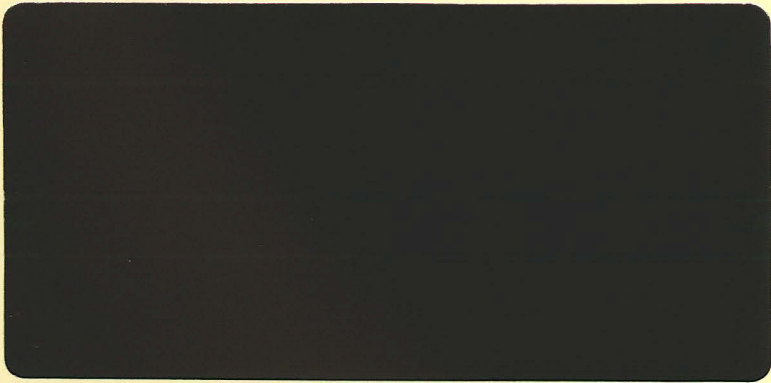


99/9

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON BOREHOLES AND TEST PITS  
AT SPOUT YARD,  
CHEQUERGATE,  
LOUTH,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(LSY99)**



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES



Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section  
14. MAY 99  
ack 14/5/99

44/99  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON BOREHOLES AND TEST PITS  
AT SPOUT YARD,  
CHEQUERGATE,  
LOUTH,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(LSY99)**

Work Undertaken For  
East Lindsey District Council

April 1999

Report compiled by  
Gary Taylor MA

National Grid Reference: TF 3272 8755  
City and County Museum Accession No: 79.99

A.P.S. Report No: **44/99**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of test pits and boreholes at Spout Yard, Chequergate, Louth, Lincolnshire.*

*The site is near the medieval (AD 1066-1500) core of Louth and Chequergate is referred to as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show buildings on the site and a tannery was located in the area in the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The site was one of the areas of Louth badly affected by river flooding in 1920.*

*Sunken structural remains of probable post-medieval (18<sup>th</sup> century) date were revealed during the investigations. These structural remains are of uncertain function but may have been tanning vats or, possibly, cellars. These had been infilled and, at some point subsequently, demolition debris was spread across the area. This debris may relate to the demolition of buildings following the 1920 flood. No medieval remains were encountered during the investigation.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.' (IFA 1997).

### 2.2 Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by East Lindsey District

Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of geotechnical test pits and boreholes at Spout Yard, Chequergate, Louth, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out on 23rd April 1999 in order to provide information about the potential archaeological deposits present at the site.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Louth is situated 19km north of Horncastle and 34km northwest of Skegness in East Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The proposed development site is located 160m northeast of the town centre as defined by the parish church of St. James (Figs 2 and 3). Situated at a height of c. 25m OD on land bounded by Chequergate to the south, Broadbank to the east and the River Lud to the north (National Grid Reference TF 3272 8755), the proposed development site is approximately 50m by 80m in extent. The site is located in the floodplain of the River Lud and drops gently down towards the river.

As an urban area, the soils have not been mapped. However, local soils are likely to be of the Holderness Association, typically slowly permeable fine loamy soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 214). These soils overlie a drift geology of boulder clay above a solid geology of Cretaceous Chalk (BGS 1980).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

There is no evidence for prehistoric activity in the centre of Louth, though there have been few previous archaeological investigations in the town. Similarly, Romano-British (AD 50-410) archaeology is absent within the immediate vicinity of the site though it has been suggested that Louth was a Romano-British town and that the line of Broadbank, just east of Spout Yard, preserved a Roman

trackway (Owen 1997, 63). However, there is virtually no supporting archaeological evidence for this suggestion.

Louth took its place-name from the River Lud which is derived from the Old English *Hlûde* meaning 'the loud one' (Ekwall 1974, 305). The first account of the town is in AD 675 when the town was given to Peterborough Abbey by King Æthelred (Swanton 1997, 37), a grant later confirmed by Pope Agatho (Hart 1966, 99). A similar charter giving Louth to Peterborough Abbey by Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, dates from AD 664 but is believed to be a later fabrication (*ibid.* 97). A monastery in Louth is referred to in AD 790 when Abbot Æthelheard of the monastery was chosen as the Archbishop of Canterbury (Swanton 1997, 54).

No Saxon finds are known from the investigation area, despite these early historical references to the town. However, two 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds were recovered during archaeological investigation 180m southwest of the site (Tann 1996, 1).

At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Louth is recorded as owned by the Bishop of Lincoln. The town contained 80 burgesses (merchants and property owners) and 2 knights with a market, 21 acres of meadow, 400 acres of woodland and 14 mills (Foster and Longley 1976).

Chequergate is first referred to in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The place-name element *Chequer* may be derived from the Middle English *Cheker* given as a name to land with a chequered appearance (Smith 1956, 92). Chequergate was formerly a longer street than it is at present and included Bridge Street as evidenced by the description of a property in 1835 (Goulding 1891, 83).

The town of Louth had a schoolmaster as

early as 1276 and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Gilds in the town were contributing 40 shillings for the maintenance of the master (Hodgett 1975, 142). In 1556-7 John Bradby gave a tenement of land in *Cheker* to the Grammar School (Goulding 1918, 41). A petty school is recorded in Chequergate in 1564 (Robinson 1992, 62).

Medieval sites in the investigation area are set within the medieval street plan which still survives. The market provided the focus for the town and was dominated by St. James's Church to the west. The main thoroughfare through the town may have been Eastgate and it is possible that Chequergate was formerly the back lane to this main thoroughfare.

The only extant remains of the medieval period in the vicinity of the investigation area is the parish church which dates to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. This is generally believed to have replaced an earlier church, the remains of which were partially revealed during restoration work in 1868 (Field 1978, 15). The former graveyard associated with St. James's extended to the south, where medieval skeletons have been found, and possibly to the north (*ibid.*).

A tannery was established on the investigation site, possibly by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as recorded in a trade directory (White 1856, 266). No tannery is recorded on this site prior to this date, although a tanner is mentioned in Louth in 1374 (Swaby 1951, 86).

Few post-medieval remains have been identified in the area though a wall of the period is recorded just south of the church. Additionally, post-medieval artefacts were recovered during development of the new market hall (Merrony 1989, 13) and the Mason's Arms hotel is recorded as having a 17<sup>th</sup> century origin (Field 1989, 22). Other post-medieval buildings are known

in the vicinity and a fuller's mill is recorded on Bridge Street (Wright 1982, 27). Historic maps depict buildings on the Chequergate frontage in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and in the yard in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Cope-Faulkner 1999).

In 1920 Louth was affected by a severe flood in which 23 inhabitants lost their lives (Robinson 1992, 123). The effect the flood had on the proposed development area is not known although a published photograph partly shows the development site, where a collapsed building is located adjacent to the river with further wreckage beyond (Robinson 1995, 26). The site was referred to as Stor's Tanyard.

There have been no previous archaeological interventions on, or in close proximity to, the site though a desk-based study of the area has previously been produced (Cope-Faulkner 1999). However, an archaeological investigation previously carried out 160m south of the site revealed a sequence of post-medieval deposits approximately 1m to 1.2m in depth overlying natural silt and clay layers (Merrony 1989, 9; 19).

### 3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to record and interpret archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, sequence, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Five test pits were opened by a mechanical excavator and were generally about 1m wide, between 1m and 2m long and varied in depth from 1m to 2.8m. In addition, five boreholes were excavated by mechanical auger. These boreholes were all 0.1m in diameter and generally 3m deep (Fig. 4).

Deposits were examined to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual material. The depth and thickness of each deposit were measured from the ground surface. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Recording of deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Records of the deposits and features recognised during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them, supplemented by artefact dating where appropriate.

## 5. RESULTS

Two phases of activity were identified:

- Phase 1      Natural deposits
- Phase 2      Undated and Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

### Phase 1      Natural deposits

Encountered as the lowest deposits in Test pit 2 and boreholes 4 and 5 were layers of dark blue-grey clay (007, 026 and 030 respectively) at least 1.7m thick. One of the clay layers (007) contained flecks of black organic matter. These deposits are interpreted as alluvium (Figs. 5 and 7).

Above these clays, or the lowest deposit encountered in several of the other test pits



and boreholes, were layers of orange clayey or gravelly sands (003, 006, 008, 018, 023, 025, 029). Above these yellow sands at the northwestern part of the site was a localised deposit of black-brown coarse sand (017). These sandy deposits are also interpreted as alluvium (Figs. 5-7).

## **Phase 2 Undated and Recent deposits**

In Test pit 3, a layer of concrete (012) was revealed 1.7m below present ground level and terminated the excavation of the pit (Fig. 5). This concrete is interpreted as a surface, possibly a floor. A further hard surface that caused the termination of excavation was encountered in Test pit 5, toward the northeastern part of the site (Fig. 6).

Above these two hard surfaces, and also identified overlying the natural clayey sand (023) in Test pit 4 (Fig. 6), were deposits of blue-grey clay with brick/tile fragments (011, 022, 034). A single fragment of mid 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery (Appendix 2) was recovered from these layers which are interpreted as dumped deposits.

Above these dumped clays in Test pits 4 and 5 at the north end of the site were layers of peaty dark brown silty clays (021, 033), interpreted as natural soil formations (Fig. 6).

Overlying these peats, and also identified above the dumped clays and natural sandy clays, were extensive deposits of fragmentary chalk and recent machine-made brick (002, 005, 010, 014, 016, 020, 028, 032). Borehole 4, on the west side of the site, terminated 0.6m below the present ground surface on an impenetrable layer apparently at the base of these brick fragments (Figs. 5-7).

These layers of brick and chalk fragments

are explained as dumped deposits but also served as a base for layers of tarmac (001, 004, 009, 013) and concrete (031) that formed the modern ground surface in parts of the site. Topsoil and turf (015, 019, 027) was also established on the dumped layers of brick and chalk fragments around the northern fringes of the site (Figs. 6 and 7).

In borehole 4, at the north-central part of the site, the dumped brick and chalk layers were absent and a deposit of gravel (024), 0.7m thick occurred directly above the natural sandy clay (025). This gravel, which also formed the site surface in this area, is interpreted as a dumped deposit (Fig. 7).

## **6. DISCUSSION**

Deposits of natural clays and sands (Phase 1) were the earliest deposits encountered during the watching brief. These deposits are alluvial in origin, though the different materials were deposited in differing environments. The clays are likely to have been deposited in lake-type conditions, which may indicate that the River Lud originally formed a wide basin and was very slow moving in this area. By contrast, the sands are typical river deposits, laid down by more rapidly flowing water.

Above the natural layers were undated and recent structural remains and dumped deposits (Phase 2). Firm surfaces were identified 1.7m and 2.5m below present ground level in the central and northeastern parts of the site. These could be cellar floors, though the proximity of the River Lud would suggest that cellar construction was unlikely in this area. It is more probable, therefore, that these are the bases of other sunken structures, possibly tanning vats as the site is known to have been a tannery from at least as early as 1856 until

the early 20th century.

Although the actual date of these structural remains is unknown they were apparently infilled in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century or later. Redeposited natural clays were used for this infilling. The presence of this material suggests other deep excavations in the area at the same time, unless spoil from the original excavation of the sunken structures was stockpiled in the area, though this is thought unlikely.

Following the backfilling a natural soil developed in the northern part of the site. The peaty nature of this soil suggests the ground was quite wet and boggy in this area.

This soil formation was terminated by the extensive dumping of brick fragments and other structural debris, probably resulting from a programme of building demolition in the area. The date of this activity is unknown though it may have occurred shortly after the Louth flood of 1920 which is known to have caused the collapse of buildings in the area. Surfaces were subsequently established on this levelled debris.

A localised, thick deposit of gravel in borehole 4 is probably infilling a cut feature, though the dimensions of the borehole did not permit this to be established with certainty. The function of this postulated cut feature is unknown, though as the gravel forms the ground surface in the area the activity must be recent.

No deposits of medieval date were identified during the watching brief. It is possible that the area was not occupied in the medieval period or that deposits of that date have been removed by later activity. However, the investigatory test pits and boreholes were small, limiting the clear

identification of archaeological remains. Similarly, the small scale of the investigation pits restricted the interpretation of function and date of the apparently post-medieval remains encountered.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations were carried out on land at Spout Yard, Chequergate, Louth because the site lies near the core of the medieval town. However, no obvious archaeological remains of medieval date were encountered. There are indications of sunken structures, possibly tanning vats or cellars, in the central and northeastern part of the site. These were infilled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or later. A surface or a floor of a further structure was tentatively identified on the west side of the area.

Waterlogged deposits were encountered during this investigation which indicates that conditions are appropriate for the survival of environmental indicators (snails, seeds, pollen, *etc.*).

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr S. Williamson and Mr J. Emerson of East Lindsey District Council who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Thanks are also due to Ms Véronique Poncelet of Allott and Lomax Consulting Engineers who carried out the site works. This archaeological project was coordinated by Gary Taylor. This report was edited by Dave Start MIFA who also permitted access to the library and parish files maintained by the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
Archaeological Supervisor: Neil Herbert  
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley  
Illustration: Philip Mills  
Post-excavation Analyst: Gary Taylor

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11. **ABBREVIATIONS**

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

LAS Lindsey Archaeological Services

TLA Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology

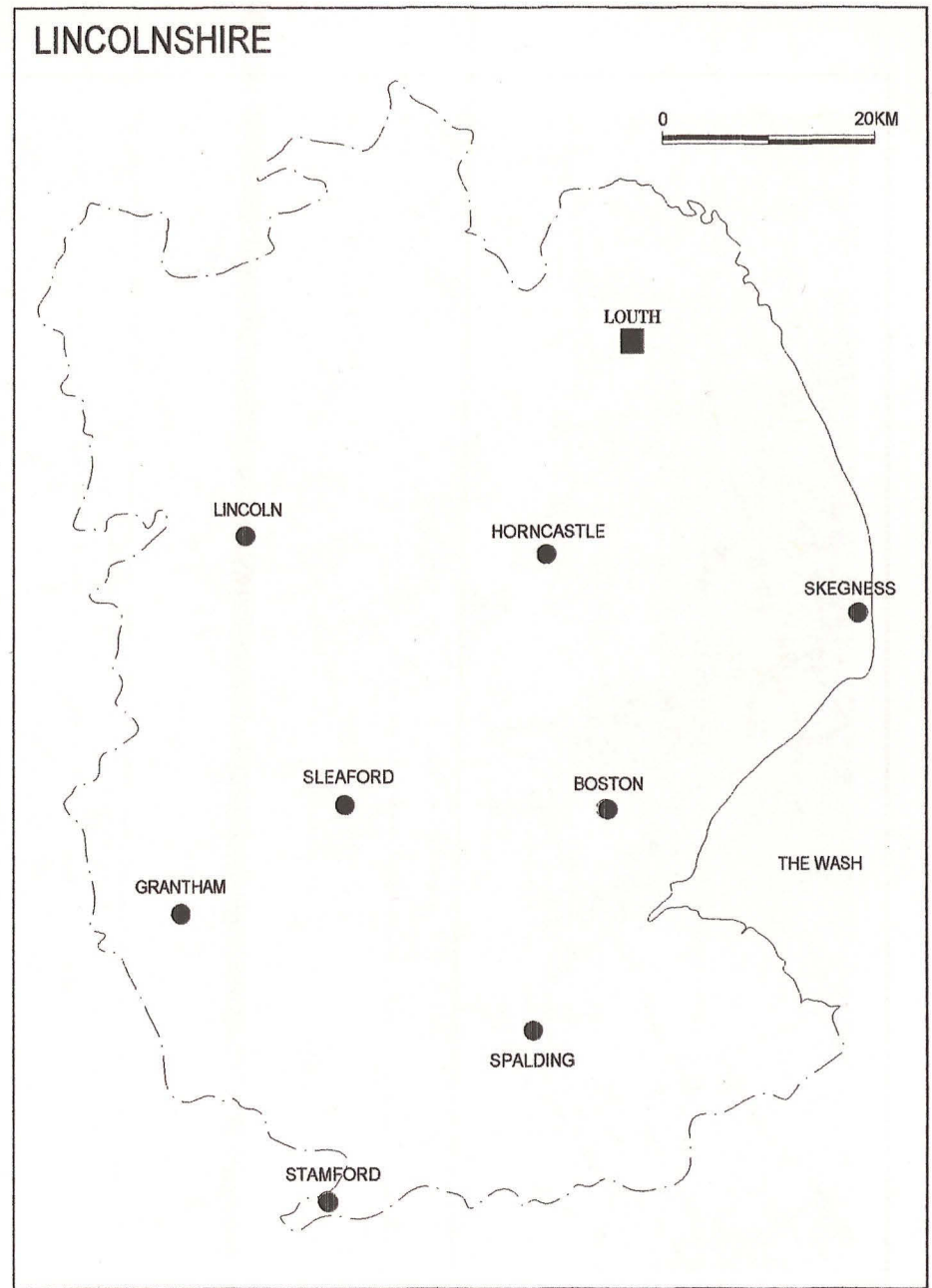
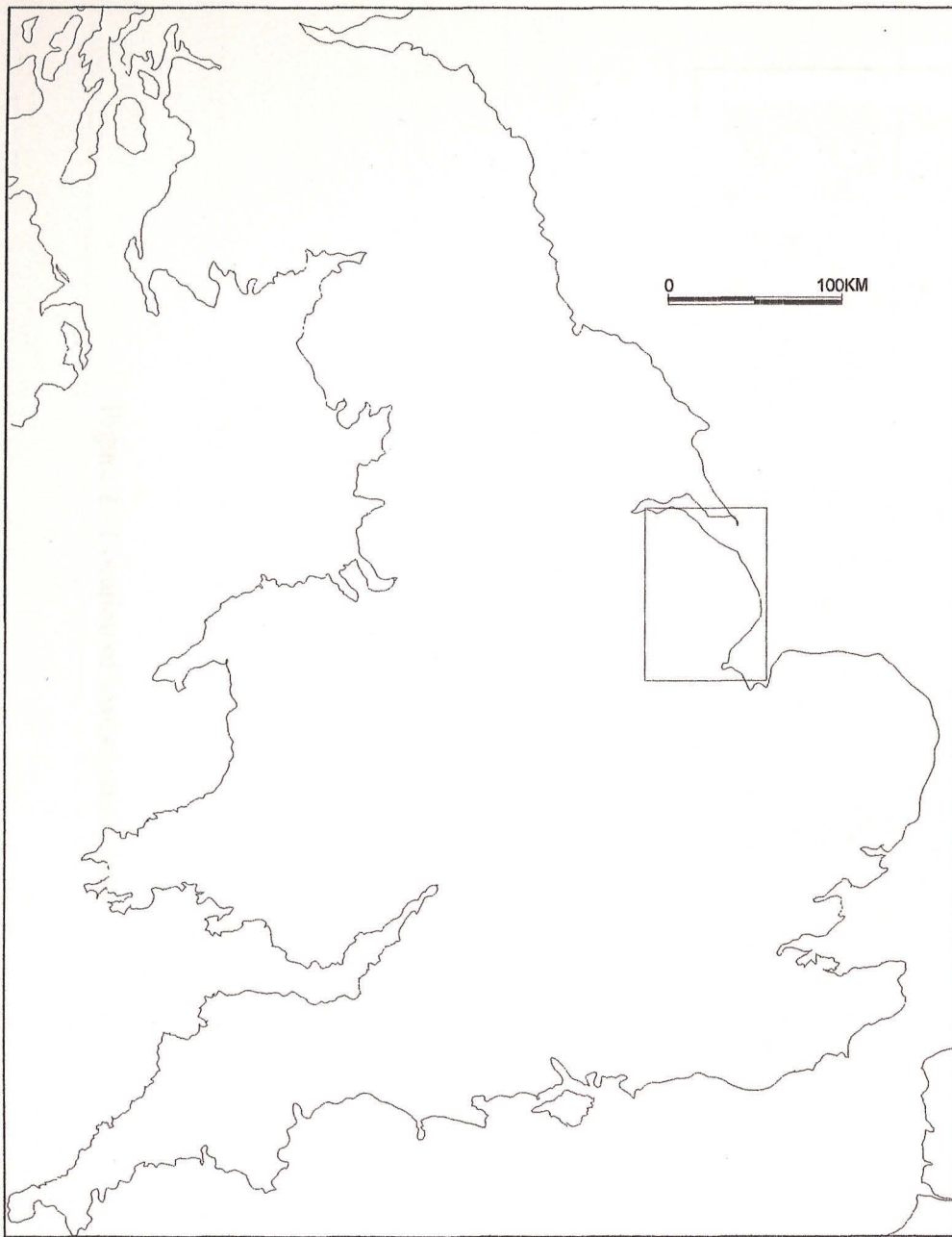


Figure 1 - General location map

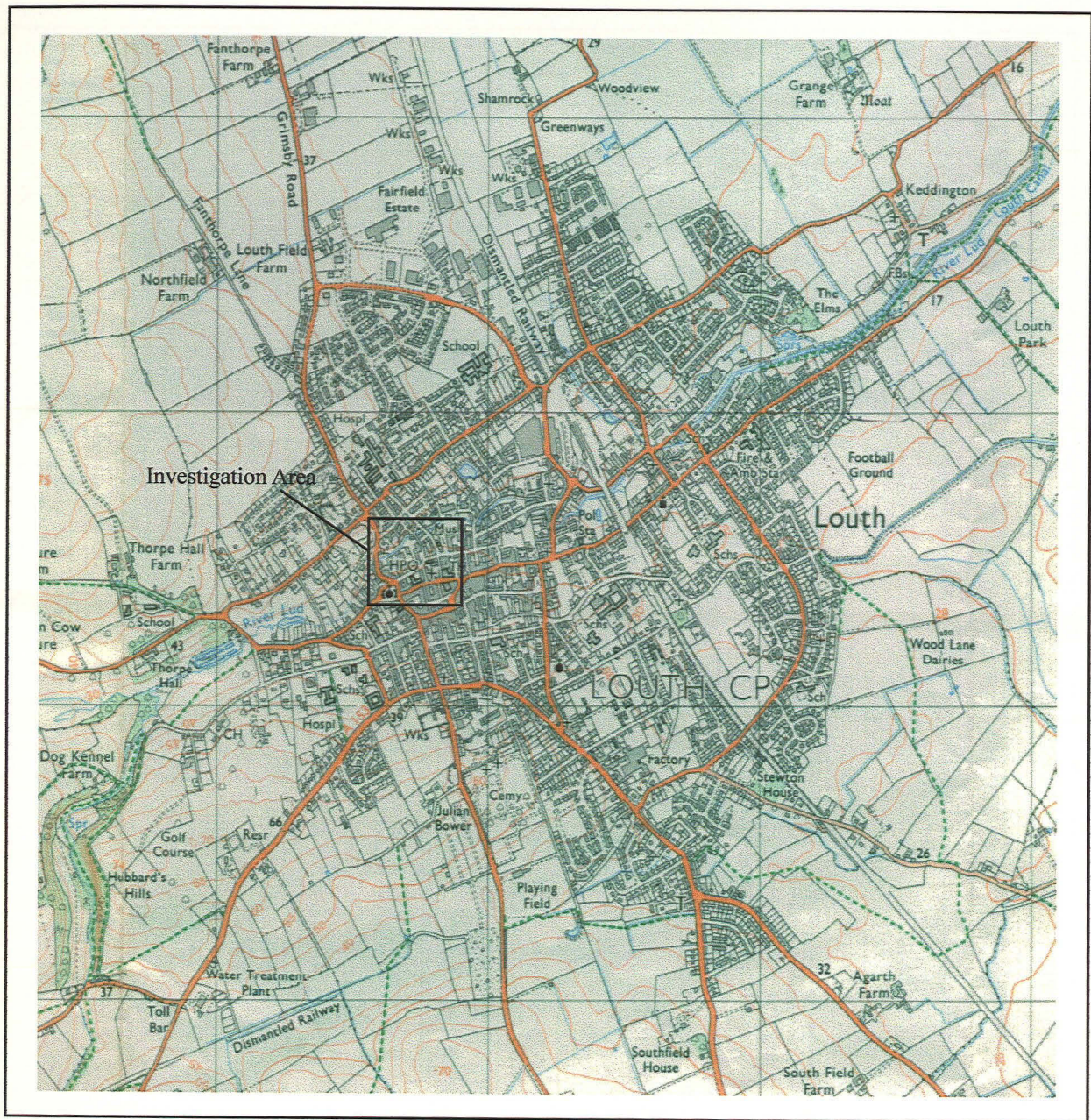
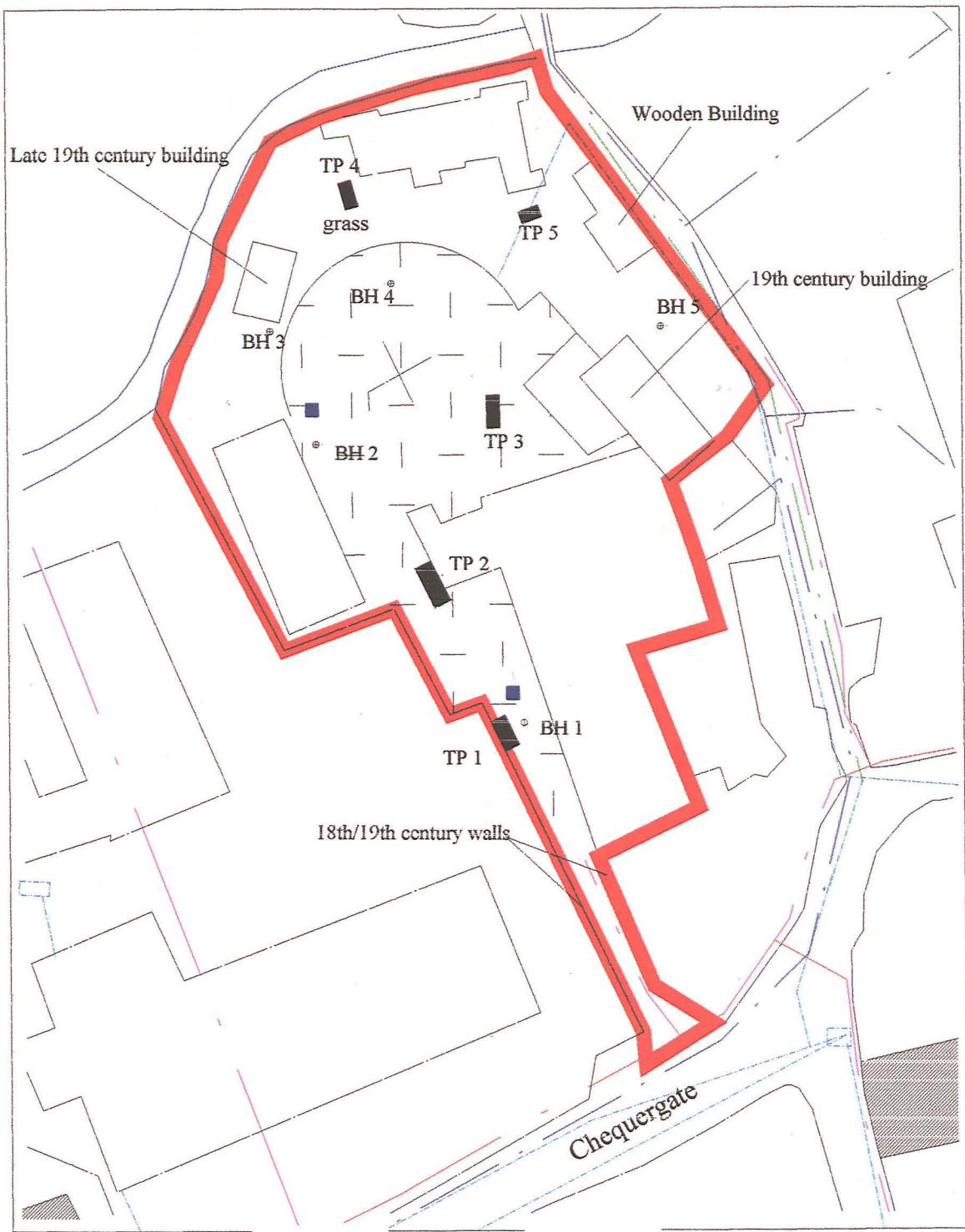


Figure 2 - Location of Investigation Area



Proposed Development Area

Figure 3 - Site Location Plan











- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Proposed development area |  British Gas     |
|  Listed building           |  British Telecom |
|  Electricity               |  Manhole cover   |
|  Combined water/sewer      |  Hardstanding    |

Figure 4 - Site plan showing locations of test pits (TP) and boreholes (BH)



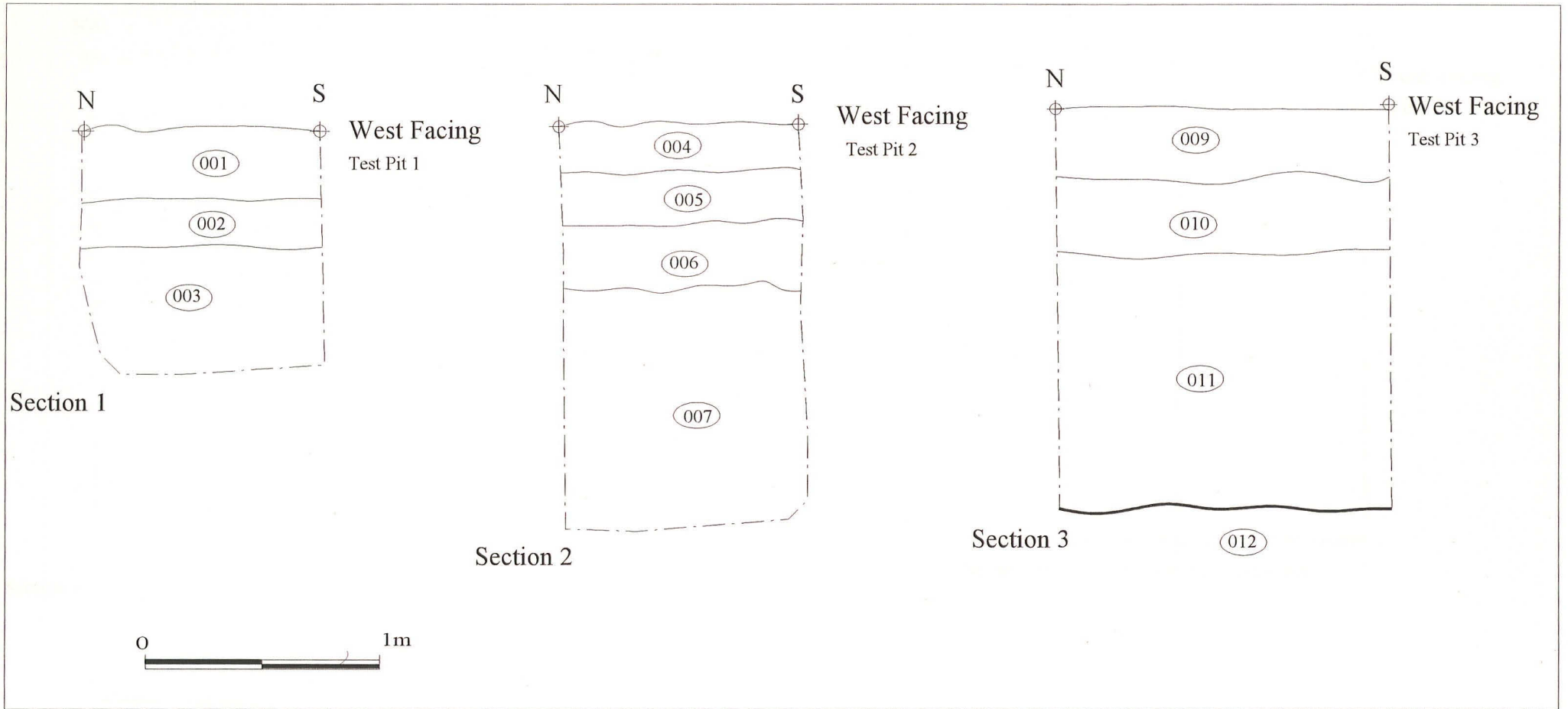


Figure 5 - Sections of test pits 1, 2 and 3

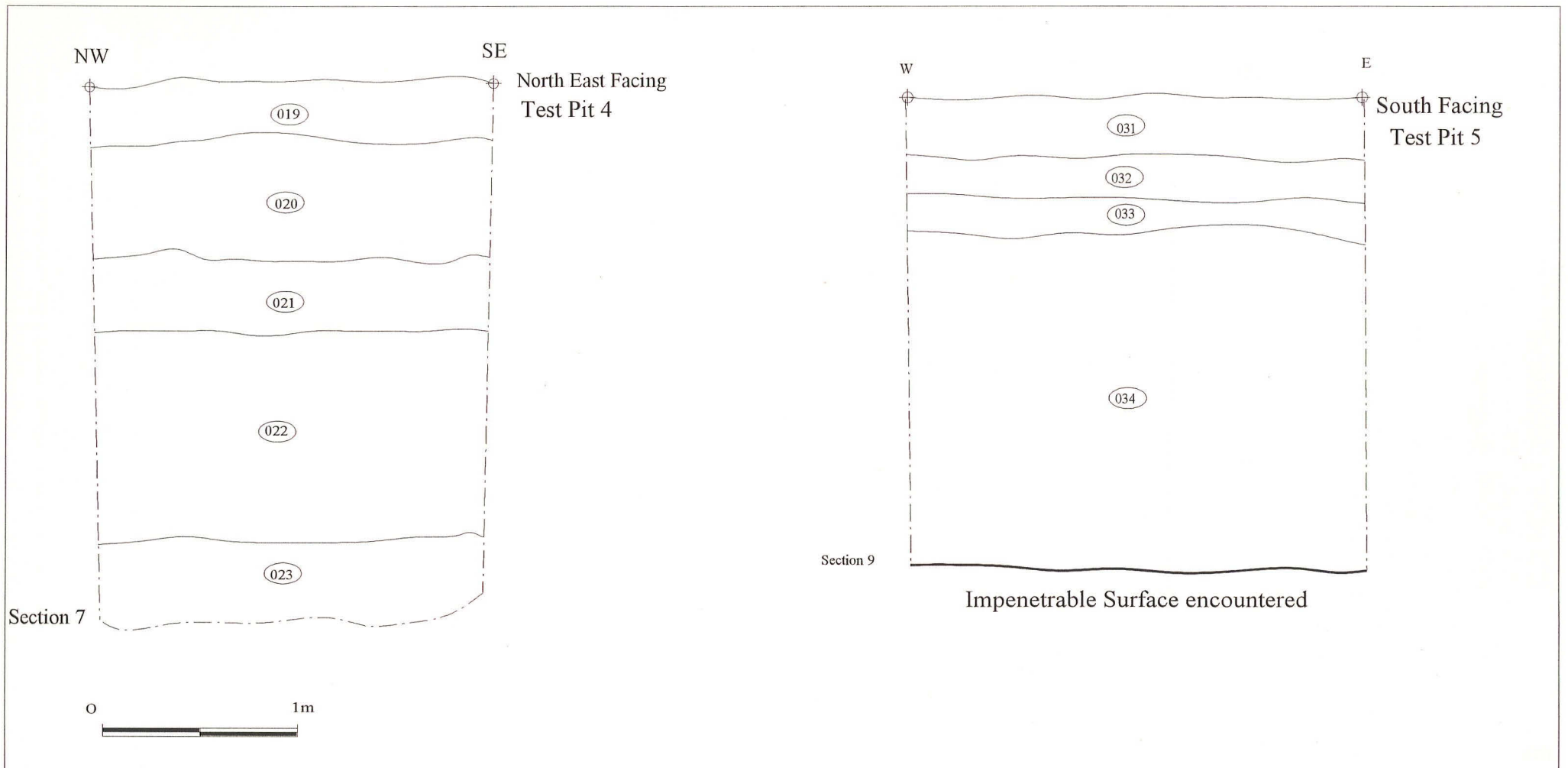


Figure 6 Sections of test pits 4 and 5

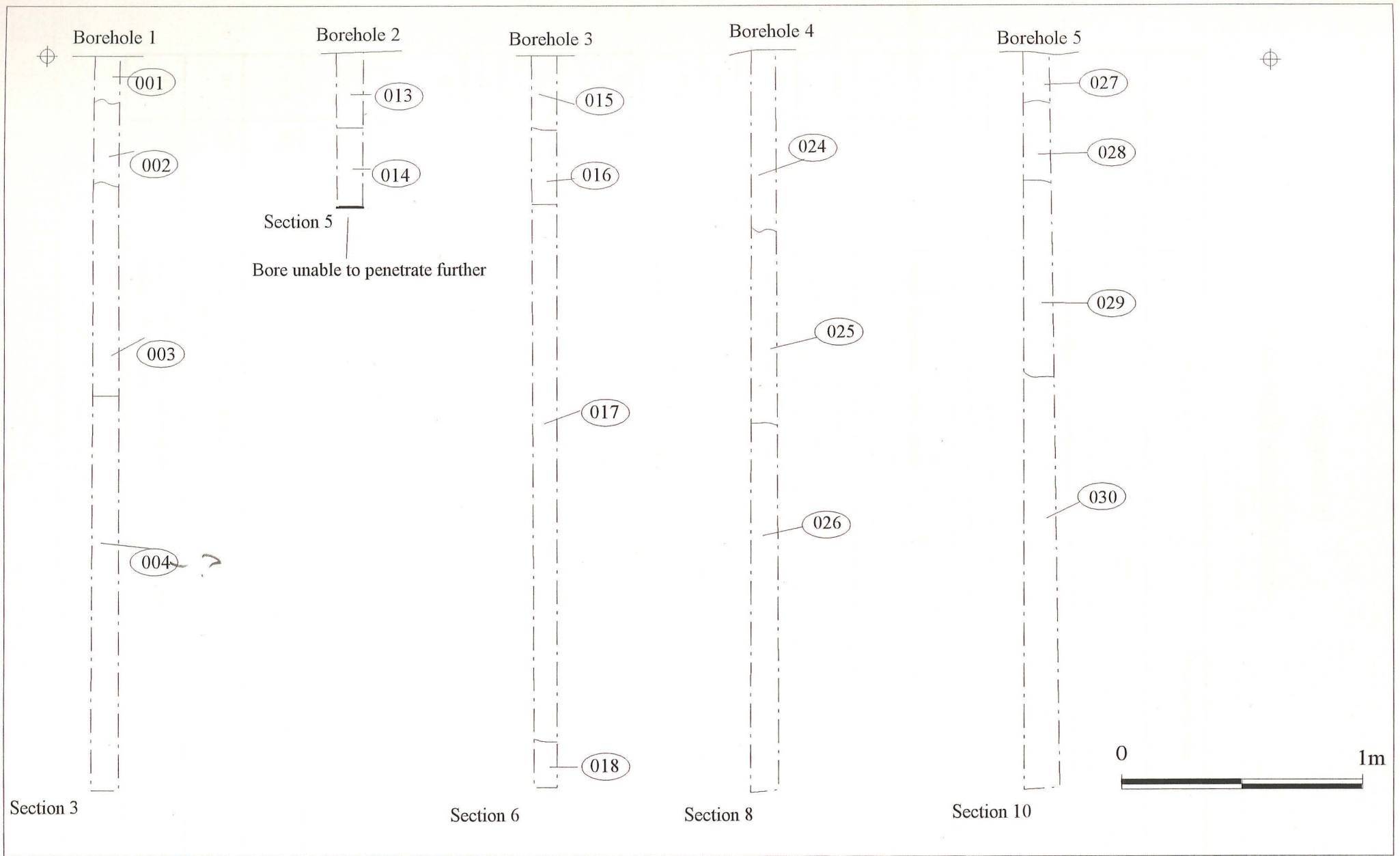


Figure 7 Sections of boreholes

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Bore hole/ Test pit	Description	Interpretation
001	T1/B1	Black-grey tarmac layer, 0.3m thick	Surface
002	T1/B1	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.2m thick	Hardcore foundation for (001)
003	T1/B1	Orange sandy clay layer, 0.95m thick	?Natural
004	T2	Black-grey tarmac layer, 0.2m thick	Surface
005	T2	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.2m thick	Hardcore foundation for (004)
006	T2	Orange sandy clay layer, 0.3m thick	?Natural
007	T2	Layer of dark blue-grey clay with organic flecks, >1m thick	Natural
008	B1	Layer of brown-orange sandy clay, >1.6m thick, waterlogged	Natural
009	T3	Black-grey tarmac layer, 0.3m thick	Surface
010	T3	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.3m thick	Hardcore foundation for (009)
011	T3	Layer of dark blue-grey clay with occasional brick/tile/drain fragments, 1.1m thick	?Dump
012	T3	Layer of grey concrete, not excavated	Surface, ?cellar floor
013	B2	Black-grey tarmac layer, 0.3m thick	Surface
014	B2	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.3m thick. Auger unable to go deeper, possible concrete layer beneath?	Hardcore foundation for (013)
015	B3	Layer of brown clayey sand and turf, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
016	B3	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.3m thick	Dump, hardcore deposit
017	B3	Layer of black-brown coarse sand, 2.2m thick	?Natural
018	B3	Layer of brown-yellow gravelly sand, >0.2m thick	Natural

019	T4	Layer of brown clayey sand and turf, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
020	T4	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.6m thick	Dump, hardcore deposit
021	T4	Layer of dark brown silty clay, 0.4m thick	?Naturally accumulated soil layer
022	T4	Layer of dark blue-grey clay with frequent brick/tile fragments and organic flecks, 1.1m thick	?Dump
023	T4	Layer of yellow-grey gravelly clayey sand, 0.4m thick	Natural
024	B4	Layer of loose gravel, 0.7m thick	Surface, dump
025	B4	Layer of yellow-brown clayey sand, 0.8m thick	?Natural
026	B4	Layer of dark blue-grey silty clay, >1.5m thick	Natural
027	B5	Layer of brown clayey sand and turf, 0.2m thick	Topsoil
028	B5	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.2m thick	Dump, hardcore deposit
029	B5	Layer of yellow-brown clayey sand, 0.8m thick	?Natural
030	B5	Layer of dark blue-grey silty clay, >1.7m thick	Natural
031	T5	Layer of concrete, 0.3m thick	Surface
032	T5	Layer of mixed red brick and grey chalk fragments, 0.2m thick	Hardcore foundation for (031)
033	T5	Layer of dark brown silty clay, 0.2m thick	?Naturally accumulated soil layer
034	T5	Layer of dark blue-grey clay with frequent brick/tile fragments and organic flecks, 1.8m thick. Indurated deposit at base of trench.	?Dump

## Appendix 2

### FINDS SUMMARY

*By Gary Taylor*

#### Provenance

The single artefact was collected from a dumped deposit (022) in Test pit 4 at the northern part of the site. This type of pottery was made widely. Machine-made brick was also observed in dumped deposits and demolition debris throughout the site but was not collected.

#### Range

The only artefact recovered is a pottery fragment of post-medieval date. No faunal or environmental remains were retrieved, though organic deposits were observed during the investigation.

Context	Description	Date
022	1x white salt-glazed stoneware	mid 18th century

#### Condition

The material is in good condition and presents no long-term storage problems.

#### Documentation

A number of archaeological investigations in Louth have previously been undertaken and reported. Details of these and other archaeological and historical evidence has been compiled (Cope-Faulkner 1999).

#### Potential

In part due to the fact that it is an isolated find, the artefact has limited potential. It may, however, indicate that there are pre-18th century deposits and structures at the site.

#### Reference

Cope-Faulkner, P., 1999 *Desk-top Assessment of the Archaeological Implications of Proposed Development of land at Spout Yard, Louth, Lincolnshire (LSY99)*, unpublished APS Report No. 34/99

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Alluvium</b>	Soil or other deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is laid down by the sea, freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or in lakes.
<b>Anglo-Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period following the Romano-British era ( <i>q.v.</i> ) when Britain was invaded and settled by peoples from Germany, Holland, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
<b>Context</b>	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 archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Dumped deposits</b>	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Old English</b>	The language of the early part of the Anglo-Saxon period, used from approximately AD 450-650.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

34	Context records
3	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Bag of finds
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum  
12 Friars Lane  
Lincoln  
LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 79.99

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: LSY99

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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