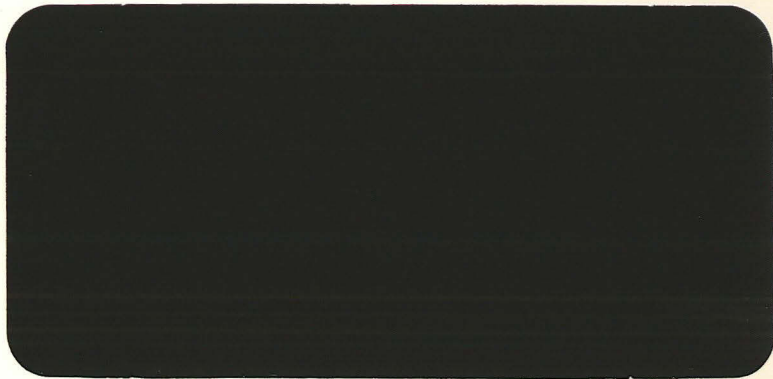


NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Box 98/26

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
MATHESON HOUSE, OXCROFT BANK,
SHEPEAU STOW, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE

1998



Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section
0 2. NOV 99
ack 2/11/99

20417-Roman

Ev 15879

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Box 98/26

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
MATHESON HOUSE, OXCROFT BANK,
SHEPEAU STOW, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE**

1998

**MATHESON HOUSE, OXCROFT BANK, SHEPEAU STOW
SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was required as a planning condition during the construction of Matheson House at Oxcroft Bank, Shepeau Stow (TF 3015 1175). The development site (Fig 1) lay in the southern part of a complex of cropmarks of Roman date (Fig 2). During construction a single ditch running northeast-south was identified probably forming part of this complex which may represent part of a Roman field system.

INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

An archaeological condition was placed on the development by South Holland District Council (Ref H23/0115/98). The development lies adjacent to an complex area of cropmarks identified as of probable Romano-British date (Philips 1970).

It was felt that the development had the potential for destroying part of these remains therefore a condition of archaeological observation and recording at all stages of ground works was required.

The development area comprised 1054m² of which about 50% was affected by the building works.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A search was made of published sources (cf Philips 1970, Hayes and Lane 1992) and the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record. The SMR contained several entries which lay with a 500m radius of the development, none however were Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

PRN	NGR	Site type
20244	30651225	Medieval settlement of Shepeau
20417	30601190	Romano-British enclosures
20418	30501160	Romano-British saltmaking/domestic debris
22027	29701180	Romano-British settlement
22028	29601230	Romano-British saltmaking/domestic debris
22045	30101240	Romano-British field system
22127	30501160	Iron Age & Roman pottery scatter
22141	30601210	Roman pottery scatter
22179	30801150	Romano-British settlement
23162	29811225	Iron Age pottery from Roman saltern
23166	30001218	Iron Age saltern
23167	30001218	Medieval pottery from Roman saltern
23168	30001218	Post-medieval pottery from Roman saltern

Of these the site lay within the southwestern portion of the crop marks 20417. Which were described in the SMR as 'enclosures in a curvilinear layout, possibly settlement and field system' (derived from Philips 1970 Gaz 3011, p298).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The works took the form of a watching brief mounted during all stages of ground disturbance following a specification issued by Northamptonshire Archaeology and approved by J Bonnor of Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section.

METHODOLOGY

Construction was undertaken with two phases of ground works:

- clearance of the footprints of the house and the garage
- excavation of the trenches for foundations.

The over-site strip of the 0.25-0.3m of topsoil was carried out by a JCB with a back actor and a toothless ditching bucket working under archaeological direction. This exposed the top of the marine silty clays into which archaeological levels would have been cut (Plate 1). After detailed examination of the surface the foundation trenches were then dug using a narrower toothed bucket (Plate 2). The main footings were 0.8m wide and the internal walls about 0.6m wide.

RESULTS

The topsoil over the site comprised a fine slightly silty loam up to 0.3m thickness. No pre-Twentieth century material was noted. The ripple configuration of the upper part of the silty clays denoted their probable marine origin.

In the garage building footprint no archaeological levels were observed other than recent plough scars and the foundations for recent greenhouses (Plate 1). Isolated organic remains extended into the sand but the represented deep rooting from plants within the former green house.

Within the building footprint a series of brick bases associated with the former greenhouses were present. The depth of topsoil cover increased towards the road from 0.3m thick to 0.4m thick where it was exposed in the service trench.

In the northeast corner of the building area a single ditch 1.15m wide and 0.85m deep was observed running obliquely across the building footprint (Fig 3), within the footing trench (Plates 3

& 4). The ditch had a mid brown silty clay above a thin black clay infill, neither of which contained stones or charcoal. No waterlogged material was present. A single sherd of red micaceous pottery weighing 4 grams was recovered from the upper level of the ditch fill. This sherd was shown to L Rollo who felt that it was likely to be of Roman date but that the sherd was otherwise undiagnostic.

CONCLUSION

The observed ditch probably represents a continuation of one of the ditch elements known from crop mark evidence and published (Philips 1970). The cropmark evidence for the former usage of the area to the north of the development suggests extensive field systems including droves and paddocks. The absence of occupation material such as bone or even charcoal, and the recovery of only a single sherd of pottery would suggest that any occupation focus is some distance away from this development.

The archive will be placed at the City and County Museum Lincoln with the site code SS98, name Oxcroft Bank, Shepeau Stow and accession number 237.99.

Bibliography

Philips, C, (ed) 1970 Fenland in Roman Times, Royal Geographical Society Research Series 5

Hayes, P and Lane, T, 1992 The Fenland Project, 5 Lincolnshire Survey, the south-west fens, East Anglian Archaeology 55

SCHEDULE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 General site location 1:50000

Fig 2 Site relative to plotted crop marks and SMR data

Fig 3 Detailed plan of house plot and oblique section across ditch

Plate 1 Garage footprint after topsoil stripping

Plate 2 House foundation trenches, general view

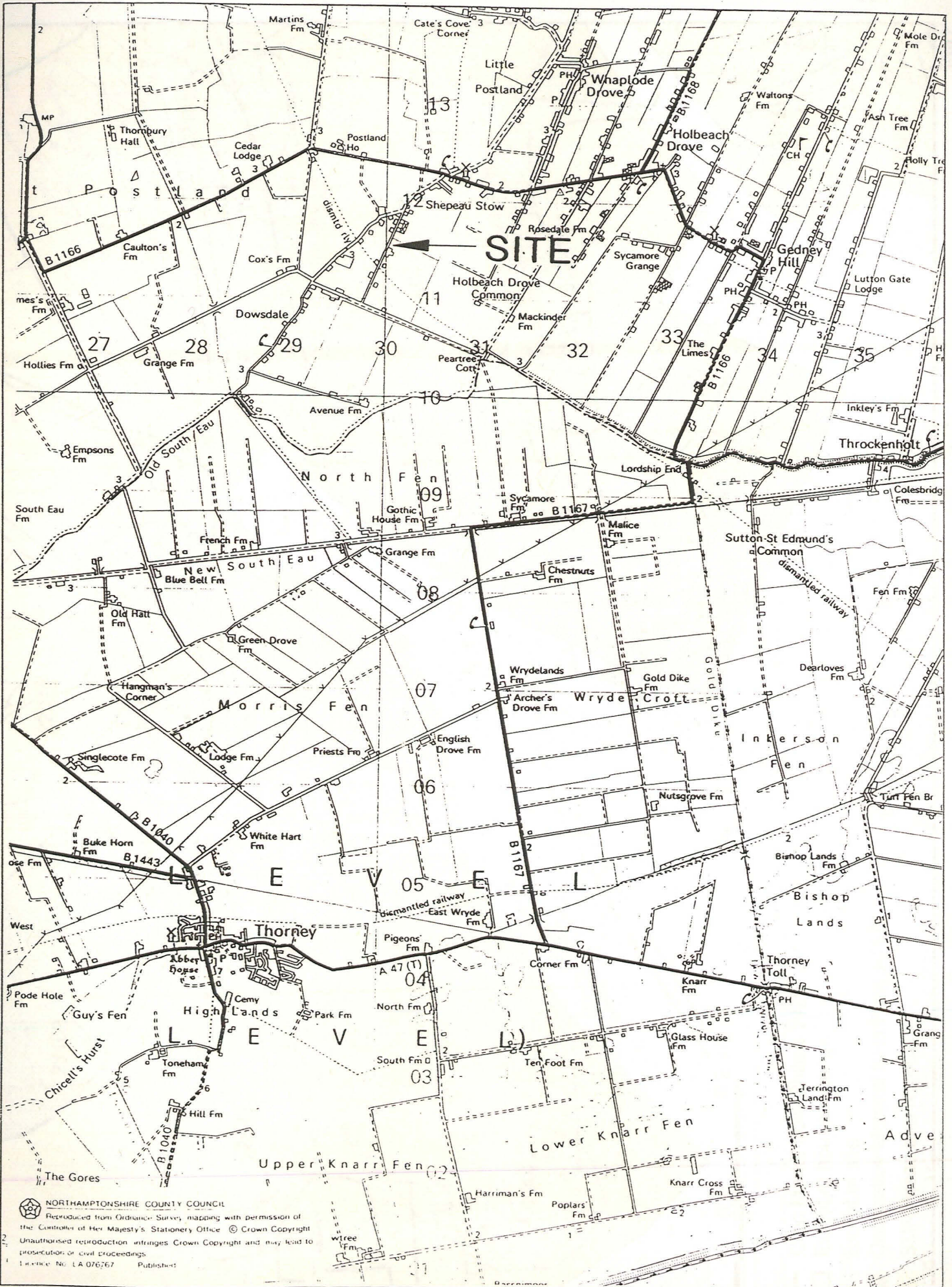
Plate 3 General view of Roman ditch

Plate 4 Detail of Roman ditch

Project Manager:	Steve Parry MA MIFA
Fieldwork and Text:	Ian Meadows BA
Illustrations:	Chris Jones
Pottery Identification:	Lindsay Rollo BA

Northamptonshire Archaeology
a service of Northamptonshire County Council
Environment Directorate

18 October 1999



SITE


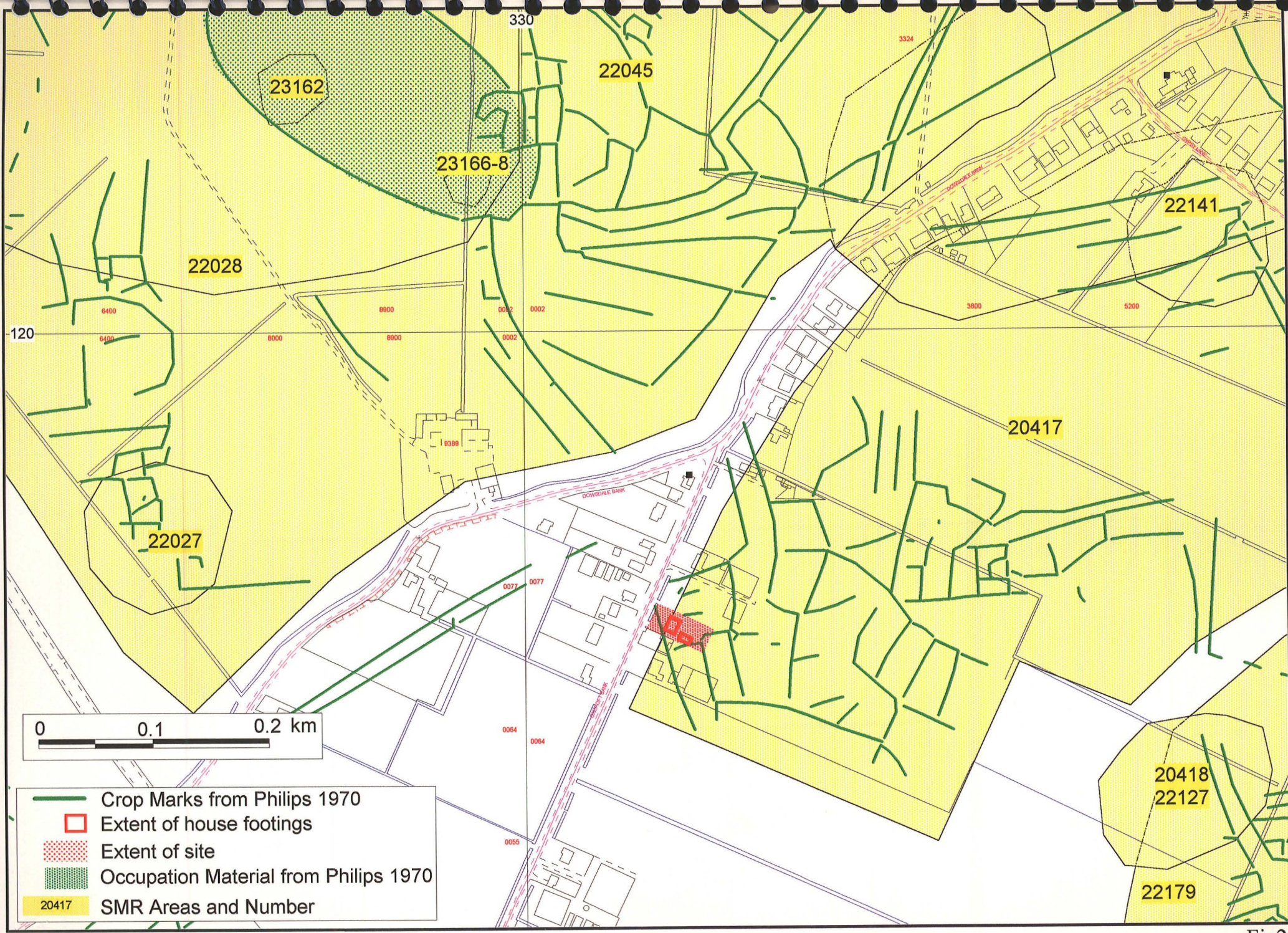

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
 Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of
 the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to
 prosecution or civil proceedings
 Licence No. LA 076767 Published

Fig. 1



0 0.1 0.2 km

- Crop Marks from Philips 1970
- Extent of house footings
- Extent of site
- Occupation Material from Philips 1970
- 20417 SMR Areas and Number

Fig2

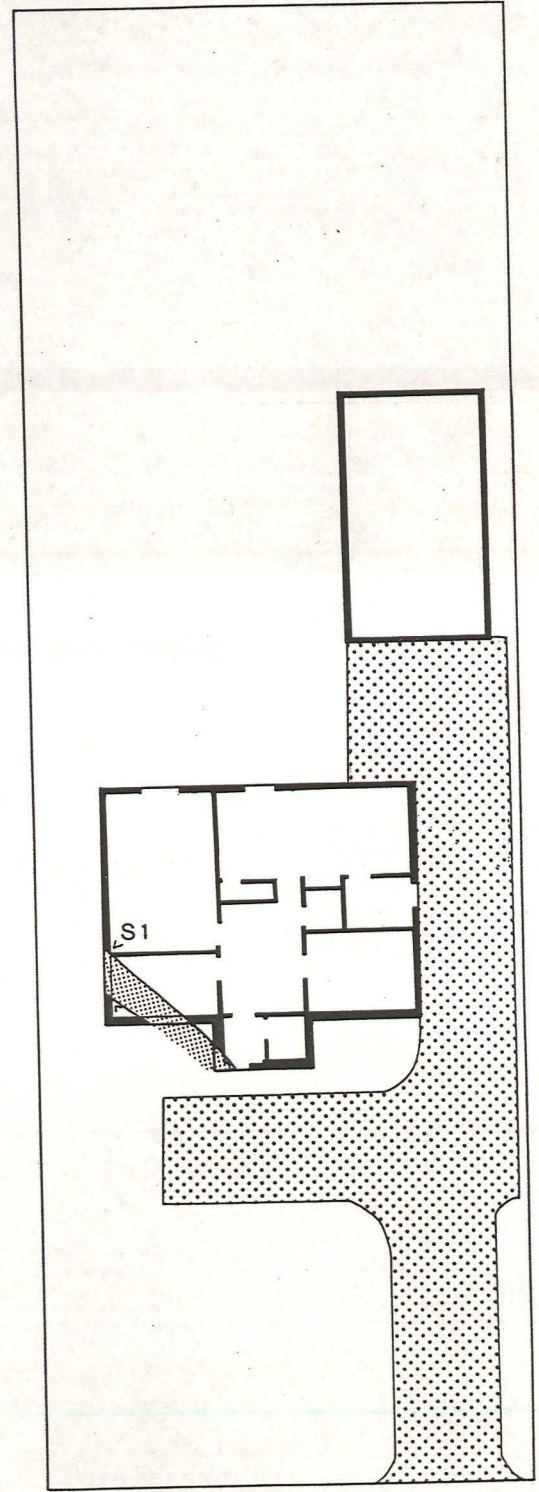
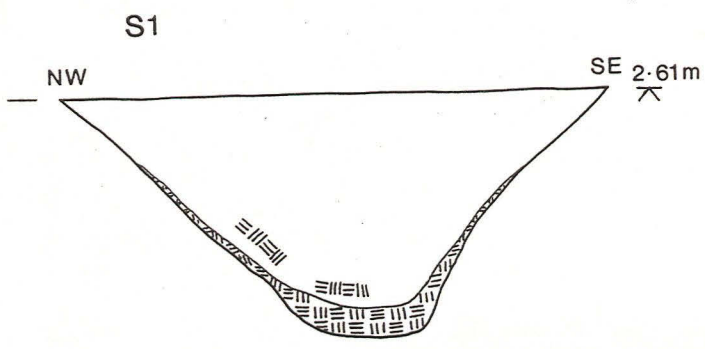


Fig. 3



Plate 1: Garage footprint after topsoil stripping



Plate 2: House foundation trenches, general view



Plate 3: General view of Roman ditch

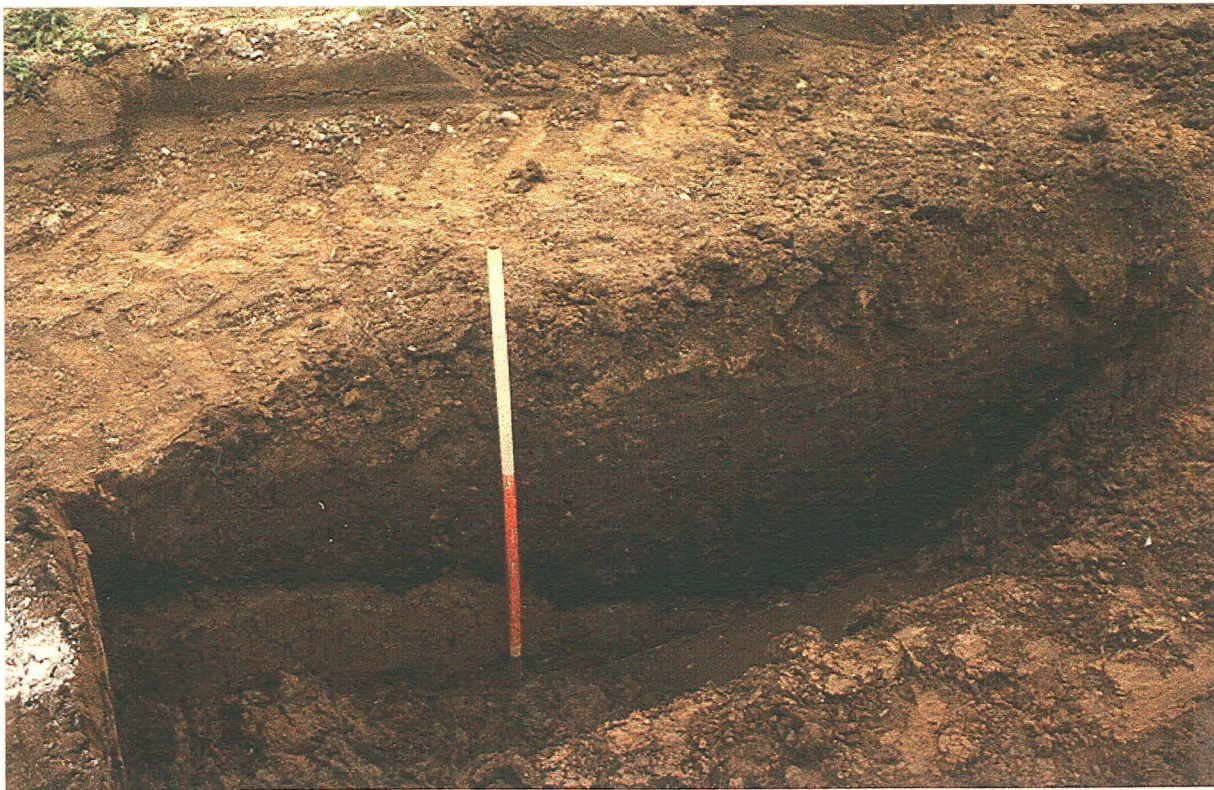


Plate 4: Detail of Roman ditch