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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Proposed Fishing Lake
Land East of Barkham Arms Public House,
Wainfleet St. Mary, Lincs.
NGR: TF 4685 5905
Site Code: WBA 99
LCNCC Museum Accn No. 254.99**

Archaeological Observation and Recording

Report prepared for

Mr. M. Stacey

LAS Report No. 375

November 1999

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Barkham Arms, Wainfleet St Mary, Lincs Archaeological Observation and Recording

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Summary

Proposals for creating a fishing lake at Wainfleet Bank instigated the excavation of three machine-cut trenches to evaluate the potential impact on a series of medieval earthworks of unknown function. A single ditch/holloway and man-made pond were uncovered in the machine-cut trenches. Some destruction of the ditch/holloway has already occurred, but further damage to the whole feature caused by the proposed pond is likely to be minimal. It is recommended that the medieval pond to the south of the proposed development be left untouched.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Mr M. Stacey in October 1999 to undertake a watching brief on land to the east of the Barkham Arms Public House, at Wainfleet St Mary in Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The monitoring had been requested by the County Archaeological Officer.

Site Location

Wainfleet is situated on the Outer Marsh zone of the Lincolnshire Marsh 8km south-west of Skegness on the banks of the Steeping River.

The site for the proposed lake is located south-east of the Barkham Arms Public House at Wainfleet Bank, approximately 2km to the west of Wainfleet All Saints (Fig. 1).

Archaeological Background

The Lincolnshire Marsh was formed by ice sheets, and consists of thick boulder-clay deposits with some ridges of terminal moraine. Its surface was probably gently undulating, with localised areas of poor drainage. The coastline has since encroached many kilometres inland, and post-glacial marine transgressions have deposited silts over the boulder clay. There were alternating marine transgressions and regressions, the former resulting in flooding of the saltmarsh, which occurred from the late Iron Age and into the post-Roman period, at varying times in different parts of the Outmarsh. These transgressions mean that Roman and earlier deposits lie buried beneath marine silts.

The distribution of Anglo-Saxon settlements on the eastern fringe of the Middlemarsh, to the west, suggests that the Outmarsh was still not permanently settled at this time, although it may have been suitable for seasonal grazing. However, Wainfleet is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, indicating that the settlement was in existence before the Norman Conquest. In 1086 Wainfleet is recorded as *Wenfelt*, with later mentions as *Weinfelt* (c.1115) and *Weynfled Beate Marie* in 1254. The name derives from the Old English, meaning 'the creek, or stream which can be crossed by a

wagon', with the affixes added later from the church dedications (Cameron 1998, 133).

Throughout the Middle Ages Wainfleet consisted of a complex group of manors and fees, originally split between five lords, which is partially reflected in the separate development of Wainfleet All Saints, Wainfleet St. Mary and Wainfleet St. Thomas (Platts 1985, 217).

The proposed lake is located within an area of earthworks which appear to relate to the medieval settlement of Wainfleet St. Mary.

Scope of Work

A large depression measuring approximately 22m by 07m had previously been excavated by mechanical digger. This water-filled depression is to be extended by the current landowner to create a fishing lake. Further investigations by the County Archaeological Officer at the edge of the depression uncovered a layer of peat approximately 0.70m below ground level (Proposal for Archaeological Observation and Recording 1999). This peat deposit was believed to be associated with the medieval earthworks of unknown function, and further investigations were requested in order to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed lake on any archaeological remains.

Method

Three trenches were excavated by mechanical digger within the area designated for the pond (Fig. 2). Archaeological features and deposits were assigned context numbers by LAS for recording purposes. These context numbers are highlighted in the text and on the illustrations (see Appendix 1)

The three trenches were all excavated with a ditching bucket to a uniform width of 1.6m, although the length of the trenches varied considerably.

Following excavation, a plan of the trench locations was made at a scale of 1:100. Any identifiable archaeological features or deposits were then investigated. This provided evidence of their shape, extent, depth and the nature of the backfill material. Some dateable artefacts were also recovered.

The excavation and recording of the trenches was carried out by Mark Allen and Claire Angus on the 4th October 1999.

Results

Original Machine-trench

An area approximately 22m x 7m (Fig. 2) was originally excavated for the recovery of a tractor that became stuck within a water-filled hollow. Although the trench then became full of water, making recording of the sections difficult, the southern edge of a linear feature containing a layer of peat was located within the trench. This feature was also recorded as layer **102** in Trench 01 and feature **203** in Trench 02 and is therefore described in further detail later.

Trench 01 (Pl. 1)

The Trench measured 10.1m long, 1.6m wide and approximately 0.75m deep below the topsoil (Fig. 3). Four distinct layers were observed within the trench, including the topsoil (**100**) and subsoil (**103**).

The topsoil **100** varied in depth from 0.05m to 0.20m deep, and consisted of a light grey-brown silty clay. A number of pottery fragments were recovered from the topsoil during the machining, all of which dated from the 13th to 14th centuries AD. Directly below the topsoil was a layer measuring 0.35-0.40m deep. This deposit, **101**, was a mix of orange/brown and grey/blue slightly silty clay. During machining, a number of small clay-pigeon fragments were found within this layer indicating that it was of very modern creation. Immediately below **101** was a 0.15m deep dark grey/black humic peat layer (**102**). Directly below the peat deposit **102**, there was the subsoil **103**, a mix of blue/grey and orange clay containing occasional marine shells (bivalves). On the base of the trench, within subsoil **103**, there were a number of peaty lenses. These appeared to be caused by root action and/or animal activity.

The peat **102** immediately above the subsoil **103** appeared to be a uniform layer throughout the trench, although evidence within Trench 02 showed that the peat formed in a discrete feature (see below). Deposit **101** (above the peat) was obviously of modern creation and on further enquiries it was discovered that landscaping of the medieval earthworks had recently taken place, when a number of hollows were infilled and raised areas levelled.

Trench 02 (Pl. 2)

The trench measured 16m long and 1.6m wide, and was machined to a depth of 0.90m at the southern end and 0.35m at the northern end (Fig. 4). The principal deposits uncovered within the trench were the topsoil **200**, layer **205**, and subsoil **201**. Several features were also uncovered, one at the north end (**202**) and the other at the southern end of the trench (**203**).

The topsoil **200** was a light grey/brown silty clay varying in depth from 0.04m to 0.30m. Layer **205**, which was located towards the southern end of the trench, consisted of a mixed orange and grey silty clay, up to 0.50m in depth. The subsoil **201** beneath the topsoil was a mix of silty blue/grey clay and orange clay containing occasional marine shells (bivalves).

At the northern end of the trench there appeared to be a former stream channel (**202**) cutting through the subsoil. This feature, running roughly east-west, measured 0.70m wide and was filled by a mixed orange/brown and grey/brown silty clay, similar in composition to the surrounding subsoil.

At the southern end of the trench, layer **205** appeared to directly seal a linear feature (**203**) that had been partially uncovered (Pl. 3). The layer seems to be a modern deposit formed by the destruction of an upstanding earthwork, followed by the deposition of the disturbed material within a hollow formed by feature **203**. This feature, running east-west, had a fairly steep, slightly convex northern edge, with the southern edge outside the trench. The single fill visible

within the trench (**204**) was a dark grey clayey silt measuring 0.20m deep, containing no finds. As only a small portion was uncovered within the trench it was difficult to ascertain the function of the said feature. However, it soon became apparent that elements of the same feature were also visible within Trench 01 and within the original machine-dug trench (Figure 2). By amalgamating all the data from Trenches 01, 02 and the original machine trench, it was clear that the feature was a linear ditch, approximately 6.0m wide, running east-west. By examining the profile of this feature in Trench 02 it was possible to show that the ditch survived to a depth of over 0.5m below the subsoil (**201**) level.

Trench 03 (Pl. 4)

Trench 03 was 18.5m long, 1.6m wide, and machined to a depth of up to 0.45m (Fig. 5). Two main layers were uncovered within the trench, topsoil **300** and subsoil **301**. The topsoil (0.05-0.20m deep) was a light grey/brown silty clay, whilst the subsoil was a mix of predominantly orange clay with some blue/grey clay.

The northern edge of a single feature (**302**) was uncovered at the southern end of trench 03 (Pl. 5). A small slot (0.75m wide) was excavated through this feature to try to ascertain its depth and function. Unfortunately the feature continued below the water table (c.1.0m below the present ground level) which meant that it was not excavated to its full depth. The cut had a steep northern edge and contained three fills. The primary fill **303**, a mid-dark grey clayey silt, was not fully excavated as it was below the water table level. A number of finds were recovered from the fill, including a fragment of a Toynton ware jug dating to the 13th-14th century, animal bone and small fragments of fired clay. The secondary fill (**304**) was a band of light orange silty clay measuring 0.15m deep. The final deposit, **305**, was a mid grey clayey silt with orange flecks approximately 0.50m in depth.

Although only a small proportion of the feature was uncovered within the trench, **302** was probably a medieval man-made pond dating to the 13th/14th Century AD, similar in shape, size and function to a number of pond earthworks that survive 150m to the north-east (Pl. 6). It is likely therefore that the pond was constructed for the breeding of fish.

The presence of Toynton ware pottery in the medieval pond **302** and within the topsoil in Trench 01 is not surprising as Toynton is located only 10km away to the west.

Conclusions

The organic deposit uncovered during a test excavation was found to be located exclusively within a medieval ditch/holloway running east-west across the site. Also, it was possible to see that the recent levelling of the earthworks had probably caused extensive damage to the upstanding earthworks whilst causing only minimal damage to the hollows. The trenches also showed that only a single ditch/holloway and possible pond are likely to be affected by the development.

The 13th/14th century pond feature in Trench 03 (Feature 302) should be preserved so that the damage to the medieval remains of Wainfleet is kept to a minimum. It is therefore recommended that the proposed modern pond should not extend more than 15m south from the original excavations.

Mark Allen
16 November 1999
Lindsey Archaeological Services

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Mr and Mrs Stacey for their hospitality on the site. Drawings were prepared by Mark Allen and the pottery was examined and identified by Jane Young. The report was edited by Naomi Field and collated and produced by Jane Frost.

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Appendix 1

Summary List of Archaeological Contexts

Context No.	Type	Relationship	Description
100	Layer	Seals all	Modern topsoil, 0.05-0.20m thick
101	Layer	Below 100, seals 102	Modern levelling layer, 0.35-0.40m thick
102	Layer/Fill	Below 101, seals 103	Dark grey/black peat deposit, 0.15m thick
103	Layer	Below 102	Marine silt subsoil
200	Layer	Seals all	Modern topsoil, 0.04-0.30m thick
201	Layer	Below 200, cut by 203	Marine silt subsoil
202	Deposit	Below 200, within 201	Former stream channel
203	Ditch	Below 205, cuts 201, filled by 204	East-West ditch, 6m wide
204	Fill of ditch	Below 205, fill of 203	Dark grey clayey silt, 0.2m thick
205	Layer	Below 200, seals 203	Modern levelling layer, 0.5m thick
300	Layer	Seals all	Modern topsoil, 0.05-0.20m thick
301	Layer	Below 300, cut by 302	Marine silt subsoil
302	Pond	Below 300, cuts 301	Man-made pond, over 1m deep
303	Fill of pond	Sealed by 304, fill of 302	mid-dark grey clayey silt
304	Fill of pond	Sealed by 305, seals 303, fill of 302	Light orange silty clay, 0.15m thick
305	Fill of pond	Sealed by 300, seals 304, fill of 302	mid grey clayey silt, 0.5m thick

Appendix 2

pottery archive wba99

context	cname	form type	sherds	vessels	part	description	date
303	TOY	jug	1	1	BS	worn	13-14th
100	TOY	jug	1	1	handle	grooved oval	14-15th
100	TOY	jar/jug	1	1	BS	worn:corrugated shoulder	13-15th
100	TOY	jar/jug	1	1	BS	worn	13-15th
100	TOY	bowl?	1	1	BS	worn:tiny frag	13-15th
100	MEDLOC	jug	1	1	BS	? Boston;copper in glaze	13-14th

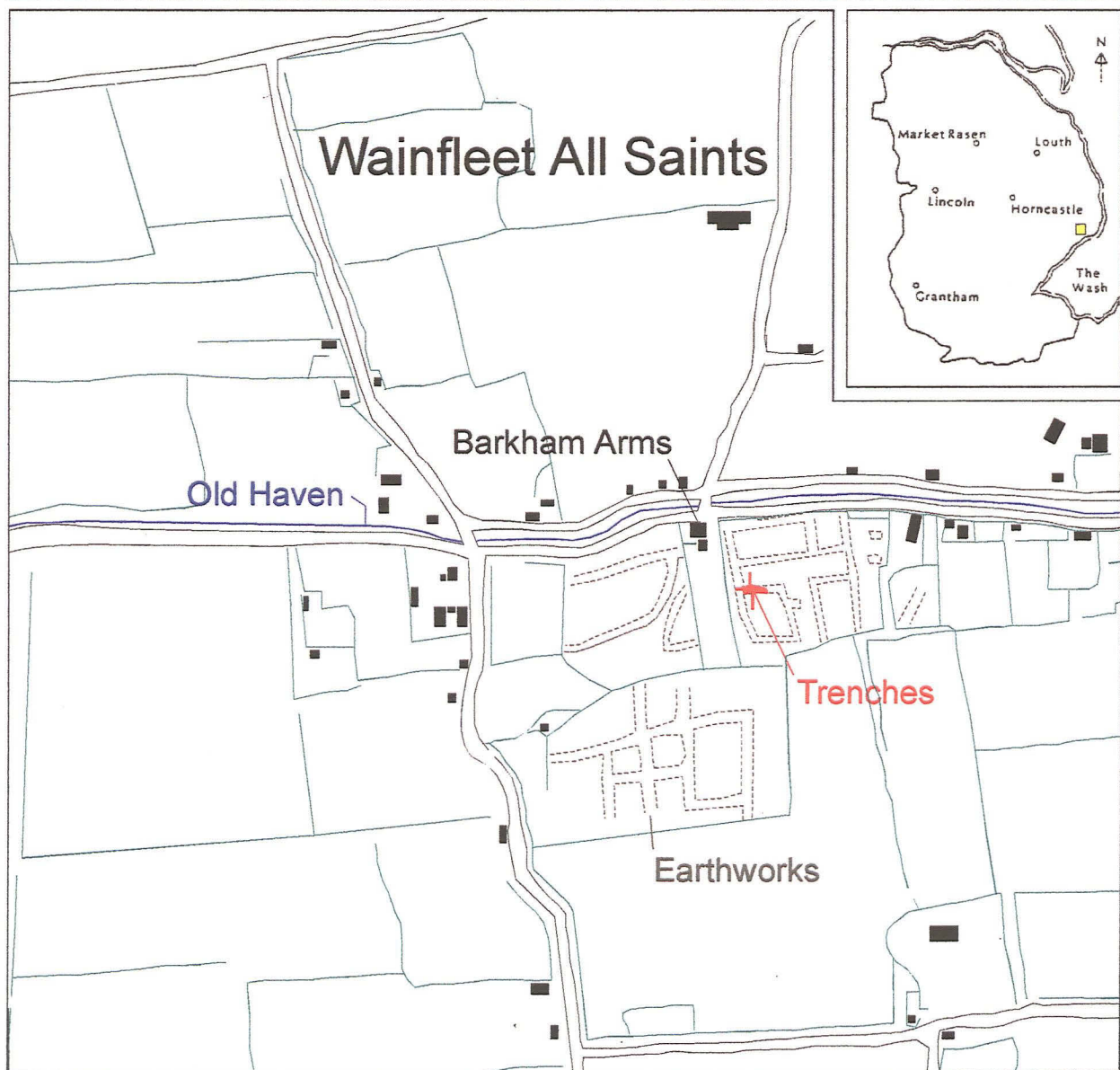
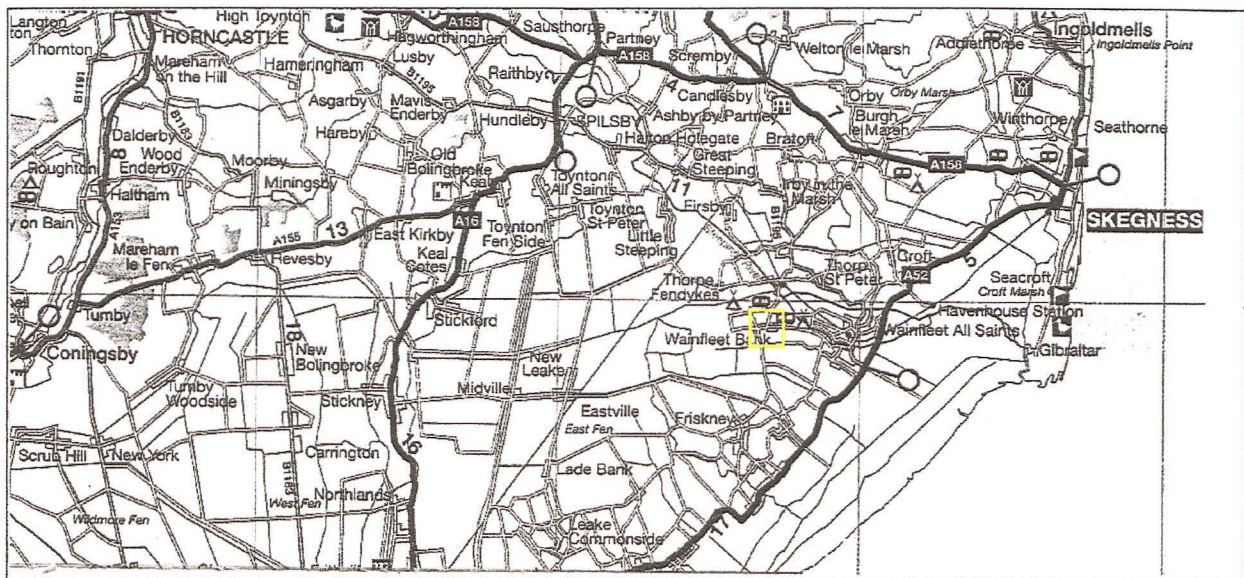


Figure 1. Location of Trenches (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10 000 map © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL50424A)

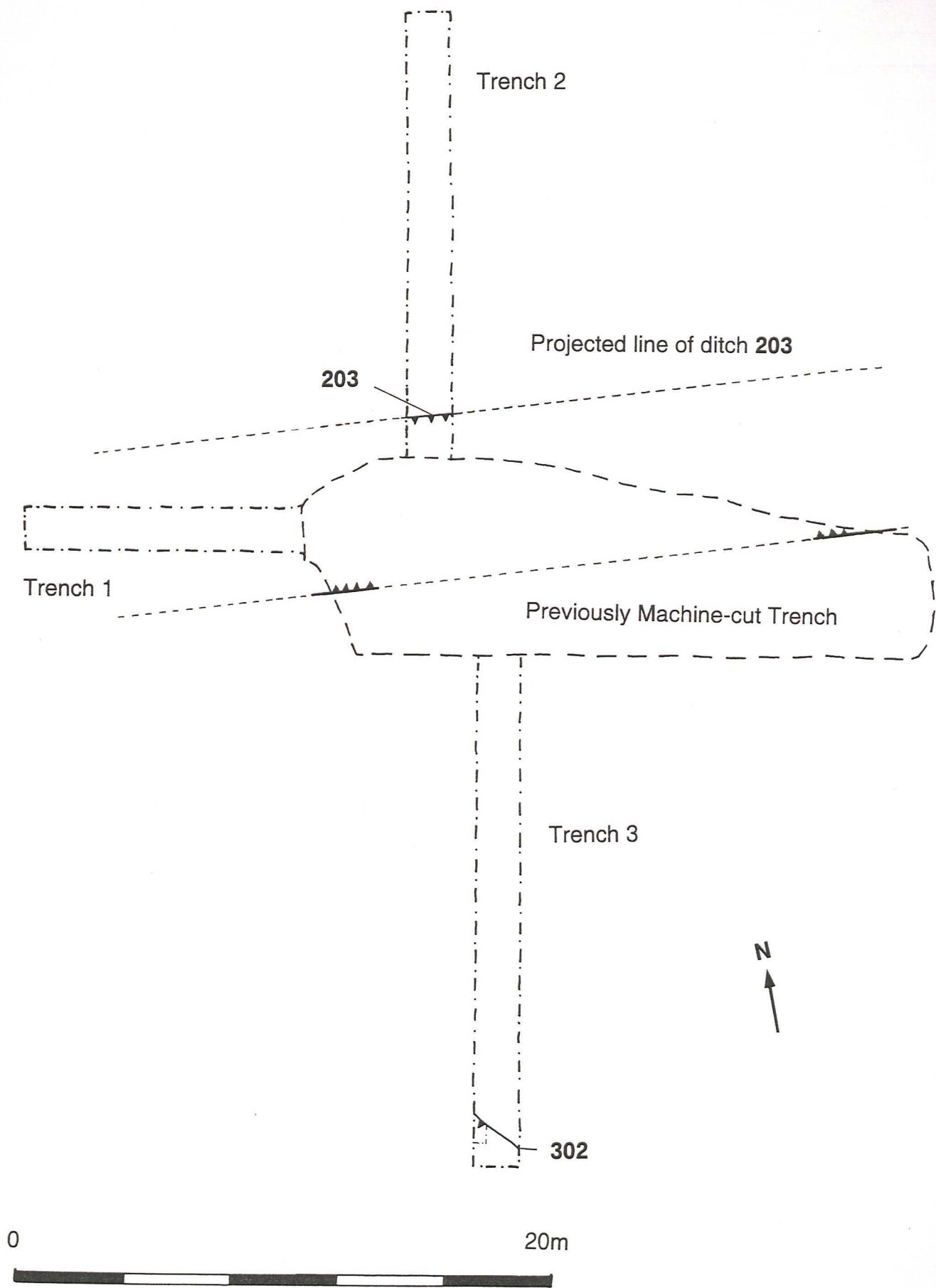


Figure 2. Plan of Trenches

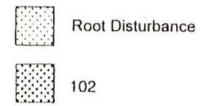
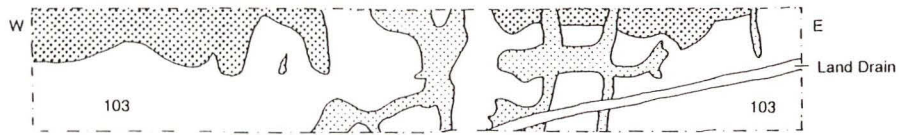


Figure 3 - Trench 01 Section and Plan

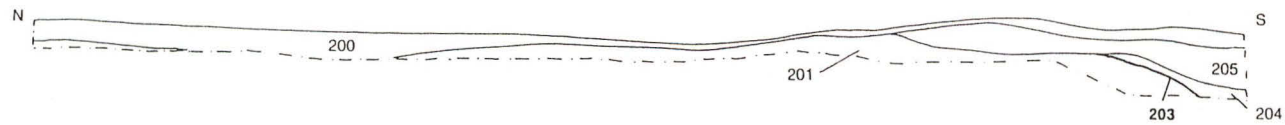


Figure 4 - Trench 02 Section and Plan

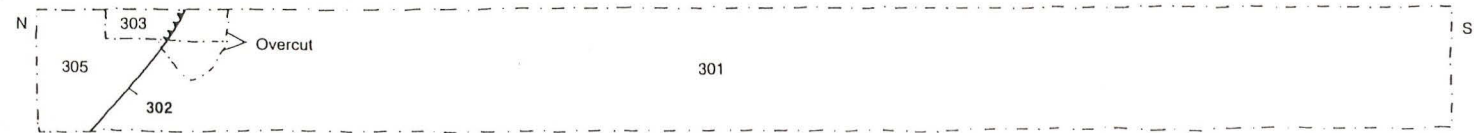
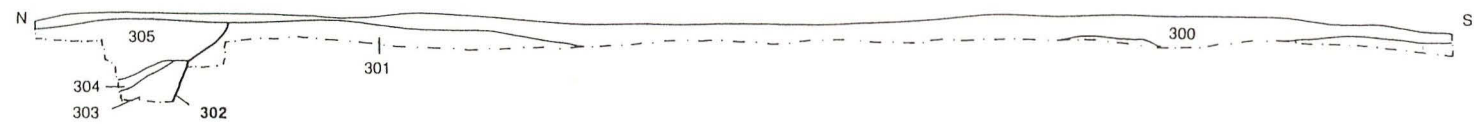


Figure 5 - Trench 03 Section and Plan



Pl. 1 Trench 01, looking N. Scales 1m.

Pl. 2 Trench 02, looking S. Scales 1m.





PI. 3 Feature 203, looking E. Scales 1m.

PI. 4 Trench 03, looking N. Scales 1m.





Pl. 5 Pond 302, looking SW. Scales 1m.

Pl. 6 Medieval Pond Earthwork, looking W towards excavations.

