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**Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief  
on land off  
Roman Bank, Gedney Dyke, Lincolnshire**

**Planning Application Reference: H06/1057/98**

**NGR TF 4142 2612 (Site Centre)**

produced by

***John Samuels Archaeological Consultants***

on behalf of

**M. Parker and Sons Ltd.**  
St Johns Road  
Spalding  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 1JX

**Site Code: RWG99**  
**Accession No. 157.99**

***JSAC 502/00/03***

**May 2000**

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained during ground works associated with the construction of fourteen domestic dwellings and a new service road on land off Roman Bank, Gedney Dyke, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out on behalf of M. Parker & Sons Ltd., Spalding by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants.*

*The location of the development, alongside the late Saxon/medieval 'Roman Bank', suggested that remains dating from this period or earlier may be encountered during development. For this reason, the Archaeological Officer (Lincolnshire County Council) requested that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during groundworks associated with the development.*

*No archaeological remains were encountered during groundworks associated with the development. Deposits representing naturally deposited silts sealed by a layer of topsoil were recorded. Modern disturbance associated with the former Anvil Public House which previously occupied the site was also recorded. It is considered likely that if any remains related to the Roman Bank existed within the site, then these will have been removed by post-medieval construction on the site.*



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Site location and Description

- 1.1.1 Gedney Dyke is situated in the administrative district of South Holland approximately 2.4km to the northeast of Gedney and 3.5km to the northwest of Long Sutton (Figure 1). The site is centred on NGR TF 4142 2612 and comprises approximately 1.17ha of rough pasture land (Figure 2 & Plate 1).
- 1.1.2 The site lies to the east of the village and is located to the south of the course of the 'Roman Bank'. The land is level and low-lying, at approximately 4.3m above Ordnance Datum and on a level with the road known as 'Roman Bank'.
- 1.1.3 Local soils at the site are Wisbech Association comprising marine alluvium which gives rise to deep stoneless calcareous loose silty soils (Soil Surveys of England Wales, 1983).

### 1.2 Planning and Project Background

- 1.2.1 M. Parker & Sons Ltd. were granted planning permission by South Holland District Council subject to certain conditions. Condition 11 of the permission, to which this document refers, states: '*Arrangements shall be made for an Archaeological Watching Brief or evaluation in respect of the site in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development is commenced*'.
- 1.2.2 M. Parker & Sons Ltd commissioned *John Samuels Archaeological Consultants* to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of fourteen domestic dwellings and an associated service road on land at Roman Bank, Gedney Dyke, Lincolnshire. A specification for the watching brief attached to these works was produced and approved by South Holland District Council (JSAC 502/99/01).
- 1.2.3 This document forms a report on the watching brief undertaken on behalf of M. Parker & Sons Ltd. It has been written by Jenny Young BA in consultation with John Samuels BA, PhD, FSA, MIFA. It conforms to 'Archaeology and Planning' *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, and is in accordance with current best archaeological practice, and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, including:

*Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991);

*Code of Conduct* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1997);

*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

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*Archaeological Handbook (Lincolnshire County Council, 1998)*



## **2.0 Archaeological and historical background**

- 2.1 Gedney Dyke lies in the civil parish of Gedney between Holbeach and Kings Lynn. The area is rich in archaeological remains of all periods with particular emphasis on saltmaking although little excavation has taken place. It was considered possible that remains dating from the late Saxon and medieval periods were likely to be encountered within the application area.
- 2.2 Gedney Dyke evolved along the course of the late Saxon/medieval sea defence known as 'Roman Bank' (Phillips 1970). The site lies to the immediate south of the course of 'Roman Bank'.
- 2.3 The Domesday Survey of 1086 lists Gedney within the Wapentake of Elloe in the district of Holland (Foster & Longley 1976). The King and Count Alan are listed as owners of the manor which comprised arable land along with a fishery and meadow. By the thirteenth century, a manor existed under Lord Ralph of Goxhill (Platts 1985).
- 2.4 Archaeological remains dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have been recorded from Gedney Dyke. These comprise mounds of waste from salt-making which was once an extensive industry in this area (Pevsner & Harris 1989). It was therefore considered likely that such remains may exist within the application area.

### **3.0 Methodology**

- 3.1 A specification for the watching brief (JSAC 502/99/01) was submitted to and approved by the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire. The watching brief was undertaken with the specific objective of establishing whether any archaeological remains were present within the site, and if so, to identify, record, and determine their significance.
- 3.2 Site visits were made by qualified archaeological staff to monitor all stages of groundworks associated with the development. Any deposits revealed were recorded in accordance with an adopted version of the MOLAS recording system. Photographs were taken before and during development.



## 4.0 Results

- 4.1 The archaeological watching brief recorded no archaeological deposits, features or artefacts. A layer of topsoil and grass was recorded across the site sealing natural deposits and modern disturbance. Groundworks were undertaken in sequence as outlined below.
- 4.2 *Foul drain and water drainage excavation*
- 4.2.1 Excavation of the foul drains recorded a 0.25m thick layer of dark brown sandy silt comprising topsoil (100). At the northern end of the foul drain trench (F1 - Figure 2), grass and topsoil sealed an area of modern disturbance which was only partially revealed in section and was recorded to a depth of 1m below the present ground surface. Modern disturbance was represented by brick and domestic rubbish (broken bottles and plastic) (Plate 2) and is thought to be representative of the demolition of the Anvil Public House which had previously occupied that part of the site. Similar disturbance was also recorded within plot 1.
- 4.2.2 Topsoil (100) sealed a 0.4m thick layer of subsoil (101) comprising a mid orange brown sandy silt. Below this a layer of dark orange brown sandy silt (102), which became more clayey with depth, was recorded.
- 4.2.3 The foul drains were excavated to a depth of 1.8m with water seepage into the trenches occurring at 1.7m below the present ground surface. Excavation of the water drainage trench extended as far as 1.3m below the present ground surface (Plate 3).
- 4.3 *Road excavation*
- 4.3.1 Excavation for the road recorded no archaeological deposits. Topsoil (100) was removed to a depth of 0.35m below the present ground surface, to reveal the subsoil (101) (Plate 4).
- 4.4 *Excavation of house footings*
- 4.4.1 The turf was stripped across each individual house plot and trenches for the footings of each building were then excavated. In general, a 0.2m thick layer of topsoil and turf sealed subsoil (101). The earliest deposit encountered comprised naturally formed deposit (102) which continued further than the limits of excavation. No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were revealed during excavation of the house footings. However, once the turf was removed for plot 1, two pits containing modern building debris and domestic rubbish were recorded cutting through the remaining topsoil (Figures 3 & 4). This material was of the same nature as those recorded during excavation of the foul drains (F1).
- 4.4.2 The house footings were excavated to a varying width between 0.6m - 1.2m and also varied by depth. Plots 2 - 4 were excavated to a depth of 0.5m, plots 5 - 7 to a depth of 0.3m, plots 8 - 13 to a depth of 0.6m, and plots 1 and 14 to a depth of 1m (Figure 5).

## **5.0 Discussion and conclusions**

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief recorded modern disturbance and naturally formed deposits. No archaeological artefacts, features or deposits were encountered during monitoring and recording of groundworks on the site.
- 5.2 The earliest deposit recorded comprised a dark orange brown sandy silt which became more clayey at depth and is thought to be representative of soils (marine alluvium) as described by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983). Sealing this layer, a deposit of mid orange brown sandy silt was recorded and is representative of subsoil encountered across the site. The most recent soil deposition on the site is represented by topsoil and turf which seals the subsoil.
- 5.3 The only human activity recorded on the site is represented by modern disturbance, probably associated with former buildings on the northern part of the site. The disturbance was recorded within the footings for Plot 1 and foul drain trench excavation (F1). A spread of building debris and rubbish, along with pits containing the same material, were recorded and indicate site usage during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such disturbance bears no association to the Sea Bank but is considered to be related to the demolition of standing buildings on the site.
- 5.4 It is considered likely that if the Sea Bank existed within and along the frontage of the development area, then any associated remains will have been destroyed by former buildings on the site. No ditches or deposits associated with the Sea Bank were encountered during the watching brief.
- 5.5 Immediately to the north of the site and on the opposite side of the road (Roman Bank), a rise in the land was noted. Ordnance Survey maps illustrate this area as comprising small islands rising above the surrounding landscape. Given the visual prominence of the rise of the land, it is considered entirely possible that this landscape would have formed a natural boundary between the sea and land. However, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that the Sea Bank did not exist within this area.
- 5.6 In conclusion, the watching brief recorded no archaeological features or deposits associated with the Sea Bank. It is considered most likely that if the Sea Bank had existed along the frontage of the site, then any such remains will have been destroyed by post-medieval buildings constructed on the site.



## **6.0 Figures**

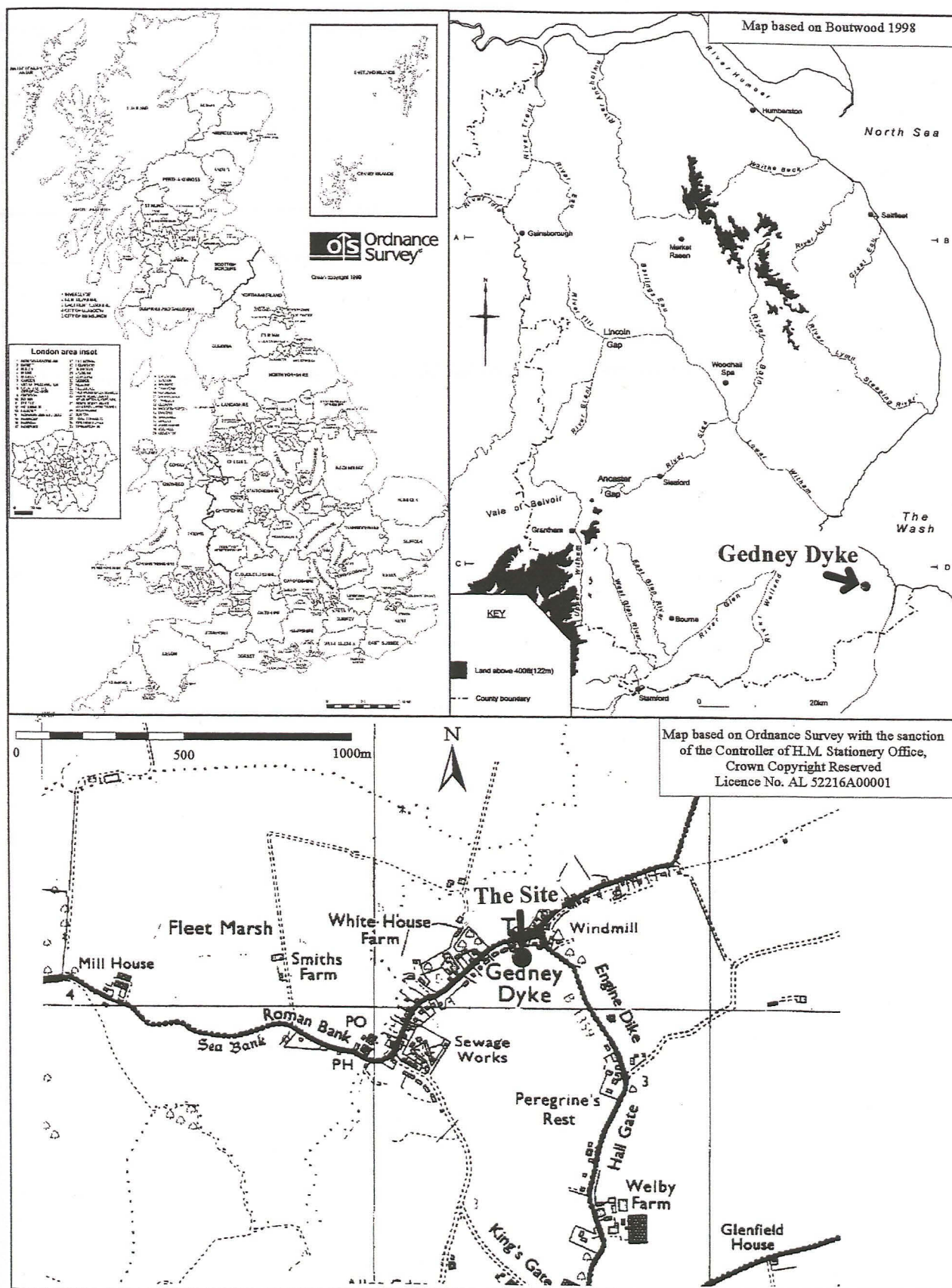
Figure 1. Site location

Figure 2. Site plan showing house plots, road and drainage layout

Figure 3. Plan of plot 1 showing the location of modern pits

Figure 4. Section drawing illustrating the profile of modern pit [104]

Figure 5. South facing section drawing illustrating the deposits encountered on site (taken from plot 14)





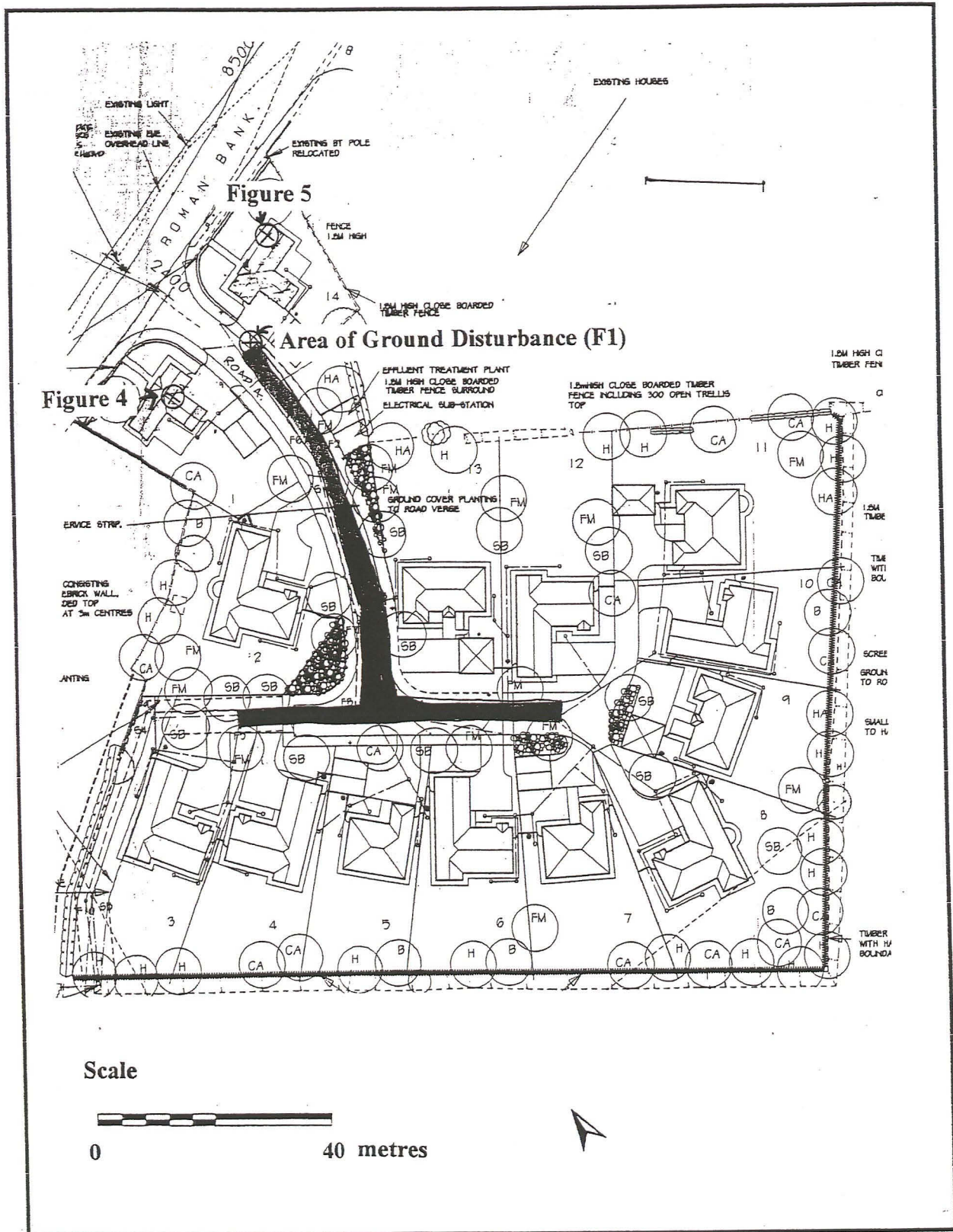


Figure 2. Site plan showing house plots, road and drainage layout

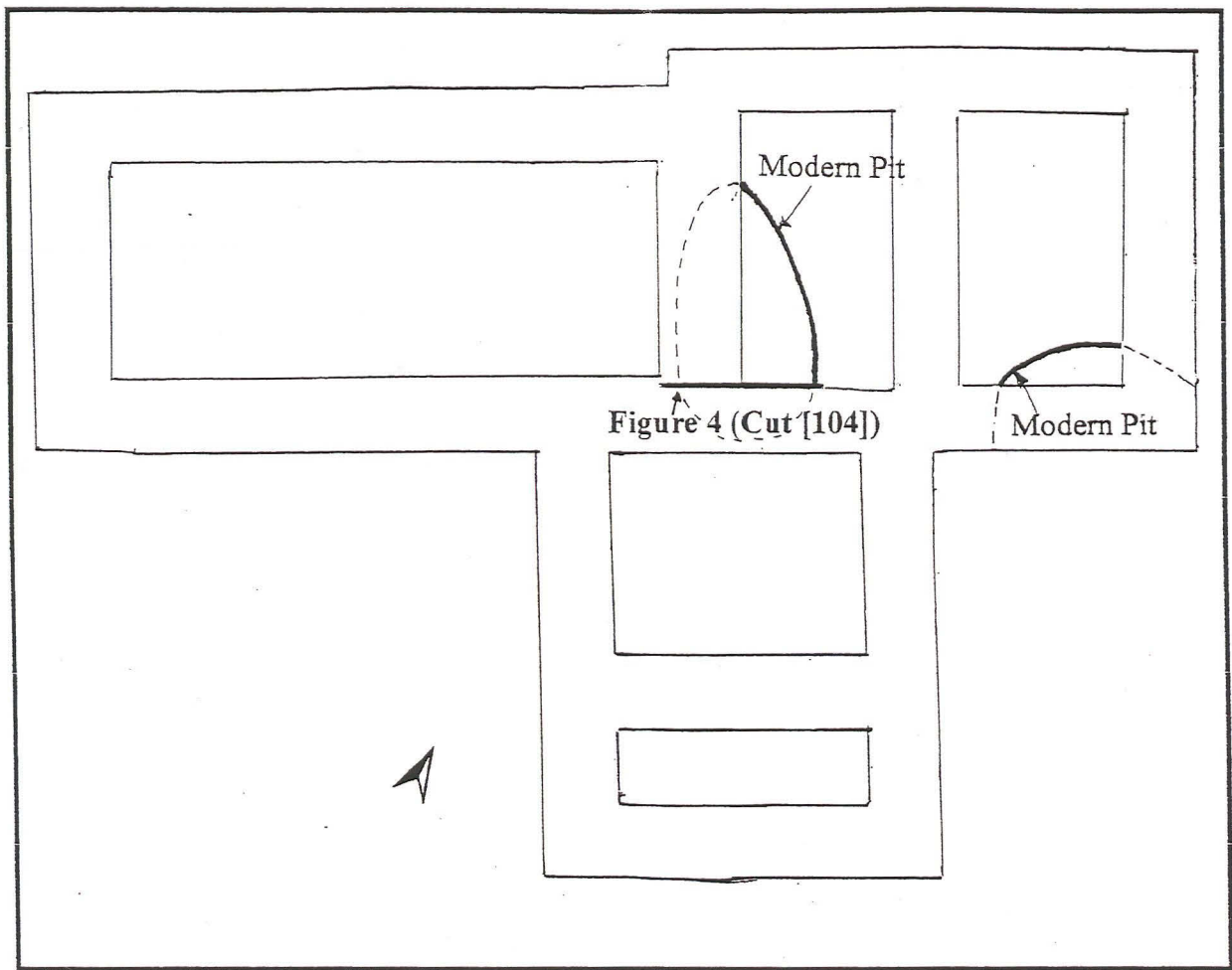


Figure 3. Plan of plot 1 showing the location of modern pits

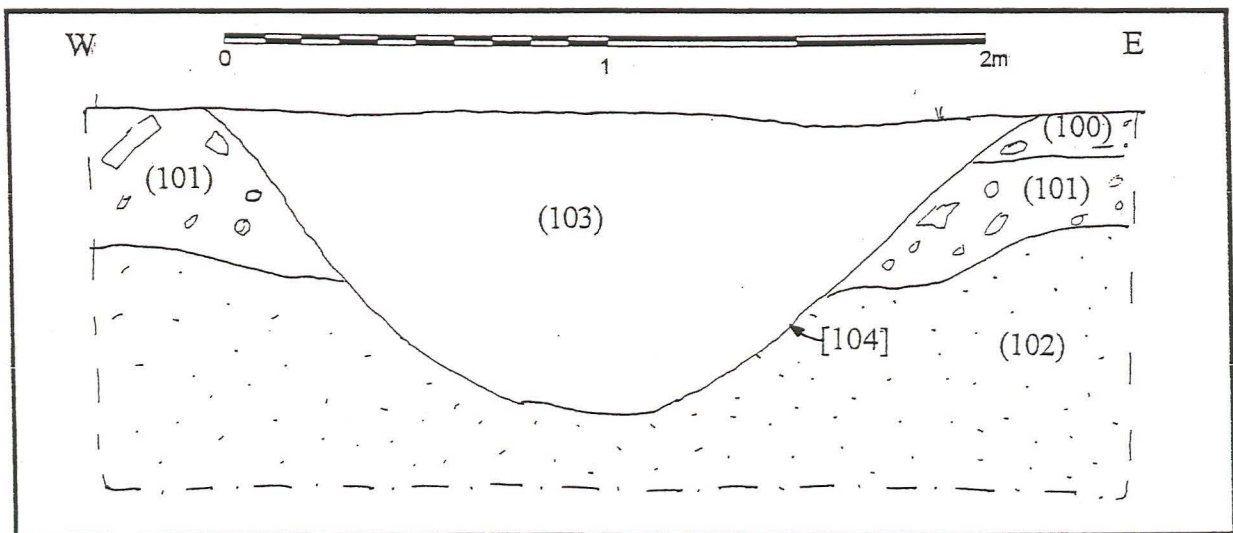
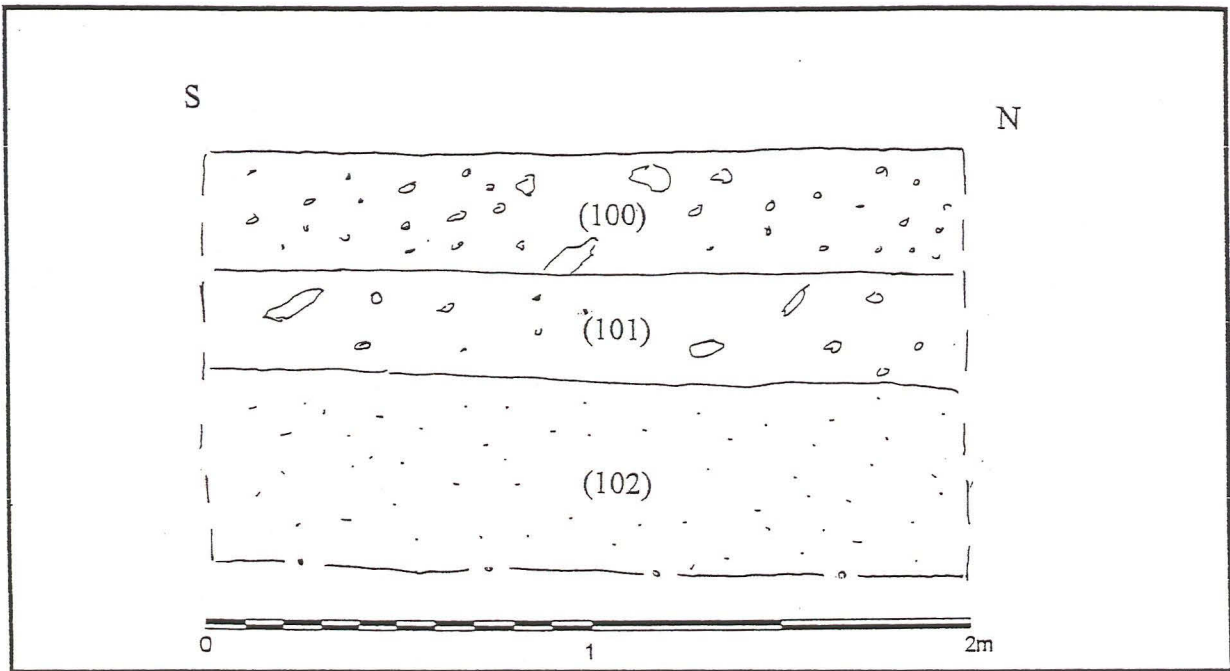


Figure 4. South facing section drawing illustrating the profile of modern pit [104]





**Figure 5. Section drawing illustrating the deposits encountered across the site (recorded during excavation of plot 14)**

**7.0 Plates**

Plate 1: General site shot, facing northeast towards Seadyke Mill

Plate 2: Excavation of storm drain, illustrating soils present on the site

Plate 3: Photograph illustrating ground disturbance and building debris at the northern end of the site

Plate 4: Excavation of the roadway, facing west





**Plate 1: General site shot, facing northeast towards Seadyke Mill**



**Plate 2: Excavation of storm drain, illustrating soils present on the site**



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**Plate 3: Photograph illustrating ground disturbance and building debris at the northern end of the site**



**Plate 4: Excavation of the roadway, facing west**



## 8.0 References and sources

Foster, C.W. & Longley, T. (1976). *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*. The Lincoln Record Society. Vol. 19.

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Phillips, C.W. (Eds). (1970). *The Fenland in Roman Times*. R.G.S Research Series: No. 5.

Platts, G. (1985). *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*. History of Lincolnshire - Volume IV.

SSEW. (1983). *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 4. Eastern England. Soil Survey of England and Wales*.

**Appendix A:**  
**Context Summary**



<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Plot</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
100	All	Dark brown sandy silt (0.25m thick)	Topsoil
101	All	Mid orange brown sandy silt	Subsoil
102	All	Dark orange brown sandy silt becoming more clayey with depth	Natural silts
103	1	Humic black silt with building rubble and debris (19th/20th century material)	Fill of [104]
104	1	Circular cut with concave sides and base (2.2m wide x 0.8m deep)	Modern pit

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