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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section

06. NOV 00

**West Street, Crowland, Lincs.**

NGR: TF 239 102

Site Code: CWSB 00

LCNCC Museum Accn. No.: 2000.160

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**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report prepared for**

**Lincolnshire Development  
(Lincolnshire County Council)**

**by G. Tann**

**LAS Report No. 474**

**October 2000**

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**Crowland, Lincs.**  
**West Street and Environs**  
**Archaeological Watching Brief**

NGR: TF 239 102  
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**Summary**

*An intermittent watching brief during the groundworks for street improvements in West Street identified no deposits of archaeological significance. The shallow works remained mostly within the backfill of existing disturbances for service trenches and backfill around a post-medieval culvert. Gravel deposits were exposed in West Street, but peat visible in a trench in Albion Street showed that the surrounding ground had not been suited for occupation in the past. A late medieval or early -post-medieval copper alloy spoon was retrieved by the contractors from a trench in Albion Street.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council (Highways and Planning Directorate) in May 2000 to conduct a watching brief during the mechanical excavation of drainage, street furniture and street lighting features in West Street and East Street, Crowland as part of village centre enhancement works (Figs. 1 and 2). A Project Brief was set by the Senior Built Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council, and the project specification prepared by LAS in May 2000 was approved.

Monitoring was conducted by Rob Armour-Chelu and the author between 26th May and 25th July 2000; six visits were made.

**Site Location and Description**

Crowland is situated on the border between Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, 10km north of Peterborough. The village site is upon a gravel peninsula which extends into the peat and silt fens, at a level between 3m and 5m OD. Alluvial deposits surround the peninsula.

The works were undertaken to the west of Crowland's Trinity Bridge, along West Street. The medieval bridge originally crossed two watercourses, one flowing towards Spalding, the other towards Peterborough. The watercourses are now culverted below the modern roads.

**Archaeological Background**

Numerous prehistoric sites and artefacts have been found near Crowland, including Neolithic flints and axes, and Bronze Age barrows. Quarrying and settlement activity have destroyed many of these sites. Iron Age pottery has been found at three locations in Crowland.

Scatters of pottery and other artefacts, together with cropmarks recorded on aerial photographs,

show evidence for Romano-British settlement in the area.

The medieval abbey is believed to have been founded on the site of a Saxon monastery, which formed the focus for settlement during the late Saxon and medieval period. Medieval pottery has been recorded from several sites in the village. Watching briefs along West Street have failed to identify significant archaeological remains but on land off Trinity Court/West Street, 1.2m of archaeological deposits dating from the sixteenth - nineteenth centuries have been recorded.

The medieval watercourse which flowed towards Peterborough is now culverted below West Street. The contractors had instructions to avoid damage to that culvert, and its structure was not seen during the monitoring visits.

### **The Watching Brief (Fig. 2)**

#### **Method**

The monitored works consisted of minor excavations by machine for drainage runs, road re-alignments, kerbing and the installation of lighting columns and seating. Observation numbers were assigned by LAS for recording purposes, and these are used below, in bold.

#### **West Street**

1. A 0.4m deep trench was examined within West Street, at the junction of South Street (Pls. 1 and 2). This cut through the tarmac road surface to a stone rubble levelling layer, covering a mixed deposit with soil, gravel and brick fragments.
2. On the west side of the junction with South Street, beneath the 0.2m thick tarmac layer was a mixed layer of orange sandy clay with fragments of mortared brick (Pls. 3-5).
3. Immediately east of the junction of Albion Street and West Street, the 0.35m deep trench revealed a mixed layer of clay with some brick rubble (as at 2), but containing a high proportion of gravel (Pls. 6 and 7). The density of gravel could possibly indicate a medieval road surface, but is more likely to derive from naturally deposited gravel associated with the culverted stream.
4. To the west of the row of shops, the excavations for new kerbing cut through the tarmac and just into the underlying material (Pl. 8). Nothing of interest was revealed.

It appears that all the trenches encountered the backfill material above or beside the culverted watercourse, but the culvert itself was not exposed.

#### **Albion Street**

5. During the last site visit, a trench for a new drain along the west side of Albion Street was examined (Pl. 9). Beneath the tarmac at the junction with West Street was a layer of brick rubble



(Pl. 10). Further to the south, the brick rubble thinned, and the trench revealed clay loam and a darker deposit of silt or dried peat (Pls. 11 and 12). The trench exposed existing services, and the extent of previously disturbed ground could not be defined. The contractors produced a copper alloy spoon which had apparently been found in the trench, but its exact provenance is unknown (Pls. 13 and 14). It has been identified as of late medieval date (Appendix 1).

### **Conclusion**

The street works revealed no features that could contribute appreciably to understanding the development of the settlement at Crowland. It appears that much of the width of West Street has been created by culverting and backfilling a broad watercourse, but its depth was not established.

To the south of West Street, the trench in Albion Street indicated that the former watercourse had crossed an area of peaty fenland. The proximity of this peat to the heart of the settlement emphasises the importance of the better draining gravel deposits beside the Welland.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS is grateful to Peter Fender, Lincolnshire County Council (Lincolnshire Development/Highways and Planning Directorate); Dave Chetwynd and the team of contractors for their co-operation. Further help was provided by the Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team (especially Jim Bonnor and Dr. Beryl Lott).

The spoon was conserved and x-rayed by Lincolnshire County Council Conservation Laboratory, and examined by Jen Mann (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit). Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid, and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
25th October 2000

### **Archive Summary**

correspondence

field notes

developer's site plans

archaeological find: copper alloy spoon

specialist's report: spoon

x-ray plate : spoon

photographs: colour prints LAS film nos. 00/56/33-37; 00/57/4-9, 11-15; 00/63/17-18; 00/69/29-32;  
00/86/20

## APPENDIX 1

### A Copper Alloy Spoon from Crowland (CWSB 00)

by Jen Mann

Part of a copper alloy spoon <1> was received for examination following X-ray by the Lincoln City and County Museum Laboratory. It has been sketched and recorded on a standard finds card to basic archive level.

The spoon <1> has a slightly bent, broken hexagonal-sectioned handle and a large circular bowl, the size of which suggests that it could have been used as a shallow ladle. The lower edge of the bowl is chipped, while among the adhering soil are soot and traces of charcoal, suggesting that the spoon had been near a fire or buried within a deposit of fire debris. A large scratch and several smaller, parallel scratches on the inner face of the bowl are very recent (unlike the other damage), and were probably accidentally made during recovery.

This piece is almost certainly of late medieval to early post-medieval date, most probably within the earlier part of that period. The bowl lacks the characteristic late medieval 'fig-shape'; its length is fractionally greater than its width, perhaps suggesting an intermediate form between circular and fig-shaped, while hexagonal-sectioned handles occur on spoons of the 14th to the mid-17th centuries - occasionally in conjunction with circular bowls. Closer dating is not possible in the absence of any other distinguishing feature such as a terminal knop.

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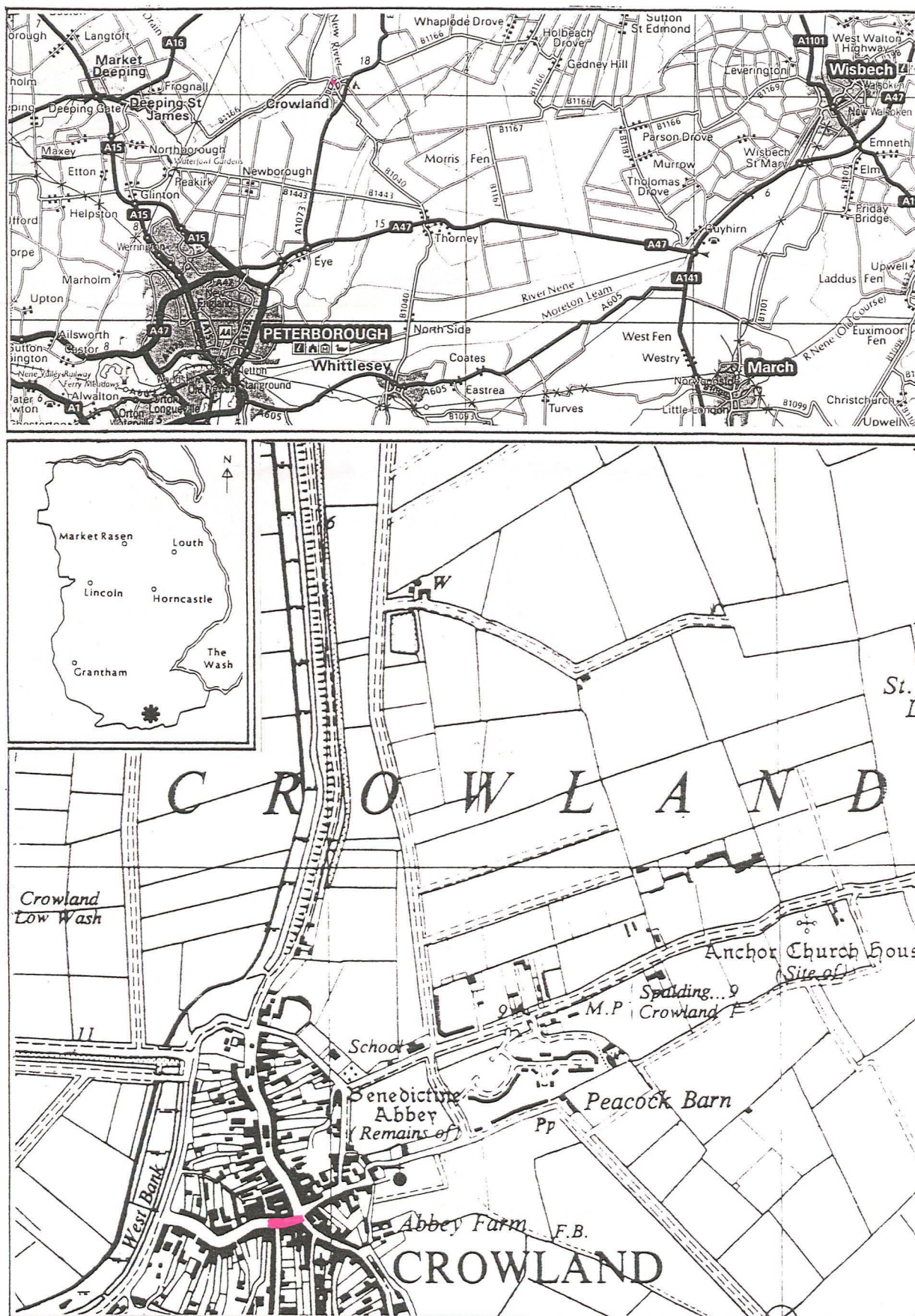


Fig. 1 Location of Crowland (based on the 1955 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet TF 21; © Crown Copyright, reproduced at enlarged scale with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



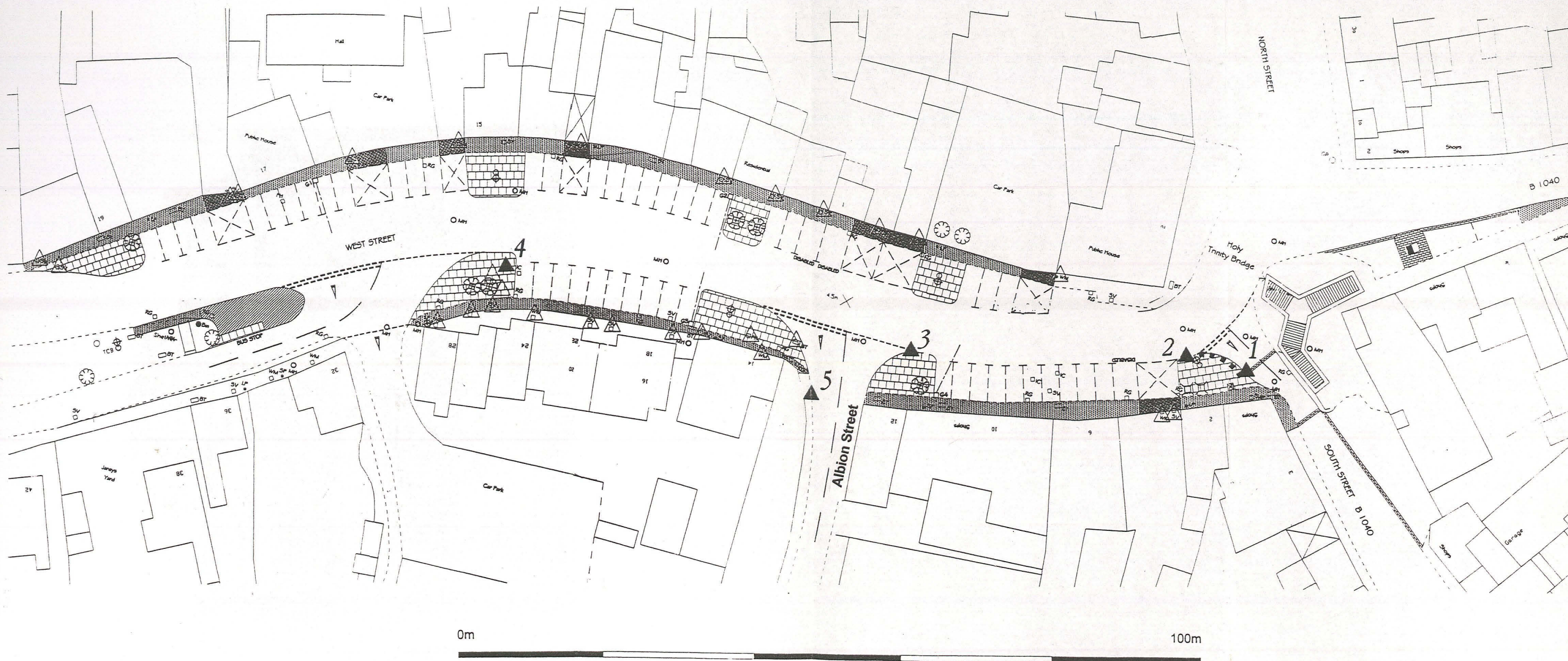


Fig. 2 West Street, Crowland, showing the position of the recorded observations (based on a reduced scale copy of dwg. no. A/502611/07/A1 by Lincs. County Council Highways and Planning Directorate).





Pl. 1 The trench at the junction of West Street (foreground) and South Street (right). Looking east towards Trinity Bridge.





Pl. 2 Deposits visible in the trench at 1, junction of West Street and South Street (looking south).

Pl. 3 View of the medieval bridge (looking NE from 2).







**Pl. 4** Mixed backfill deposits and gravel in the trench at 2 (looking SW in West Street).

**Pl. 5** Section through levelling deposits onto probably redeposited gravel at 2.







**Pl. 6 The monitored groundworks at 3, east of the junction of Albion Street and West Street (foreground). Looking SW.**

**Pl. 7 Gravel layer at junction of Albion Street 3. Scale 0.2m.**







Pl. 8 Limited extent of groundworks in West Street 4 (looking NE).

Pl. 9 Position of the monitored drain trench in Albion Street, looking north to West Street.







**Pl. 10 Brick rubble below the modern road surface at the junction of Albion Street and West Street.**

**Pl. 11 Clay loam and peaty deposits, Albion Street. The trench exposed existing services, and may have been fully within redeposited material.**







Pl. 12 Dark silty or peat deposits in the drain trench, Albion Street.





Pl. 13 Copper alloy spoon from Albion Street (scale 0.2m).

Pl. 14 Base of spoon from Albion Street (scale 0.2m).

