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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

## **Bicker, land off Drury Lane and Friest Lane**

*NGR: TF 2230 3723*

*Site Code: BDF 99*

*LCNCC Museum Accn. No.: 196.99*

*Planning Application No.: BO4/0222/96*

## **Archaeological Watching Brief [Plots 1 and 4]**

**Report prepared for L.E. Henton and Son**

**by G. Tann**

**LAS Report No. 458**

**November 2000**

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SOURCES LI 6136/37  
PRN 13550 LI 80965.

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## **Archaeological Watching Brief [Plots 1 and 4]**

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### **Summary**

*A watching brief during the excavation of further foundation trenches on the residential development identified a pit containing shellfish debris, and a layer of material containing fired clay and a single sherd of late eleventh century/mid-twelfth century Stamford ware pottery. An extensive but thin spread of peat was present in the SE part of the site. Archaeological deposits survive below the foundations of the new buildings.*

### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by L.E. Henton and Son in September 1997 to conduct a watching brief during the mechanical excavation of house footings on a 0.35ha. development site between Drury Lane and Friest Lane, Bicker (Fig. 1). A condition of Boston Borough Council's full planning permission for residential development required an archaeological watching brief for which a brief was prepared by the Boston Community Archaeologist (dated 6th August 1996). A project specification prepared by LAS in September 1997 was approved.

This second report relates to groundworks conducted during 1999. Monitoring was conducted by the author on 20th July 1999 (Plot 4) and 6th August 1999 (Plot 1).

### **The Development Site**

The development site lies on the corner of Drury Lane and Friest Lane, towards the southern end of Bicker. This report describes the watching brief on the foundations for two buildings, on Plots 1 and 4 (Fig. 2). A report was produced by LAS in June 1998, which described the monitoring of Plot 6 (formerly Plot 10) and its garage (Tann 1998). It is not known whether further dwellings will be built at a later date.

### **Archaeological Background**

The local soils are reclaimed alluvial silts developed on former roddons. Salterns are found on previously tidally marginal land and medieval examples are known to have flanked Bicker Haven. These sites produce large volumes of briquetage (fired clay vessels and supports) associated with evaporation of brine. None have been identified yet on this development site.



A previously unsuspected sixteenth/seventeenth century pottery kiln is now known to have been sited near this development; a waste deposit was found below Plot 6 in 1997, but the kiln site itself was not revealed (Tann 1998).

No prehistoric remains have been reported from Bicker but Romano-British finds are known.

### The Watching Brief

#### **Method**

The house foundation trenches were excavated with a JCB to widths of 0.8m and 0.4m, and a depth of about 1.2m. The trenches were not excavated to undisturbed ground as this might have proved a poorer foundation than higher deposits. As a result, the depth of the archaeological features was not established.

Context numbers were assigned to features and their fills for recording purposes; these are used (in bold) in this report and are listed in Appendix 1.

#### **Plot 1** (Fig. 3; Pls. 1 and 2)

The topsoil **4** across both plots was between 0.25m and 0.35m thick (Fig. 4). Beneath the topsoil was a layer of brown silty clay **5**, 0.35m thick (except in the SE corner where it was slightly shallower). This layer sealed a blue silty clay deposit **6**, 0.3m – 0.6m thick, with a brown silt layer **7** beneath it (Pl. 3).

A thin lens of peat **8** was seen between 1m and 1.15m below the surface, within the blue silty clay **6** (Pl. 4). Evidence of this peat was present across most of the house plot.

#### **Plot 4** (Figs. 5 and 6; Pls. 5 and 6)

Two features were seen during excavation of the footings for this building. In the centre of the northern side, the base of the trench revealed the top of an archaeological horizon. This had been covered by 0.65m of brown silt **5**, in addition to the modern topsoil **4**.

The 0.1m thick archaeological layer was a grey/brown silt **1**, containing a single rim sherd of late eleventh/mid-twelfth century Stamford ware pottery, and four fragments of fired clay (Pls. 7 and 8). The fired clay was undiagnostic, other than being derived from the local fen silts (Dr. A. Vince, pers. comm.). The pottery is readily dateable, and the sherd showed no signs of have been redeposited (Appendix 2). Beneath these remains was a peat lens **9**, with a layer of light brown silt **10** below, extending below the trench base. The early medieval material may have been filling a depression or a feature such as a pit or ditch, as the layers dipped down to the north. On the opposite side of the trench, the grey silt layer **1** was very thin, suggesting that it was at the very edge of the feature, but insufficient was visible to establish its shape or size.

To the SE of this plot, a feature 11 was identified in only one trench, indicating that it was a pit rather than a ditch (Pls. 9-11). The brown silt layer 5 was 0.5m thick on this side of the plot, with small pockets of brown silt and blue/grey silt above the underlying pit. This material may have been disturbed by animal activity or drainage.

Beneath the silt was a 1.6m wide pit 11, probably 0.45m deep but possibly slightly deeper. Its western edge sloped gradually and evenly to the 0.6m wide, rounded, base, but the eastern edge exhibited a slight step. The fill 3 was mostly a black silt with shells, but within the deposit was a concentration of shells 2 which was sampled. The pit had been dug into brown silt 12, similar to that which overlaid it, and probably the same deposit as 7.

This pit 11 appears to have been used for refuse exclusively associated with shellfish preparation. From its stratigraphic position, it seems to have been excavated during a sustained stage of alluvium deposition, but not necessarily during a marine regression that was long enough for peat or vegetation to form (Appendix 3). This may be a feature dug into mudflats, unrelated to the other archaeological features found on the site. It is potentially later than the archaeological horizon 1.

### **Conclusion**

During the 1997 archaeological monitoring of Plot 6 to the NE (formerly Plot 10), there was no evidence for features between Plot 6 and Friest Lane, other than a recently filled drainage ditch crossing the SE corner. The further monitoring has shown that there are unrelated archaeological features extending across this part of the site.

The previous report on work at this site suggested that the sixteenth/seventeenth century pot and brick kiln refuse deposits found in Plot 6 (to the NE) derived from an unlocated site north or east of the development. Elsewhere in Bicker there have been Romano-British finds, but it is now probable that while trenches for any further development on the site may reveal the upper deposits of medieval features, they are unlikely to penetrate Romano-British or earlier levels.

### **Acknowledgements**

Site plans and access to the site were arranged through L.E. Henton and Son. LAS would also like to thank the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section (now the Built Environment Team) for their assistance during this watching brief. Information was provided by Hilary Healey.

Fieldwork for this project was conducted by the author; the pottery was identified by Jane Young and the fired clay by Dr. Alan Vince. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid and Mark Williams. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
16th November 2000



## References

Tann, G. 1998 *Bicker, land off Drury Lane and Friest Lane: Archaeological Watching Brief [Plot 10]*.  
LAS Report No. 300, June 1998.

## Archive Summary

archaeological finds: pottery, fired clay  
environmental sample residues

specialists' reports and archive lists:

pottery  
environmental

correspondence

developer's site plans (annotated)

field section drawings

photographs: colour prints LAS film nos. 99/90/27-31; 99/95/0-9

## APPENDIX 1

## Context List

Context No.	Plot No.	Type	Relationships	Description	Finds	Date
1	4	Layer	Below 5, over 9	Grey/brown silt, 0.1m thick; possibly fill of feature.	1 sherd 11/12thC pottery; fired clay	Medieval?
2	4	Fill	Fill of 11, within 3	Shell concentration		Medieval?
3	4	Fill	Fill of 11, below 5; contained 2	Black silt, sea shells		Medieval?
4	1 & 4	Layer	Over 5	Topsoil, Plots 1 and 4. 0.25m - 0.35m thick.		Modern
5	1 & 4	Layer	Below 4, over 3, 6	Brown silty clay, 0.35m - 0.65m thick		Medieval or later
6	1	Layer	Below 5, over 7; contained 8	Blue silty clay, 0.3m - 0.6m thick		?Pre-11thC
7	1	Layer	Below 6; ?same as 12	Brown silt		Pre-11thC
8	1	Layer	Within 6	Peat layer, 0.03m thick		?Pre-11thC
9	4	Layer	Below 1, over 10	Peat layer, 0.01m thick		Pre-11thC
10	4	Layer	Below 9			Pre-11thC
11	4	Cut	Filled by 3, cut 12	Pit, 1.6m wide; 0.45m+ deep		Medieval or later
12	4	Layer	Cut by 11; same as 7	Brown silt		Pre-11thC

## Pottery Archive BDF99

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	cname	full name	sherds	vessels	part	description	date
U/S	ST	Stamford Ware	2	1	rim	freshly broken;fairly fresh condition;medium to large fragment	late 11th to mid 12th

**Bicker - BDF99****Environmental Archaeology Assessment***Introduction*

A Watching Brief in advance of house construction conducted by Lindsey Archaeological Services at Bicker produced one soil sample. This sample was processed by LAS and the residue and flot submitted to the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy for assessment.

The sample derived from context 2, the fill of pit 11, and weighed 2 kilogrammes. The residue was sorted by eye, and environmental and archaeological finds picked out, noted on the assessment sheet and bagged independently. A magnet was run through the residue in order to recover magnetised material such as hammerscale and prill. The residue was then discarded. The float of the sample was studied under a low power binocular microscope. The presence of environmental finds (ie snails, charcoal, carbonised seeds, bones etc) was noted and their abundance and species diversity recorded on the assessment sheet. The float was then bagged. The float and finds from the sorted residue constitute the material archive of the sample.

*Results*

The sample produced almost no non-archaeological residue, just a few small concreted lumps of silt. The bulk of the residue was composed of fragmented marine mussel shell. Other shells present included cockle, tellen, piddock, rough winkle, *Hydrobia ulva* - a small estuarine and salt marsh snail, and fragments of barnacle. Animal bone was limited to a fragment of mammal rib and three bones of fish, one of which was burnt, while two pieces of bird eggshell (probably chicken) were also recovered.

The flot produced a little charcoal and fuel ash slag, three charred cereal grains and a couple of charred weed seeds.

The finds of charcoal, charred cereals, burnt fish bone and fuel ash slag clearly indicates that this deposit probably contains domestic waste. The group of shells, however, is characterised by a high proportion of spats and small shells of no commercial or food value and extremely unlikely to have been collected unless the catch was dredged.

The deposit therefore appears to be the discard from a small dredged catch with whole small shells and fragmented larger shells being dumped with a little domestic fire and food debris in the pit.

*Acknowledgments*

I should like to thank Jeremy Mordue for the sample processing and Alison Foster for the sample sorting.

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21 May 2000



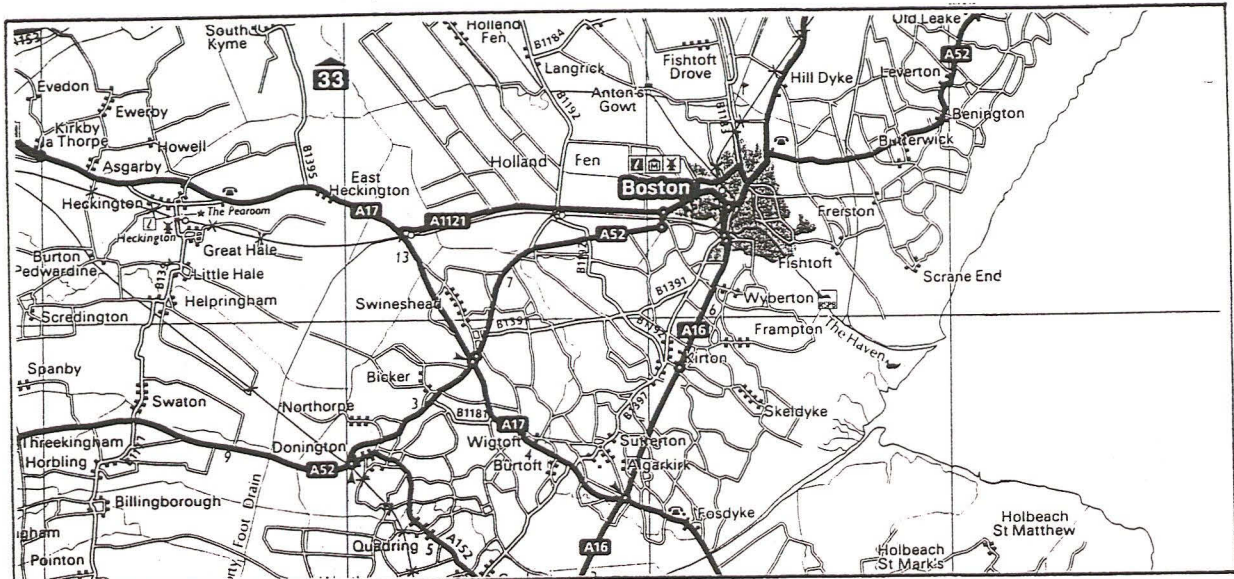
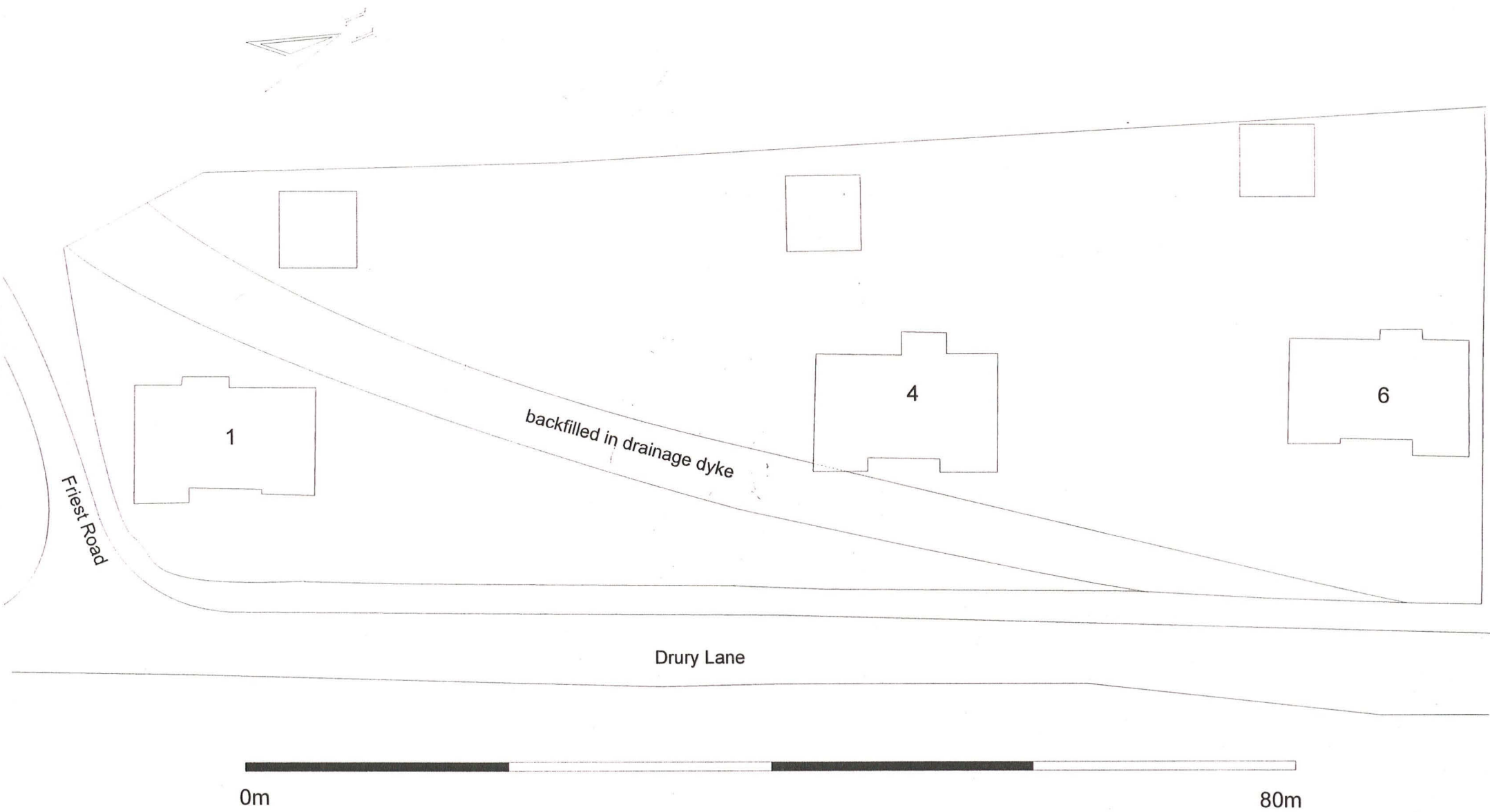


Fig. 1 Location of Bicker (based on the 1955 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet TF 23. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



**Fig. 2 Position of the monitored development, Plots 1 and 4 (Williams, based on Site Layout plan produced by Clive Wicks Associates, dwg. number 94 563/01N).**



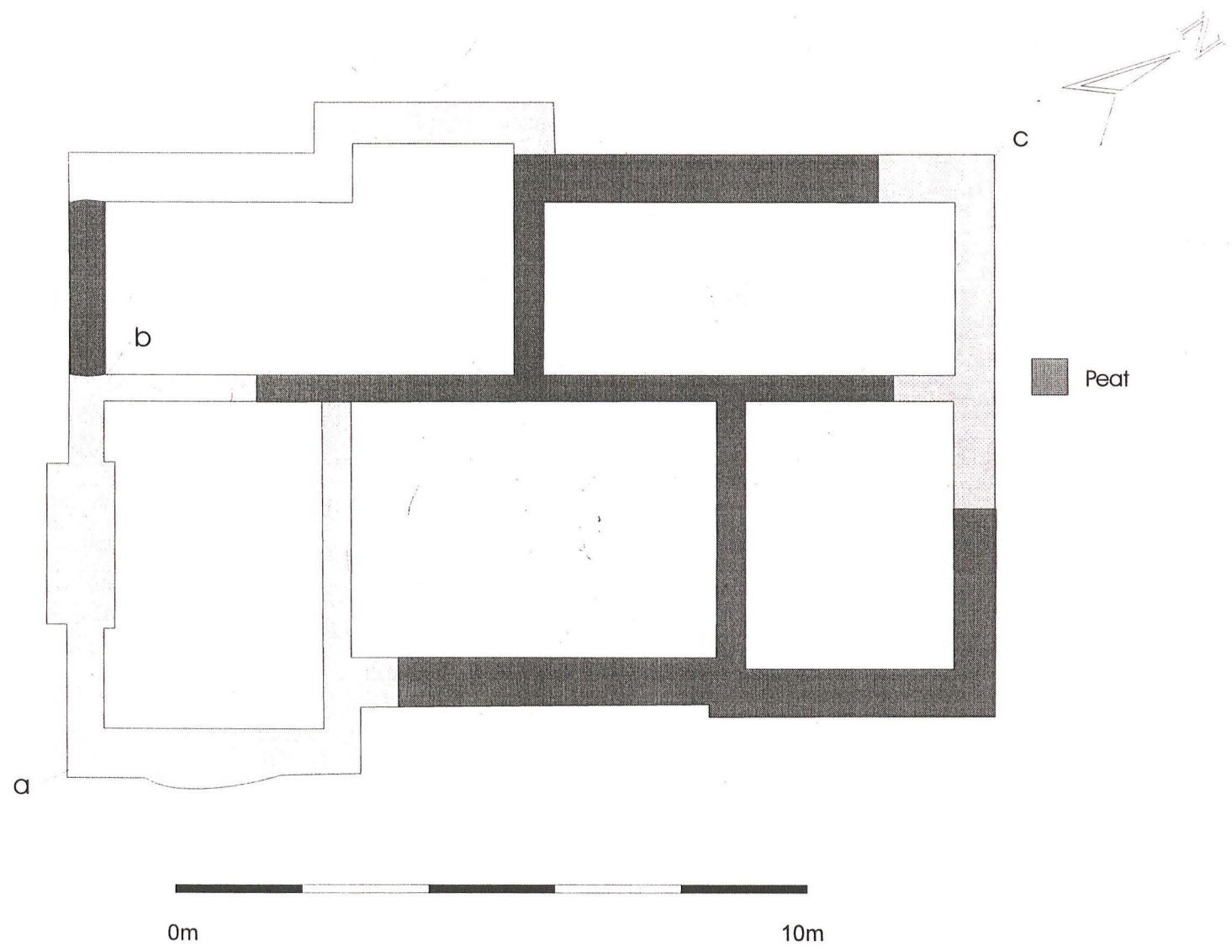
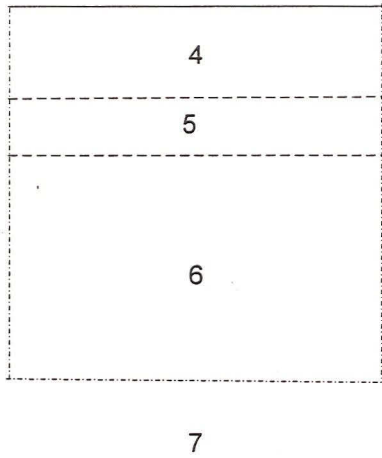
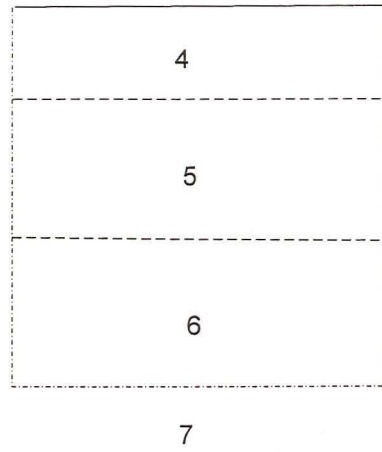


Fig. 3 Foundation plan, Plot 1, showing position of archaeological observations (Williams, after Tann).

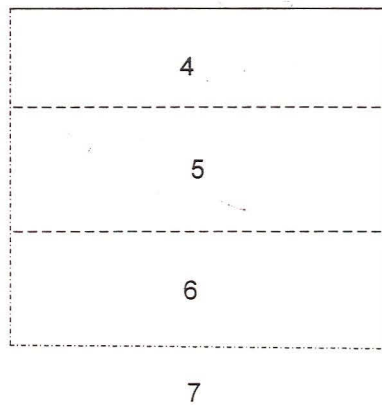
a



b



c

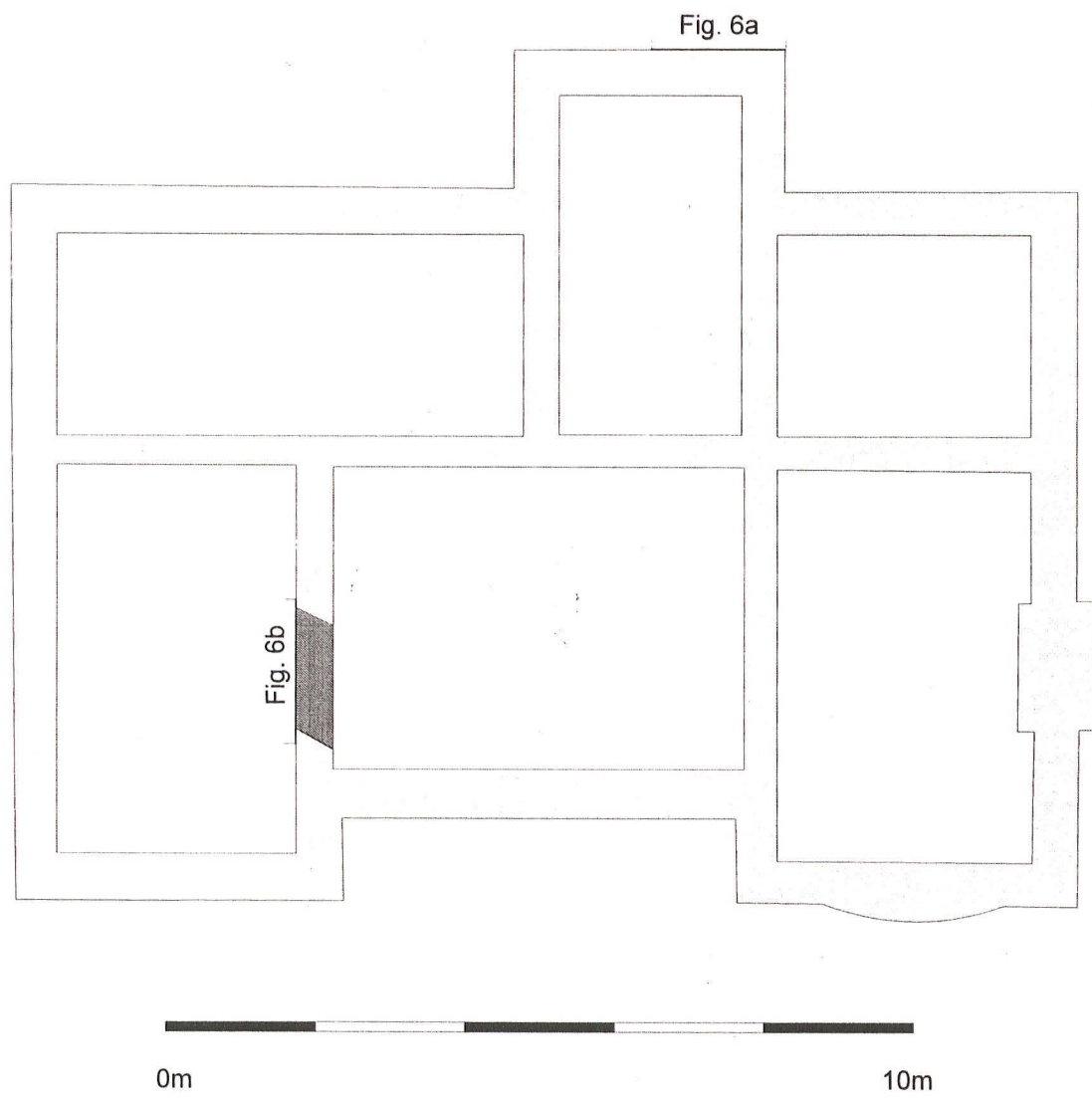


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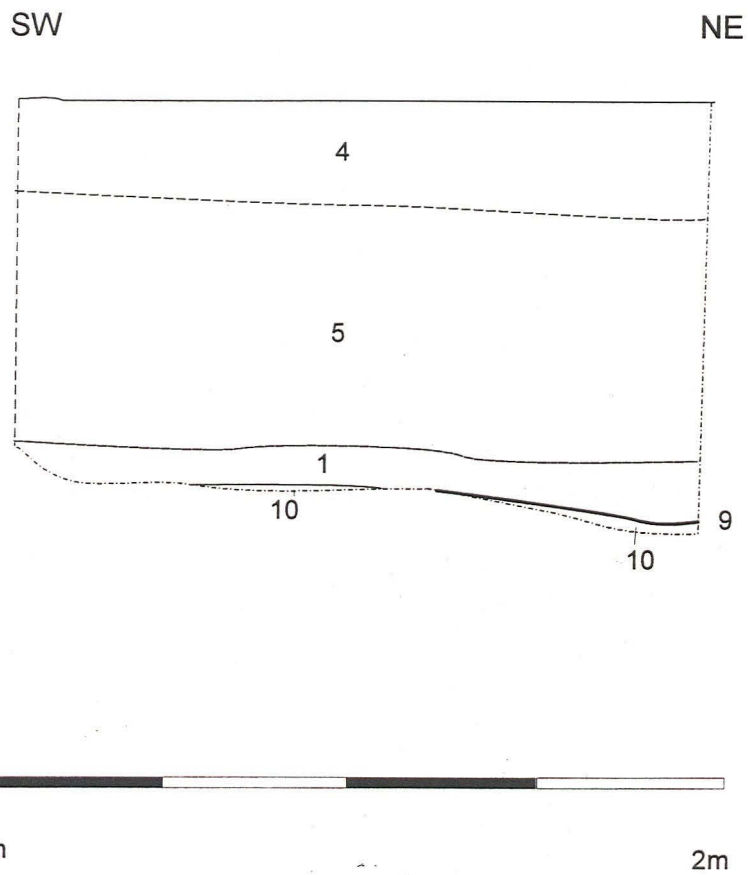
**Fig.4 Sections through deposits exposed in the foundation trenches, Plot 1 (Williams after Tann).**





**Fig. 5 Foundation plan, Plot 4, showing position of archaeological features (Williams, after Tann)**

a)



b)

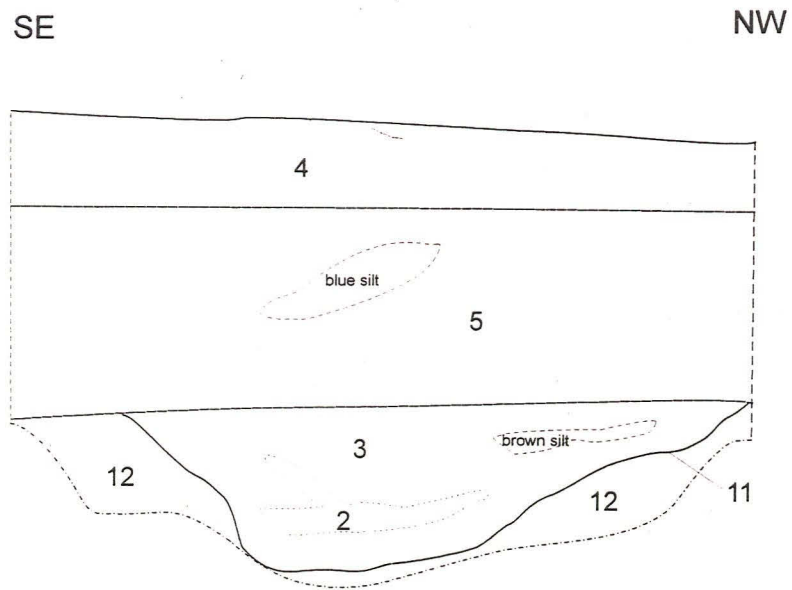


Fig.6 Sections through features, Plot 4; a) peat deposit 9; b) pit 11 (Williams after Tann)





PI. 1 Position of Plot 1, at the junction of Drury Lane and Friest Lane (looking south).

PI. 2 Plot 1 (looking north across the site to the bungalow (Plot 6)).







**Pl. 3 Silt deposits at B, close to Friest Lane (looking east).**

**Pl. 4 Silt deposits in the trench face at C (looking west).**







**Pl. 5** Position of Plot 4 (looking south).

**Pl. 6** Foundation trenches for Plot 4 (looking NW towards the garage for Plot 6).







PI. 7 West end of Plot 4, showing the peat layer 9 at the trench base.



PI. 8 Deposits in the trench face at the west end of Plot 4.





Pl. 9 Pit 11, with dark fills visible in the face of the foundation trench (looking west).

Pl. 10 Fill of pit 11 at the base of the foundation trench, overlain by flood silt deposits (looking south).

