



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Land south of Church St, Hemswell, Lincs
Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: SK9300 9081
Planning Application: M00/P/0484 0530
Site Code: HEMA 01
LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2001.71

Report

for

Land and Development Consultants

On behalf of
Limestone Farming Co.

LAS Report No: 526

April 2001

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Summary

In April 2001 two 15m long archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at the above site. Archaeological remains dating from the 13th century were discovered in Trench 2. Numerous upstanding earthworks were also present on the site suggesting small scale settlement. Archaeological remains in Trench 2 were limited to residual pottery in the topsoil.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services undertook an evaluation for Land and Development Consultants on behalf of Limestone Farming Co. in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998) and the requirements of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council, as discussed verbally.

Site Location and Description

The development site (Fig. 1 & Pl. 1) was located on the south side of the village between Weldon Road to the east, running behind the properties fronting Church St, with access at the north-west corner through the site of the old Post Office. It is 1.4ha in extent with poultry houses currently covering part of the site, the remainder being pasture.

Archaeological Background

An archaeological desk top study and geophysical survey of the site have already been carried out by the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (Trimble 2000). The report produced no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the boundaries of the proposed development although pointed out that there was potential for remains of this period given the presence of remains of this date in the wider area around Hemswell.

The evidence for medieval activity was more conclusive. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 there was a manor (estate) within the parish held by the Bishop of Bayeux (brother of William the Conqueror). The village is clearly of medieval or Saxon origin and a site visit, undertaken as part of the desk top study, confirmed that irregular earthworks were present in the western part of the site. These were interpreted as the remains of village earthworks including a hollow way and possible house platform. The report concluded that there was potential for finding evidence for settlement remains of medieval and later periods on the site. In addition geophysical survey identified a few linear anomalies (Pl. 2) suggestive of boundaries for tofts and crofts two areas of possible building

rubble (f7 and f8) which were thought to be evidence of structures not present on maps of 1885 and later.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to establish whether the two areas provisionally identified by the geophysical survey as spreads of possible building debris, overlie early buildings.

In general terms the purpose of the evaluation was to

- establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the development area
- gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact which development will have upon them
- enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development

METHOD

Evaluation Trenches

Two trenches, each 15m x 1.8m in size were excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision (Pl. 3 & Fig.2). All archaeological works were carried out by a team of 2 experienced archaeologists, including a Site Director.

Topsoil was removed to the first recognisable archaeological horizon. The trenches were then hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and selected excavation of features was carried out in order to achieve the objectives outlined above.

A full written (single context) and photographic record was made during the excavations, along with a plan of each trench and section drawings of one side. All recorded deposits were assigned context numbers by LAS who operate a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years, based on MOLAS and CAS formats.

Results

Trench 1 (Pl. 4 & Fig. 3)

The topsoil in this trench, **101**, comprised a dark grey clay loam, 0.20m thick from which one 12th-13th century sherd of pottery was recovered. Below **101**, was **102**, a 0.30m deep mid orange brown silty clay subsoil with occasional limestone fragments and waterborne pebbles, underlying which was **103**, the orange clay natural. No archaeological features were present although a modern land drain was noted.

Trench 2 (Pl. 5 & Fig. 4)

The topsoil, **201** was a 0.14m deep dark brown grey clay loam which overlay **202**, a 0.60m thick dark brown clay and limestone rubble mix, which contained occasional rounded and sub-angular stones. Late medieval–early modern pottery, tile, animal bone and one fragment of oyster shell were recovered from this deposit.

Below **207**, in the eastern end of trench 2 was **203**, (Pl. 6) a mid greenish grey silty clay with sparse charcoal flecks and limestone fragments. Early 13th century pottery was recovered along with probable 12th century material.

Below **202**, in the western end of trench 2 was **207**, a red brown clay rich subsoil deposit which, in turn sealed **205**, a north east-south west aligned stone filled drain. It was, on average, 1.70m wide and contained **206**, which consisted of limestone and flint fragments within a mid to dark grey clay matrix. This feature remained unexcavated as amounts of water within the stone and clay fill suggested it to still be, at least partially, active.

Discussion and Conclusion

The trenches were located according to instructions from the County Archaeological Officer away from the earthworks and other features noted on the geophysical survey, over deposits described as "building rubble" in the desk-top study and showing as anomalies on the geophysical survey (Trimble 2000).

Trench 1 contained no archaeological features and failed to produce any deposits which could positively account for the anomalies recorded by the geophysical survey. Without more extensive excavation it is impossible to tell whether the presence of limestone fragments and pebbles in the subsoil was localised and responsible for the geophysical anomalies. The presence of a single piece of 12-13th century pottery in the topsoil is not surprising given the proximity of earthworks to the west, indicative of settlement remains and the survival of an old land surface in Trench 2 to the east.

In Trench 2 the topsoil, **201** overlay **202**, dark brown clay and limestone rubble mix, which contained occasional rounded and sub-angular stones. The associated medieval–early modern pottery, tile, animal bone and one fragment of oyster shell from this deposit suggests that this material may represent an accumulation of material used as hardcore laid down to maintain access at the entrance to the field. This deposit probably accounts for the anomaly recorded in the geophysical survey as possible building rubble.

Beneath the limestone rubble deposit **203** almost certainly represented a buried medieval soil rather than the fill of any specific feature. The pottery assemblage from this probable medieval land surface included sherds of jars, jugs and bowls again indicative of domestic activity close by. This material is

dated to a period encompassing the 12th and early 13th centuries, much earlier than the suggested 17th century abandonment of the area suggested in the desk-top assessment.

Some of the earthworks to the west of the evaluation trenches can almost certainly be attributed to quarrying, as depicted on the 1792 enclosure award map. Although this may have damaged earlier remains, it is likely that further evidence for earlier settlement and its successive abandonment may have survived. Indeed, several enclosures identified both by visual survey, from documentary sources and the Geophysical Survey results suggest that the development site contains some of the medieval plots belonging to the properties.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Land and Developments Consultants for their co-operation during these excavations. Fieldwork was carried out by the author and Rob Armour-Chelu. This report was edited by Naomi Field and produced and collated by Jane Frost.

Sue Farr

April 24th 2001

(Revised, Naomi Field May 31st 2001)

Reference

Trimble R. 2000 *Residential Development on Land South of Church St (Site H3) Hemswell, Lincolnshire: Archaeological Desk-top study & Geophysical Survey*, City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit.

APPENDIX 1

The Pottery Archive

Jane Young

Pottery Archive HEMA01

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	full name	cname	sub fabric	sherds	vessels	form type	part	description	date
101	Nottingham Splashed ware	NSP	sandy	1	1	jug	BS	abraded	mid/late 12th to early/mid 13th
201	Early Modern wares (general term)	LPM		2	1	bowl	rim	banded yellow earthen	19th to 20th
202	Black-glazed wares	BL		1	1	hollow	BS		18th to 19th
	Creamware	CRMWARE		1	1	dish	rim		18th to 19th
	Early Modern wares (general term)	LPM		3	3	various	various		19th to 20th

context	full name	cname	sub fabric	sherds	vessels	form type	part	description	date
203	Reduced glazed red earthenware	RGRE		1	1	hollow	BS	Humber-type	17th to 18th
	Staffordshire/Bristol mottled-glazed	STMO		1	1	hollow	BS		18th
	Medieval local fabrics	MEDLOC	A	2	2	jar	BS		early to early/mid 13th
		MEDLOC	A	1	1	?	base	soot;? ID or POTT	
		MEDLOC	A	1	1	?	BS		
	13th to 14th century Lincoln Glazed Ware	LSW2		1	1	jug	BS		13th
	Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware	LFS		1	1	jar	BS		11th to 12th
	Lincolnshire Early Medieval Shelly	LEMS		1	1	bowl	rim	soot	12th to early/mid 13th

context	full name	cname	sub fabric	sherds	vessels	form type	part	description	date
		LEMS		1	1	bowl	rim		12th to early/mid 13th
		LEMS		4	4	jar	BS		12th to early/mid 13th
		LEMS		2	2	jar	BS	soot	12th to early/mid 13th
		LEMS		1	1	?	base		12th to early/mid 13th
		LEMS		2	2	?	BS	soot	12th to early/mid 13th
		LEMS		2	2	?	BS		12th to early/mid 13th
	Potterhanworth-type Ware								
		POTT		1	1	jar	BS		13th

A small assemblage of mixed material ranging in date from the early medieval to early modern periods was recovered from the site. The group of pottery from context 203 probably dates to the early part of the 13th century, although some sherds may be residual 12th century material.

APPENDIX 2

The Context Summary

Land south of Church St, Hemswell (HEMA 01) Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Finds
Trench 1			
101	L	Topsoil	pot
102	L	Subsoil	
103	L	Natural	
Trench 2			
201	L	Topsoil	
202	L	Make-up	pot, tile, bone & shell
203	L	Buried soil	
204		unused context	
205	C	Drain	
206	F	Fill of 205	
207	L	Subsoil	
208	L	Natural	

APPENDIX 3

The Animal Bones

Hemswell (HEMA 01)

The Animal bones from context 202

By Richard Moore

Cattle. Right metatarsal. Distal end, and shaft.

Hard and quite dense, still with fairly high organic content. Some possible gnaw marks, but surface generally not eroded.

Probably deliberately cracked, either to extract marrow or as part of butchery process.

Large - cattle vary considerably in size, different breeds and bulls bigger than cows, but generally later prehistoric and medieval animals were smaller.

Sheep. Left tibia. Distal end and distal part of shaft. Similar condition to above.

Oyster. Large fragment of upper shell.

Oysters common as food species at least since Roman times to later post-medieval. Fairly large, at least 4 years old and probably older - specimens from heavily exploited fisheries tend to be smaller than this.

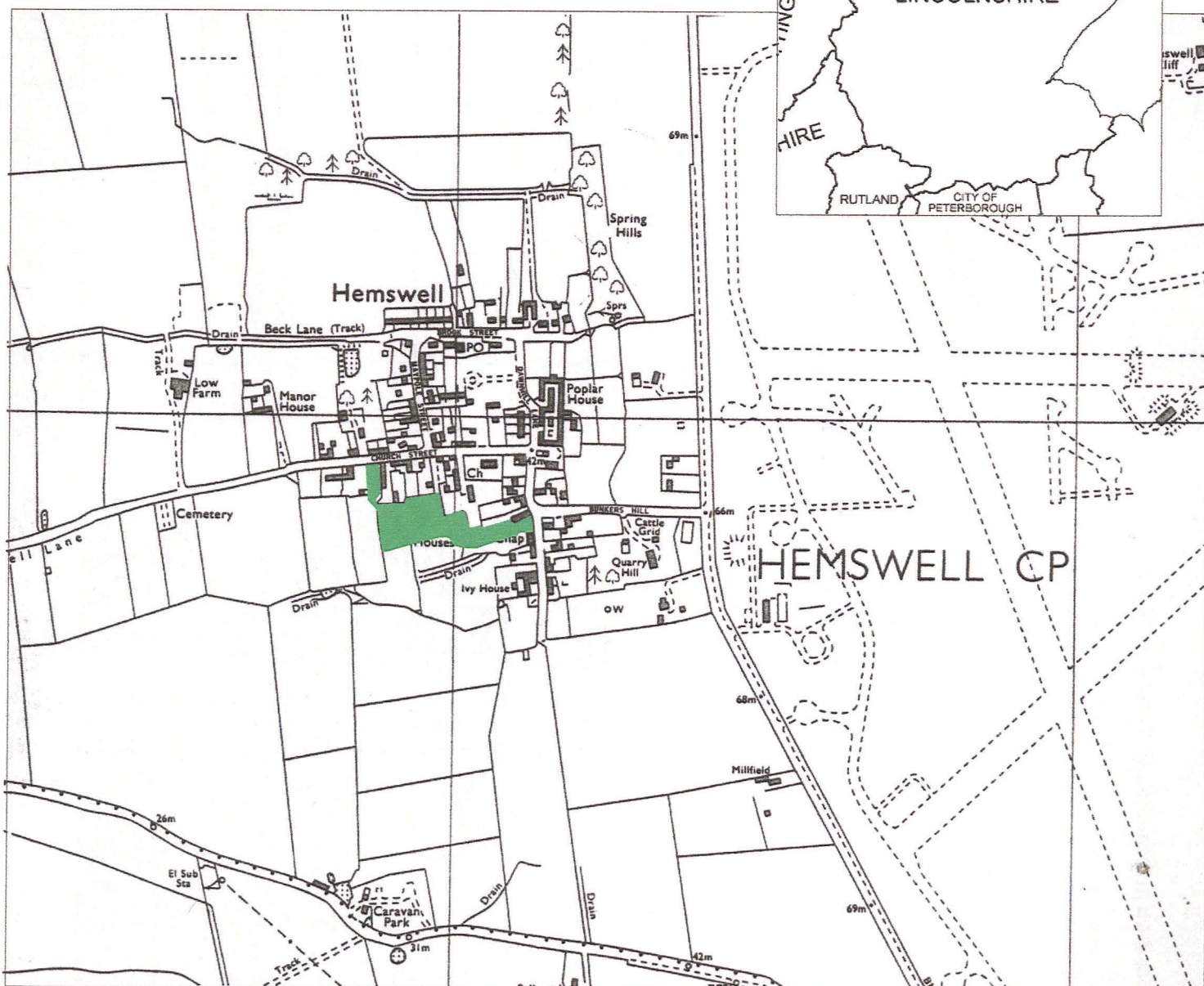
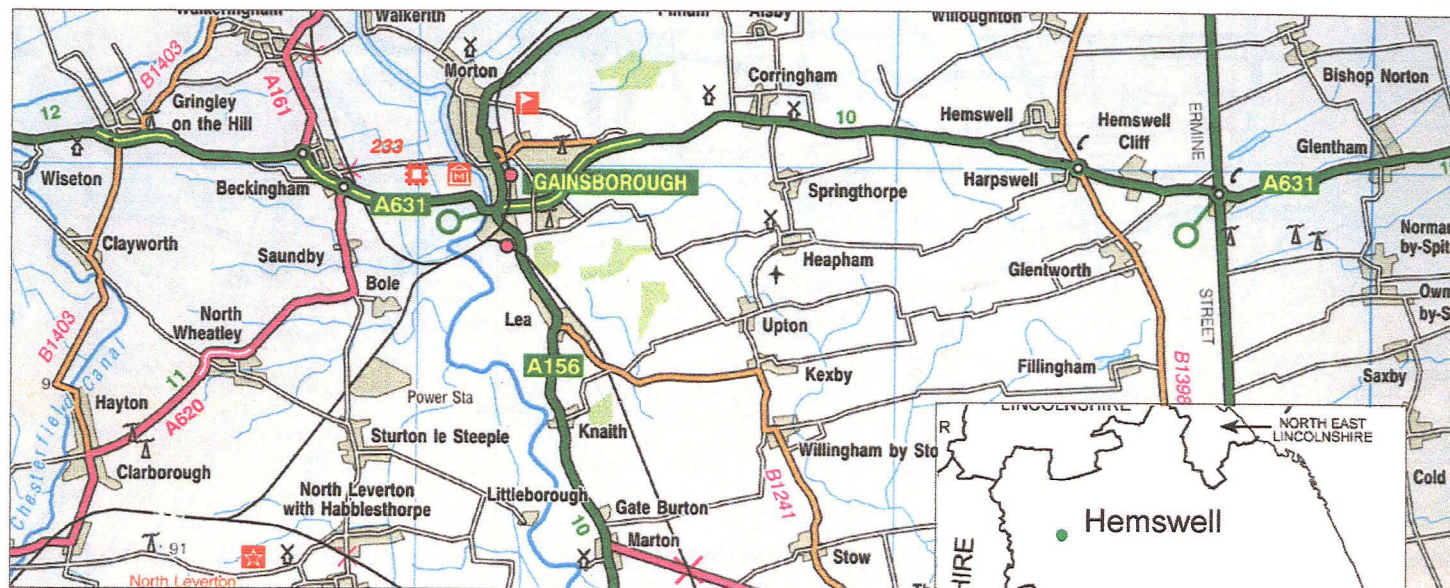


Fig. 1 Hemswell, site location, reproduced from the 1:10,000 Map. Crown copyright: reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. LAS Licence Number AL 100002165

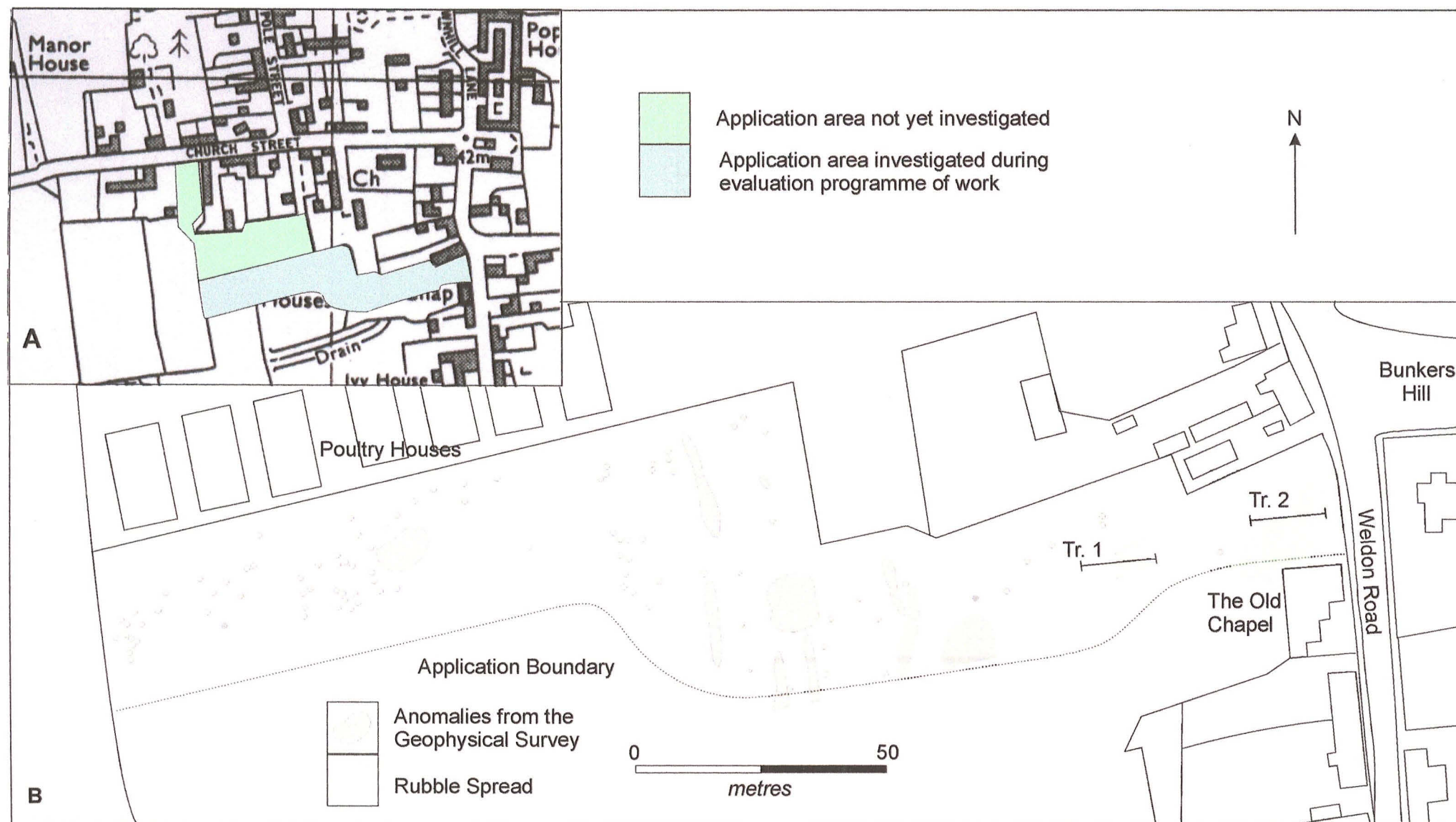


Fig. 2 A, plan of area investigated B, Trench locations

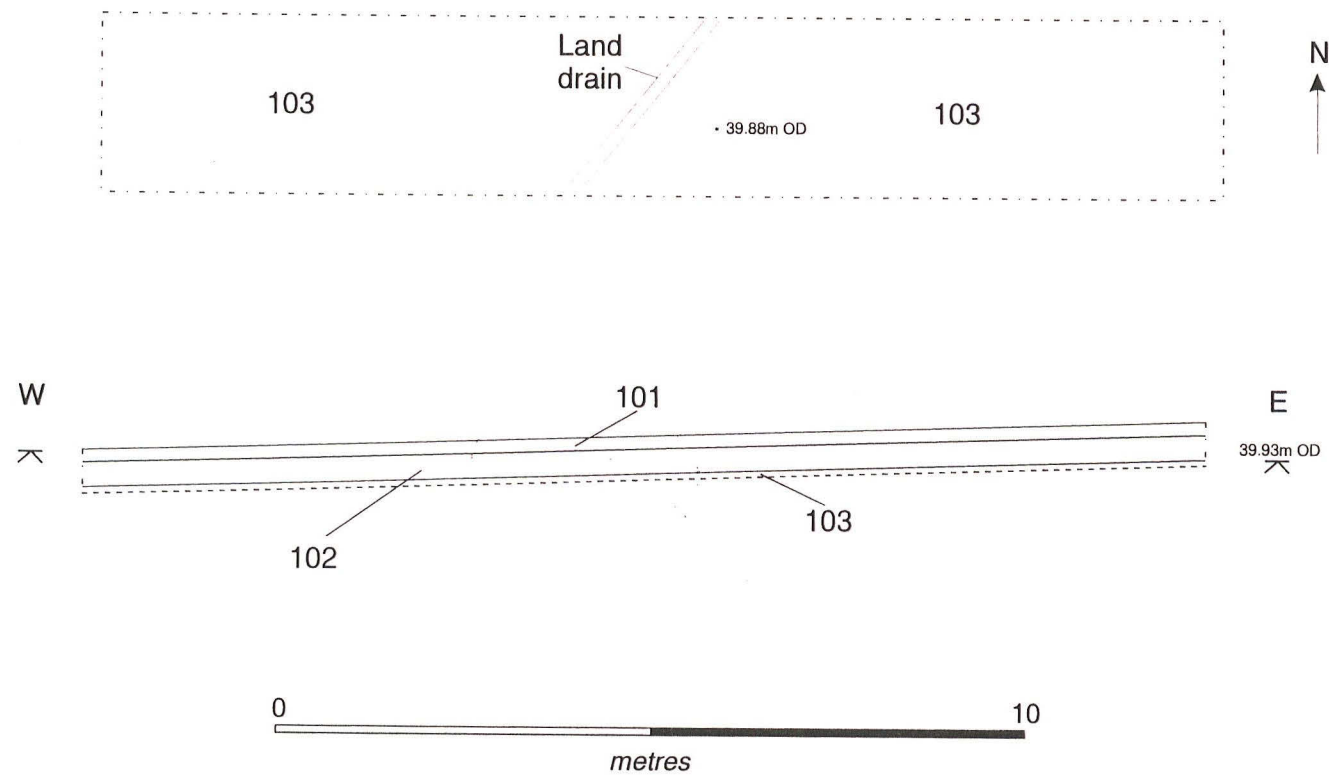


Fig. 3 Plan and south facing section of Trench 1.

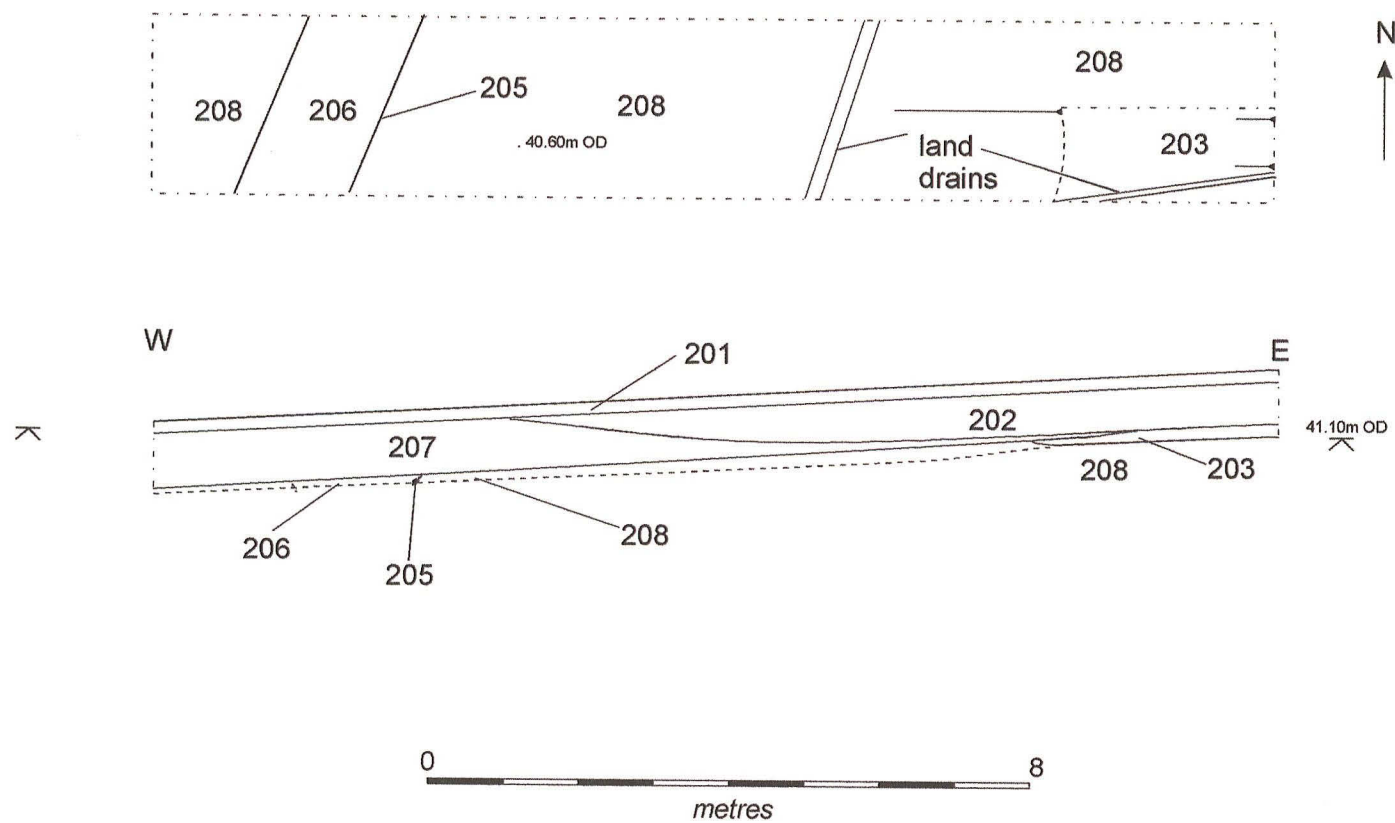


Fig. 4 Plan and section of Trench 2.



Pl. 3 Excavation of archaeological trenches under archaeological supervision looking west.

Pl. 4 Trench 1, looking west. Scales 2m.





Pl. 1 The site prior to excavation looking east towards Weldon Road.

Pl. 2 The site showing two linear earthworks





Pl. 5 Trench 2, looking west. Scales 2m.

Pl. 6 Deposit 203, looking east. Scales 1m & 0.50m

