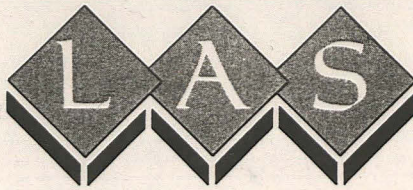


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# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
Technology complex Phase 2  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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COMMUNICATIONS  
DIVISION

CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
Technology complex Phase 2  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned to carry out a watching brief during preparatory groundwork for phases 1 and 2 of a new Technology Complex on the site known as Varlow's Yard, North Kelsey Road, north of the existing Grammar School (Fig. 1). This was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the planning consent. Phase 1 had been preceded by an evaluation excavation adjacent to the stone retaining wall forming the south boundary of the site (see Report: CGS Archaeological Evaluation 1992). Phase 1 groundwork (trenching for groundsills) is described in Report: CGS1-93. Service and drainage trenches are described in Reports: CGS2 and CGS3-93 respectively.

**Purpose of the Watching Brief**

Although the substantial foundations appropriate to a Roman defensive wall were not proved within the narrow limits of the excavation, it is thought that the existing retaining wall does not mark the exact line of the original outer face of the Roman wall. The south edge of what appeared to be a Roman outer defensive ditch, whose fill was cut by Saxon features, was found running parallel to the present wall. Its closeness to the present wall may indicate that the Roman wall foundations lie further to the south, within the retained bank. Conjectural projection of the ditch scarp angle northwards suggested a potential ditch width of c.12m. The angle of an early ground surface (recorded in service trench section) falling from north to south near the centre of the site may have been the north edge of the same ditch.

Considerable disturbances of post-medieval date made interpretation difficult in the relatively shallow trenches and it was considered that the piling operations for the Phase 2 building might provide an opportunity to examine deeper, less contaminated deposits.

**Demolition of Brick Barn**

Groundwork preparation necessitated the demolition of the single storey brick barn aligned east-west on the north boundary of the site (Fig. 1, Pls 1-4). This had been in recent use for storage of school furniture. The original use of this structure is not known but it had undergone a series of minor alterations and repairs, the most obvious being re-arrangement of internal divisions, insertion of new access points and windows and the blocking of earlier ones (Pls 5,6). Each bay had floors at varying levels and in different stages of concrete or brick.

There was no definite evidence for a west wall, this apparently having been formed by the east wall of the adjoining western building which displayed two low blocked arched openings. The walls were of 34cm thickness, with a more or less solid brick bond throughout (Pl.7). Four distinct sample brick sizes were taken from various places in the demolished rubble (Pl. 8); the earliest is unlikely to have pre-dated the late 18th century. There was no evidence for fireplaces and it is assumed that the burnt material found in the rubble was re-used or associated with various industrial processes carried out at different periods in the history of the building. As no conditions were made for the recording of any part of the structure only a cursory external examination was made before demolition. The only part of special note was the tumbled brickwork in the east gable, the style, together with the brick dimensions, bond and wall thickness, suggesting a late 18th century date. The arrangement and brick dimensions of the other footings on the site seemed to indicate a group of buildings that were nearly contemporary, and of which the northern range was possibly one of the earliest.

#### Phase 2 Piling (Pls 9-21)

The area for the Phase 2 building had been spread with hardcore and crushed limestone in preparation for the piling (Pl.9). Stakes marked the drilling centres, the overall area measured 18.10m east-west by 8.20m north-south (Pls 10-12). Its southern limit was 6m north of the projecting north gable of the phase 1 block; the northern limit being c.2.50m south of the southern wall of the demolished brick store shed. The piling contractors, Van Elle Piling Ltd, of Alfreton, Derbyshire, operated a Soilmec machine which employed a 300mm diameter auger having a depth capacity of c.11m. The method was to drill to a solid rock base (in this instance varying from 9 to 10m deep) and pump concrete in via a feed hose connected directly to the auger shaft (Pls 13,14). Pumping was commenced with the auger fully inserted; on withdrawal from each drill hole the lowest part of the auger was covered with concrete. The following hole was drilled with the auger still loaded with spoil and concrete from the previous one. The spoil occasionally fell from the auger on withdrawal but most was forced out at ground level (or lower) during drilling of the following hole. This made identification of any archaeological layers or fills that might be present extremely difficult and almost impossible where the auger had entered an underground water channel, flooding the spoil with muddy water and consequently contaminating and obscuring subsequent drill casts. Observation of any changes in the nature of the spoil are given below with reservations as to their accuracy. Due to the difficulty of identifying the layers of soft or fragmented rock (perceptible only to the machine operator) only the final depth is given.

Auger No.	Description
1-4	Not observed but c.1-1.50m of dark fill near the surface (observed by B. Chollerton) Depth c.9-9.50m
5	Mostly light brown sandy clay, occasional limestone lumps of up to c 50mm. Depth c.9-9.50m.
6	As 5
7	No noticeably dark spoil; water gushing from hole. Depth c.9.50m.
8	As previous. Depth c.9m
9	?Darker spoil to upper 2m, remainder light -brown sandy clay. Depth 9-9.50
10	Depth c.10m.
11	Black soil erupted from ground during upper 1-2m of augering (actual depth not known)(Pl.15).
12-17	All waterlogged from 5-6m downwards. Depth 9.50m generally.
18	Dark soil erupting at 1-2m. Water at 5m. Depth 10-10.50m.
19	Dark soil erupting while auger at depth of 6-7m (?from previous hole). (Photograph from south-west). At c. 3m dark green clay peeling from auger (from hole 18). Spoil wet. Depth c.10m.
20	At 2m, spoil from hole 19 darker brown. At 1-2m very dark soil erupting (from hole 19)
21	Depth 9.50m
22	Water ejected at c.6m. Hardly any spoil in auger. Depth c. 10m.
23	Depth c.9.50m.
24	Depth c.9.50m.
25	Depth c.9.50m.

#### Discussion

The unreliable data from the augering did not prove the presence of a deep ditch beneath the Phase 2 area. There was certainly up to 2m depth of dark fill at 1-4, 9, 10, 18 and 19, although the upper part of this has been previously shown to be (in part at least) post-medieval in date. Any subtler change in colour, such as might be associated with an ancient ditch fill similar in colour to material through which it was dug, would not be distinguishable in the poor conditions described above.

If the unproven north edge of a possible large ditch (seen during Phase 1 operations) is correct, then the projection of this edge westward might run beneath only the south-east corner of Phase 2 area (holes 17-20) or perhaps miss it completely. The only factor which approximated to this alignment was the occurrence of water or wet deposits generally south of a line drawn between holes 7 and 11, but

not consistently so. It is possible that water might still run through an ancient ditch fill here, particularly where the base is rock. The depths at which the water ejected was c.5-6m which is a level only c.2m below a point in the road at the north-west corner of the site.

In the absence of any artifacts in the upcast at any point during the augering, the question of the ditch location, and its alignment, must remain open until more favourable opportunities are presented elsewhere.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the following for their assistance, co-operation and advice:-

The employees of Taylor and Pearson (building contractors), especially Bert Clarke (foreman), Brian Cholerton (foreman) and piling operatives of Van Elle Piling Limited.

M.V. Clark  
March 1994

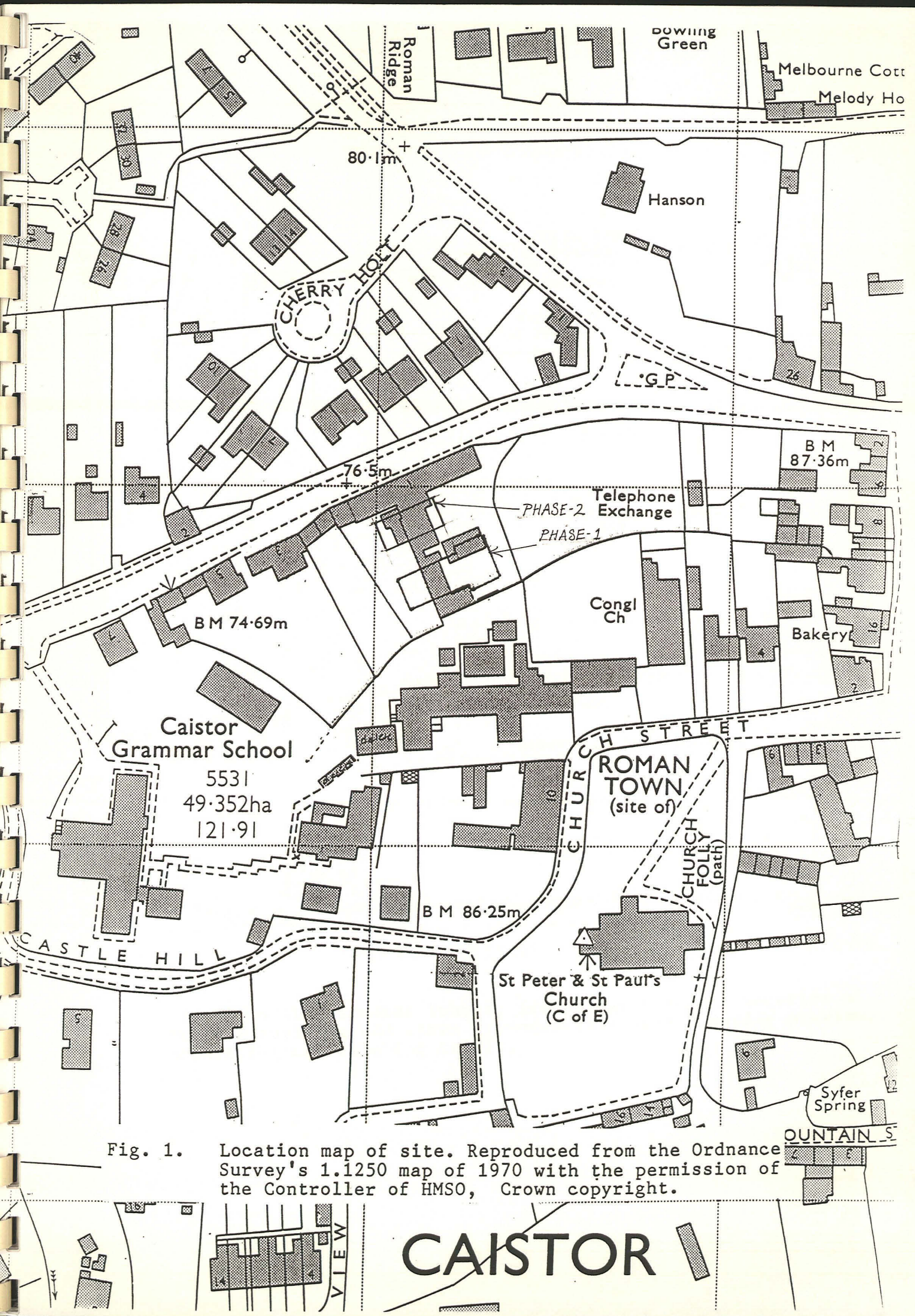


Fig. 1. Location map of site. Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:1250 map of 1970 with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, Crown copyright.

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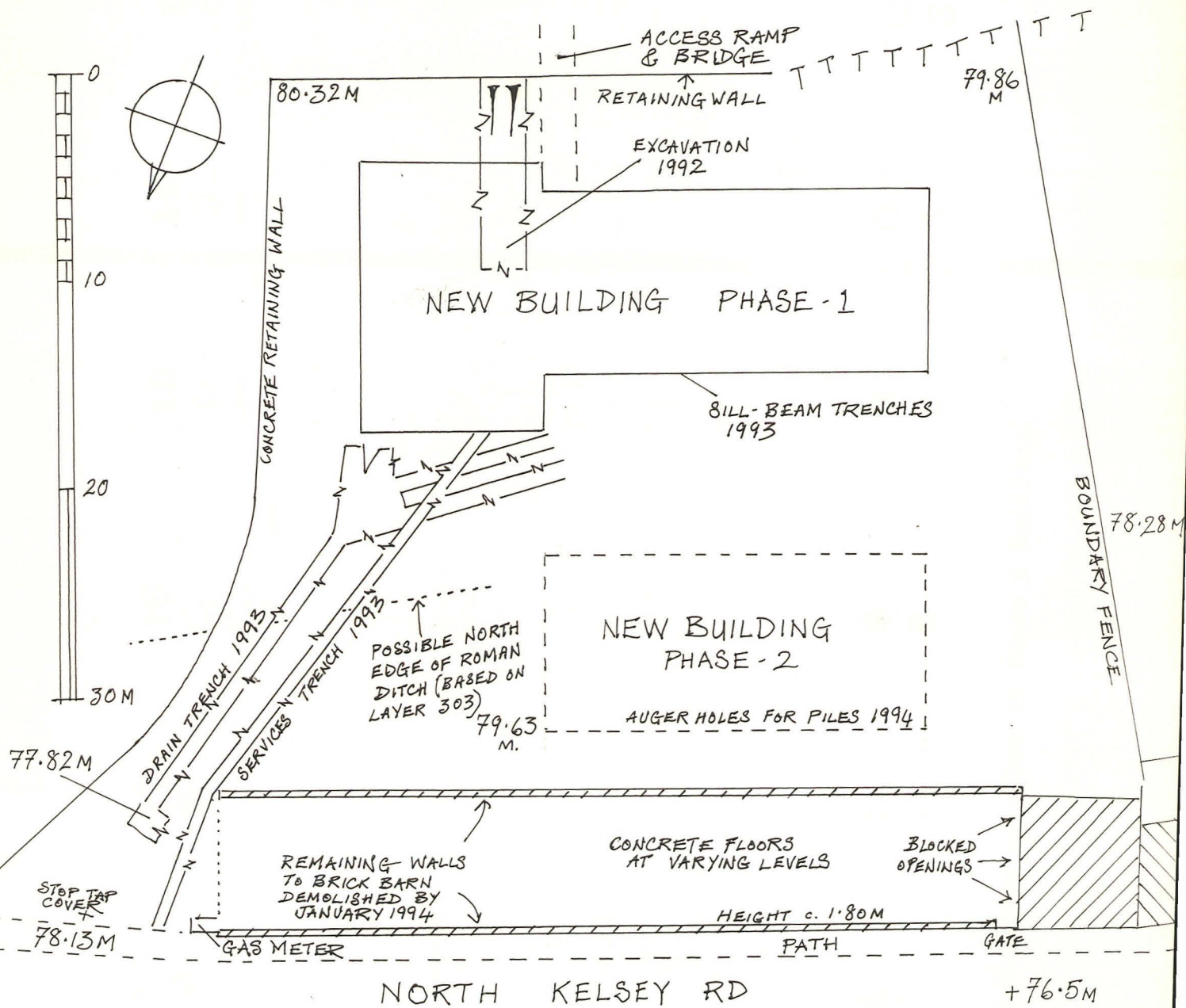


Fig. 2 Caistor Grammar School, Technology Complex. Location of Phase 2 building and other groundworks observed during previous archaeological watching briefs.



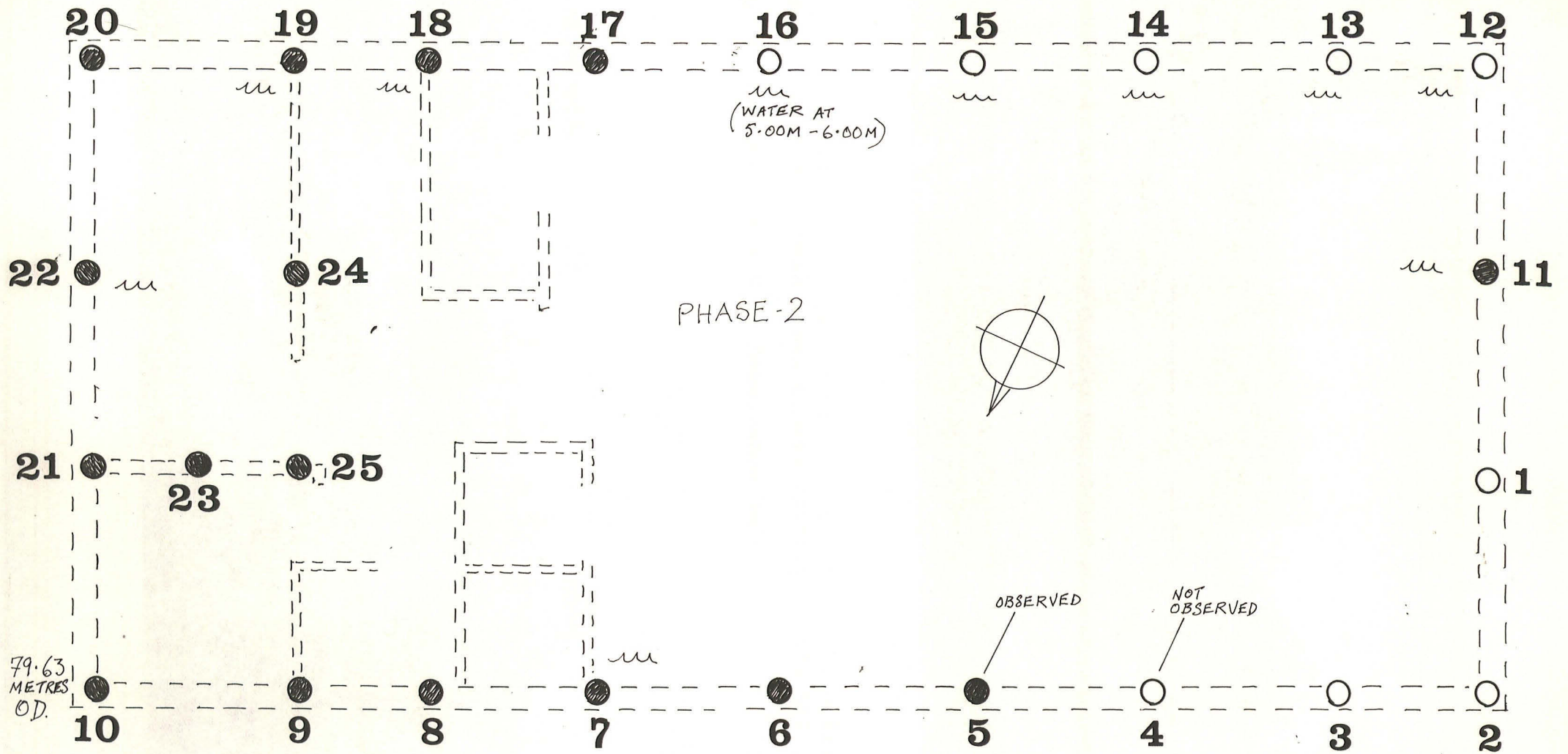


Fig. 3 Position of piles in Phase 2 building.



Pl. 1 General view of site from NE. Demolished barn fronting North Kelsey Rd. Phase 1 new school science block, top left.

Pl. 2 Terraced area S of demolished barn





Pl. 3 Demolished barn showing varying concrete floor levels

Pl. 4 General view of barn site from W





Pl. 5 Demolished barn S wall, internal elevation showing example of blocked openings

Pl. 6 E elevation of retained building showing blocked openings





Pl. 7. Section of barn N wall



Pl. 8 Examples of bricks of different sizes from demolished barn



Pl. 9 NW corner of Phase 2 site, looking N. Stakes mark piling positions

Pl. 10 Phase 2 site, view E. Stakes mark piling positions





Pl. 11 Phase 2 site, view E. Stakes mark piling positions

Pl. 12 Phase 2 site, view S. Stakes mark piling positions.  
Phase 1 building in background





Pl. 13 Auger arm of Soilmec drilling rig showing concrete feed hose attachment at top centre of auger



Pl. 14 Drilling in progress at Pile 5 , N end of site, view E.





Pl. 15 Black spoil at Pile 11



Pl. 16 Drilling in progress on S side of site



Pl. 17 Drilling in progress on S side of site

Pl. 18 Drilling in progress on E side of site



Pl. 19 Drilling in progress at NE corner of site

Pl. 20 Drilling in progress at NE corner of site





Pl. 21 General view of W part of site after piling, from SE.