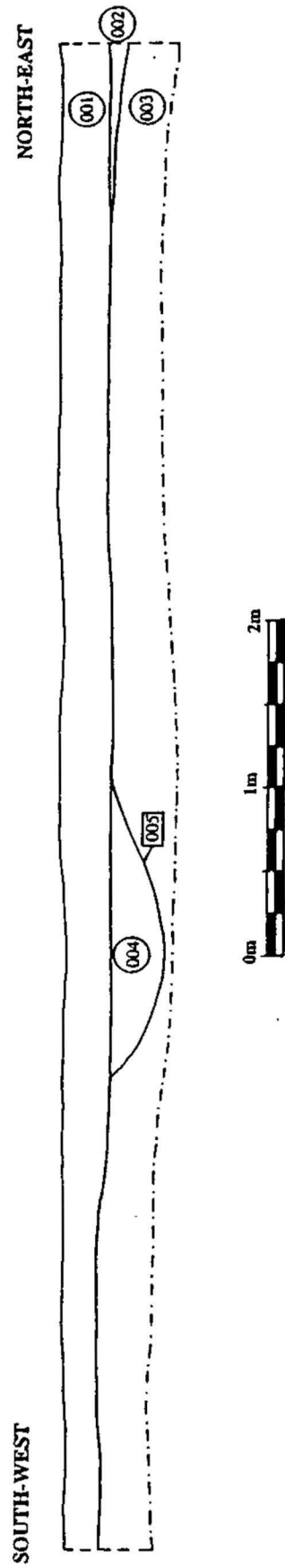
The watching brief revealed one archaeological feature namely the pit identified in section 2. Due to the lack of finds, from the pit as well as the site in general, no dating evidence was available for the feature.

It is suggested that the archaeological feature is associated with occupation activity to the west of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heritage Lincolnshire wish to thank Mr D. Hudson for the funding the watching brief.

Fig. 4 Section 2



APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an excavation or evaluation is allocated a unique context number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by square brackets e.g. [001].
Cut	A cut refers the physical action of digging a post-hole, pit, ditch etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an excavation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded
Dumped deposits	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal, or may represent positive attempts to reclaim land.
Fill	Once a hole of any sort has been dug, it immediately begins to silt-up, (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which are contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil which is not contained within a cut.
Natural	Deposit(s) of soil which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.

A P P E N D I X 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

CONTEXT No.	DESCRIPTION
001	Friable mid-brown silt, topsoil.
002	Firm mid-brown clay, possibly redeposited natural.
003	Friable yellow/brown silt, (fen silt) - natural deposit.
004	Firm reddish/brown silt, fill of pit 005.
005	Shallow slightly concave pit.