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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Snarford, Hall Farm

**Archaeological Watching Brief
during Groundworks for an Extension to the
Farmhouse**

TFOS08 8240

NGR: ~~TF 0510 8241~~

Site Code **SHE 99**
LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **9.99**
WLDC Planning Application No. **98/P/0824**

Report prepared for Mr Pennell

LAS Report No. 342

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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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EVENT L13477
SOURCES L18187 L18188
S3199 Medieval
S4782 L183331 Roman
S4783 L183332 Undated

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief, during excavation of two foundation trenches for a house extension, recorded traces of several ditches and pits. Despite a high level of modern disturbance, some of these features were suspected to be of medieval date although this could not be confirmed. In addition to medieval and post-medieval finds, the monitoring produced a fragment of Roman vessel glass and one sherd of Torksey-ware pottery, probably pre-dating the Norman Conquest. Apart from a bone handle with either Roman or Saxon decoration, found NE of the church in 1957, these represent the earliest finds from the settlement.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Mr Pennell in January 1999 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during excavations of foundation trenches and drains for a two-storey extension at the rear of Hall Farm, Snarford (Figs. 1 and 2). The watching brief was required by West Lindsey District Council to fulfil a condition of full planning permission on Application No. 98/P/0824.

Groundworks were monitored by G. Tann on 5th and 6th of January 1999.

Archaeological Background

Hall Farm, with the adjacent farmhouse, lies close to the centre of the former medieval village of Snarford. The house is about 30m from the parish church dedicated to St. Lawrence. Snarford is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when its name was *Snerteforde*, "ford of a man called Snotr" (Mills 1991, 300).

The church, Hall Farm House and the farm buildings are the only buildings within the area of the medieval settlement (Pl. 1). The church has twelfth century fabric at the base of the tower and later building elsewhere, but the farmhouse and farm buildings are probably of seventeenth century origin; the site of successive medieval hall buildings is thought to lie west of the modern road (Pevsner and Harris 1964, 363-4).

Earthworks of medieval house platforms and crofts, separated by ditches and medieval lanes, survived in identifiable form until extensive levelling by bulldozer took place in 1954 and 1956. Prior to levelling, the Ministry of Public Building and Works conducted a survey of the earthworks (Fig. 3). This showed a probable moated site SW of the church, in a field known as Hall Close. The modern road was seen to diverge from its medieval course beside the church, and cut through crofts to the north.

After levelling, seven trenches were excavated in 1957 under the direction of S.E. West for the Ministry of Public Building and Works (West 1969, 93-99). Building rubble and pottery, mostly shell-tempered twelfth and thirteenth century fabrics but with infrequent glazed and later sherds. Sixteenth and seventeenth century sherds were collected west of the modern road after the bulldozing had taken place. Stanley West's descriptive report and consideration of the documentary sources provides a useful source for this site. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHM(E) has since investigated three parts of the earthwork complex, and established that the 'moated site' was probably a garden area which overlay medieval ridge and furrow (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, 50). The village appears to have been a small community which survived fourteenth century plagues but was then taken out of arable farming. It is unclear whether depopulation prompted the change or was caused by it.

The oldest externally visible part of farmhouse is of stone, with later brick additions around it. The present kitchen has been built against the stone building, apparently with part of the eastern wall removed for access. Some of the disturbed dressed stone blocks were re-used as foundation material for the nineteenth century brick kitchen extension.

The new extension is positioned in the angle between the brick kitchen, the stone heart and a 25-30 year old brick extension to the north (Pl. 2). It replaces part of a surfaced tennis court.

The Watching Brief (Fig. 4)

Context numbers were assigned by LAS for recording cut features, fills and soil layers identified in the machine-excavated trenches for the building foundations and service trenches. These numbers were used on finds and on the section drawings included in this report.

Part of the watching brief took place in particularly dull conditions with persistent rain. The contractor worked using arc lights when necessary, and in these circumstances the detection of pottery fragments may have been affected. Where possible, trenching undertaken in poor light was re-examined when conditions improved.

By arrangement with LAS, the contractor had removed the tarmac surface of the tennis court from the area of the new extension before the first monitoring visit. Inspection confirmed that this operation had not affected any archaeologically significant deposits, and that the court had been levelled on a brick rubble foundation.

The extension area was stripped of tarmac, brick rubble and redeposited soil containing late nineteenth/twentieth century debris to a depth of about 0.35m, by a mini-digger with an untoothed bucket. Three trenches were then excavated with a 0.6m wide bucket. The northern trench was designed to act as a wall of a future structure and was less substantial than the two walls forming the outside of the new extension.

The Stripped Surface

After removal of the levelling material for the tennis court, three features were evident within the cleared area of the new extension. To the SW was an extensive area of yellow clay which formed the rectangular end of a 3m wide feature extending northwards beyond the site. Within the centre of this clay was an area of ash and clinker (Pl. 3). After excavation of Trench 1 along the northern side of the extension, it was apparent that the yellow clay was redeposited material surrounding a deeper central feature 6 which incorporated topsoil with brick and stone rubble. The deepest element seemed to be a 1m wide north-south aligned ditch, cut into the undisturbed orange sandy clay. The ditch appeared to have been backfilled this century, although there was no clue as to its original date.

Immediately east of the yellow clay area was a spread of black and green/brown loam and fragments of post-medieval ceramic roof tile. This material may have contained cess, and have been a rubbish deposit levelling an underlying ditch 8. Ditch 8 was revealed when Trench 2 was excavated, as a 1m wide west-east aligned ditch, at least 0.8m deep and backfilled with grey/green sandy clay. This ditch is almost certainly the same feature as 3, seen in Trench 3, where it produced a fragment of a second/third century Roman glass cup or bowl rim (App. 2).

2m north of the NE corner of the existing kitchen, a spread of brick rubble and cream mortar 13 was exposed on the stripped surface. Unlike the other rubble which was interpreted as imported demolition material used to level the ground for the tennis court, these bricks appeared to be virtually *in-situ* and may have been the foundations of a small outhouse. The brick dimensions were 230mm x 105mm x 55mm, with no frog.

Two pottery sherds were found on the surface 1; their position close to underlying feature 2 may indicate their previous provenance. One is from a thirteenth/fourteenth century jug, but the other is a sherd from a Torksey ware jar of late tenth/eleventh century date (App. 1). Trade from the Torksey kilns seems to have flourished in the Saxo-Norman period, perhaps declining at the time of the Norman Conquest. This could be the earliest sherd yet found at Snarford. A fragment of a post-medieval brick (sixteenth/eighteenth century) and an entire floor tile of similar date, with dimensions of 210mm x 200mm x 30mm, were also collected from 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of about 1m below the external ground level. At the NW end of the trench, and almost certainly cut by the foundations of the brick wing, was a feature 7 filled with limestone rubble (Pl. 4). The feature had virtually vertical sides and may have been a wall foundation trench or a stone-packed post-hole. Insufficient was exposed to allow the shape or extent of this to be obtained.

At the eastern end of Trench 1, extending slightly into Trench 3, was a small area of green/brown clay loam which probably represented a small pit or other

disturbance. This may have been medieval or early post-medieval, judging by the light colour of the fill. No finds were seen in this feature.

Trench 2

An active domestic drain, outside the kitchen window, was found to overlie a much older backfilled west-east aligned ditch **2** (Pl. 5). The ditch was about 1.8m wide at ground level, sloping to about 0.8m wide close to its base 0.8m below the stripped surface. To the north, the 'natural' at the trench base was dirtier than elsewhere and may possibly have been fill of an even earlier adjacent ditch **5**, on a similar alignment. Two fills were recognised: the upper was a dark brown mixed clay loam, with an underlying grey/green silty clay. From the evidence of Trench 3, it seems that these represent two successive cuts of the same ditch.

The southern side of the deeper part of ditch **2** coincided with the position of the stone wall of the farmhouse. Its position suggested that the house had been built up to a traditional west-east boundary ditch which had already become backfilled.

A possible post-hole or gully terminal **12**, 0.4m wide and with its base at least 1m below the ground surface, was seen 1.5m north of ditch **5**, extending to the east. Nothing more could be established of this feature.

1m north of **12** was ditch **8**, described above.

Trench 3

This trench, not intended to carry a load-bearing wall, extended the line of the existing rear kitchen wall. Two separate ditches seen at the southern end seem to have been the feature recorded in Trench 2 as ditch **2**. The darker, most recent fill of that ditch (recorded here as **10**), was present to about 0.8m wide, partly covered by the kitchen wall. **2** produced a single base sherd from an eleventh/twelfth century pot. A narrow peak of undisturbed sandy clay, 0.45m below the stripped surface, separated the base of **10** from the base of the 1.5m wide ditch **9**. Ditch **9** contained a green/brown lighter fill. In this trench there was no evidence for disturbed 'natural' to the north, and ditch **5** may have been entirely covered by **9** at this point. The slight divergence of **2** and **9** suggests that the boundary was not especially rigid a land division and had been in use for considerable time before its disuse by the seventeenth century.

1.8m north of **9**, the trench was crossed by a 0.15m wide gully **14**. This feature is suspected to form a continuation of **12**.

The Drain Trench

The line of the new drain trench **4** was excavated through the back garden area to the existing septic tank. The trench cut through the deeply cultivated topsoil into the top of a lighter soil but no archaeological features were seen.

Conclusion

The archaeological remains revealed during this watching brief provided

further confirmation that this site lay within the medieval village settlement. There were tantalising hints of second century Roman and tenth/eleventh century activity, but too little to assume local occupation.

The ditches and other archaeological features cannot be understood or reliably dated on the basis of 0.6m wide machine-excavated trenches across their alignment, but no medieval house remains were identified. The linear ditch alongside the northern edge of the stone house, interpreted as a medieval plot boundary, was of most interest. Although it appeared to predate the stone structure, it had been respected by it, as if the seventeenth century builders had been constrained by medieval plot divisions.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful for the co-operation received from Mr and Mrs Pennell and their contractors.

Specialist identification of finds was by Jane Young (LAS) and Jen Mann (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit).

The illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
29th January 1999

References

Everson, P.L., Taylor, C.C. and Dunn, C.J. 1991 *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North West Lincolnshire*. London.

Mills, A.D. 1991 *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names*. Oxford.

Pevsner, N. and Harris, J. 1964 *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*.

West, S.E. 1969 "The Deserted Medieval Village of Snarford, Lincs." in *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 1 pt. 4; 93-99.

Archive Summary

Correspondence

Archaeological finds: vessel glass, pottery, tile

Specialists' archive lists

Developer's plans

Field plan drawings

Photographs: LAS colour print film nos. 99/5/1-7

Appendix 1

Snarford Post Roman Pottery and Tile Archive List (Jane Young)

Pottery

Context 1

TORK jar	1 sherd	base	
LSWA jug	1 sherd	base	?id; ?SCAR

Context 2	LFS	1 sherd	base	soot
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Glossary of Fabric Codes

Lfs	Lincoln fine-shelled ware: late 10th - early 13th centuries
Tork	Torksey ware/ Saxo-Norman: late 9th - late 11th centuries
Lswa	Lincoln glazed wares, fabric A: 12th - 15th centuries
Scar	Scarborough wares: 13th - 14th centuries

Tile

Context 1 FLOOR 1 tile, 21 x 20 x 3cm fine orange fabric. Post-medieval. This tile is unusual and is complete apart from surface flakes. Microscopic examination confirmed that this had not been a glazed floor tile. This tile would be a useful addition to a county-wide tile type series collection.

Context 1	BRK	1 brick fragment.	Post-medieval.
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Appendix 2

Report on the Glass from Snarford Jen Mann (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit)

One fragment of vessel glass was recovered from Context 3. The blue/green base fragment has a tubular footring and may be from a vessel such as a cup or a bowl. It is definitely Roman, probably second/third century. It is certainly not fourth century or later.

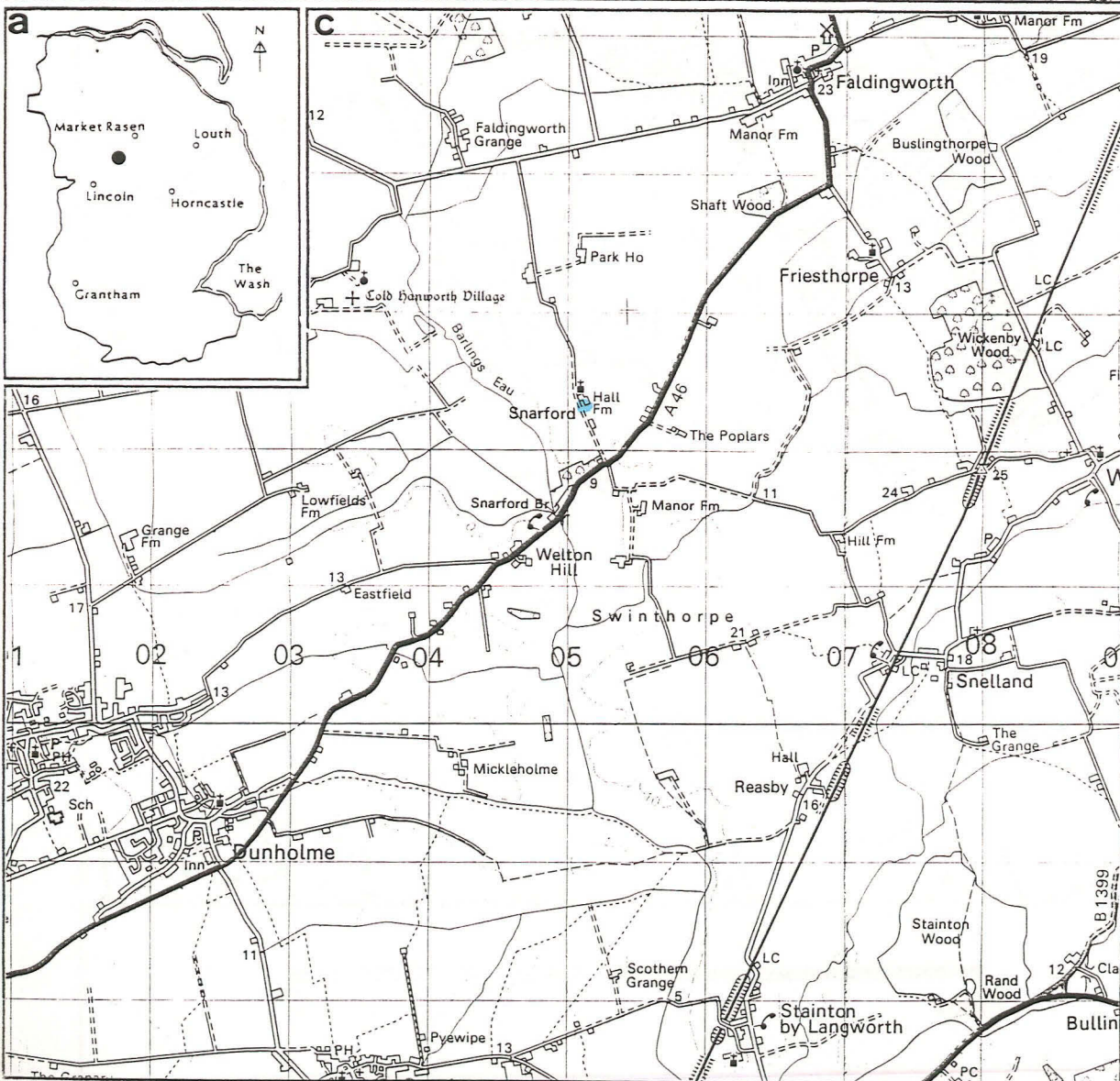
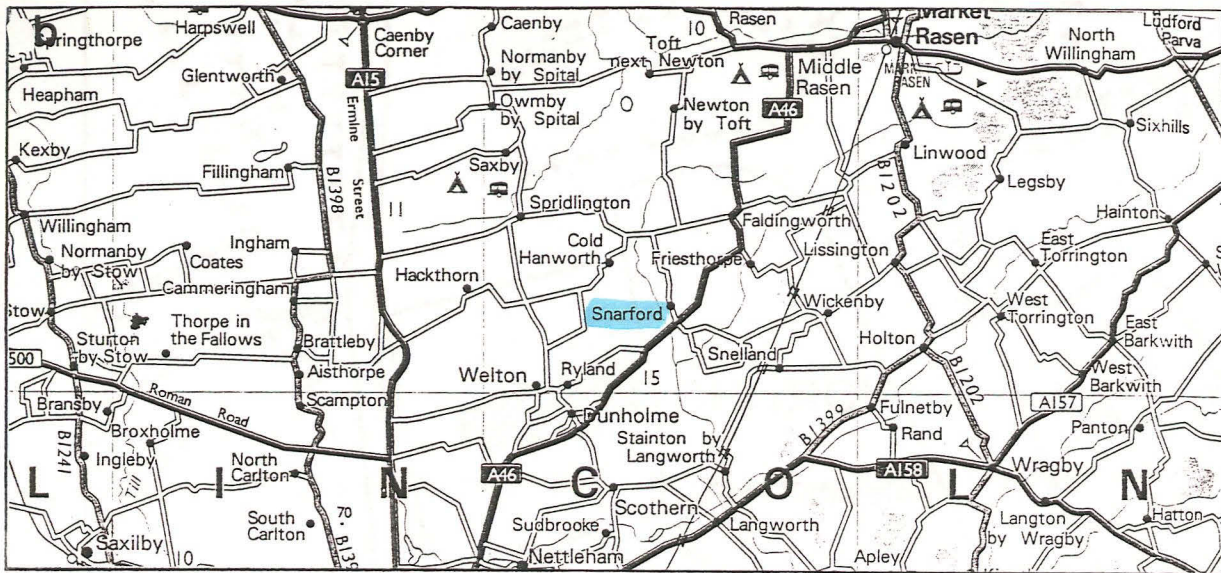


Fig. 1 Location of Snarford. Inset C based on the 1989 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map Sheet 121. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

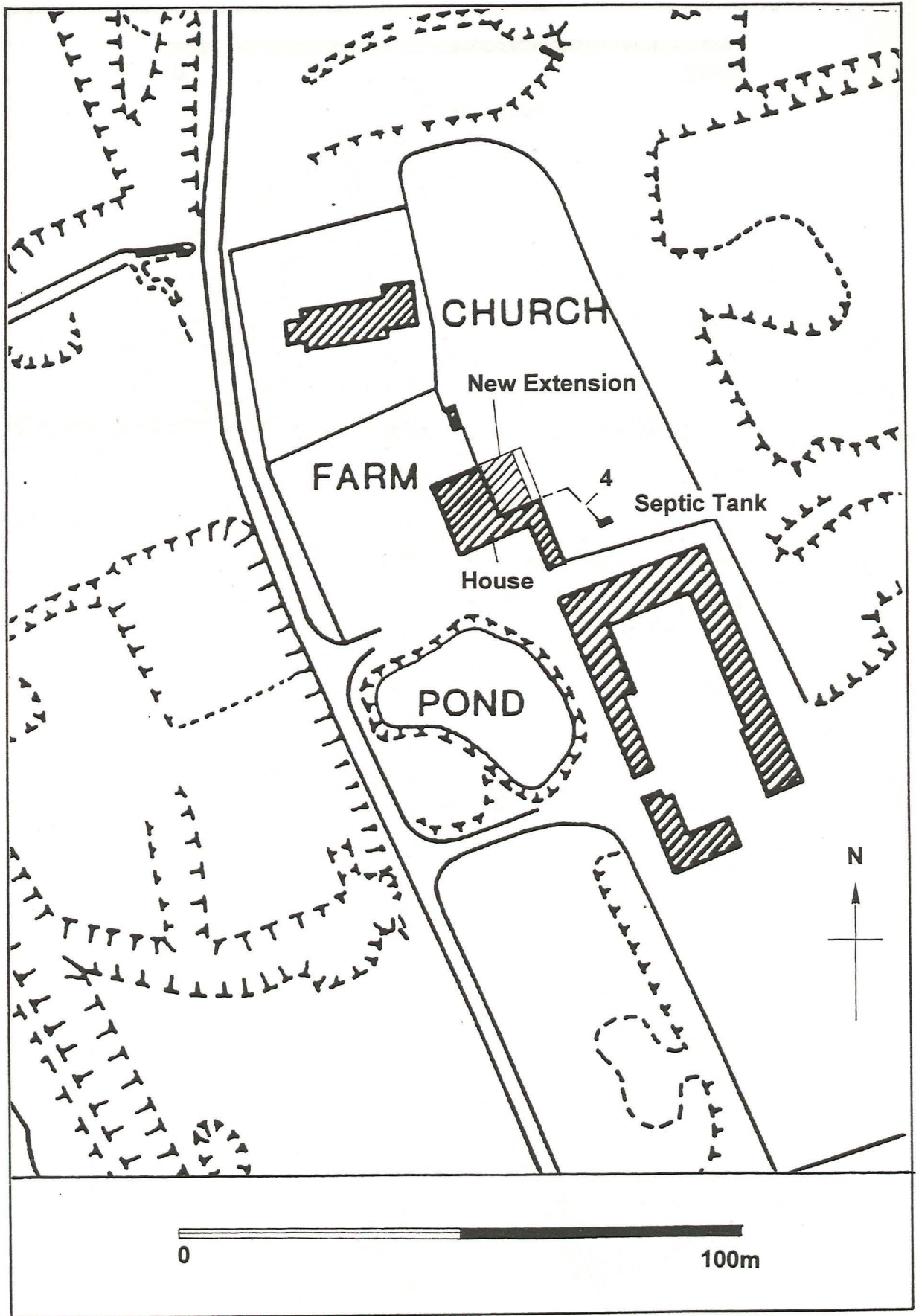


Fig. 2 Location of the new extension and the drain trench (based on West 1969, Fig. 1, reproduced at enlarged scale).

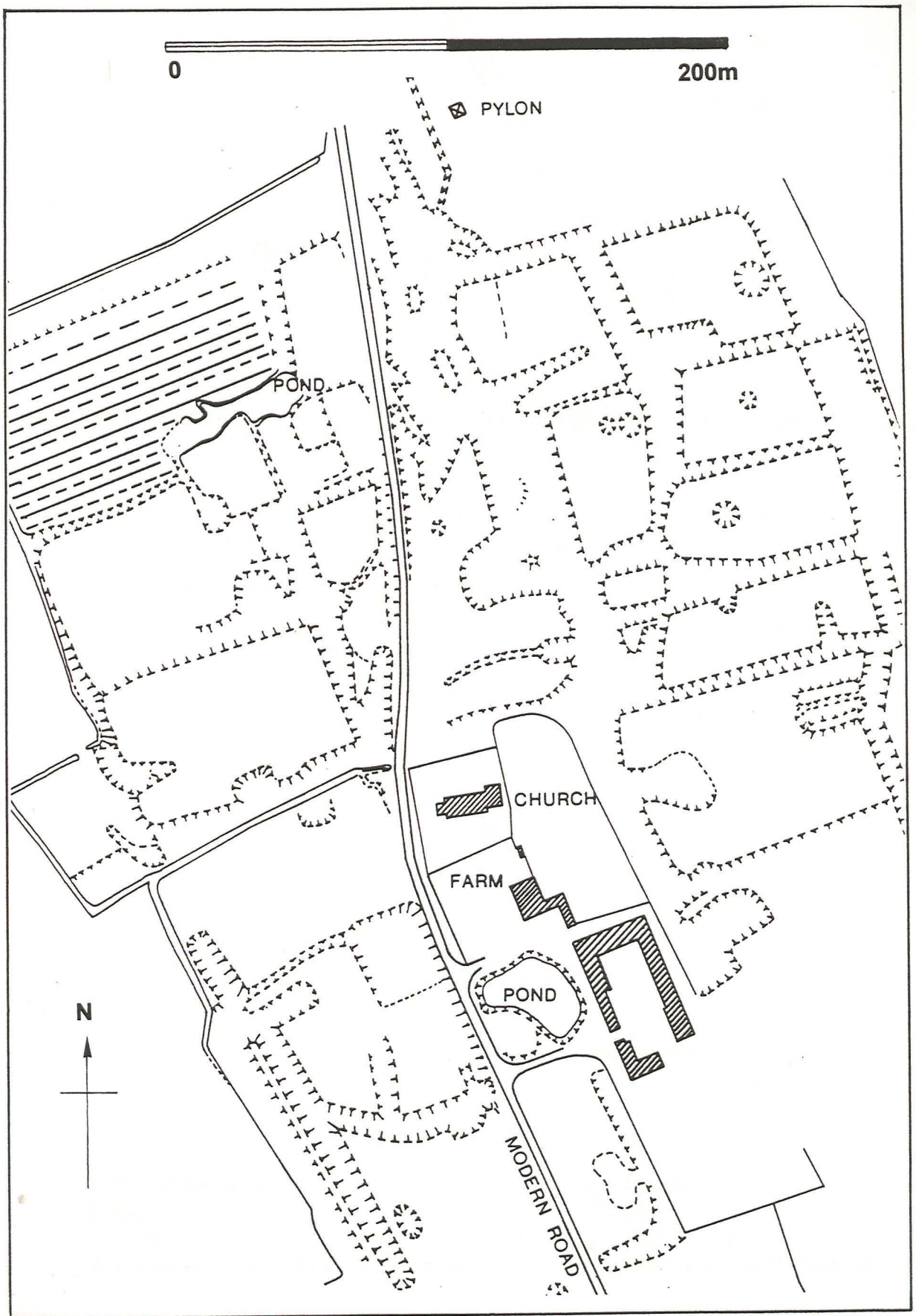


Fig. 3 Earthworks of the deserted medieval village at Snarford (reproduced from West 1969, Fig. 1).

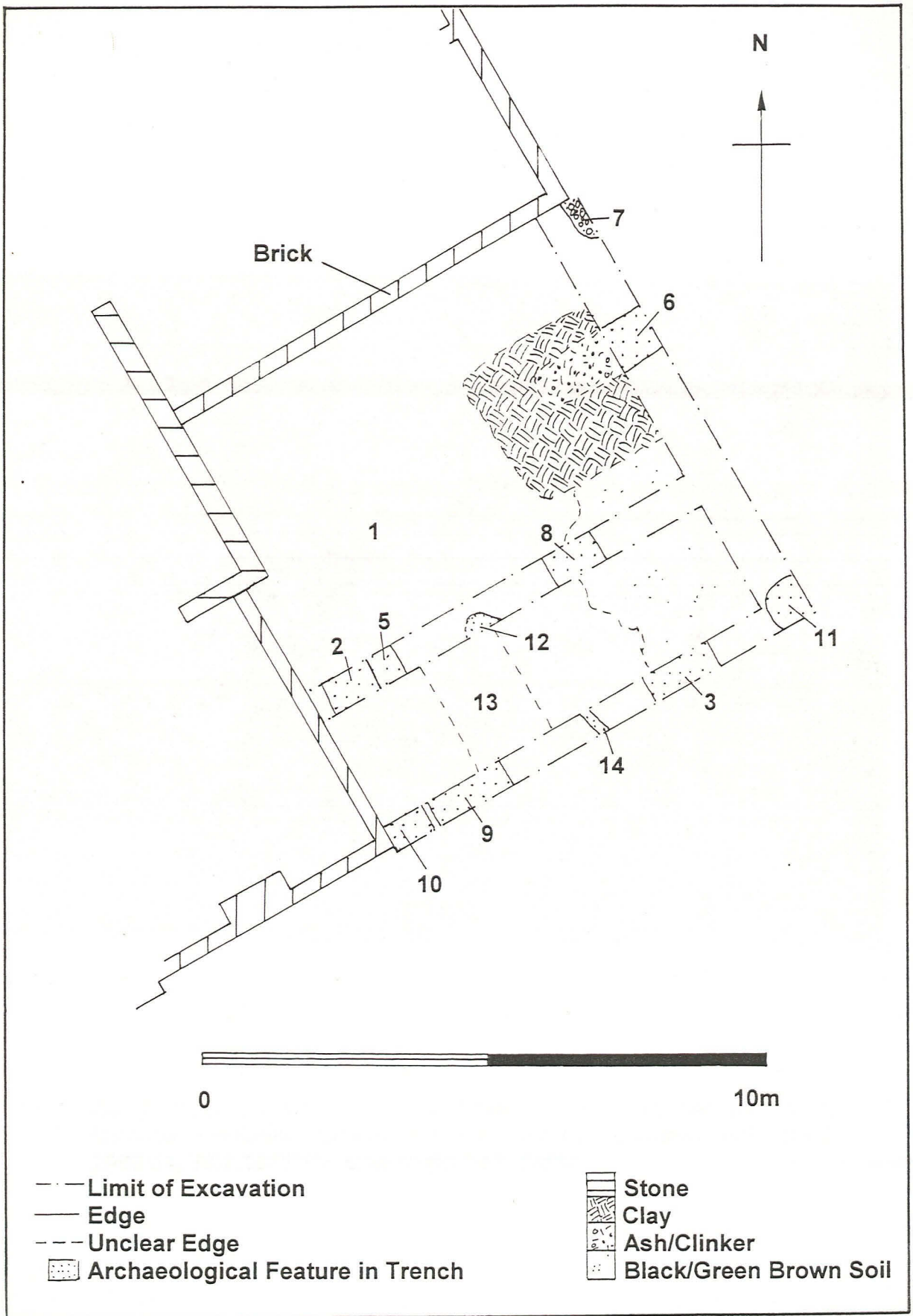


Fig. 4 Position of the monitored foundation trenches, showing the location of the observations. (McDaid after Tann; based on a plan supplied by the developer).



Pl. 1 Air photograph showing Hall Farm, Snarford in the centre of levelled medieval settlement earthworks. Looking NE. (Ref. 2963/31, 29.7.1979 PE. Copyright Reserved).



Pl. 2 Position of the new extension, after removal of the tennis court surface. Looking SW.

Pl. 3 Yellow clay and ash above ditch or pit 6. Looking NW.





Pl. 4 Stone rubble foundation 7 in side of Trench 1. Looking west.

Pl. 5 Dark brown upper fill of ditch 2 below modern drain. Looking south.

