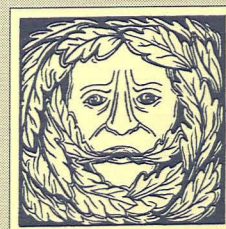


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON WATER MAIN TRENCHES
AT HELPRINGHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE
(HVP 99)**

**Work undertaken for Anglian Water
December 1999**



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ON WATER MAIN TRENCHES
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(HVP 99)**

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December 1999**

Report compiled by Joanna Hambly

**National Grid Reference TF 139407
City and County Museum accession no: 297.99**

APS Report No: 6/00



**Archaeological Project Services is an IFA Registered
Archaeological Organisation (No. 21)**

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken after the excavation of trenches during the replacement of the water main in the centre of Helpringham village, Lincolnshire.

Helpringham is situated in an area of known archaeological activity from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods and documentary sources indicate the village itself is probably of Anglo Saxon origin. The area of investigation is in the medieval core of the village, close to the 11th century parish church.

Very limited excavation beneath the modern road surface revealed a short sequence of natural deposits overlain by an undated buried soil horizon.

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 Planning Background

On the 7th December 1999, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavations to replace the water main in the centre of Helpringham village, Lincolnshire.

The excavations were subject to conditions including the implementation of an archaeological watching brief. Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Anglian Water to undertake the watching brief. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief of works set by the Assistant Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Helpringham is located on the edge of the south Lincolnshire Fen at the eastern border of North Kesteven, 19km west of Boston and 9km south east of Sleaford (Fig. 1).

The watching brief took place along the High Street in the centre of the village in front of the village green (Fig 2). Trench 1 was located on National Grid Reference TF139407 at a height of 8.00m OD. Trench 2 was located at N.G.R. TF140407 at a height of 8.30m OD. From the High Street, the land slopes gently downhill, northwards to the Helpringham Eau water course.

Local soils are Beccles 3 Association, typically fine loam over clay (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 121), overlying glacial drift sands and gravels.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Helpringham is situated in an area of known archaeological activity dating from the Iron Age to the medieval period.

Up to the Roman period, the village was in an area affected by the salt marsh and close by to several Iron Age and Roman salterns (salt making sites) The Roman watercourse, Car Dyke, passes just beyond the eastern parish boundary and is particularly well preserved here.

All indications suggest an Anglo-Saxon origin for the village. The name Helpringham means the *ham* (village) of Helpric's people (Ekwall, 1960). A landowner called Eilric and a pre-conquest church owned by Azor are mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 (Foster & Longley, 1924). A probable Anglo-Saxon clay spindle whorl has been found south of the church, near the railway line. The present day parish church of St Andrews was built mainly in the 14th century but has an Early English (1190-1250) chancel and a Norman frieze decorating part of the inside wall (Pevsner & Harris, 1989). This frieze is probably a relic of the church recorded in the Domesday survey.

Evidence of medieval field systems are still visible as ridge and furrow in fields near the village. Helpringham was enclosed in 1773 (Trollope, 1872).

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to record and analyse archaeological deposits exposed.

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- Determine the form and function of the archaeological features exposed;

- Determine the spatial arrangements of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practical to recover dating evidence from the archaeological features recorded;
- Establish the sequence of archaeological remains present on the site.

4. METHODS

A mechanical excavator was used to excavate 2 trenches, through a tarmac road surface, each measuring 2.40m long by 0.94m wide. Subsequent to the excavation, the sides of the trenches were examined for archaeological remains. Each deposit and feature revealed was given a unique reference number, (written in brackets in the text), and recorded on a *pro forma* record sheet. Each trench was photographed and a representative section from each one was drawn at a scale of 1:20.

5. RESULTS

Records of the deposits identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and the recognisable relationships between them. Three phases were identified:

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Pre-modern deposits
Phase 3	Modern deposits

Phase 1 Natural deposits

A sterile, firm, orange, sandy clay, banded with mid grey clay (5) was encountered at a depth of 0.80m below the ground surface in trench 1 (Fig. 3).

Phase 2 Pre-modern deposits

Above the natural orange clay was a 0.20m thick layer of soft, very dark grey silt (4), containing moderate quantities of rounded pebbles. This was recorded in both trenches 0.60m below the present ground level.

Phase 3 Modern deposits

A total of three modern deposits were observed in the course of the watching brief. A sterile, orange sandy clay and gravel (3) was present in both trenches above the phase 2 silty layer. This deposit was overlain by a dark grey, sandy clay and gravel (2) in trench 1. The uppermost deposit in the sequence consisted of a 0.25m thick layer of tarmac (1).

6. DISCUSSION

The sterile sand and clay encountered at the bottom of the deeper trench 1, appears to be a natural deposit. The banding observed and the composition of the deposit, indicate it was water lain.

The stratigraphic position of the homogenous grey layer, (4), above natural material and below a series of modern deposits, suggest it represents a pre-road ground surface, probably a buried soil. No finds were recovered from this context and so dating is not possible, however, the depth at which it was encountered suggests it is not a recent deposit.

The construction of the road is represented by two layers of gravelly make up covered with tarmac. A map of the area drawn in 1779 by A. Armstrong shows the existence of a road on the same alignment, so it is possible one of

the gravelly make up deposits is associated with the 18th century road.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Excavations for the water main installation in Helpringham were subject to a watching brief because of their location in the core of the medieval village. However, other than a probable buried soil, no obvious archaeological remains were revealed. This is, perhaps, partly due to the small size of the excavations and their location on a long established thoroughfare. Nonetheless, the presence of the probable buried soil indicates a potentially ancient ground surface surviving in the area.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge Anglian Water who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor co-ordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Kate Orr, the North Kesteven Community Archaeologist, permitted access to the relevant parish files.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Co-ordinator: Gary Taylor
Supervisor: Joanna Hambly
Illustration: Phil Mills
Post-excavation analyst: Joanna Hambly

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Pevsner, N.& Harris, J., 1989, *The Buildings of England. Lincolnshire.* (revised Antram, N).

Trollope, E. (Ven), 1872, *Sleaford and thwe Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn in the County of Lincoln.* (Heritage Lincolnshire)

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services.

SMR Sites and Monuments Record.

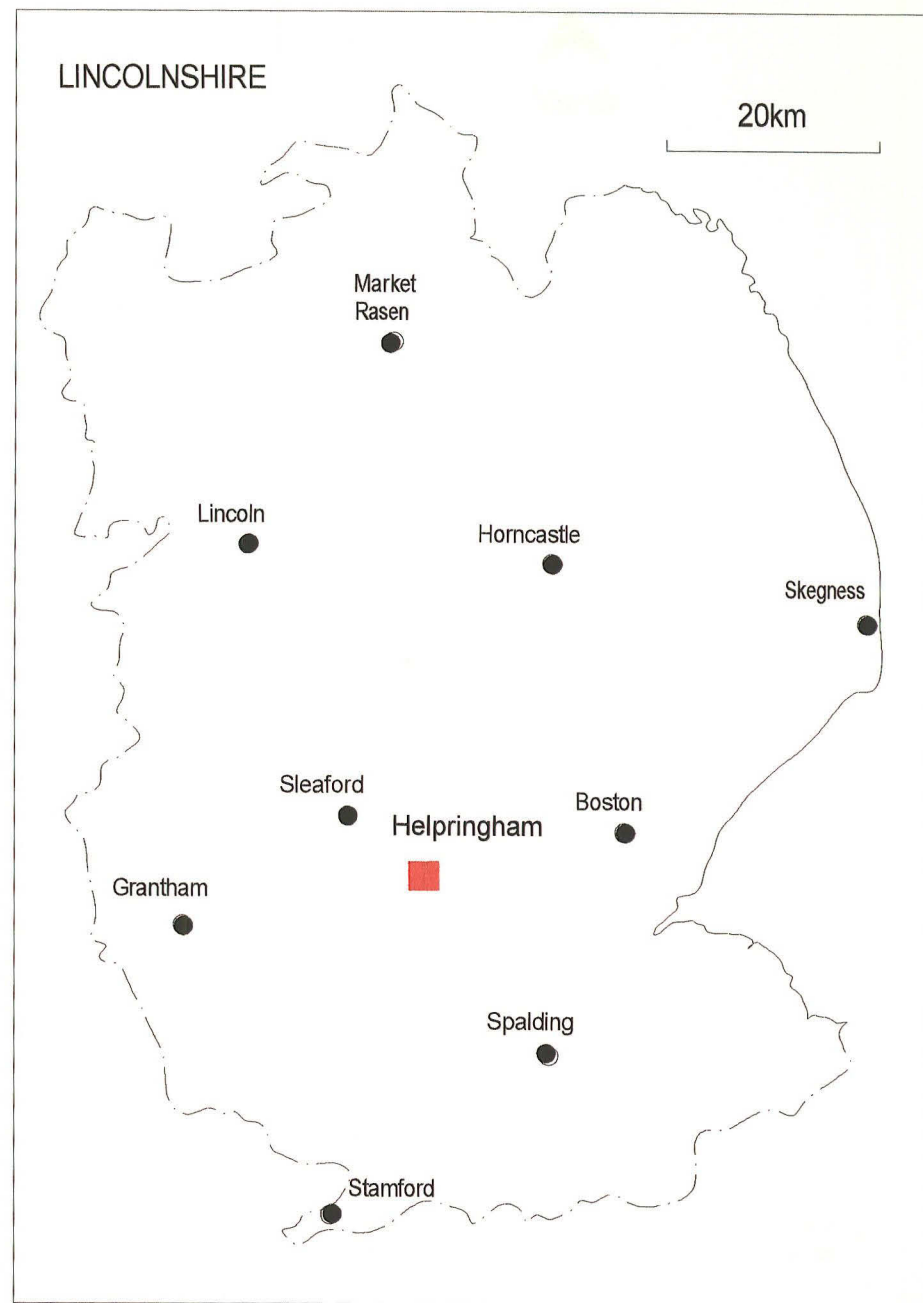
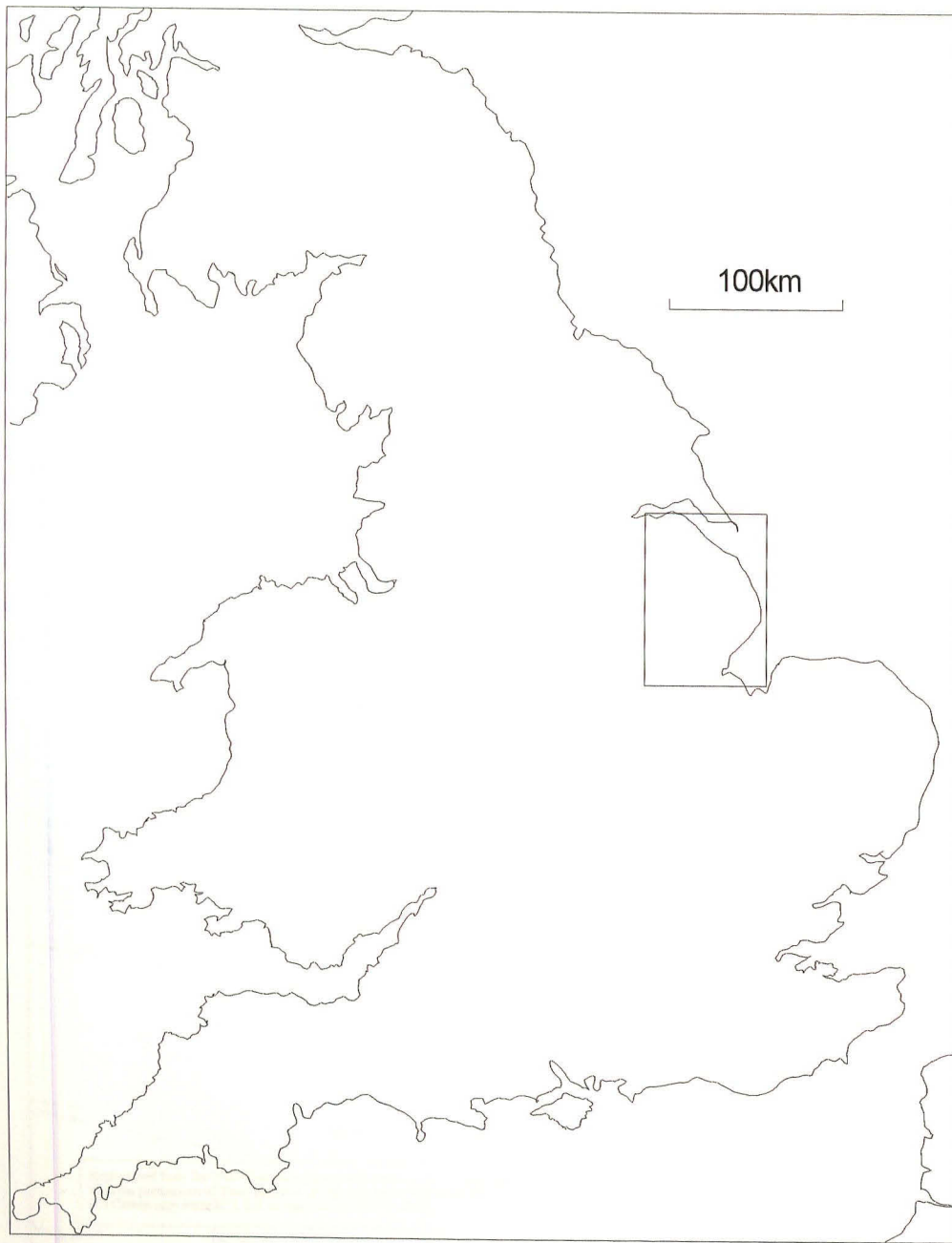


Figure 1 General Location Plan

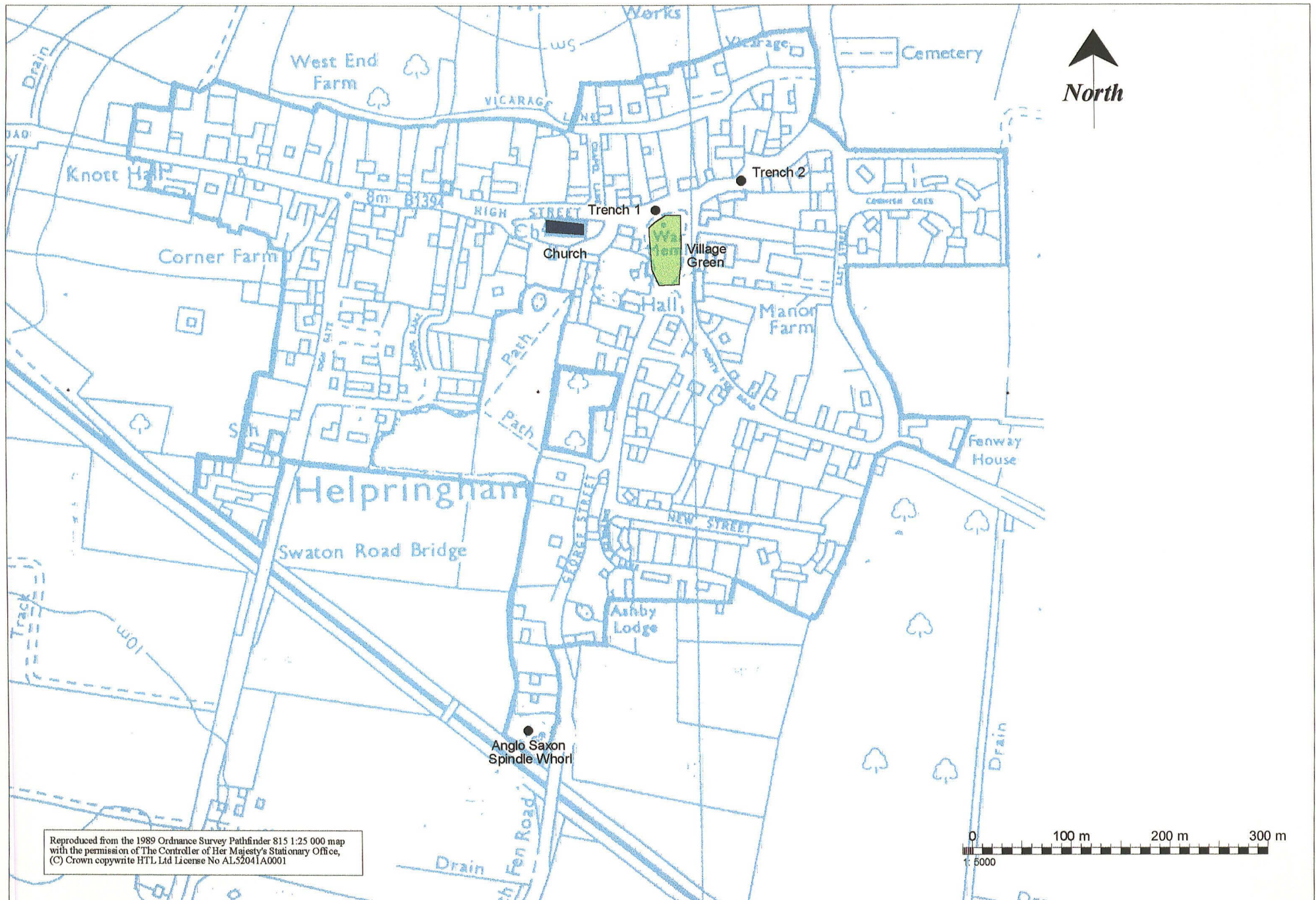


Figure 2 Site Location Plan and Archaeological Setting

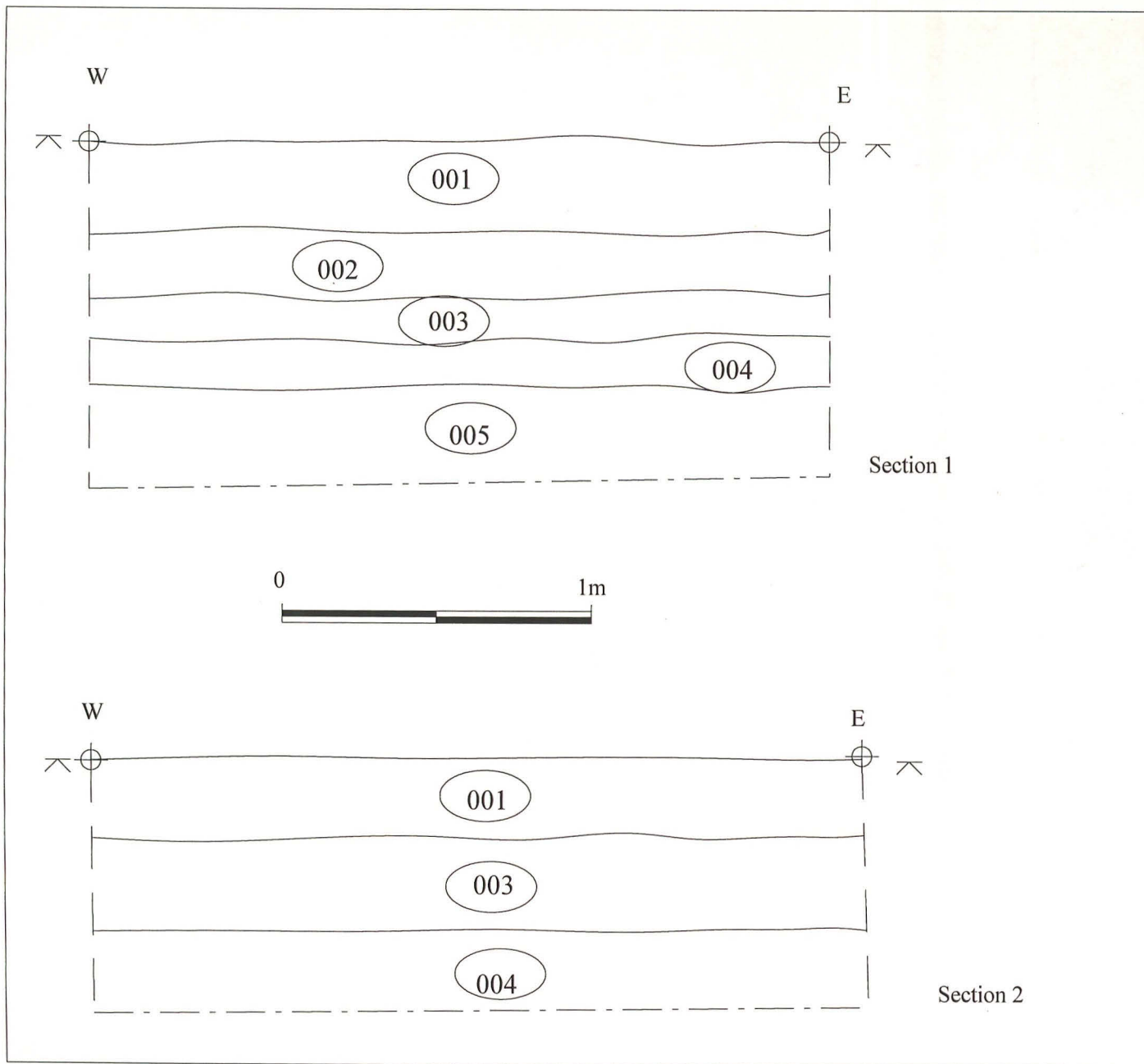


Figure 3 Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 Trench 1,
looking southeast

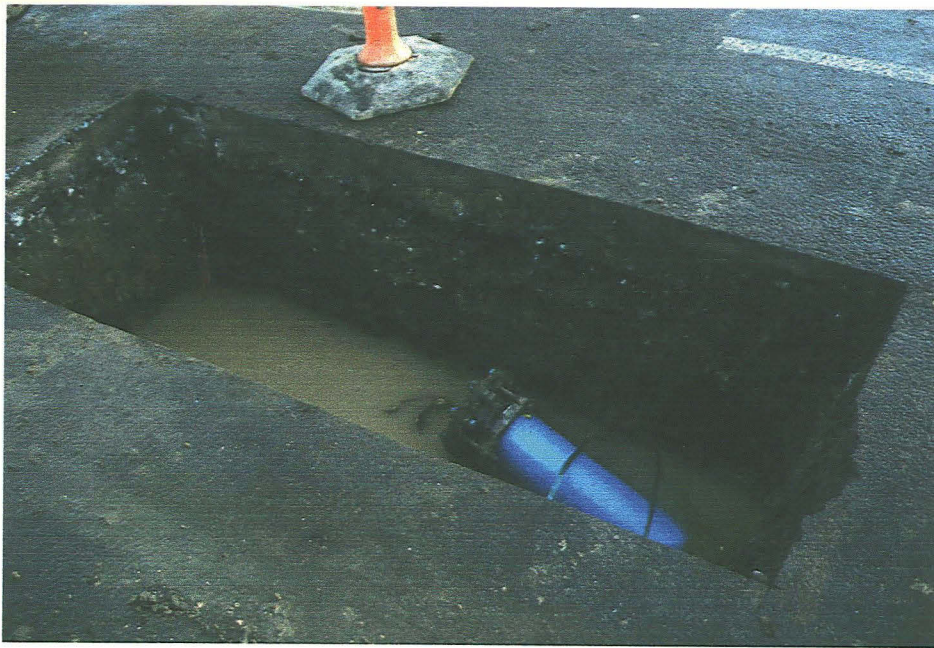


Plate 2 Trench 2,
looking southeast

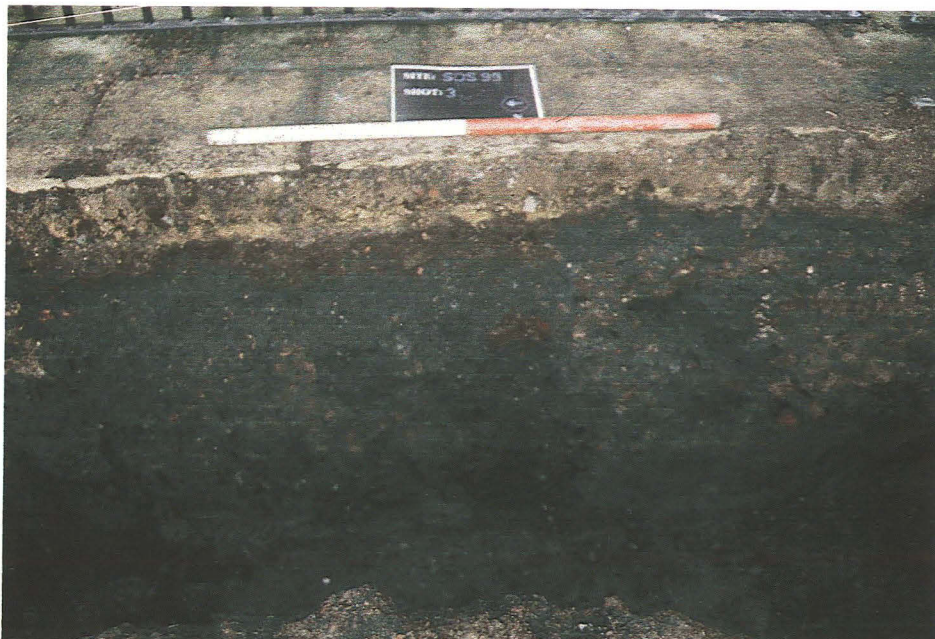


Plate 3 Trench 2,
north facing
section

Appendix 1

CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context No.	Type	Description
1	Deposit	<i>tarmac road</i>
2	Deposit	<i>dark grey sandy, clay & gravel make up for tarmac road</i>
3	Deposit	<i>orange, clay sandy gravel make up for tarmac road</i>
4	Deposit	<i>dark grey silty probable buried soil</i>
5	Deposit	<i>orange/grey sandy clay natural</i>

Appendix 2

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

5 Context sheets

Photographic record sheets for

Black and white negatives and contact prints
colour slides

2 1:20 scale section drawings

1 watching brief daily record sheet

1 section record sheet

1 context register

This document

The digital archive consists of:

Copies of the digitised plan and section in DCAD 2000 format

Copies of the photos used in this report in JPEG format

Copies of this report in Word 97 format

All digital archives are stored at APS.

All primary records 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: **297.99**

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: **HVP 99**

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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