



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Proposed Residential Development
Land West of Pinchbeck Road, Spalding**

NGR: TF 245 240 (centre)

South Holland DC Planning Application No. H16/0554/99

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Report prepared for

Stamford Homes Ltd

LAS Report No. 362

September 1999

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**Proposed Residential Development
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Summary

Minor earthworks are present in the western part of the application site, although no archaeological remains have been reported from the site or from its immediate vicinity, and no features on the site are known from air photographs. Some of the earthworks which are visible at ground level coincide with the projected course of a medieval or earlier road with adjacent ditch and bank (visible as far south as Vernatt's Drain on air photographs). Pinchbeck Road changes alignment beside the application site as it approaches a bridge across the mid-seventeenth century Vernatt's Drain, but a precursor is suspected to have crossed the application site. Other depressions are interpreted as post-medieval field boundary ditches marked on nineteenth century maps.

Nineteenth century maps also show a brickworks on adjacent land, possibly pre-dating the railway. This industrial site may have previously extended into the NW part of the application site.

The impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains within 1m of the ground surface is likely to be high, but the archaeological potential in these upper deposits is considered to be confined to limited areas of the site. Roman and prehistoric remains are not known to be present but might be disturbed by deeper excavation.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Stamford Homes Ltd in August 1999 to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment of land west of Pinchbeck Road, Spalding (Figs. 1 and 2).

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is to identify the archaeological potential of the application site by collating available existing information.

The Application Site

The application site is situated north of Spalding, some 25km NE of Peterborough, and 15km west of The Wash. It comprises a triangular piece of land 5ha in extent to the west of the B1356 Boston - Peterborough road (now bypassed by the A16), and to the east of the Spalding - Sleaford railway line. Vernatt's Drain, a major artificial drainage channel, forms the northern limit (Pl. 1). It is currently under grass.

Planning Background

A planning application, H16/0554/99, for 60 dwellings, associated garages and estate access roads, has been submitted to South Holland District Council. The proposal envisages a public open space alongside Woolram

Wygate, but with development over all the remaining area except for margins alongside the railway and Vernatt's Drain (Fig. 3). The desk-based assessment was requested for further information prior to determination of the application.

Methods and Sources

A desk-based assessment of the application site within a 0.5km surrounding area was undertaken in order to identify and assess possible archaeological constraints. Research for the assessment was conducted by G. Tann between August 9th and 11th 1999. The following sources were consulted and available information researched:

- Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record, Lincoln
- Lincolnshire Archives Office, Lincoln (Enclosure map, Ordnance Survey maps, manuscript maps and other documentary sources)
- Lincoln Central Library, Reference Collection [Local Studies Dept.] (Ordnance Survey maps and published sources)
- Site visit to verify site conditions and assess any modern disturbances to the site
- National collections of aerial photographs at Cambridge University and the National Air Photographic Library, Swindon (English Heritage)

Topography and Geology

Spalding is sited on marine alluvium of the Terrington Beds, with Oxford Clay beneath the alluvium. Boreholes within the application site indicate that the 0.2m thick topsoil overlies brown silts or grey silts; no peat was encountered (Abatech 1999). Levels on the application site vary from about 2.25m OD to about 3.2m OD. A distinct NW-SE aligned depression and parallel slope cross the middle of the field; land to the east of this is generally lower than that to the west, although a series of linear depressions are present in the NW part of the field (Fig. 4).

Prehistoric, Romano-British and Saxon Remains

No finds have been reported from the application site or its immediate environs. The marine alluviation may have been responsible for masking Roman and earlier ground surfaces beneath considerable depths of silt.

Medieval and Post-medieval Remains

The application site lay within the parish of Pinchbeck until at least 1819. Land in Pinchbeck parish (in the Wapentake of Elloe) was divided between two manors held by Ivo Taillebois and Guy of Craon when the Domesday Survey was prepared in 1086 (Foster and Longley 1976).

The modern Pinchbeck Road leads out of Spalding in a NNW direction, passing the site of the castle. Beside the application site it abruptly curves to the NNE before crossing Vernatt's Drain at Sharpe's Bridge. Vernatt's Drain was part of the works of Sir Philibert Vernatti, who was commissioned to drain the Deeping and Croyland Fens by the Earl of Bedford in 1631.

An apparently artificial linear ridge crosses the application site on the projected alignment of the road into town (Pls. 2 and 3). Land to the west is raised on a level, with land to the east considerably lower. The abrupt deflection in the course of the road is not obviously caused by any natural feature but is explained by the position of the bridge across the Drain. The present bridge upgrades one built in 1806, which in turn replaced an earlier narrow one on the same location. The ridge may represent the eastern edge of a medieval road causeway which fell into disuse and was replaced by the modern Pinchbeck Road either when the Drain was cut in 1842, or at an earlier date. No map pre-dating the Drain was located, and the medieval road system can only be conjectured with information from later sources.

An undated map of part of Spalding parish, thought to be after 1819, shows the application site as lying within part of Pinchbeck parish cut off by Vernatt's Drain (LAO HD1/8). The site is subdivided by a NNW-SSE aligned linear boundary, marked in a solid line in place of the dotted lines used for all other plot divisions in the Pinchbeck part of the map (Fig. 5). The boundary seems to have cut across an earlier arrangement of rectangular plots, probably indicating an early post-medieval feature superimposed on enclosed strips within a former open field. The road to Pinchbeck crosses Vernatt's Drain by an un-named bridge in the present position, with another lane (*Woolram Wygate*) crossing the Drain further to the NW at *Two Planks Bridge*. *Woolram Wygate* curves and forks; one arm joins Pinchbeck Road at the southern edge of the application site.

Bryant's map of the county shows the road at the southern end of the application site as *Market Way* (Fig. 6; Bryant 1828). The detailed Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1886-7 labels that section of lane as *Woolram Wygate*, but marks *Market Way* west of Blue Gowt Bridge, leading off Pinchbeck Road south of Pinchbeck (Fig. 7; OS 1890).

It appears that a road between Pinchbeck and Spalding (perhaps the only road) may have crossed the application site on the outskirts of the town. It was probably replaced for cart traffic by the existing Pinchbeck Road, but remained in use as a droveway. After construction of Vernatt's Drain in 1642, numerous minor lanes were truncated, and linked to a lesser number of lanes which crossed small bridges. The truncated lanes are evident on maps of 1824 and 1828 (Figs. 8 and 6; OS 1824; Bryant 1828).

Lanes which no longer served any useful function may have been rapidly reincorporated into adjacent farmland, and their courses lost when further phases of land drainage took place. The surviving network of lanes provided alternative, but less direct, routes, avoiding toll bars on the road from Spalding to Donington, turnpiked in 1826 (Gooch 1940, 337).

Although the 1824 map shows two features, possibly buildings, on the application site, no information about these has been obtained from other sources. The 1890 Ordnance Survey map shows field boundaries (probably ditched) sub-dividing the application site, in addition to a complex of drains and small ponds in the NW (Fig. 7). Examination of the map suggests that the

latter features may be associated with the brickworks with Huntingdon kiln marked to the west of the railway. The brickworks was opened after 1819, but the 1848 railway embankment seems to clip the NE corner of a large rectangular clay extraction lake, suggesting that the brickworks occupied the site first. In 1899, it was stated that a Mr C. Brett had until recently owned a brickyard at Spalding near the Pinchbeck Road (Leveritt and Elsdon 1986, 107). Within the application site, the visible depressions coincide with the mapped drains (and the field divisions of the 1819 map).

The Great Northern Railway was constructed in 1848, and forms the western limit of the application area. Some localised disturbance caused by its construction is likely.

Air Photographic Coverage

A cover search of air photographs held at the national collections of aerial photographs at Cambridge University and the National Air Photographic Library, Swindon (English Heritage) found that no oblique photographs were available. A total of 37 vertical prints include part of the application area (Appendix 1).

A copy print was obtained for a monochrome photograph taken by the Ordnance Survey in early June 1965, with the application site slightly south of its centre (NMR OS/65097). The photograph is of approximate scale 1:7500.

No features of interest are visible on the application site, which was under grass when photographed, but two ditches flanking a road or driveway can be clearly seen leading SE from Market Way, Pinchbeck (marked on Fig. *). The cropmark continues, with slight changes in angle, as far as Vernatt's Drain: it is almost certainly the feature which can be seen in the application site from the ground.

The date of this road is not certain, but immediately north of Vernatt's Drain it appears to be parallel to faintly visible strip blocks within a medieval open field (Fig. 9). This suggests that a medieval date is reasonable. This section of road must have fallen from use by 1642 when the Drain was built.

Site Visit

The application site was visited on 9th August 1999 in dry, bright weather conditions. The field was under mown rough grass. Access was gained through a field gate in the SE corner, off Pinchbeck Road.

The field has a hedge containing mature horse chestnut and cherry trees alongside Pinchbeck Road. Inside the hedge is a parallel depression, probably remains of a boundary ditch. A metal pipe crossing Vernatt's Drain may continue underground along this depression.

The field consists of three distinct areas. To the east is low ground, virtually flat. Within this zone are slight vegetation variations, possibly marking areas of ground disturbance. One area close to the SE corner is roughly circular, and 9m diameter (Pl. 4).

The second area is the raised flood embankment beside Vernatt's Drain, with a slope at the NE corner providing access from a field entrance into the site.

To the western side of the application site is the higher third area, occupying about 50% of the field. This area has an abrupt even slope from the lower land, with a parallel slight ditch depression at its foot. This impression is the result of a gradual slope being altered by a ditch and its upcast bank (on the west side) emphasising the difference in levels (Pl. 5). Between this ditch and the railway line (along the western side) are further linear depressions which break the land into irregular shapes (Pl. 6).

Molehills and backfilled test pits offered an opportunity to see underlying deposits: the black fine topsoil overlies brown silts, with blue/grey silt evident in places. A very few fragments of nineteenth or twentieth century glass and ceramic debris were seen.

The application site is not crossed by overhead cables but a Gas high pressure pipeline marker was seen in the southern boundary. A water tap and cattle trough were beside the field entrance off Pinchbeck Road at the SE of the site, and another trough was seen near the NW corner. A wide area of water-logged ground close to the latter trough may indicate a leaking pipe or naturally wet land.

A World War II square pillbox (SMR 23578), described in the SMR entry as 'non-standard', occupies land immediately outside the application site, beside the level crossing (Pl. 7).

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There are no scheduled ancient monuments affected by the proposed development. To the north of Vernatt's Drain, beside Pinchbeck Road, is Yew Tree Farm, where the farmhouse and associated buildings are Listed Grade II. The farmhouse looks across the Drain towards the application site, and the horse chestnut trees in the roadside hedge may have been planted as part of its *vista*.

Archaeological Implications of the Proposed Development

The application area is not known to contain any prehistoric or Roman features. Surveyors for Stamford Homes Ltd have suggested that north-south aligned ridge and furrow is present, but no certain ridge and furrow was seen during the site visit. Research for this assessment has identified what is interpreted as a well-defined medieval or earlier road crossing the site. The construction techniques of this feature would be of considerable regional importance as it can be demonstrated to pre-date construction of Vernatt's Drain in the mid-seventeenth century. It is possible that brickworks pre-dating the railway may also be present.

Recommendations

Possible further archaeological investigation of the application site could take the form of fieldwalking, geophysical survey, evaluation trenching and/or excavation.

It is not thought that geophysical survey would contribute further information about the past activity on the application site, as an arrangement of backfilled ditches are visible at ground level and have been interpreted in this report as medieval or post-medieval field boundary ditches. A gas main along the western side of the site would affect readings in that area.

The positioning of any evaluation trenches would have to make allowance for the gas main and other services known on the site. An evaluation trench could be positioned in the NW part of the site with the aim of confirming the existence of the road, and establishing its construction detail and sequence, and whether any buildings had been built alongside it. For practical purposes, this trench would need to be placed to the south of the saturated ground; Trial Pit 6 identified the base of a backfilled feature (probably a field ditch) at 1.1m below ground level.

This trench could be extended west towards the boundary with the railway with the further aim of establishing whether brickworks activity is present, and its relationship to the old road. Brick rubble was not reported from any of the trial pits.

In the event that unexpected significant remains were found by any investigation approaches used, excavation of an area might be necessary.

Conclusion

Existing gas and water services are present but are not thought to have caused extensive disturbance to the site. The remainder of the site is currently grass and may be relatively undisturbed by modern agricultural activity.

The proposed development on the site would destroy any archaeological remains immediately beneath the topsoil. Although the application site is not thought to contain archaeological remains of national significance, the medieval road is of possible regional significance and the brickworks, if found to be present, would be of local or regional interest.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Paul Bywater and Dennis Carter, Stamford Homes Ltd; Jim Bonnor and Judy O'Neill, Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section; staff at Lincolnshire Archives and at Lincoln Central Library Reference Dept; staff at the English Heritage National Monuments Record National Air Photograph Collection, Swindon; for their help during the preparation of this assessment. The report could not have been produced so rapidly without their co-operation in providing access to information at short notice, and this was appreciated. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
14th September 1999

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English Heritage-National Monuments Record

Air Photos Library

Sortie Number	Library Number	Cam Pos	Start Frame	End Frame	Held	National Start (TF)	Reference End (TF)	Date Flag	Date	Quality	Scale 1:	Focal Length	Format	Repository	Copy Right
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78B/12/4	8618	V	2	2	H	246235	246235	05/08/42	1	AB	4300	8	BW55	FDM	CRW
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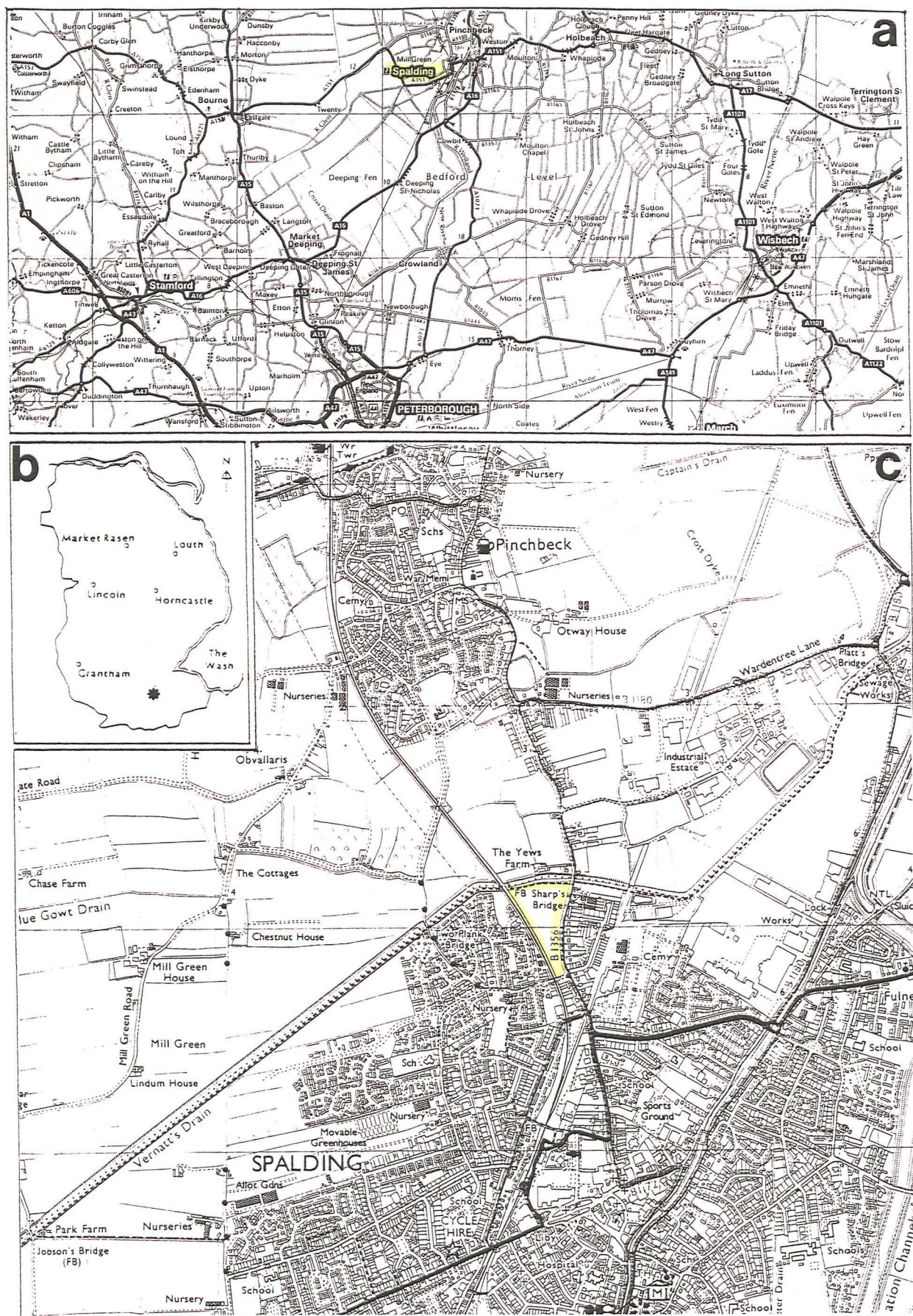


Fig. 1 Location of Spalding and Pinchbeck. Inset C shows the Application Site (based on the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map, Sheet 249. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

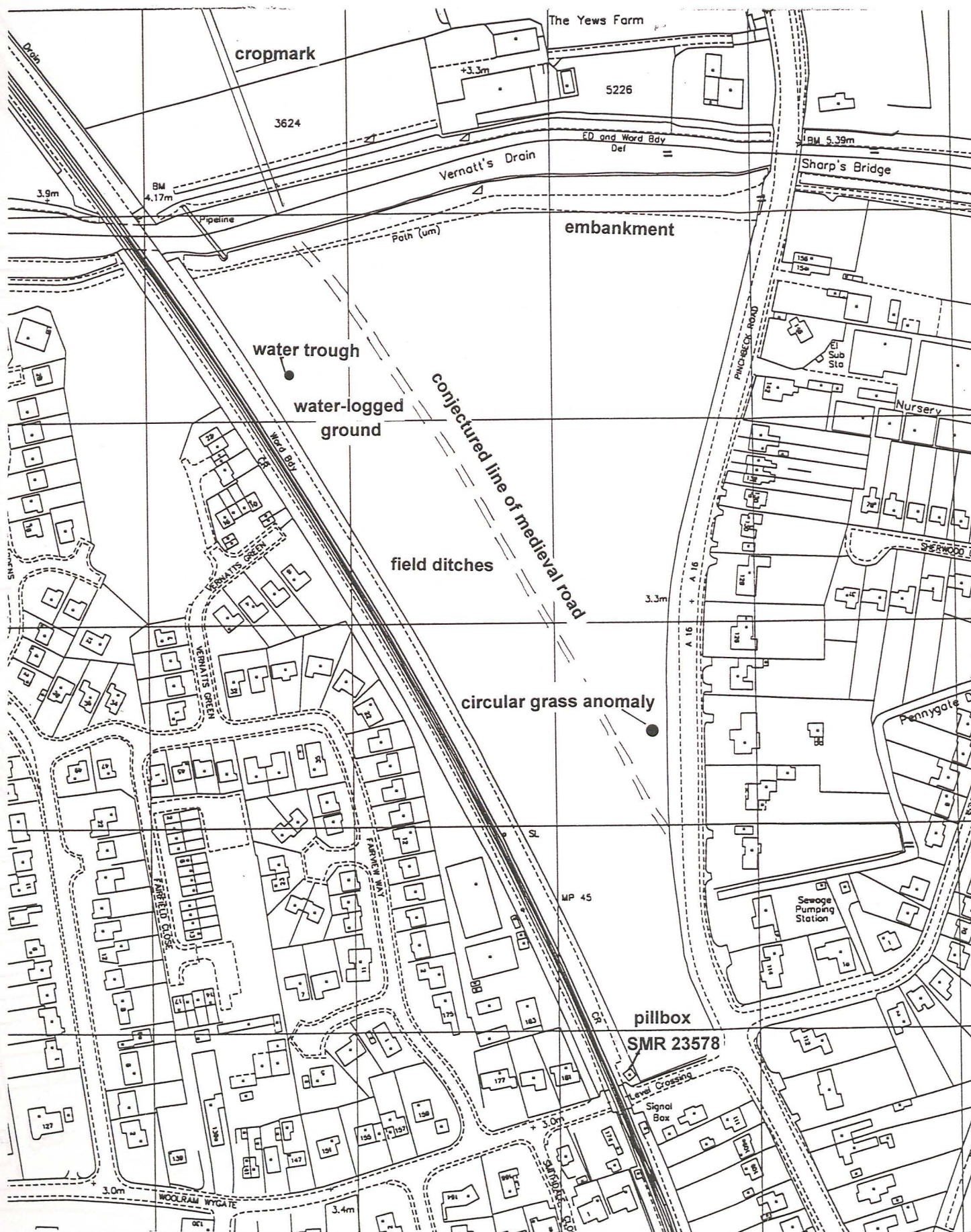


Fig. 2 The application site, showing approximate position of known cropmark features and the suspected medieval road. Based on a 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map supplied by the client. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

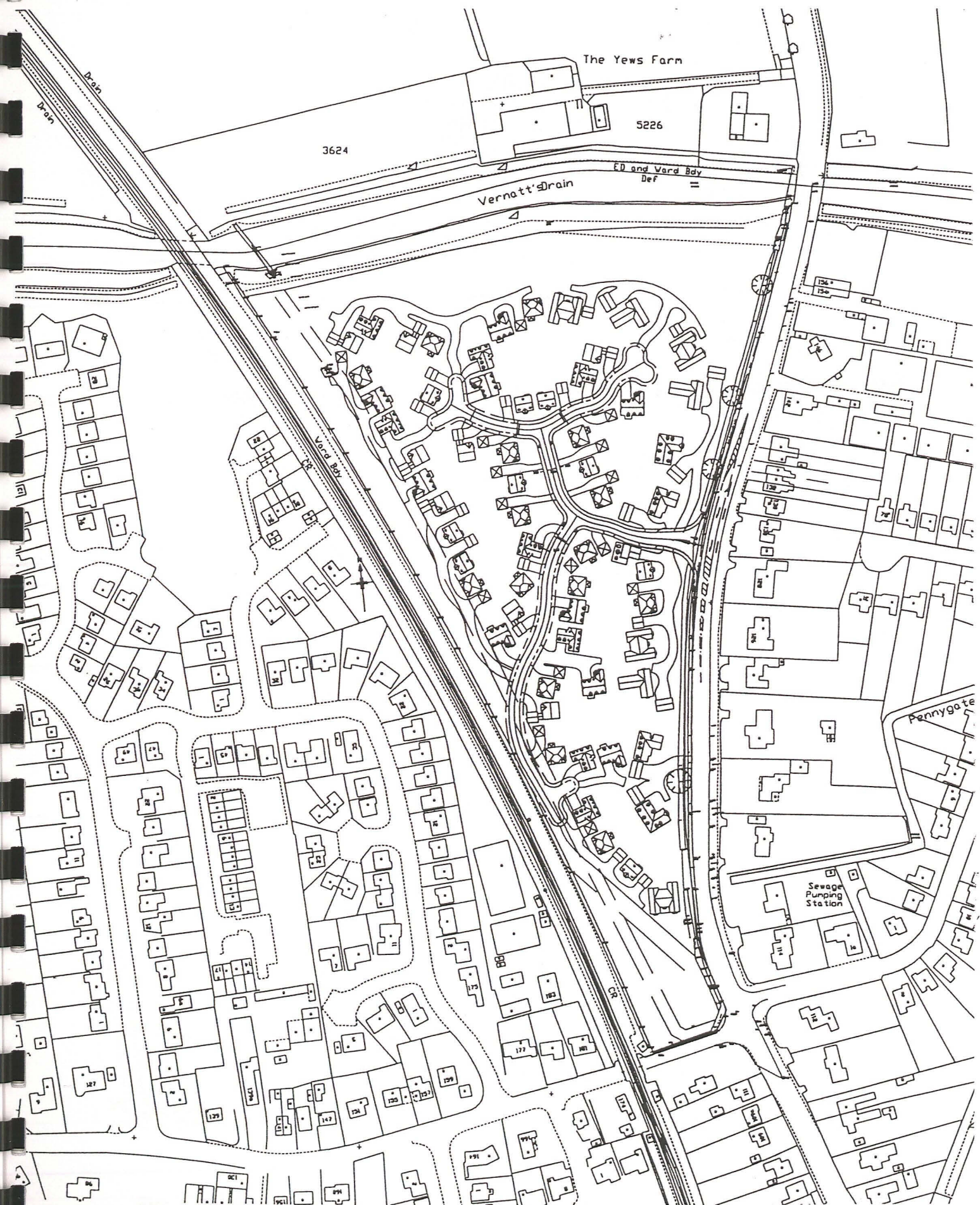


Fig. 3 The Development Proposal (based on a 1:2,500 scale plan supplied by the client, dwg. No. SH/313/30 [10/9/99]).

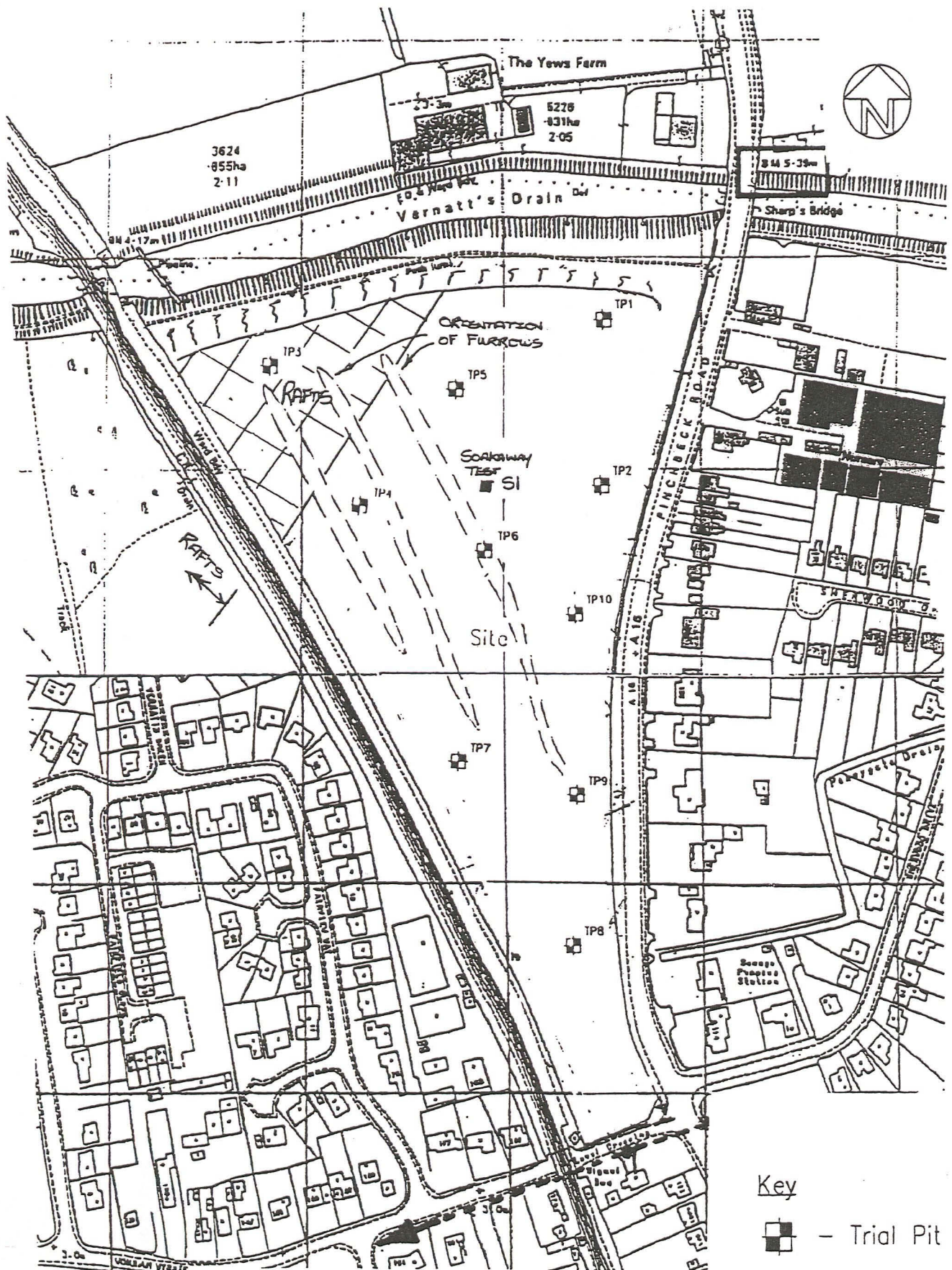


Fig. 4 Position of Ground Investigation Trial Pits, and sketch of surface linear depressions (reproduced from Abatech 1999, Dwg. No. 99150/002).

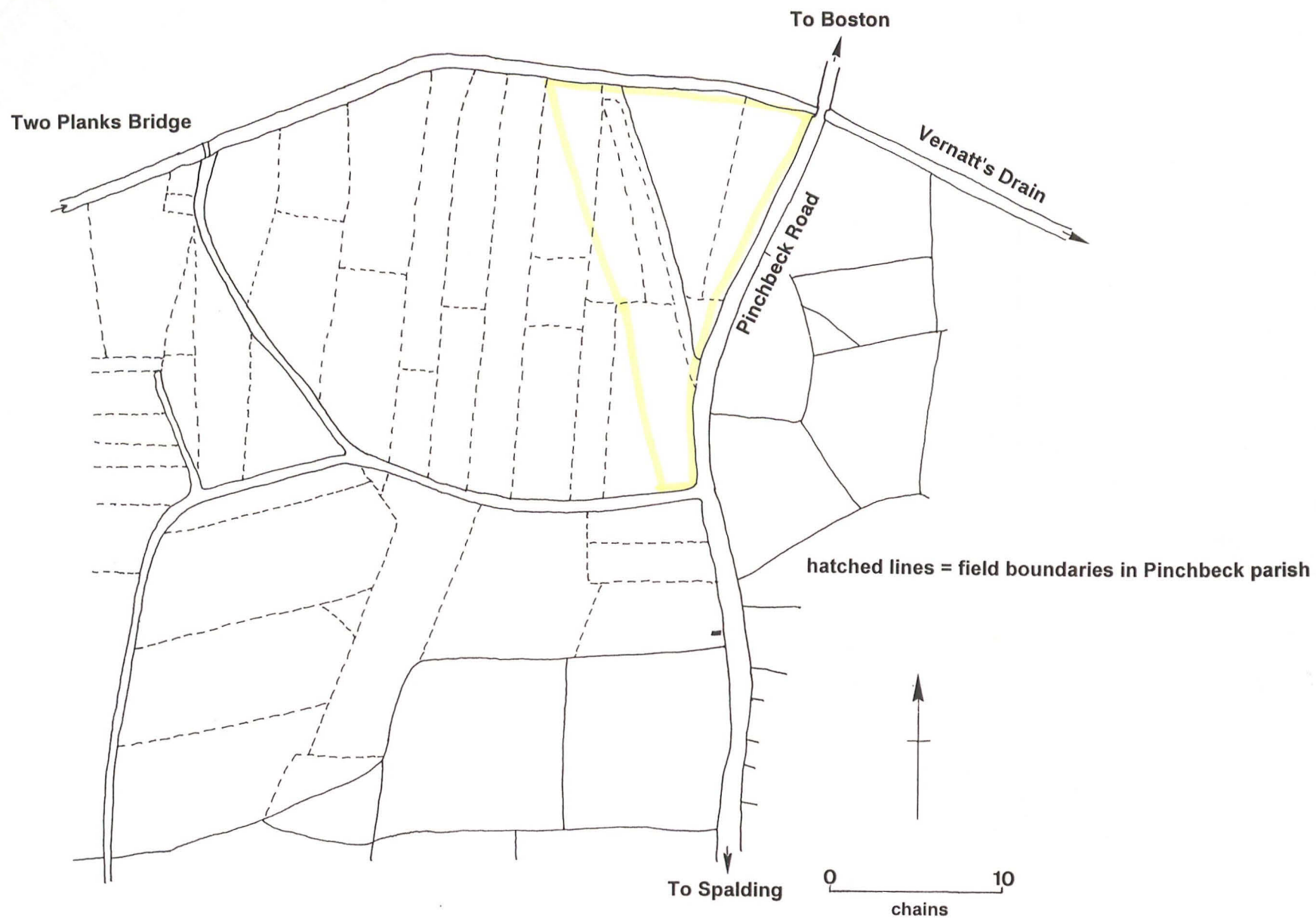


Fig. 5 Field divisions on the Application Site and its environs, circa 1819.
Based on a tracing of *Plan of part of the Parish of Spalding*, surveyed
by G. Clarke. LAO HD1/8.

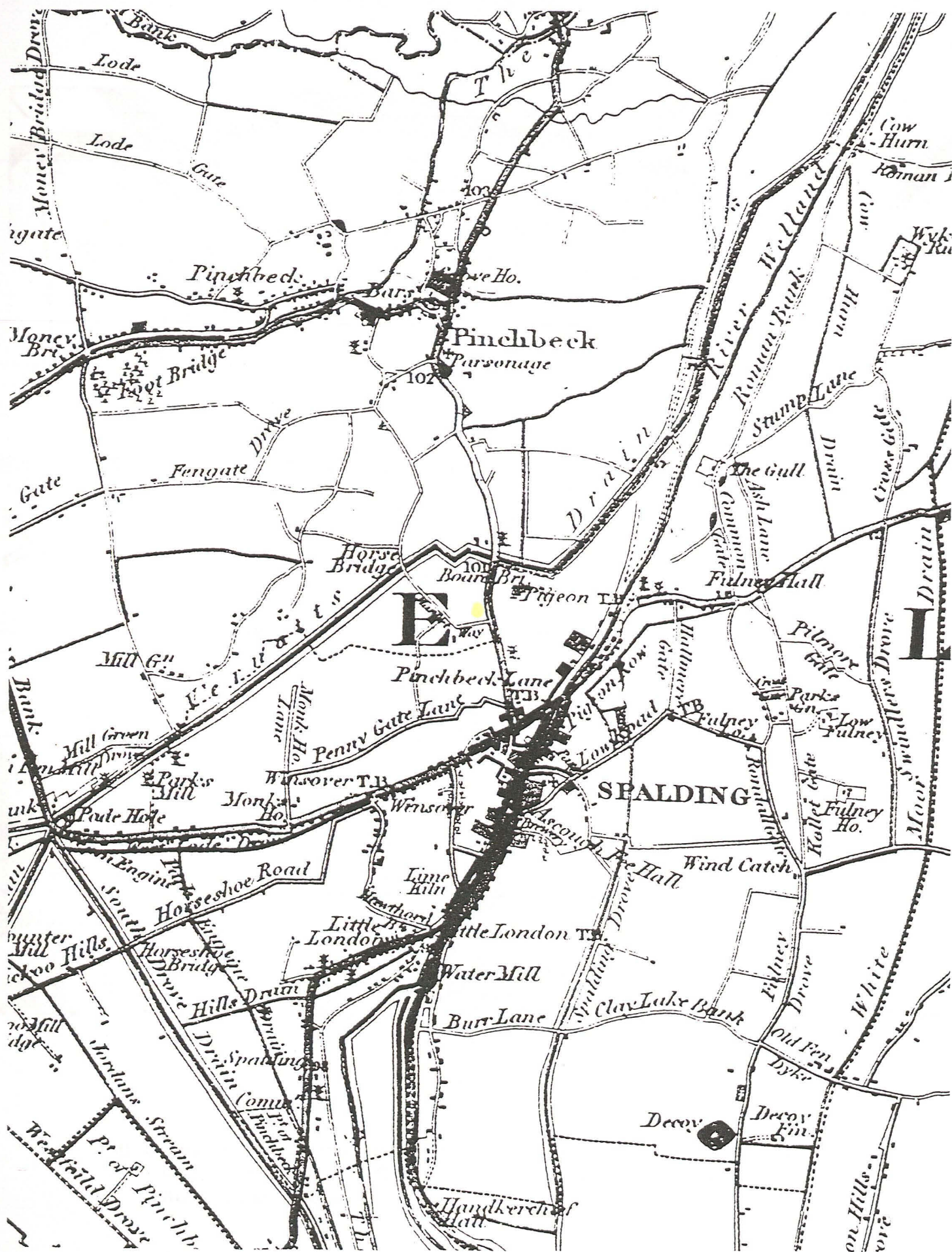


Fig. 6 Pinchbeck and Spalding, 1828, showing Market Way south of Vernatt's Drain. Based on Bryant's Map of the County of Lincoln, not to published scale.

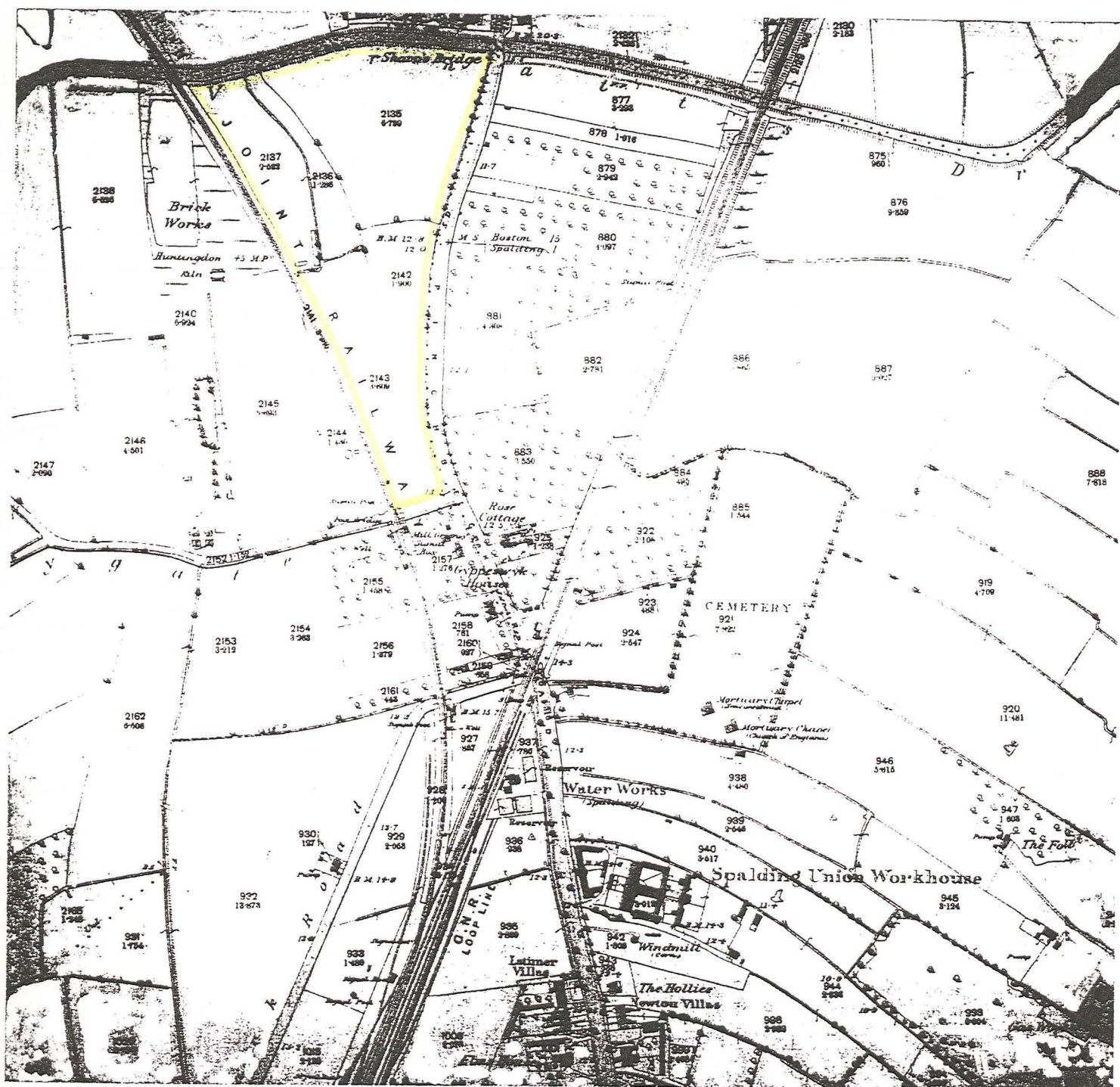


Fig. 7 The application site, with adjacent brickworks, as shown on the Ordnance Survey 1890 First Edition 1:10,560 map, Lincs. Sheet 134, not to published scale.

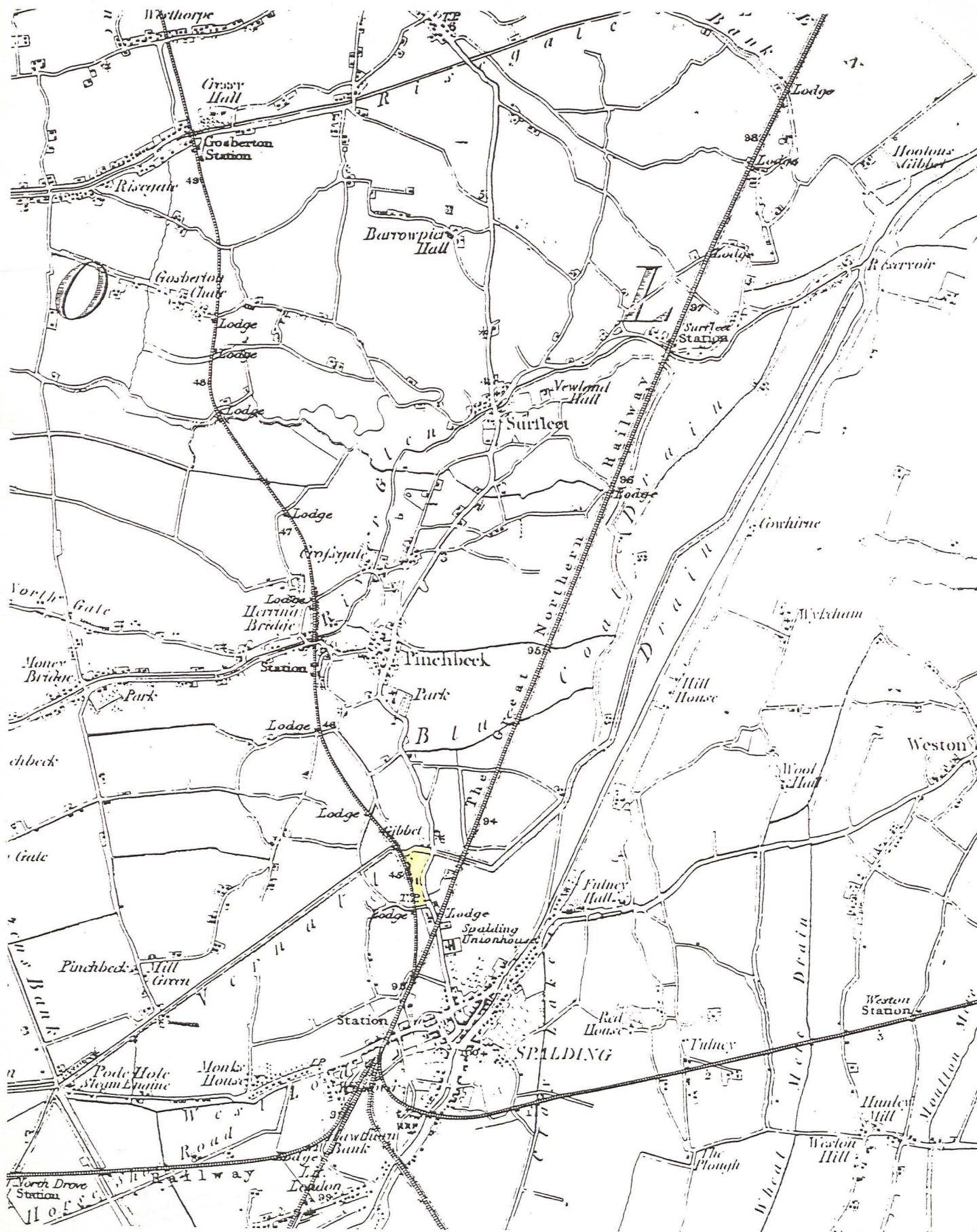


Fig. 8 Reproduction of part of the 1824 Ordnance Survey 1" map (revised 1887) showing a short spur of road to the east of Market Way, north of Vernatt's Drain. Not to published scale.

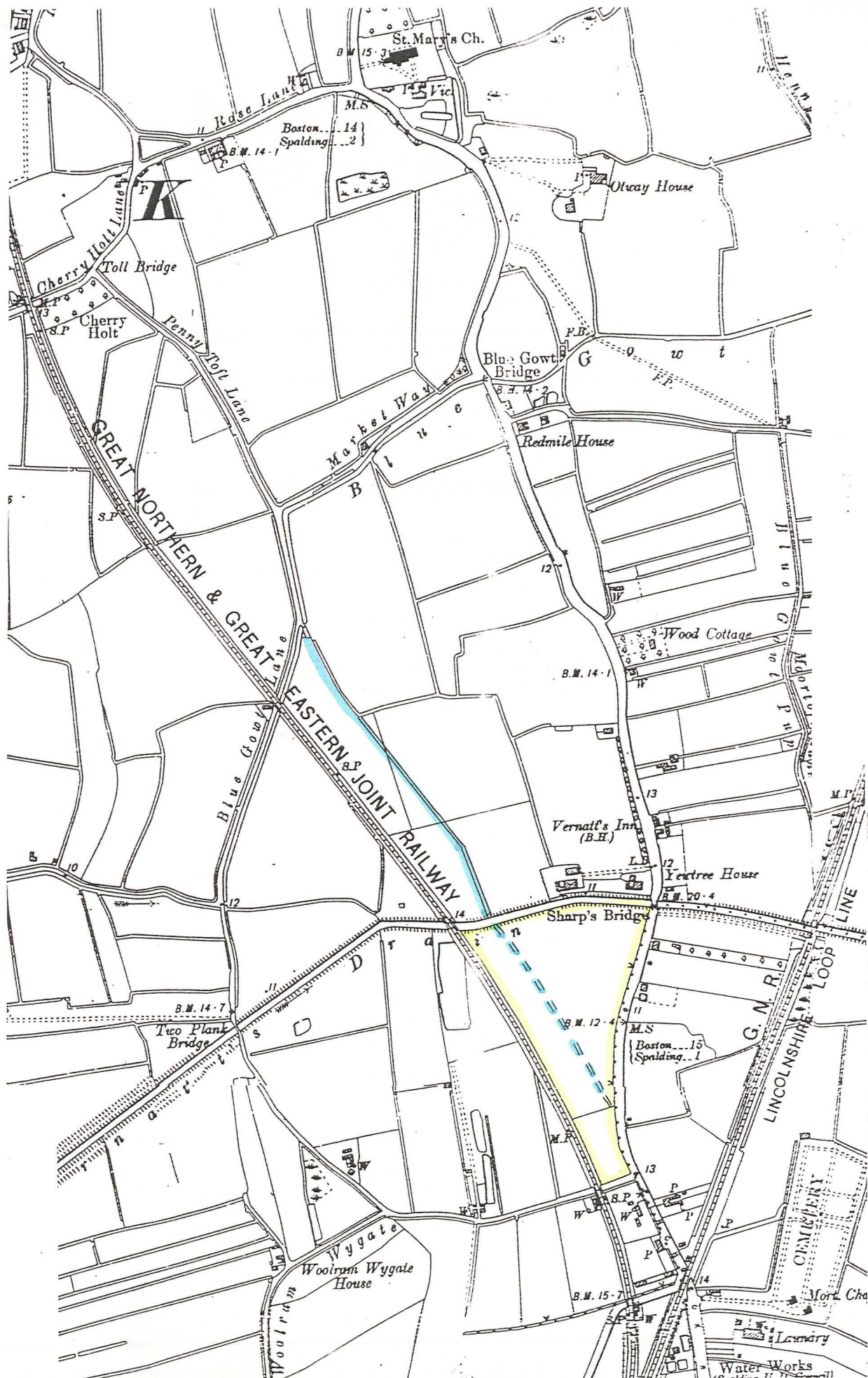


Fig. 9 Sketch plot of cropmarks of a track or road north of Vernatt's Drain (air photograph ref: CUCAP OS/65097.26; 4/6/1965). Based on the 1906 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map (revised 1903). Not to published scale.



Pl. 1 Panoramic view of the application site, looking SW from the NE corner of the field, beside Vernatt's Drain. Pinchbeck Road is behind the mature trees (left).



Pl. 2 A slight ridge crosses the field from the bend in Pinchbeck road (left) NW as far as Vernatt's Drain. Land to the east is lower than to the west. The ridge may mark the course of a medieval road (looking north).

Pl. 3 Lush grass in backfilled curving ditch to east of the probable road (looking SE towards Pinchbeck Road).





Pl. 4 Circular anomaly in grass growth, close to Pinchbeck road in SE part of the field (looking NE).

Pl. 5 Depressions of backfilled ditches in the NW corner of the field. These equate with field boundaries shown on post-medieval maps, and cut the course of the probable medieval road. Looking SW from beside Vernatt's Drain.





Pl. 6 Variations in grass growth showing backfilled field boundary ditches (looking NE from railway fence to embankment beside Vernatt's Drain).

Pl. 7 World War II pill box (SMR 23578) outside the SW corner of the application site (looking SW across Woolram Wygate).

