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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF SERVICE TRENCHES AT
ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
WHAPLODE,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(WSM 01)**



A P S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

Event - L12578

MON L122187

Source - L17177

REN 22187

L14148

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Highways & Planning
Directorate

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OF SERVICE TRENCHES AT
ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
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(WSM 01)**

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Work Undertaken For
Father D. Carney

Report Compiled By
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons) AIFA

October 2001

A.P.S. Report No: 139/01



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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Purpose of a Watching Brief

A watching brief is defined as a record of observation and recording conducted during any work carried out for any purpose within a specified area where there is a possibility that archaeological remains may be disturbed or destroyed (2001).

2.2. Project Background

The Project Services was commissioned by Peter D. Carney to conduct an archaeological watching brief at the site of St Mary's church, Wisplade, on 24th September 2001.

2.3. Topography and Geology

Wisplade is located 8 km east of Spalding and 1 km south of Boston in South Holland

District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

St. Mary's church is located in the central portion of the village at National Grid Reference TF 325 2401 (Fig. 2). The church is situated at a height of c. 4m OD and is bounded to the north and south by a ditch.

A watch-tower is located on the site of the Saxon tower, which was built by the people living on the site during the 10th century. The tower was built as a watch-tower to protect the village from the Danes. The tower was built on a site which was previously occupied by a Saxon watch-tower. The tower was built on a site which was previously occupied by a Saxon watch-tower.

2.4. Archaeological Setting

Wisplade is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. It is listed as *Copelade* and *Copolade* the name is derived from the Old English *cop* meaning a watercourse and *wap*, an eel-like fish (Cameron 1998, 137). The Domesday Survey records that the land was owned by the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craun and was assessed along with Holbeach and Gedney (Fosber and Longley 1976).

The earliest remains connected with the church are some fragments of Late Saxon sculpture. These include fragments of an early to late 11th century grave cover and a mid to late 11th century grave cover (Gerson and Staker 1999, 270). Two additional Saxon sculpted stones are also recorded from the church which have since disappeared. These would appear to confirm the existence of a church in the village during this period.

St. Mary's church has elements dating from the 12th century with additions extending from the 13th, 14th and 17th centuries.

1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of new service trenches at St. Mary's church, Whaplode, Lincolnshire.

St. Mary's church has 12th century features but largely dates from the early 13th and 14th centuries. Two Late Saxon (AD 850-1100) grave covers or markers may indicate the existence of an earlier church on the site.

The investigations revealed a graveyard soil, containing a burial, overlain by modern topsoil. Finds recovered from this investigation comprise medieval floor tiles, a post-medieval floor tile, 18th - 19th century pottery and a fragment of glass.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.' (IFA 1997).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Father D. Carney to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at St. Mary's church, Whaplode, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was undertaken on the 24th September 2001.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Whaplode is located 8km east of Spalding and 19km south of Boston in South Holland

District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

St. Mary's church is located in the central portion of the village at National Grid Reference TF 3235 2401 (Fig. 2). The church is situated at a height of c. 4m OD with land dropping to heights of c. 3m to the south and north.

Whaplode is located on soils of the Romney Series, typically coarse silty gleyic brown calcareous alluvial soils (Robson 1990, 26). Beneath these soils is a drift geology of young marine alluvium which overlies a solid geology of Upper Jurassic West Walton Formation mudstones and limestones (BGS 1992).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Whaplode is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Copelade* and *Copolade* the name is derived from the Old English *lād* meaning a watercourse and *cwappa*, an eel-like fish (Cameron 1998, 137). The Domesday Survey records that the land was owned by the King, Crowland Abbey, Count Alan and Guy of Craon and was assessed along with Holbeach and Gedney (Foster and Longley 1976).

The earliest remains connected with the church are some fragments of Late Saxon sculpture. These include fragments of an early to late 11th century grave cover and a mid to late 11th century grave cover (Everson and Stocker 1999, 270). Two additional Saxon sculpted stones are also recorded from the church which have since disappeared. These would appear to indicate the existence of a church in the village during this period.

St. Mary's church has elements dating to the mid 12th century with additional works dating from the 13th, 14th and 17th centuries

(DoE 1987, 77). The church was restored in 1818. To the northeast of the church is the base and shaft of a 14th century cross (*ibid.* 79).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to record and interpret archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, sequence, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Two trenches, one for the supply of gas and one for electricity, were excavated by machine to depths of 0.5m (electricity) and 0.75m (gas). Following excavation, the sides of the trenches were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were partially or fully excavated by hand to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual material. The depth and thickness of each deposit were measured from the ground surface. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording of deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Finds recovered from excavated deposits were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). Burials, where encountered, were left *in-situ*. Records of the deposits and features recognised during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on artefact dating and the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit encountered in the trenches was a graveyard soil comprising mid brown silt (002). A single human skull (003) was identified in this deposit but was left *in-situ*. Other finds retrieved from the graveyard soil include three pieces of dressed stone (which were not kept), two 13th - 14th century floor tiles and a glass bottle fragment of 17th century date.

Overlying this was the present topsoil of black sandy silt (001) which was 0.15m thick. A post-medieval floor tile and 18th - 19th century pottery was retrieved from this deposit.

6. DISCUSSION

A disturbed graveyard soil was the earliest deposit encountered which was overlain by the present topsoil. A single burial was recorded but was not retrieved from the trench.

Several finds were recorded from the site and comprise medieval and later floor tiles, 18th - 19th century pottery and a glass bottle neck. Such finds, derived from the topsoil and graveyard soil, may indicate nothing more than discarded rubbish incorporated into the ground during grave digging. The floor tiles indicate that the church was likely to have had a tiled and patterned floor.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations were carried out at Whaplode as the site lay within the

churchyard of the 12th century and later St. Mary's church.

A developed graveyard soil was encountered that contained a single burial. This was sealed by topsoil.

Medieval and later floor tiles, a glass bottle neck of 17th century date and two sherds of 18th - 19th century pottery were retrieved during this investigation. No waterlogged features were found which indicates that few environmental indicators (snails, seeds, pollen *etc.*) will survive other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Father David Carney who commissioned the fieldwork and post excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Denise Drury and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly permitted access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Denise Drury
Supervisor: Jim Snee
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Photographic Reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services
GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain
IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

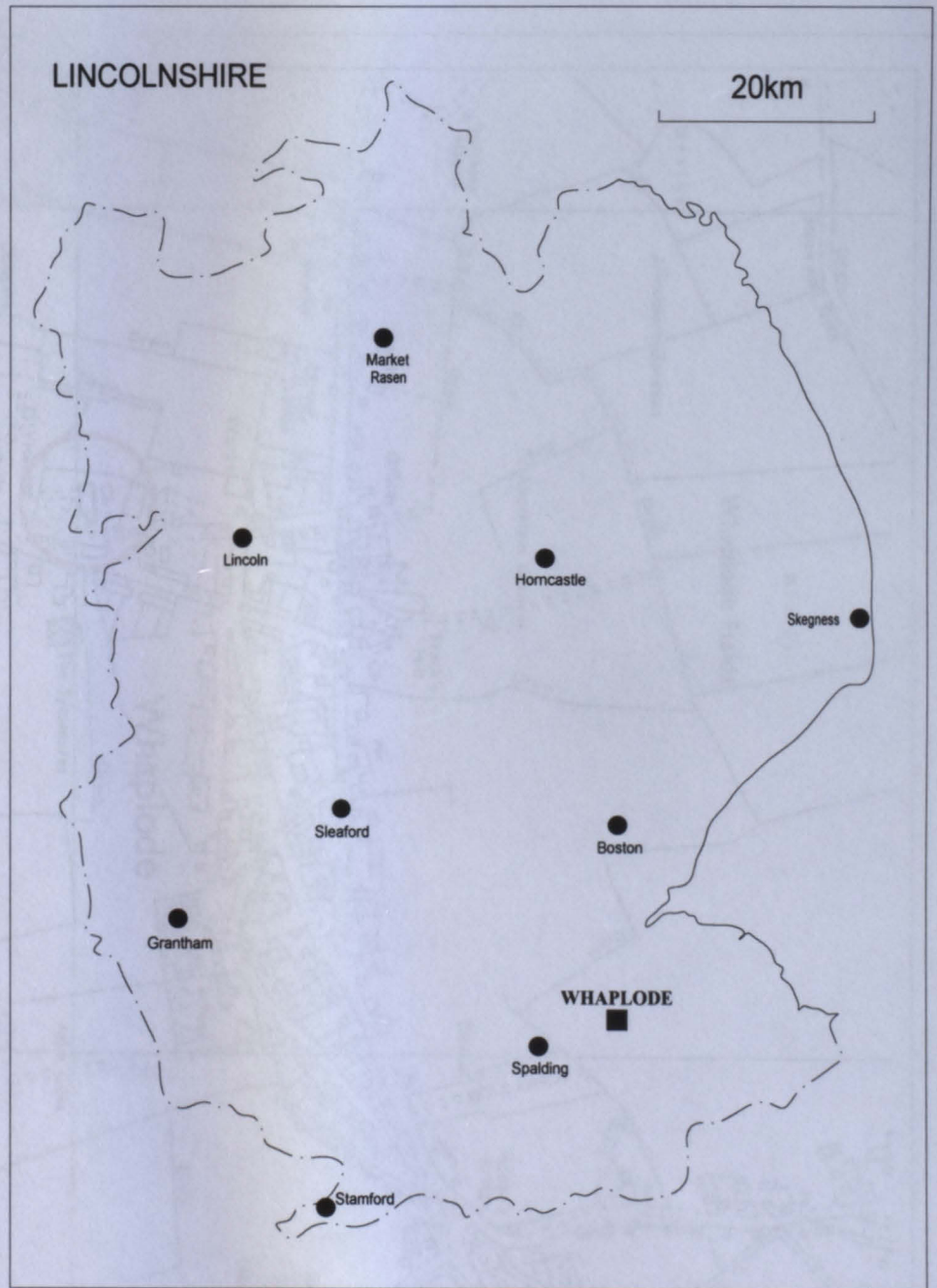
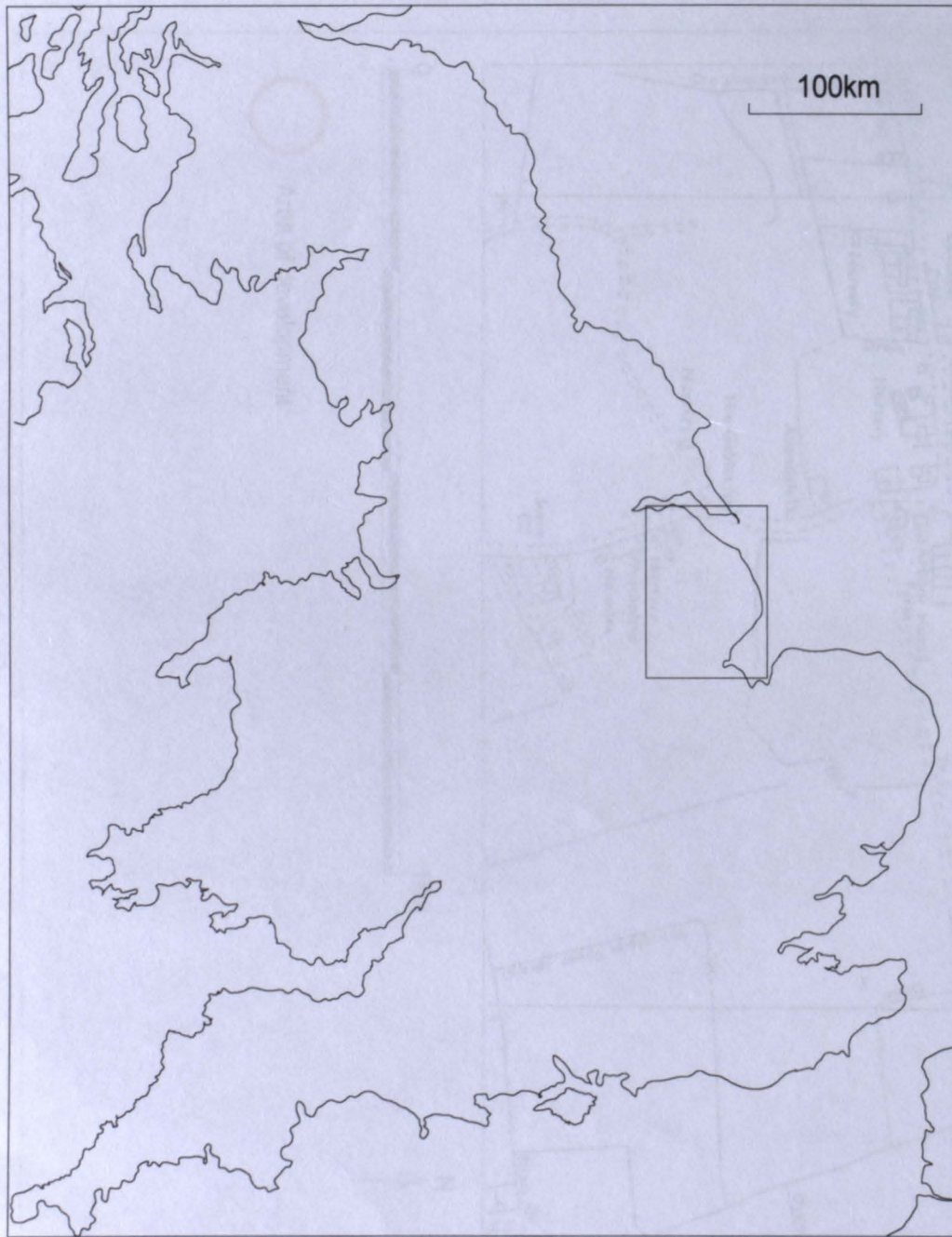
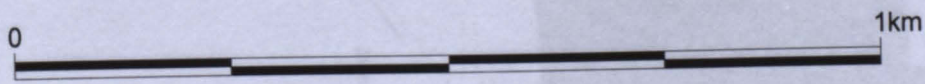
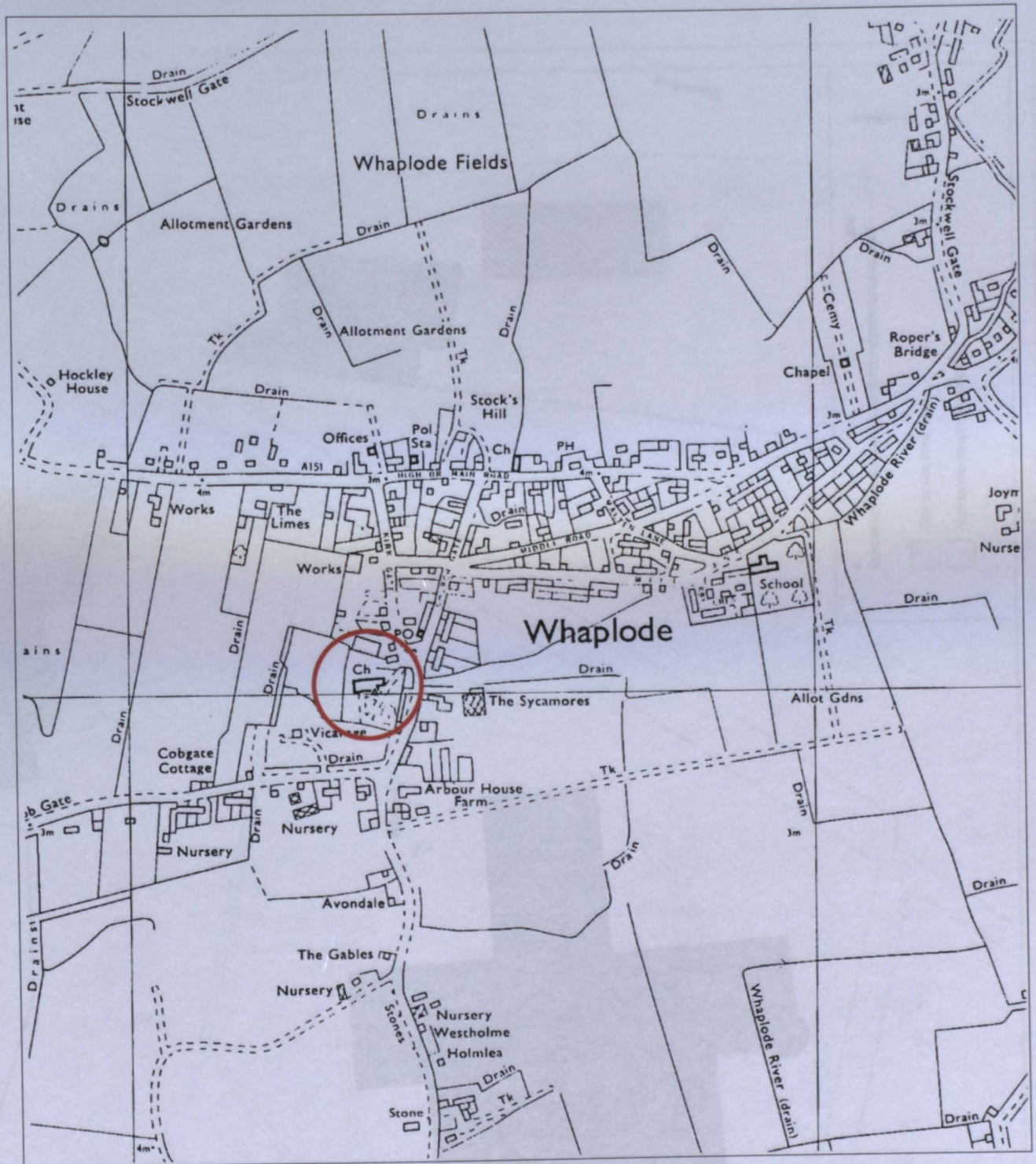


Figure 1 - General Location Plan




 Area of development

Figure 2 - Site location plan

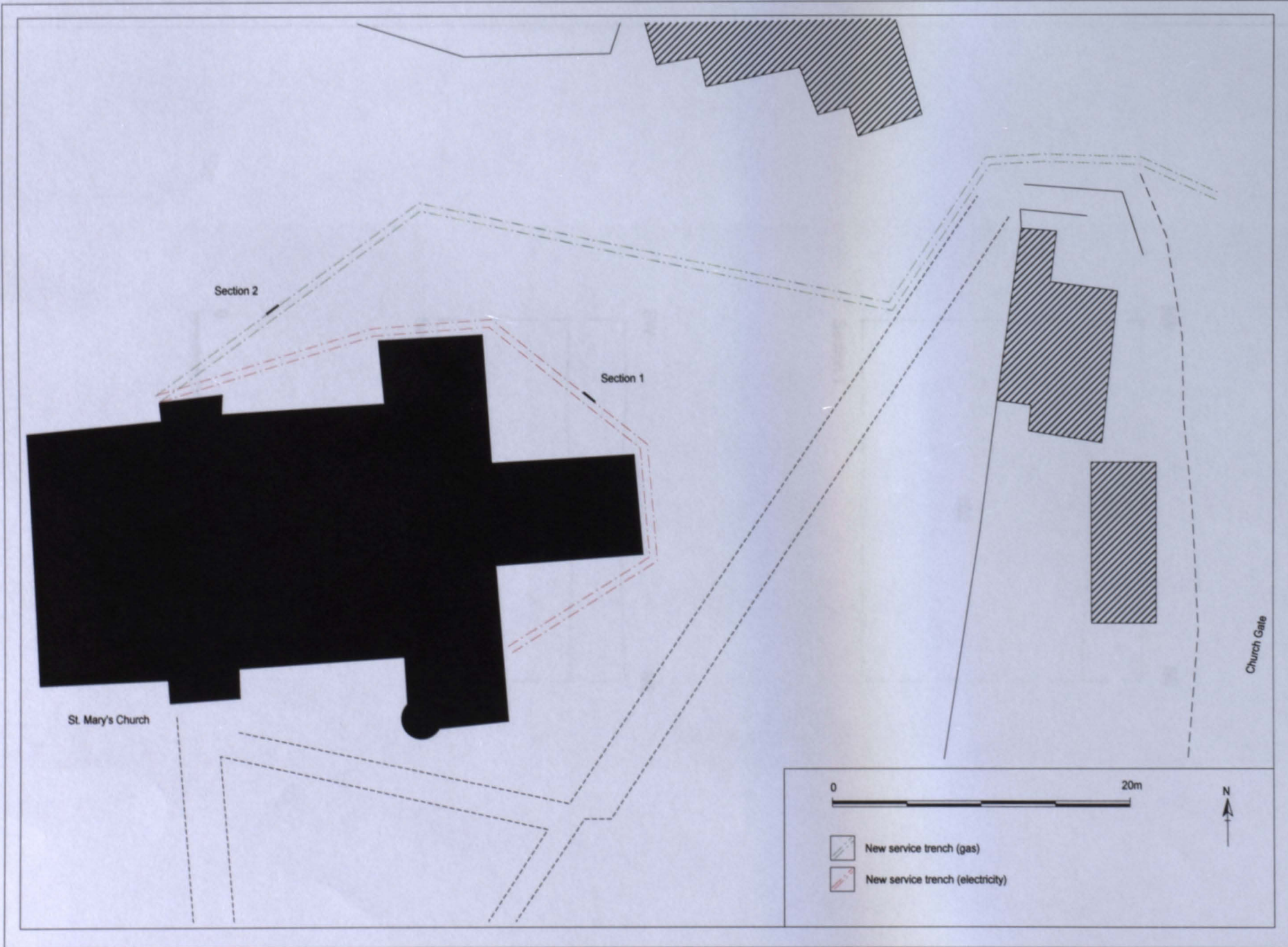


Figure 3 - Plan of the service trenches and location of drawn sections

Jim Bonson

Archaeology Section

With Compliments
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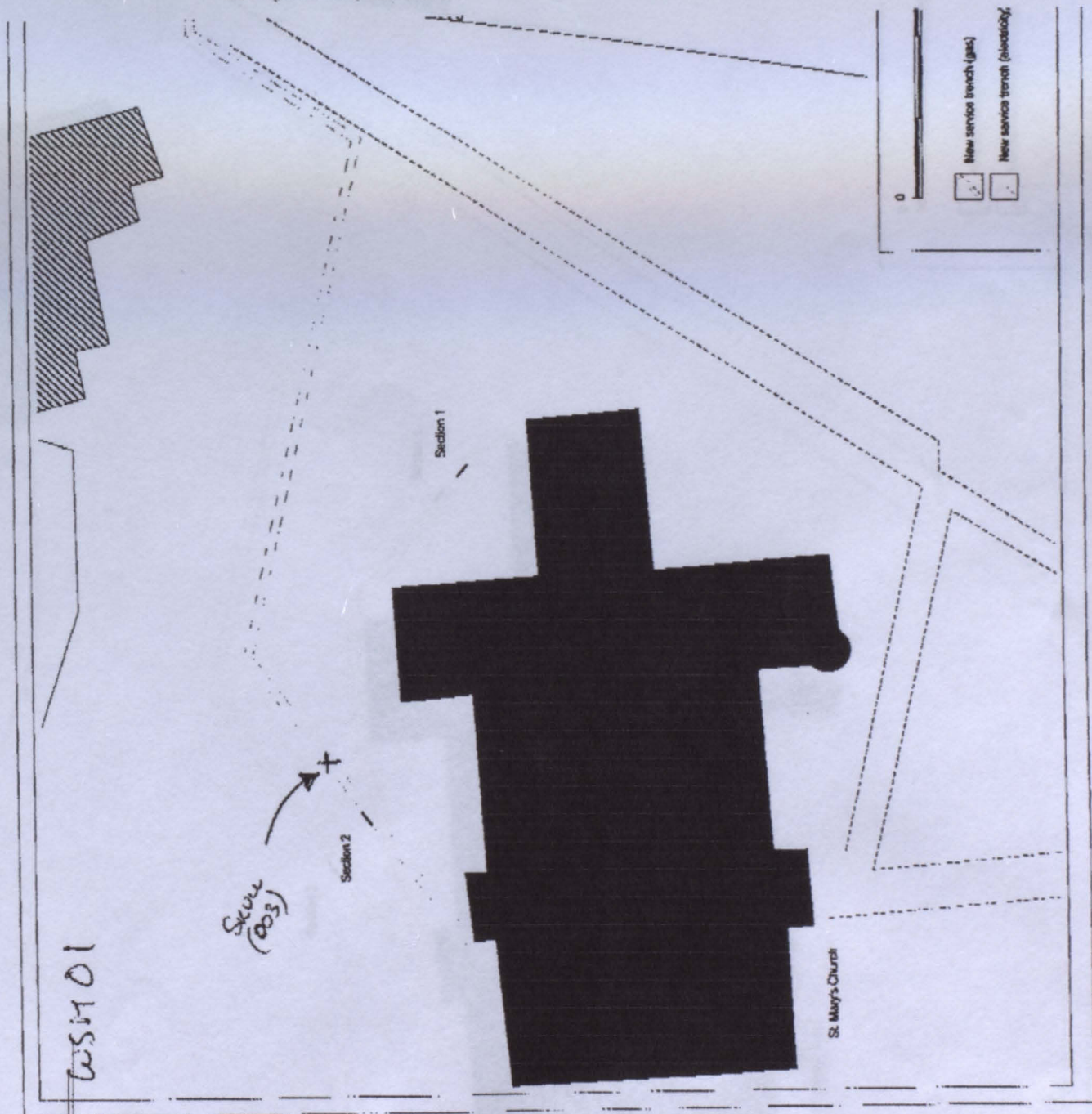


Figure 3 - Plan of the service trenches and location of drawn sections

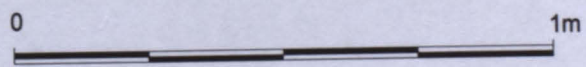
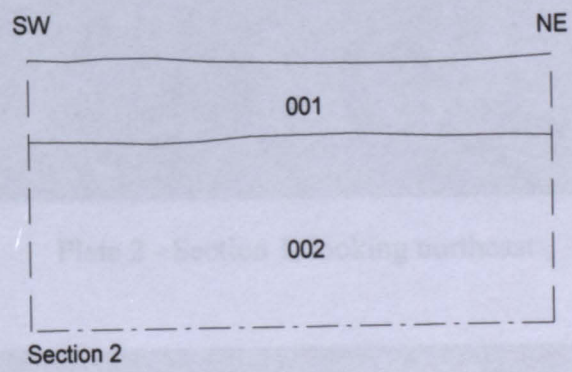
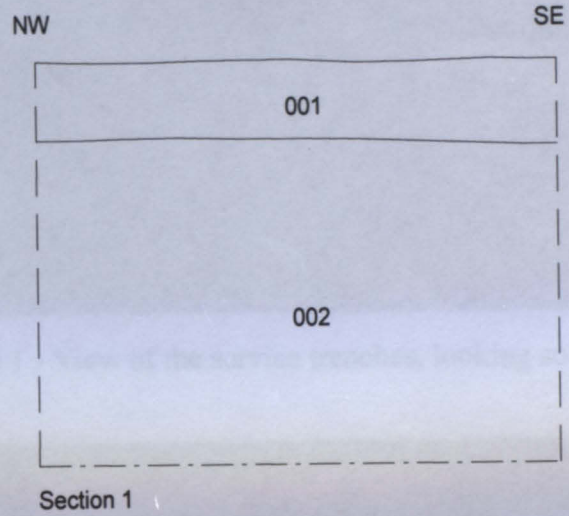


Plate 3 - Skull Fragment (003)

Figure 4 - Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 - View of the service trenches, looking southwest



Plate 2 - Section 1, looking northeast



Plate 3 - Skull fragment (003)

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Friable black sandy silt, occasional gravel and rubble, 150mm thick	Topsoil
002	Firm mid brown silt with occasional building debris, >0.6m thick	Graveyard soil
003	Human skull, unexcavated	Burial

No.	Description	No.	Weight (g)	Context
001	Yellowish buff-glazed stoneware, base 13°-14° century	1	14	14 th century
002	Red-glazed earthenware, black glazed, base 13°-14° century	1	9	
003	Flint tile, glazed black/dark green, very worn surface, no mortar adhering, post-medieval?	1	235	
004	Flint tile, glazed green over plain crown slip, mortar adhering 13°-14° century	2	1143	
005	Red green brown rock and tile, rough waterworn, early 17 th century	1	41	

There are five tiles, one of them virtually complete, are plain slipped and glazed floor tiles of red-brown slip. They are 13th-14th century and 150mm thick and have mortar adhering. The third tile, retrieved from (002), is also 114mm square but 150mm thick. This is also glazed but unslipped, the lead glazed deriving its colour a black or very dark green, showing the woven fabric of the tile. This tile is at a rough floor level than about 100mm and also, in accordance with the above, does not have any mortar adhering. This may also be a medieval piece but is perhaps more likely to be post-medieval, perhaps a replacement or repair to the medieval tiled floor. The two glass colours of the tile, a red yellowish and a now black, perhaps suggest that the floor was a deep-set lead piece of alternating light and dark tiles.

Condition

All the material is in good condition and present no long-term storage problems. Archival storage of the collection is by material class.

Reinterpretation

There have been several previous archaeological investigations by Wimpole and district and the subjects of reports. Additionally, the aim of the present investigation was to write a wider report that would bring together the progress of such-based research that collected and reported the archaeological and historical evidence for the area. Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are mentioned in the Local Area Change Chart of Sites and Monuments Survey.

Potential

Although only a small collection, the assemblage has moderate local potential and significance and indicates that the church and a tiled and patterned floor in the medieval period, and probably later.

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

Rachael Hall, Hilary Healey and Gary Taylor

Provenance

The material was recovered from the topsoil (001) and a graveyard soil (002).

The earlier ceramic may have been produced relatively locally in the general Moulton-Spalding area.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the table.

Ceramic floor tile is the most abundant material in the small assemblage. Only tile, pottery and glass was recovered and no faunal remains were retrieved.

Context	Description	No.	Weight (g)	Context Date
001	?Nottingham salt-glazed stoneware, late 18 th - 19 th century	1	14	19 th century
	Red painted earthenware, black glazed, late 18 th - 19 th century	1	9	
	Floor tile, glazed ?black/dark green, very worn surface, no mortar adhering, post-medieval?	1	235	
002	Floor tile, glazed green over plain cream slip, mortar adhering 13 th - 14 th century	2	1163	
	Mid green bottle neck and rim, much iridescence, early 17 th century	1	44	

The two earlier tiles, one of them virtually complete, are plain slipped and glazed floor tiles of medieval date. Both are 118mm square and 24mm thick and have mortar adhering. The third tile, retrieved from (002), is also 118mm square but 22mm thick. This is also glazed but unslipped, the lead glazed deriving its colour, a black or very dark green, from the iron-rich fabric of the tile. This tile is in a much finer fabric than those from (001) and also, in contrast to the others, does not have any mortar adhering. This may also be a medieval piece but is perhaps more likely to be post-medieval, perhaps a replacement or repair to the medieval tiled floor. The two glaze colours of the tile, a pale yellowish and a near black, perhaps suggests that the floor was a chequer-board pattern of alternating light and dark tiles.

Condition

All the material is in good condition and present no long-term storage problems. Archive storage of the collection is by material class.

Documentation

There have been several previous archaeological investigations in Whaplode and district that are the subjects of reports. Additionally, the area of the present investigation site is within a wider region that has been subject to a programme of desk-based research that collated and examined the archaeological and historical evidence for the area. Details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Potential

Although only a small collection, the assemblage has moderate local potential and significance and indicates that the church had a tiled and patterned floor in the medieval period, and probably later.

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g.(004).
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

3	Context records
1	Photographic record sheets
1	Drawing sheets
1	Bag of finds
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 2001.374

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: WSM 01

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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