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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

## **Branston Mains Relay**

**Branston and Washingborough Replacement Mains**

*NGR: TF 023 674 and TF 020 707*

*Site Code: WBM 99*

*LCNCC Museum Accn. No.: 193.99*

TF 0181 7077

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report prepared for**

**Anglian Water Services Ltd**

**by G. Tann**

**LAS Report No. 418**

**May 2000**

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**Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Summary**

*Monitoring of trenches for a new main found few archaeological deposits or features. To the south of Branston Church, a 14m wide feature was identified. This might represent a backfilled watercourse or possibly a boundary ditch associated with a medieval manorial site. In Main Road, Washingborough, the road was found to be based on peat. This suggests that the road may not be early in date, unless the Roman Car Dyke canal had already produced tractable land off the limestone at the fen edge.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd in August 1999 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during directional drilling and excavation of pipe trenches for a replacement water main in the parishes of Washingborough and Branston (Fig. 1). Monitoring of specific sections had been requested by the County Archaeological Officer in a letter to the Conservation Section of Anglian Water Services Ltd, dated 29th July 1999. Intermittent monitoring by Claire Angus, Wendy Booth, Sue Farr, Naomi Field and Geoff Tann took place between 11th August 1999 and 24th March 2000; 40 monitoring visits were made.

**Archaeological Background**

Monitoring was requested at seven locations within the scheme:

1. Branston, Lincoln Road. West of Ashfield Cottage Farm, a Roman and medieval site is recorded close to the road.
2. Branston, Church Road, around All Saints' Church which contains medieval fabric. Here there was the potential for medieval settlement remains and possibly burials.
3. Branston, Station Road, north of Branston Community College. Anglo-Saxon material, including a spearhead, possibly from a cemetery, was found in the field 60m east of the trench position in 1958.
4. Washingborough, Lincoln Road and Main Road, from the Car Dyke Roman canal (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) to west of Ferry Lane. Monitoring of this section was to ensure that no damage was caused to the Car Dyke monument, and to record any visible remains within the present village.
5. Washingborough, Lincoln Road, near the railway bridge, close to where Anglo-Saxon remains have been recorded

6. Washingborough, High Street, around the restored medieval cross (a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Monitoring at this location was to ensure that no damage was caused to the monument or within its 1m management area.

7. Washingborough, Canwick Road, south of Washingborough village (between the railway bridge and Church Hill)

## **The Watching Brief**

### **Method**

An intermittent watching brief was maintained, with visits timed to observe most or all sections of excavated trench within the specified sections. Observation numbers were assigned by LAS for recording purposes, using the order of specified sections described above. The trenches and access pits were usually too narrow for access, and recording was undertaken from the surface.

### **Branston**

#### **Lincoln Road**

**1a.** Trenching was monitored along the southern edge of Lincoln Road, from 100m east of the track to Ashfield Cottage Farm, to the western end of the new main. 150m west of that track, a possible ditch was observed in the trench sides, aligned approximately north-south. The 2m wide feature had been cut through dense limestone, and backfilled with light brown clay loam with stones. Its base was deeper than the 1m deep trench.

**1b.** Outside 219 Lincoln Road, 80m west of **1a**, a 2.5m wide similar disturbance to the bedrock was seen.

**1c.** As far west as 227 Lincoln Road, the trench encountered bedrock at between 0.6m and 0.5m below the road surface, rising slightly to the west. To the west of this, the limestone became more broken, with brash mixed with clay. No further anomalies were seen.

#### **Church Road**

**2a.** Alongside the NE edge of the churchyard, the trench cut through very mixed deposits of soil and limestone rubble, which extended beneath the trench base (PI. 1). The material was not uniform, and may have been the fill of a large feature or of several intercutting features, possibly stone quarries. There is a small possibility that the disturbed material was more recent, and filled a broad existing service trench.

**2b.** To the west of Orchard Wall, the disturbance recorded to the north was no longer present, and modern road surface was separated from apparently undisturbed limestone rubble and brown clay loam by no more than 0.2m of foundation material.



**2c.** On the eastern edge of the road, at the northern edge of 21 Church Road, the modern road was also separated from limestone bedrock by 0.2m of soil and rubble. No observations between **2b** and this point suggested the presence of ground disturbed other than by service trenches.

**2d.** From **2c**, the ground had been disturbed to a depth lower than the trench base (0.9m below the surface) by a 14m wide feature, apparently aligned NW-SE or north-south (Pl. 2). The sides seemed to be steeply sloping (Pl. 3). The fill contained a high proportion of dark brown clay loam, with some limestone rubble, but nothing dateable was seen other than brick and tile fragments in the top fill (Pl. 4).

This feature was interpreted as a backfilled watercourse or broad ditch. The road here is at about 39m OD, in a depression between higher ground at the church to the north, and the junction with Hall Lane to the south. It was noted that the feature shared a common alignment with the boundary wall of the Hainton House property to the SW of the church (Pls. 5 and 6). The boundary wall forms one side of a narrow lane which leads to Rectory Lane.

The position of Hainton House, 25m west of the church, suggests that it could represent a medieval manorial site. If this were so, the large feature could be a backfilled medieval moat, although the height of the site and the limestone bedrock shed doubt on this.

#### **Station Road**

**3.** In Station Road, immediately north of Branston Community College, the road is raised relative to the fields to either side, as is the track to Grange Barn (Pl. 7). Within the road, the trench exposed 0.3m of tarmac over 0.2m of limestone rubble. A 0.15m thick, mixed layer of clay and rubble beneath this covered a red/brown loam (Pl. 8). It is probable that much of the visible material has been introduced to create a raised road across a depression. The original ground level may have been close to the trench base (1.05m deep), and any archaeological features present here may not have been disturbed by this scheme.

#### **Washingborough**

##### **Main Road**

**4a.** West of High Street, the trench was laid close to the centre of Main Road (Pl. 9). The tarmac surface here was particularly thick, covering an equally thick layer of crushed limestone and limestone rubble (Pl. 10). The limestone layer was not of uniform thickness, and sealed a dark brown silty soil which was interpreted as a peat deposit (Pl. 11). The road has been constructed on peat, and considerable thicknesses of rubble have been needed to produce a solid foundation. As this road skirts the edge of the historic settlement core (which is on the higher ground to the south), it could represent a late medieval or post-medieval 'bypass'. Drainage of this part of the fen was very late, in about the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century. The road was certainly

developed by the early nineteenth century when the Ordnance Survey *First Edition One Inch* map was prepared. The position of an earlier road alignment on the limestone has not been identified.

**4b.** On the north side of Main Road in front of No. 6, the trench cut across some form of stone culvert beneath the main road (Pls. 12 and 13). It was difficult to establish its shape as the machine had dislodged the stones, but it appeared to have had a broad curving cover resting on a wall of stone rubble (Pls. 14 and 15). No. 6 has a date stone inscribed 1863, and the culvert could either have drained its site before it was developed, or have been built with the house. The presence of brick rubble in the hardcore around the culvert implies that the culvert is probably no earlier than the eighteenth century, and it is possible that the brick rubble and culvert were laid together as part of an extensive road improvement which raised the road surface by about 0.5m.

**4c.** Less peat was evident within the trench base to the west of No. 6, but it was unclear if this was because of firmer ground or thicker road foundation rubble (Pls. 16 and 17).

**4d.** Further fragments of brick rubble were seen up to 0.8m below the modern road surface, north of No. 2, Main Street. This suggested that the road had been considerably raised during the post-medieval period.

**4e.** Opposite Washingborough Methodist Church, the thickness of the modern road and its bedding was markedly thinner than to the east, and rested on a sandier brown loam.

**4f.** Across the road from 14, Lincoln Road (50m west of Ferry Lane) the tarmac and road foundation lay on a 0.5m thick layer of orange/brown silty sand with infrequent small limestone fragments. Beneath this was a layer of grey silty clay (at least 0.2m thick), with veins of orange/brown silty sand. The lower material may represent a peat horizon, with late prehistoric alluvium filling cracks in its dried surface. The lower layer at this location is at about 6m OD and may be about the furthest south that the peat extends; 30m to the south, the ground is about 1m higher.

**5.** 50m east of the railway bridge, the road and its foundation were 1.2m thick. Beneath this was a light sandy layer, extending below the trench base. There was no trace of peat in this trench; but the 'sand' could be alluvium covering the lower peat layer.

### **High Street**

**6a.** On the east side of High Street, opposite the cross, the trench was excavated alongside existing backfilled service trenches (Pl. 18). Where a small area of less recently disturbed ground was visible, a layer of limestone rubble (which may have been a post-medieval road surface) was seen under the modern road bedding. Beneath the rubble was light brown clay.

6b. A connection was made between the trench in High Street and the properties to the south and west of the cross. A narrow open trench was excavated across the grassed area south of the cross, cutting through stone rubble but no recognisable archaeological features (Pls. 19 and 20).

### **Canwick Road**

7. The trench between Mill Road and the road from Washingborough to Branston was inspected. The foundation for Canwick Road is about 0.6m thick, overlying a red/brown clay loam. Loose limestone was seen 1m below the surface, 100m east of Stone Pit Houses. A former stone quarry was sited to the south of the houses, but undulations in the pasture field north of Heath Farm may indicate further minor workings. The absence of stone near the surface under the road could be evidence of quarrying, but a localised variation in the bedrock is more likely.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the close proximity of known archaeological features to the monitored sections of this scheme, no archaeological remains were found other than post-medieval road surfaces and drains. The watching brief found that much of the monitored ground had been considerably disturbed in the past when existing services had been installed.

The most significant result of this project was to identify a former peat layer below Main Road, Washingborough. It is unlikely that an early medieval road linking the fen-edge settlements would have been sited on the fen itself; a route along the edge of the limestone would be much more probable. No obvious alternative position for an east-west road has been identified. One possibility is that the Roman Car Dyke produced such improved local drainage that a road was feasible along its landward side by the medieval period.

In Branston, the 14m wide backfilled feature south of the church was of interest, but too little information could be obtained to allow useful discussion. Future development in this vicinity might provide an opportunity to identify its age and function.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS is grateful to Anglian Water Services Ltd (especially Matthew Vickers) and their contractors Morrisons, for their co-operation during the monitoring project. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid, and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
22nd May 2000

## **Archive Summary**

Anglian Water Services plans

Annotated copies of AWS plans

Photographs (colour prints, LAS film nos. 99/136/1-5,23-36; 99/138/22-25; 99/143/5-10; 99/150/0-7, 16-19; 99/155/34-37; 99/164/1-8; 00/12/1-4; including those used in this report)

Correspondence

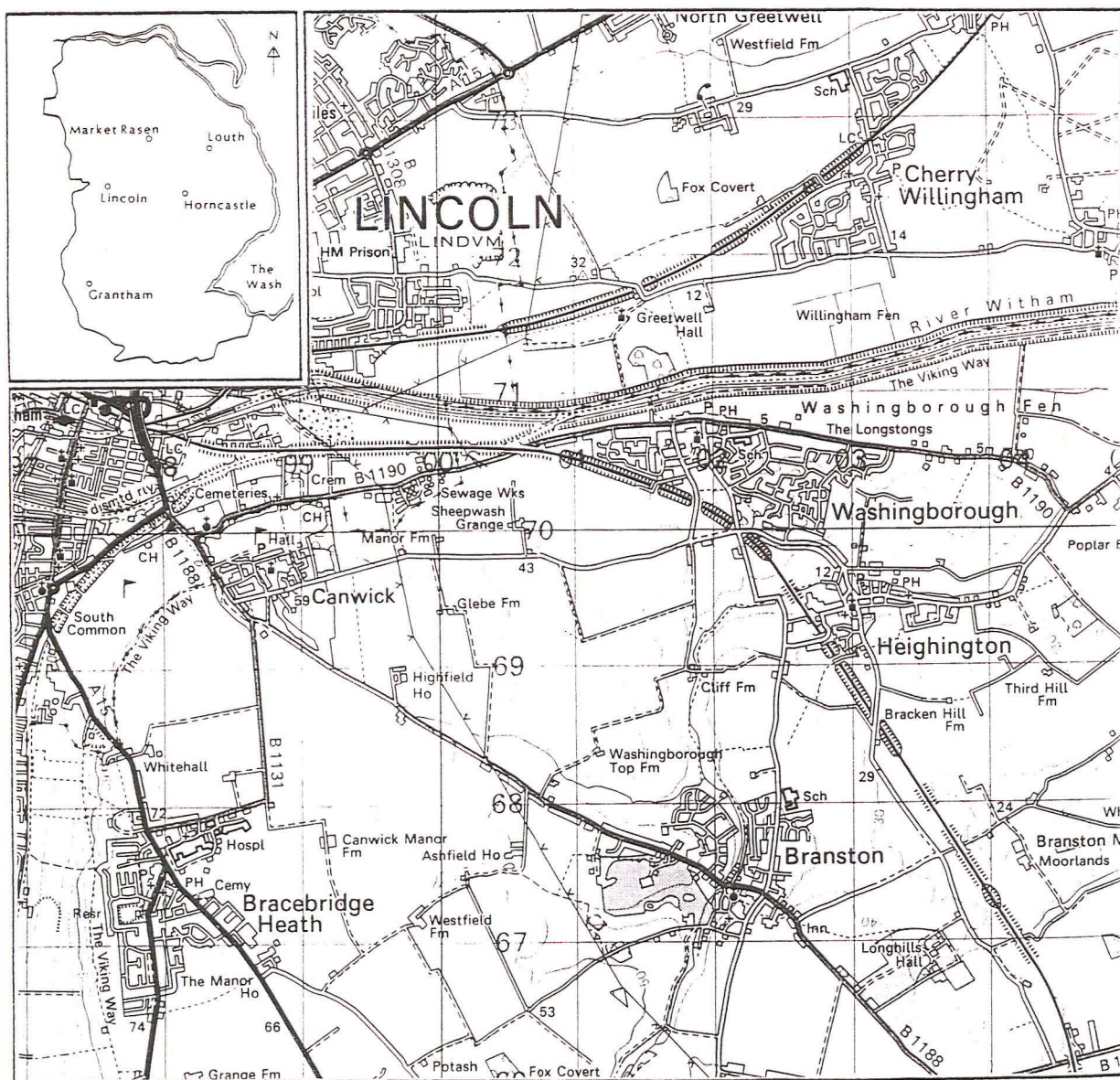
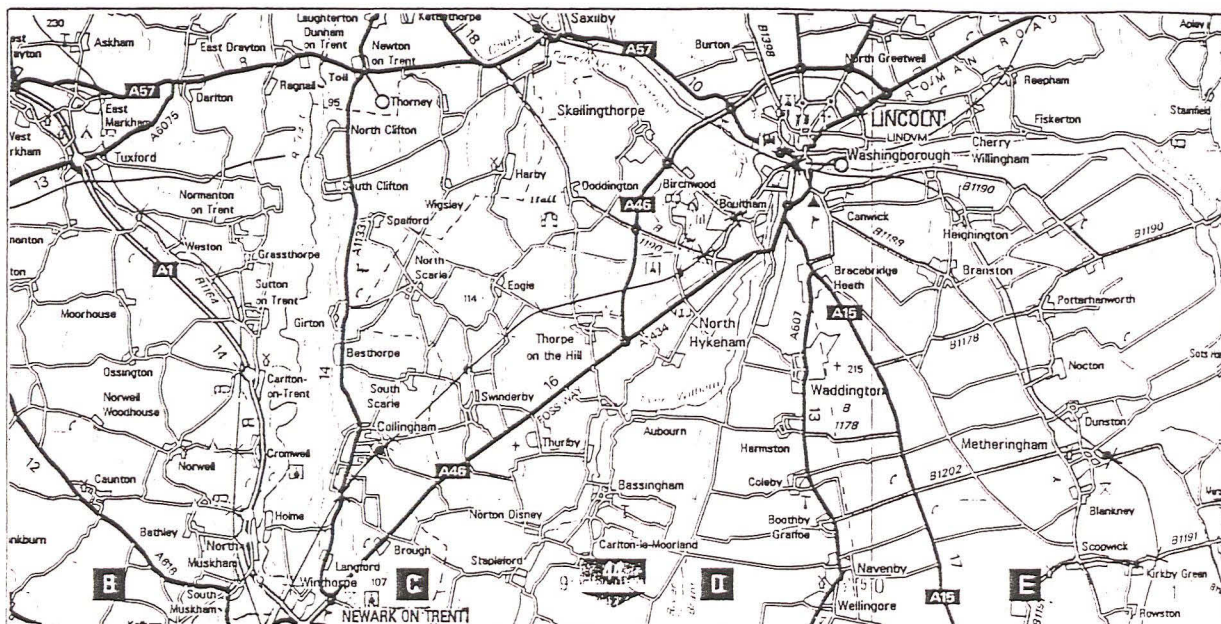


Fig. 1 Location of Branston and Washingborough (C based on the 1989 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map, Sheet 121. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

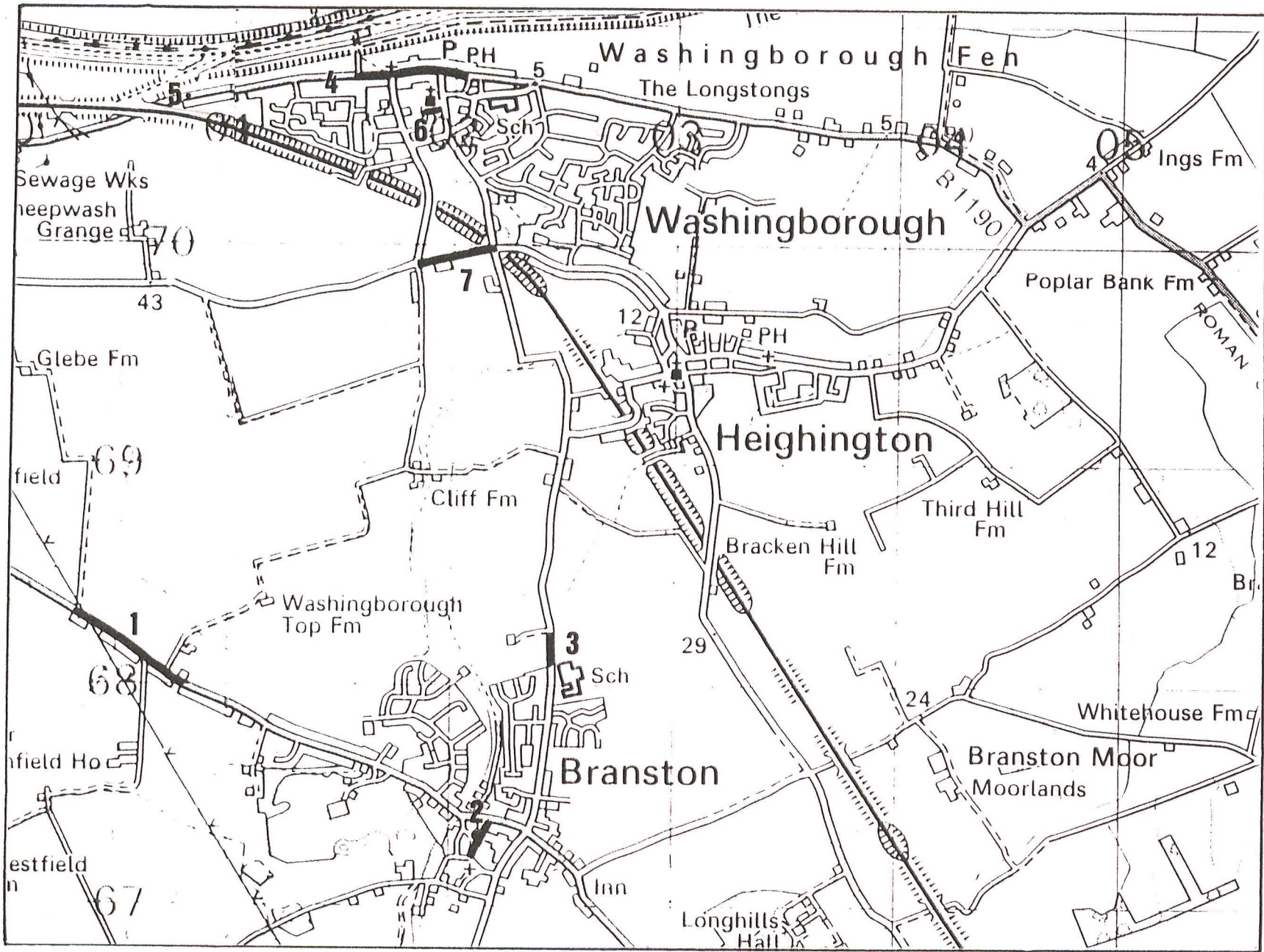


Fig. 2 Monitored sections of the scheme (based on the 1989 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map, Sheet 121. © Crown Copyright, reproduced, at enlarged scale, with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

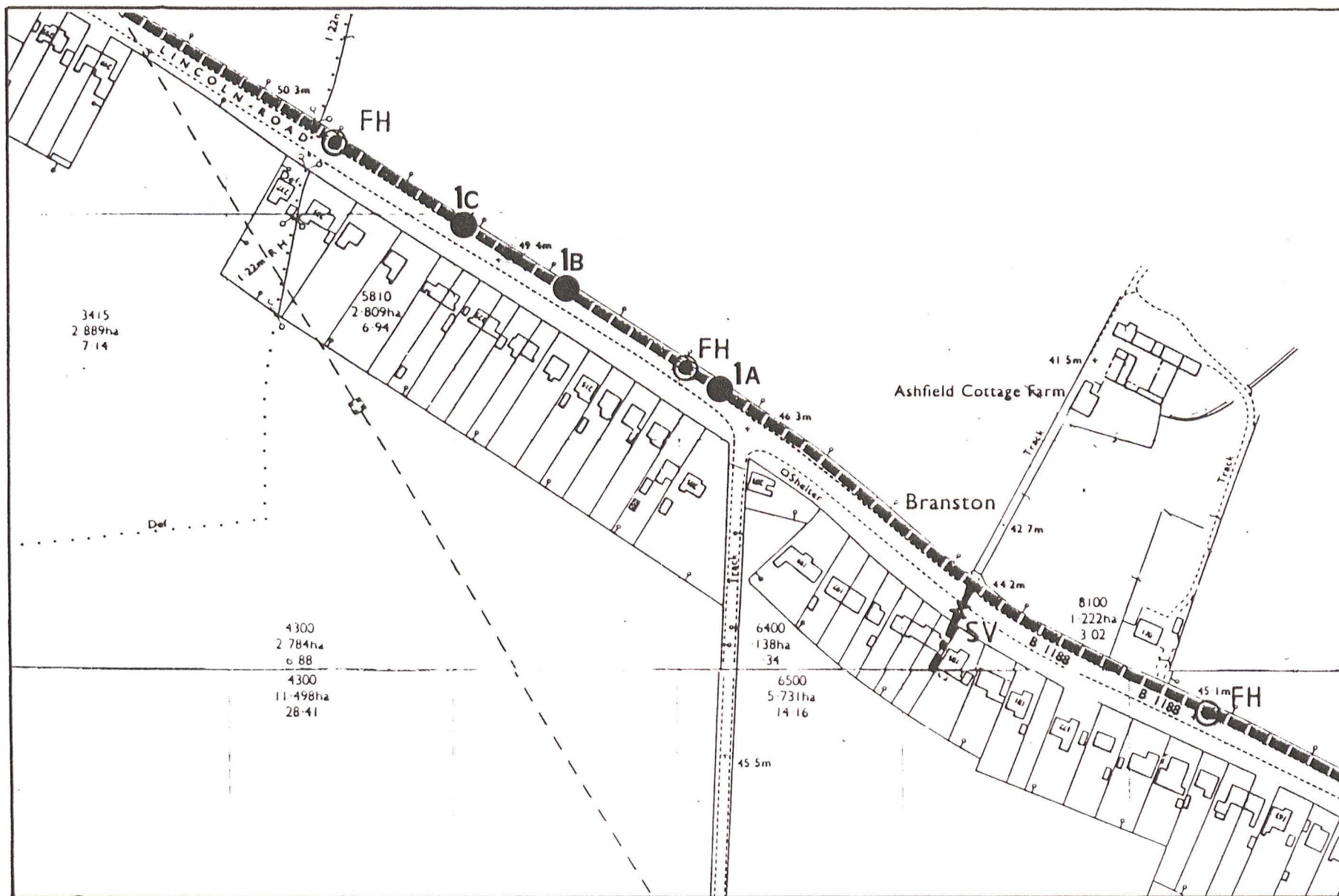


Fig. 3 Observations in Area 1 (Lincoln Road, Branston). Based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/3 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

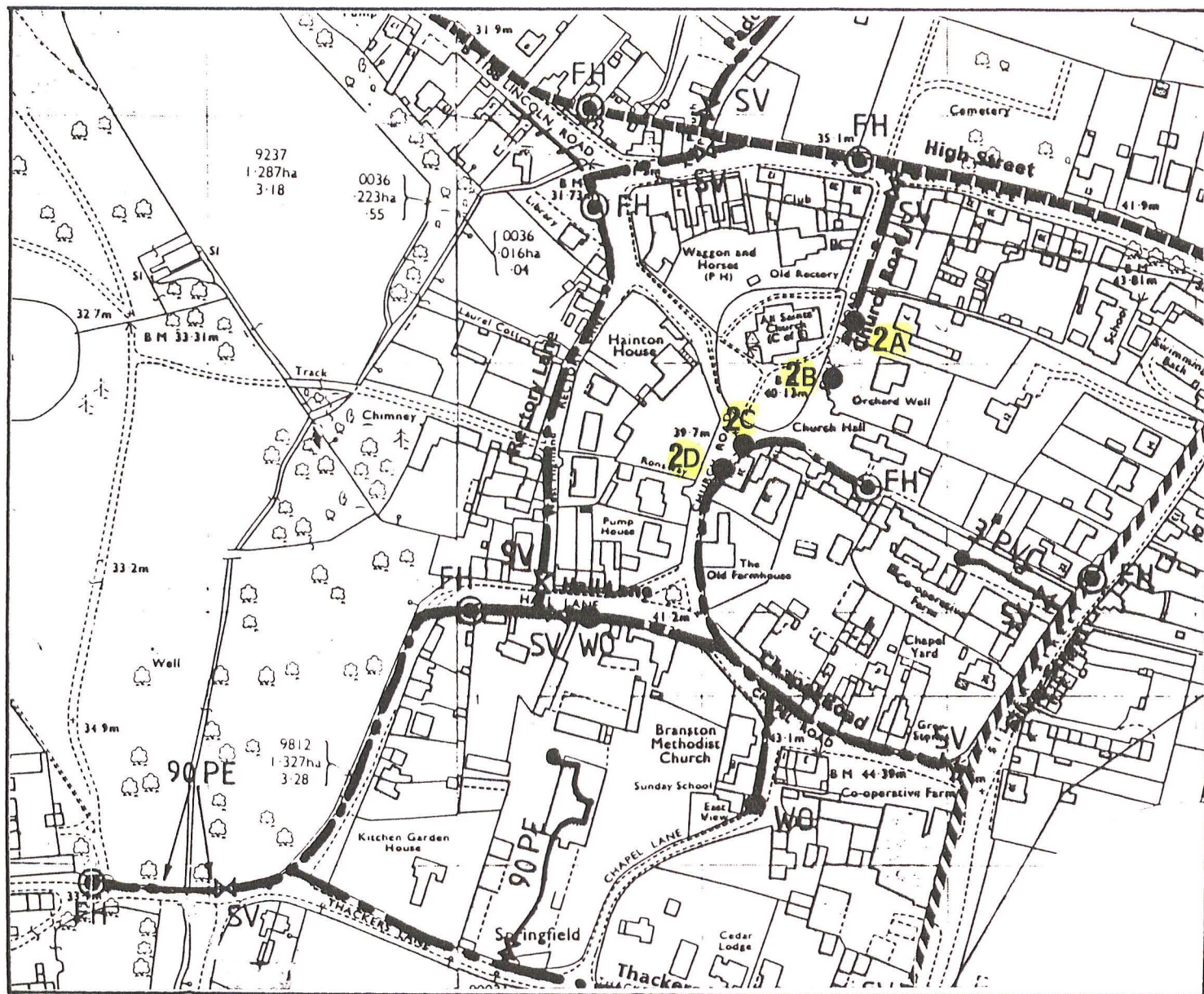


Fig. 4 Observations in Area 2, Church Road, Branston (based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/3 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



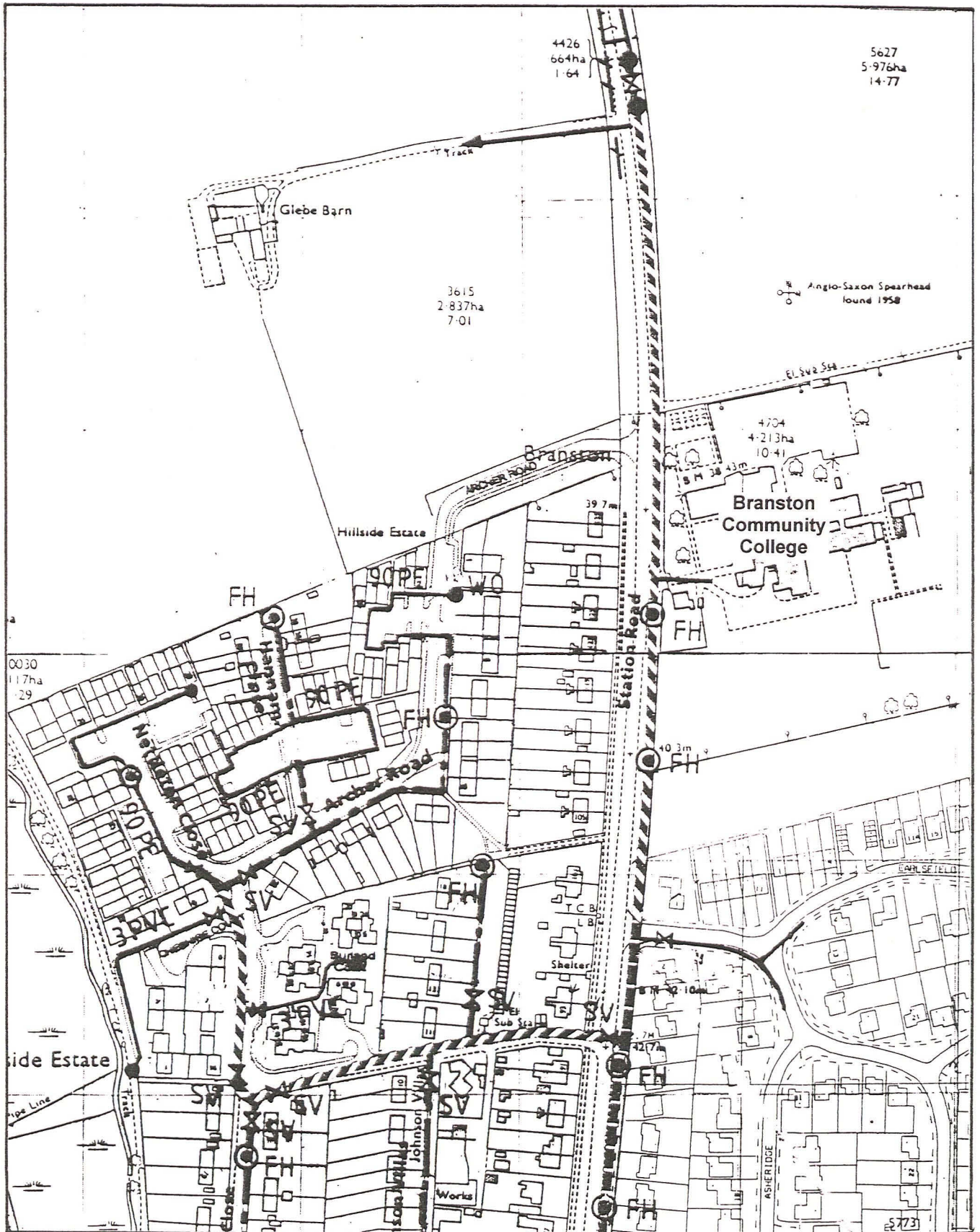


Fig. 5 Observations in Area 3, Station Road, Branston (based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/3 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

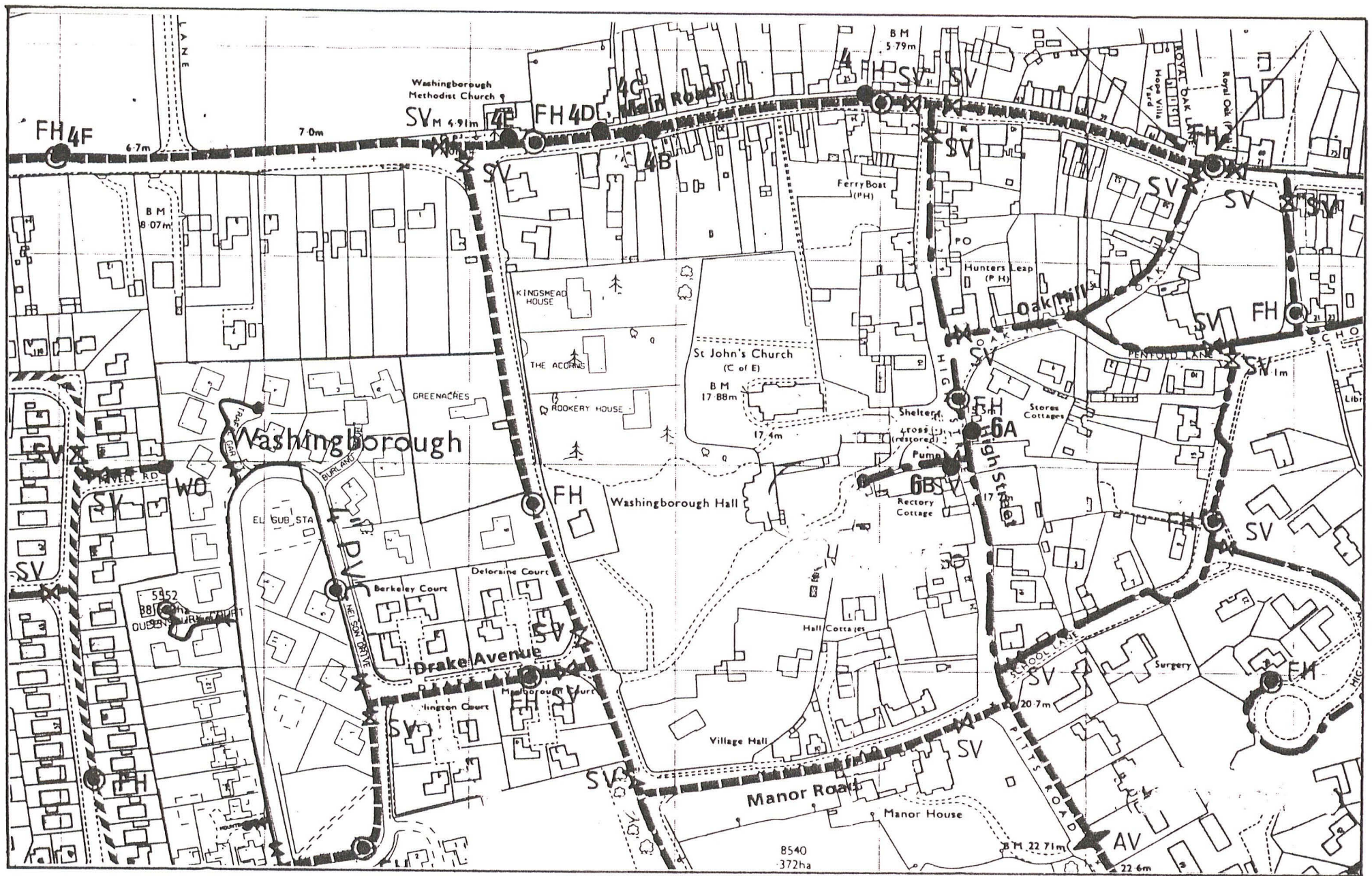


Fig. 6 Observations in Areas 4 (Lincoln Road/Main Road) and 6, (Washingborough). Based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/2 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

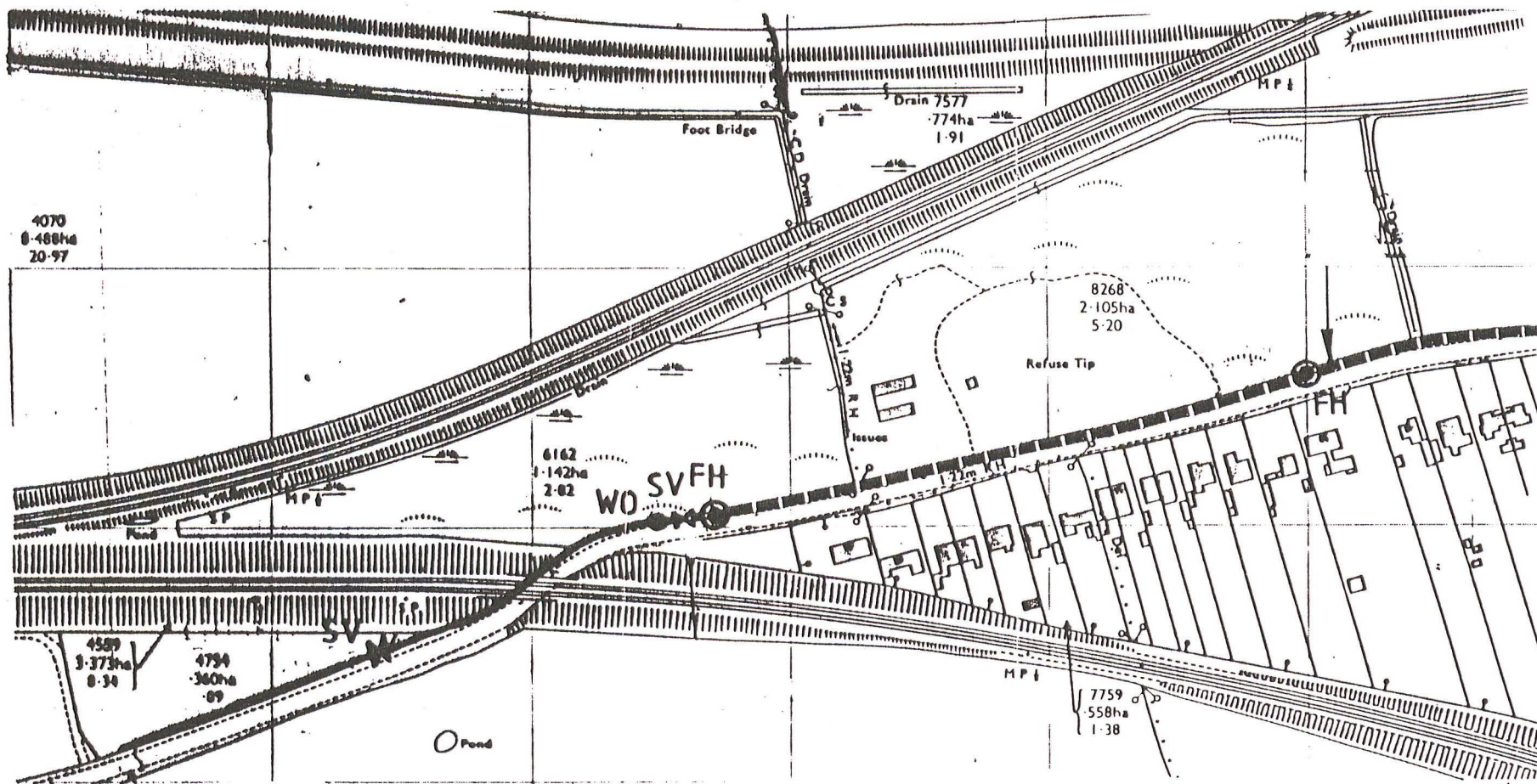


Fig. 7 Observations in Area 5, Lincoln Road, Washingborough (based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/2 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).

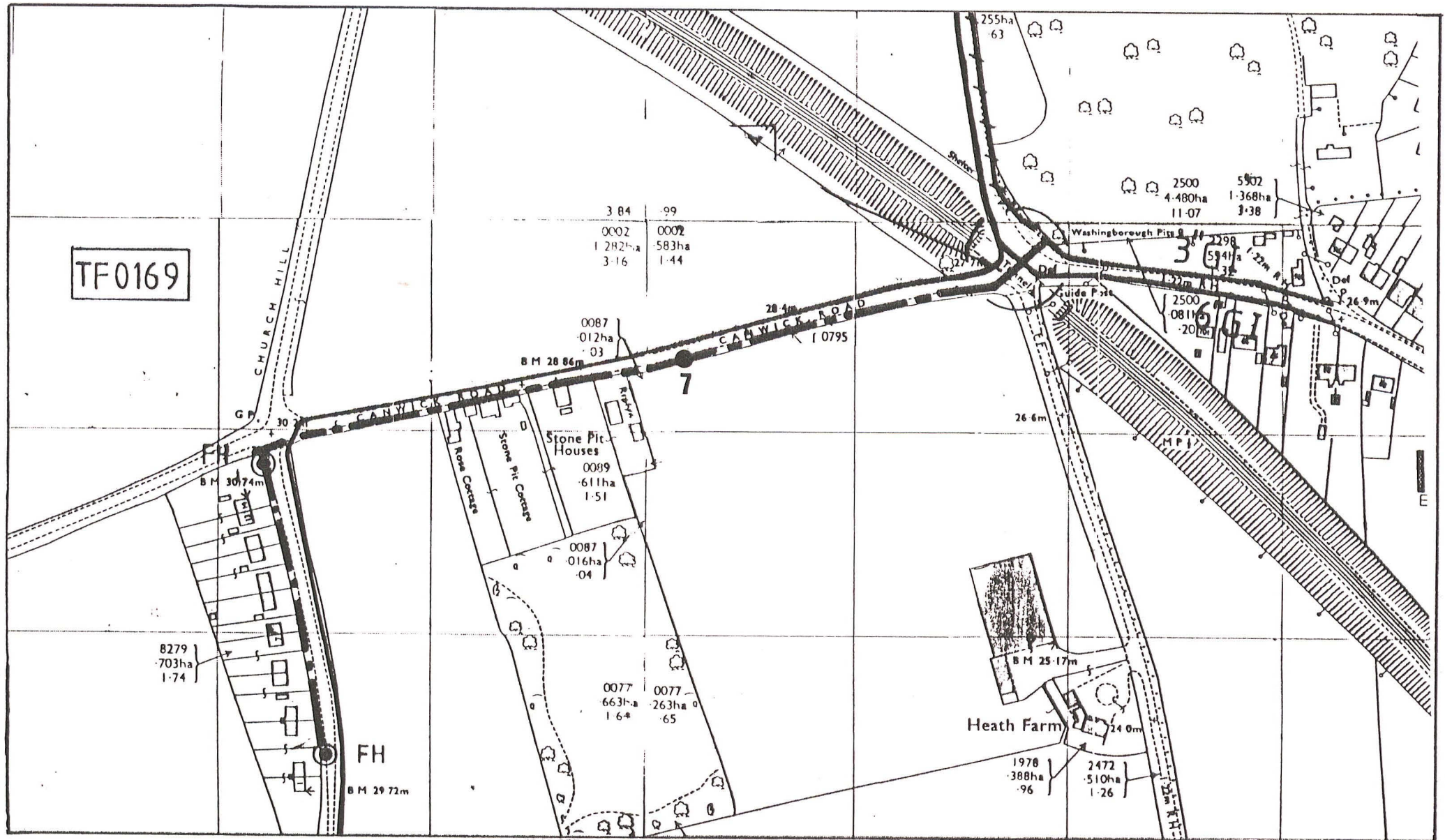


Fig. 8 Observations in Area 7, Canwick Road, Washingborough (based on the 1:2,500 plan dwg. no. WAT 02472/2 supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



Pl. 19 Location of trench 6a, in the verge beside High Street, Washingborough (looking west).

Pl. 20 Limestone rubble in trench 6a, close to the Washingborough medieval cross base (scale 1m).





Pl. 17 Road foundation deposits at 4c.

Pl. 18 Trenching at 6a, opposite the medieval cross base, High Street, Washingborough (looking south).





Pl. 15 Remains of stone culvert 4b, looking north.

Pl. 16 Location of 4c, Main Road, Washingborough (looking west).





Pl. 13 The stone culvert 4b was aligned towards No. 6, Main Road (looking north).

Pl. 14 Remains of stone culvert 4b, looking south.







Pl. 11 Thinner road foundation over peat at 4a.

Pl. 12 Location of 4b, Main Road, Washingborough (looking east).





Pl. 9 Location of 4a, Main Road, Washingborough (looking east, with High Street to the right).

Pl. 10 Thick limestone rubble road foundation at 4a, overlying peaty material at the trench base.





Pl. 7 Location of the monitored trench 3, Station Road, Branston (looking north from the college entrance).

Pl. 8 Thick layer of limestone road foundation at 3, with light brown buried soil at the trench base.





Pl. 5 Location of 2d, looking NW along its alignment. Hainton House lies beyond the wall to the left, with the church in the centre, top.

Pl. 6 Location of 2d, looking SE along its alignment.





Pl. 4 Dark soil fill of 2d.



**Pl. 3** Detail of the southern edge of the broad feature 2d, Church Road, Branston. The dark fill is to the right, with apparently undisturbed bedrock to the left.



PI. 2 Limestone in the trench end marking the southern edge of the broad feature 2d, Church Road, Branston.



Pl. 1 Disturbed deposits 2a, possibly from backfilled stone quarries, in the trench face opposite All Saints' Church, Branston (looking SW).



