



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Land to Side and Rear of High House
High St, Bicker, Lincs.
Archaeological Evaluation**

NGR: TF 2245 3775

Planning Application No.: B/01/0313

Site Code: BHHS 01

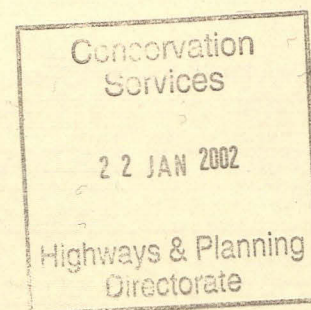
LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2001.294

REPORT

for

**Mr D. M. Gedney
on behalf of
Mr B. Gedney**

**LAS Report No. 565
January 2002**



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Contents

List of figures and plates

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Planning Background	1
Site Location and Description	1
Archaeological Background	2
Scope of Work	2
Aims and Objectives	2
Evaluation Trenches	2
Results	3
Trench 1	3
Trench 2	3
Trench 3	4
Discussion	4
Conclusion	5
Reference	5
Acknowledgements	5
Archive List	5
Appendix 1: The Post Roman Pottery Report and Archive Lists	
Appendix 2: Context List	
The figures	
The plates	

The Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Bicker. Based on the 1955 OS 1:25,000 map sheet TF 23, with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS licence no. AL 100002165.

Fig. 2 High House, High Street, Bicker. Site and trench location. Based on OS 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS licence no. AL 100002165.

Fig. 3 High House, High Street, Bicker. Proposed development, plan supplied by the client (reduced scale).

Fig. 4 Trench 1. a) Plan b) Section at east end of trench showing fall in natural towards the street. c) section through pit 103.

Fig. 5 a) Trench 2 plan and section b) Trench 3 plan and section.

The Plates

Pl. 1 High Street Bicker. Aerial view of site to right and rear of house. Copy of photo belonging to the client, taken in the 1960s.

Pl. 2 High Street Bicker, view of farm house prior to rendering showing stone quoins and brick tumbling in the gable end. Copy of photo belonging to the client.

Pl. 3 High Street Bicker, general view looking east.

Pl. 4 Trench 1 looking east.

Pl. 5 Trench 1 looking west. Scales 2m and 1m

Pl. 6 Trench 1, pit 103, looking east. Scales 0.30m and 0.20m

Pl. 7 Trench 2 during excavation, looking east.

Pl. 8 Trench 2 looking north-west. (Machine excavation in foreground revealed further natural silts.) Scales 2m and 1m

Pl. 9 Trench 2, north section showing post-medieval pit with pot sherd left of scale. Horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 1m intervals.

Pl. 10 Trench 3, looking south. Scale 2m and 1m

Pl. 11 Trench 3, sondage along west section, Scales 2m and 1m.

Pl. 12 Trench 3, west section, showing lenses of charcoal and burnt clay. Horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 1m.

Land to Side and Rear of High House, High St, Bicker

Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: TF 2245 3775

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Summary

Three evaluation trenches were excavated at the front centre and rear of the proposed development site. One small pit was found in trench 1, with no finds, and no evidence was found for occupation along the street frontage. The only feature in Trench 2 was a rubbish pit containing 15/16th century pottery. Trench 3 at the rear of the property revealed lenses of flood deposits containing small fragments of charcoal and fired clay, possibly the remnants of briquetage (used in the processing of salt). Associated with these deposits were a few sherds of 11th century pottery. The site was probably in the vicinity of a salt processing site but not actually on it. The deposits were found at a depth of 0.90m below the present ground surface and lie below the proposed base for any building foundations. The impact of development is therefore likely to be limited, perhaps to disturbance by deeper service trenches.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr B. Gedney to undertake an evaluation of the above site in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998) and the Brief set by the Boston Community Archaeologist dated June 28th 2001.

Planning Background

An application has been made for the development of 5 domestic dwellings and detached garages (Fig. 3). The application is to be determined after archaeological evaluation of the site has been carried out.

Site Location and Description

Bicker is situated in the south west part of the Lincolnshire Fen 10km south of Boston (Fig. 1). The application site is located in the centre of Bicker, south of St Swithun's church, on the west side of the Old Eau a drainage dyke which runs through the middle of the village and flows towards Bicker Haven, a former inlet of the Wash where evidence for medieval saltmaking has been recorded (Healey 1999). The proposed development site comprises a sub-rectangular plot, 0.28ha in extent located on the west side of High Street, north of the playing field (Fig. 2, Pl. 1). High House is a farm building of probable mid-late 18th century date (Pl. 2). The land is currently cultivated as a vegetable garden.

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Archaeological Background

Bicker is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and there is archaeological evidence to suggest that the settlement originated in the middle Saxon period. An important port, centred around Bicker Haven, developed in the late Saxon period and flourished until the river silted up in the early post-medieval period. There were 22 active saltpans in the village at the time of the Domesday Survey. Evaluation of a site to the south-east of the proposed development, in January 2001, found evidence for salt-making, as well as industrial and domestic activity, dating to the 12-14th centuries. Evidence for 11th century saltmaking was found during a watching brief off Church Road, to the east of the site, on the opposite side of the Old Eau. Evaluation and a subsequent watching brief off Red Lion Street in 1996 identified Saxon occupation on the street frontage as well as medieval and post-medieval features. The potential for Saxon and/or medieval remains relating to the settlement and/or industrial activity on the proposed development site was thought to be high.

Scope of Work

A programme of archaeological evaluation comprising a 2% sample of the area was carried out to establish the extent of archaeological remains.

Aims and Objectives

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 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.

Evaluation Trenches

Site evaluation was undertaken on October 18th 2001 and was undertaken by a team of two archaeologists. Three trenches were excavated in the front, centre and to the rear of the site. The ground was under a crop of cabbages at the time of the evaluation. Each trench was machine excavated, under archaeological supervision, using a JCB with a toothless dyking bucket, to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon.

The trenches were hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations should these prove to be necessary.

Results

Trench 1 (10 x 2m)

Trench 1 was situated perpendicular to High Street (west-east) in the garden north of High House (Pls 3 and 4). It was positioned to avoid the greenhouse to the rear and a cess pit next to the outside toilet. Although the ground was under a crop of cabbages at the time of the evaluation but it was still possible to see sherds of pottery in the topsoil. Nine pieces of pottery were collected prior to excavation of Trench 1 and are catalogued in Appendix 1 as U/S (unstratified) material. The earliest piece of pottery from the site came from this surface collection- a late 10th/11th century sherd of Stamford Ware. The remainder of the sherds from the surface ranged in date from the 11th-19th centuries.

The topsoil in Trench 1 was 0.25m deep and was a dark brown silty garden soil **100**. It sealed a thick deposit of subsoil of mid-brown silt **101** (Pl. 4). The depth of subsoil at the west end of the site was 0.50m but dropped at the east end of the trench below the level of excavation where it was a minimum of 0.80m deep (Fig. 4b, Pl. 5). A single handle was found in this layer, which was early to mid-13th century, probably from a jug manufactured in Lincoln. The subsoil overlay a mottled light yellow-brown silt **102** which was interpreted as a natural flood deposit (Pl. 5). However, it may seal archaeological deposits at a greater depth.

The base of the trench, at 3.93m O.D. was almost exactly that of the street level on the other side of the hedge but the garden surface level was 1.10m higher than street level.

Apart from a modern dog burial, the only feature recorded in Trench 1 was a small oval pit **103** (Pl. 6). This was 0.60m x 0.40m in area and 0.27m deep. Its fill, **104**, was a mixture of the subsoil and natural silts through which it had been cut. It contained no finds.

Trench 2 (10.10m x 2m)

Trench 2 was located to the south-west of the greenhouse and aligned north-south (Pl. 7). The topsoil **200** in this trench was 0.25m deep and was a dark brown silty garden soil, as in Trench 1. It sealed a thick deposit of subsoil of mid-brown silt **201**, 0.50m deep, again similar to that found in Trench 1 (Fig. 5a). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1m, penetrating the natural yellow-brown silts (**202**), which were similar to those found in Trench 1, but a little darker. At the south end of the trench the machine excavated a small part of the trench to a depth of 2m to check whether layer **202** sealed archaeological remains but the excavation did

not penetrate the base of this deposit (Pl. 8).

At the north end of the trench was a large rubbish pit **203**, recorded mainly in section. It was dug through the subsoil **201** and extended below the base of the trench, giving a minimum depth of 0.80m. It extended a maximum of 0.84m in plan, at the base of north-east corner of the trench (Pl. 9). It was more than 2m in diameter. A base sherd of pottery from its fill **204**, was a Toynton ware of 15/16th century date, possibly part of a urinal. Pottery collected from the topsoil in Trench 2 was also of 15/16th century date (with the exception of one sherd).

There were no other features in Trench 2.

Trench 3 (14.90m x 2m)

Trench 3 was located near the south-west end of the proposed development site. It was positioned to avoid the seedling cabbages which had been planted along the westernmost strip of the site. The sequence of topsoil (**300**) and subsoil (**301**) over a natural yellow-brown silt (**302**) was the same as found in Trenches 1 and 2. However, at the north end of the original trench a thin layer of silt containing fragments of fired clay was seen, so the trench was extended a further 5m northwards. This revealed a more complex sequence of deposits (Fig. 5). Beneath the subsoil was a thin patchy layer of yellow silt (**305**) 8-10cm thick which overlay **306**, a deposit similar in colour to the subsoil **301**. It was possibly an earlier ground surface, which had been subject to a short flooding episode, represented by **303**. Beneath **306** was a thin deposit of silt which contained burnt clay fragments and charcoal flecks, **303**. It was 5cm thick, and crossed the trench diagonally. Two sherds of pottery were found in this layer, both of 11/12th century date. Beneath **303** was **304**, a dark grey lens of silt containing charcoal and fragments of mussel shells. It filled the undulations in the natural silt **302** below. Three sherds of 11th century Stamford ware were found in layer **304**.

North of **303** layer **306** lay immediately over **307** which was slightly paler than **306** but not as pale as the natural silt **302** beneath. The horizon between layers **306** and **307** was unclear and may represent an even earlier topsoil horizon, separated by an episode of flooding (**303** and **304**) which must have occurred at a date soon after the 12th century.

Discussion

Trenches 1 and 2 failed to reveal any significant archaeological remains. It was particularly surprising that no evidence of former occupation was found near the street frontage. The pottery sherds from this part of the site are likely to represent disposal of rubbish from a nearby building. The pottery found in Trench 2 was earlier than the material from the front of the site and the rubbish pit **203** was of a similar date (15/16th century). The deposits in Trench

3 contained the earliest stratified pottery of all, being 11/12th century in date, and hint at a complex sequence of flooding episodes with intervening dry periods. Although the charcoal and fired clay fragments in layers **303** and **304** suggest that there was saltmaking activity in the vicinity, the deposits present in Trench 3 were probably flood layers which had carried fragments of the material perhaps for some distance from their source. The date of these deposits ties in with the evidence for 11th century saltmaking activity at the site off Church Road, to the east of the site.

Conclusion

There was little evidence for human activity on the site, apart from the general spreading of rubbish that is perhaps more indicative of cultivation than occupation. There is evidence of periodic flooding in Trench 3 with an indication that saltmaking was being carried out nearby in the 11th century or earlier, but there was no evidence of burning in situ. The thin layers of material containing the fired clay were found at a depth of c.1m below the present ground surface. The proposed strip foundations for construction of the houses are unlikely to penetrate to this depth. The impact of development is therefore likely to be limited, perhaps to disturbance by deeper service trenches.

Naomi Field

January 18th 2002

Reference

Healey Hilary, 1999 'Medieval salt-making site at Bicker Haven', in Antony Bell, David Gurney and Hilary Healey *Lincolnshire Salterns: Excavations at Helpringham, Holbeach St Johns and Bicker Haven*. East Anglian Archaeology Report 89.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Mr and Mrs B. Gedney for their hospitality whilst on site. The excavations were carried out by Naomi Field and Tom McCarthy. The illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid .

Site Archive

18 context sheets

Site notes

2 sheets site drawings

5 ink report drawings

Pottery and tile archive report

Correspondence

Photographs Film no. 01/88 Negs. 00-23 including those used in report

Lindsey
Archaeological Services

Archive Report on the Post-Roman Pottery from High House, High Street, Bicker, Lincolnshire (BHHS01)

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

Introduction

Thirty-two sherds of post-Roman pottery were recovered from the site. The pottery ranges in date from the Saxo-Norman to the early modern period. The pottery was examined both visually and using a x20 magnification, then recorded on an Access database using locally and nationally agreed codenames.

Condition

The material is in variable condition, with some vessels being abraded while others are in a fresh condition. Sherd size is on the whole in the small to medium range, although a few sherds are larger and may suggest primary deposition.

Overall Chronology and Source

A range of 15 different post-Roman pottery types were found on the site, the type and general date range for these fabrics is shown in Table 1. Most of the material found on the site was typical of pottery recovered from previous excavations within Bicker, and includes local and regional types.

Table 1: Post-Roman pottery codenames and total quantities by sherd and vessel count

codename	full name	earliest date	latest date	sherds
BL	Black-glazed wares	1550	1750	3
BOU	Bourne D ware	1450	1650	4
BOUA	Bourne-type Fabrics A, B and C	1150	1350	1
LFS	Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware	970	1200	1
LMLOC	Late Medieval local fabrics	1350	1550	1
LSW2	13th to 14th century Lincoln Glazed Ware	1200	1320	1
MY	Midlands Yellow ware	1550	1650	1
NCBW	19th-century Buff ware	1800	1900	1
NOTS	Nottingham stoneware	1690	1900	1
RGRE	Reduced glazed red earthenware	1600	1850	1
SLQSO	South Lincolnshire Quartz Shell & Oolite	1000	1200	1
ST	Stamford Ware	970	1200	6
STMO	Staffordshire/Bristol mottled-glazed	1690	1800	1
TB	Toynton/Bolingbroke wares	1450	1750	6
TOYII	Toynton Late Medieval ware	1450	1550	3

The post-Roman pottery is summarised by trench in Table 2, where it can be seen that the earliest pottery was recovered from Trenches 1 and 3. The condition and number of 11th century sherds present in this small assemblage suggests nearby occupation of this date. Both medieval sherds recovered from the site can be dated to between the late 12th and early 14th centuries. There then appears to be a gap in the ceramic sequence until the late medieval to early post-medieval period sometime after the mid 15th century. Pottery of post-medieval date is present, however it is not

possible to date any of the vessels closely. The range of forms present in the assemblage is limited to fairly standard jugs, jars and bowls, although one Toynton-type (TOYII) vessel may be the base of a urinal.

Table 2: Pottery by ceramic period

period	Trench1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Total sherds
Saxo-Norman (11-12 th)	2	0	6	8
Medieval (13 th to 14 th)	1	0	1	2
Late medieval (15 th to mid 16 th)	1	3	0	4
Late to post-medieval (mid 15 th to 17 th)	3	7	0	10
Post-medieval (16 th to 18 th)	6	1	0	7
Early modern	1	0	0	1
Total sherds	14	11	7	32

Summary and Recommendations

The post-Roman material recovered dates between the Saxo-Norman and the early modern periods with the majority of the pottery dating to between the mid 15th and 17th centuries. The post-Roman pottery, although typical of material found on sites elsewhere in the area, should be retained for any future scientific analysis, or the development of a ceramic type series for the county.

Pottery Archive BHHS01

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trench	context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	part	description	date
1	100	BL		jar	1	1	BS	Stafffs	mid 17th to 18th
1	100	BL		jar	1	1	BS	Staffs ?	mid 17th to 18th
1	100	BOU		jug/jar	1	1	BS		mid 15th to mid 17th
1	100	MY		jar	1	1	rim		16th to 17th
1	101	LSW2		jug	1	1	handle	strap handle; ? Lincoln product	early to mid 13th
1	U/S	BL		jar ?	1	1	BS		mid 17th to 18th
1	U/S	BOU		bowl	1	1	rim		mid 15th to mid 17th
1	U/S	LMLOC	OX/R/OX;med sandy	bowl ?	1	1	BS	int splashed glaze	15th to 16th
1	U/S	NCBW		dish	1	1	rim		19th
1	U/S	RGRE		large bowl	1	1	rim		mid/late 16th to 18th
1	U/S	SLQSO		?	1	1	BS		11th to 12th
1	U/S	ST	A	jar	1	1	BS	unglaze	late 10th to 11th
1	U/S	STMO		mug	1	1	BS		18th
1	U/S	TB		?	1	1	BS	flake	16th to 17th
2	200	BOU		small jug	1	1	rim		mid 15th to 16th
2	200	BOU		?	1	1	base		15th to 16th
2	200	NOTS		jar ?	1	1	BS		18th to 20th
2	200	TB		bowl ?	1	1	rim		15th to 16th

trench	context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	part	description	date
2	200	TB		small jug	1	1	BS		15th to 16th
2	200	TB		jug	2	1	base & BS		15th to 16th
2	200	TB		jar ?	1	1	BS	int dep;oxid;? ID	15th to 16th
2	204	TOYII		urinal ?	3	1	base & BS	thick int glaze;post dep soot int;vessel has spalled and blown air holes	15th to 16th
3	300	BOUA		bowl	1	1	rim	unglaze	late 12th to 14th
3	301	ST	A	jar	1	1	BS	soot;unglaze	late 10th to 11th
3	303	LFS		?	1	1	BS	soot;tiny frag;? ID	11th to 12th
3	303	ST	A/B	jar	1	1	BS	unglaze	mid/late 11th to mid 12th
3	304	ST	A	pitcher/jar	1	1	BS	glaze	11th
3	304	ST	A	small jar	1	1	base	soot;unglaze except for spot on base	11th
3	304	ST	A	small jar	1	1	base	soot;unglaze except for spot on base	11th

Tile Archive BHHS01

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trench	context	cname	full name	frags	weight	description	date
1	100	BRK	Brick	2	374	handmade;oxid	post medieval
2	200	BRK	Brick	2	15	handmade;oxid	post medieval
2	200	BURNT CLAY	Burnt clay	1	13	probably Briquetage	
3	304	BURNT CLAY	Burnt clay	5	48	probably Briquetage	

High Street, Bicker (BHHS 01) Context List

Context No.	Type	Description	Dimensions	Finds
Trench 1				
100	layer	Topsoil, Dk brown silty soil	0.25m deep	Brick, 15-18th C pot
101	layer	Subsoil, mid-brown silt	0.55m deep	Mid 13th C pot
102	layer	light yellow-brown silt, natural		
103	cut	oval pit cutting 102	0.65 x 0.40 x 0.27m deep	
104	fill of 103	light brown silt, mix of 101 and 102		
Trench 2				
200	layer	Topsoil, same as 100		brick, 15-20th C pot
201	layer	Subsoil, same as 101		
202	layer	yellow-brown silt, darker than 102, natural		
203	cut	pit at N. end of trench, dug through 201	Mainly recorded in section	
204	fill of 203	mid-brown silt		Mid 15th/16th C pot
Trench 3				
300	layer	Topsoil, same as 100	0.40m deep	Late 12/14th C pot
301	layer	Subsoil, similar to 101	0.44m deep	pig ulna
302	layer	yellow brown silt, natural, below 307		
303	layer	thin flood lens, with clay frags and charcoal flecks, below 305	0.005m	11/12th C pot
304	layer	Dk grey lens of silt with charcoal and mussels shell frags, below 303	0.02m	Briquetage frags, 11th C pot
305	layer	yellow silt lens beneath 301 in N third of trench	0.08-0.10m	
306	layer	mid-brown silt, flood layer below 305 in N third of trench	0.20m	
307	layer	same as 306, below 304	0.02m	

THE FIGURES

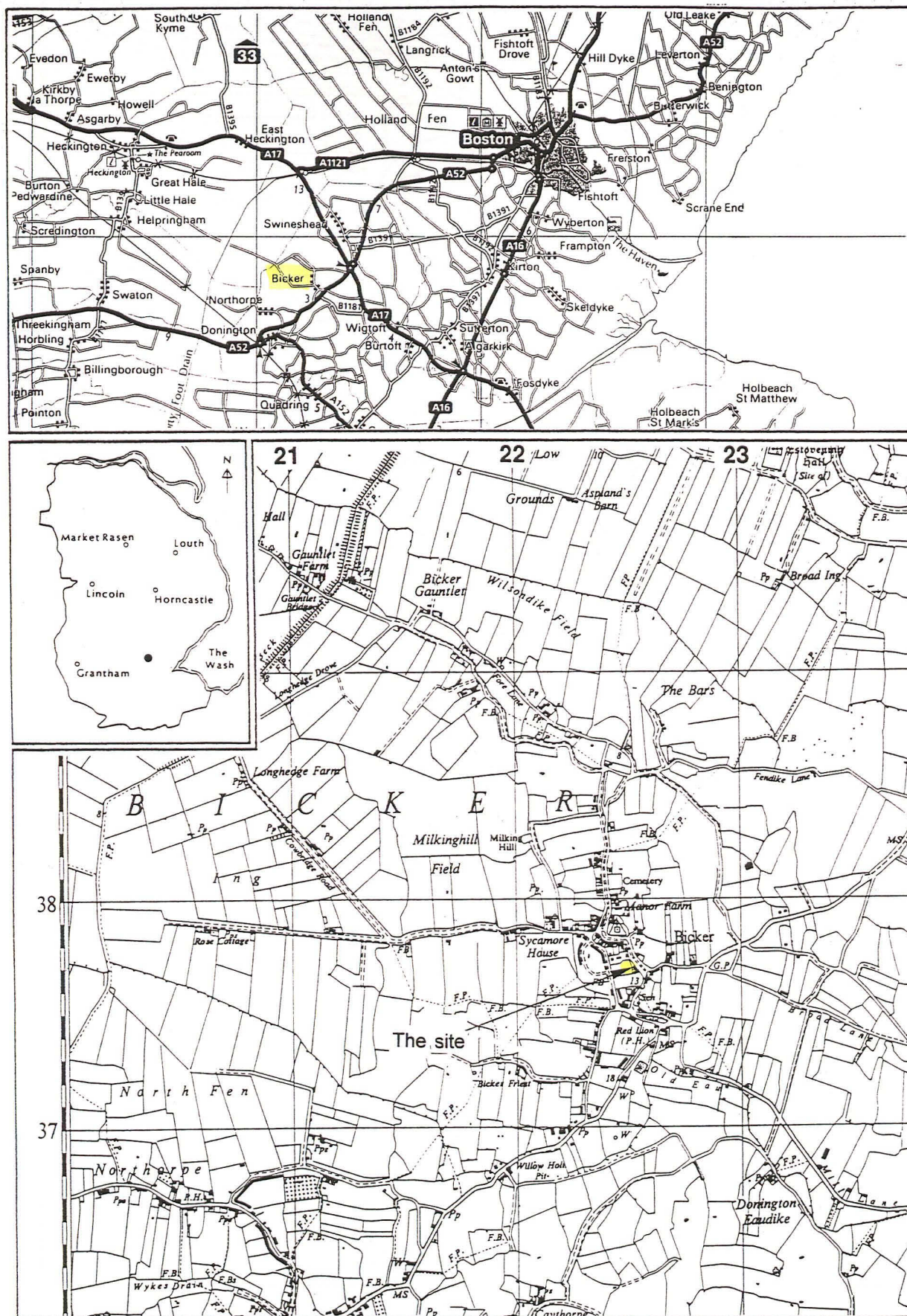


Fig. 1 Location of Bicker. Based on the 1955 OS 1:25,000 map sheet TF 23, with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS licence no. AL 100002165.

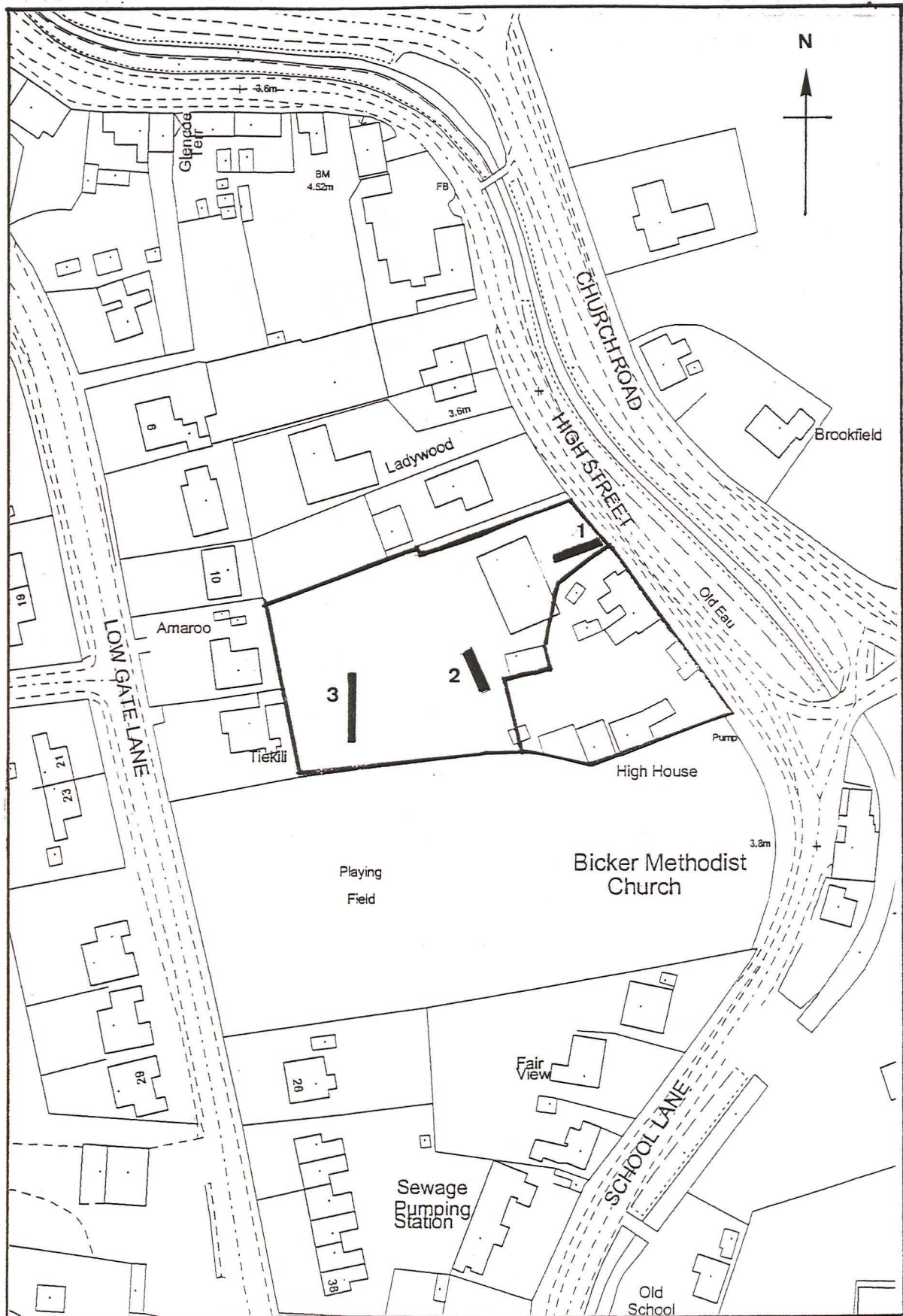


Fig. 2 High House, High Street, Bicker. Site and trench location. Based on OS 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAS licence no. AL 10002165.

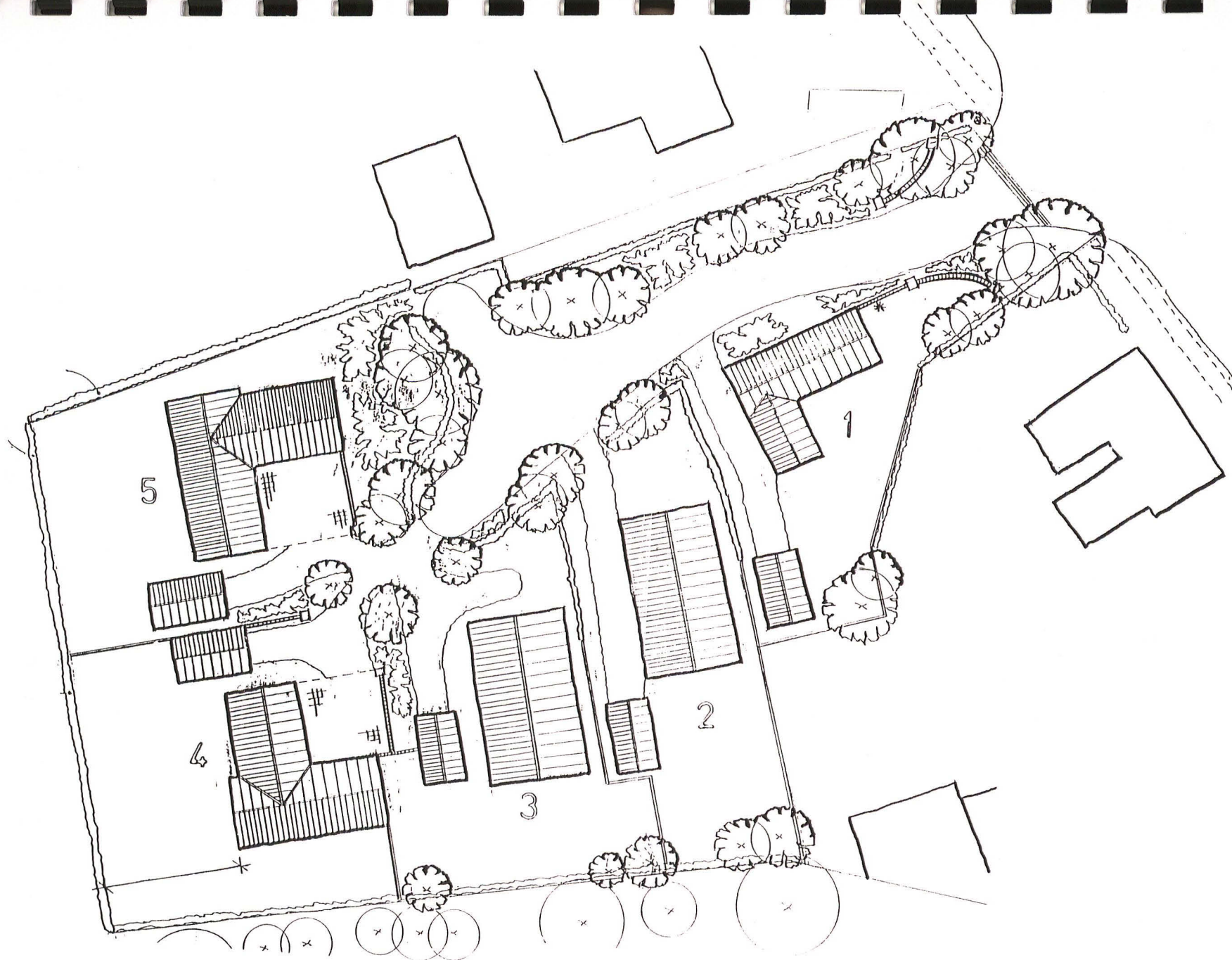


Fig. 3 High House, High Street, Bicker. Proposed development, plan supplied by the client (reduced scale).

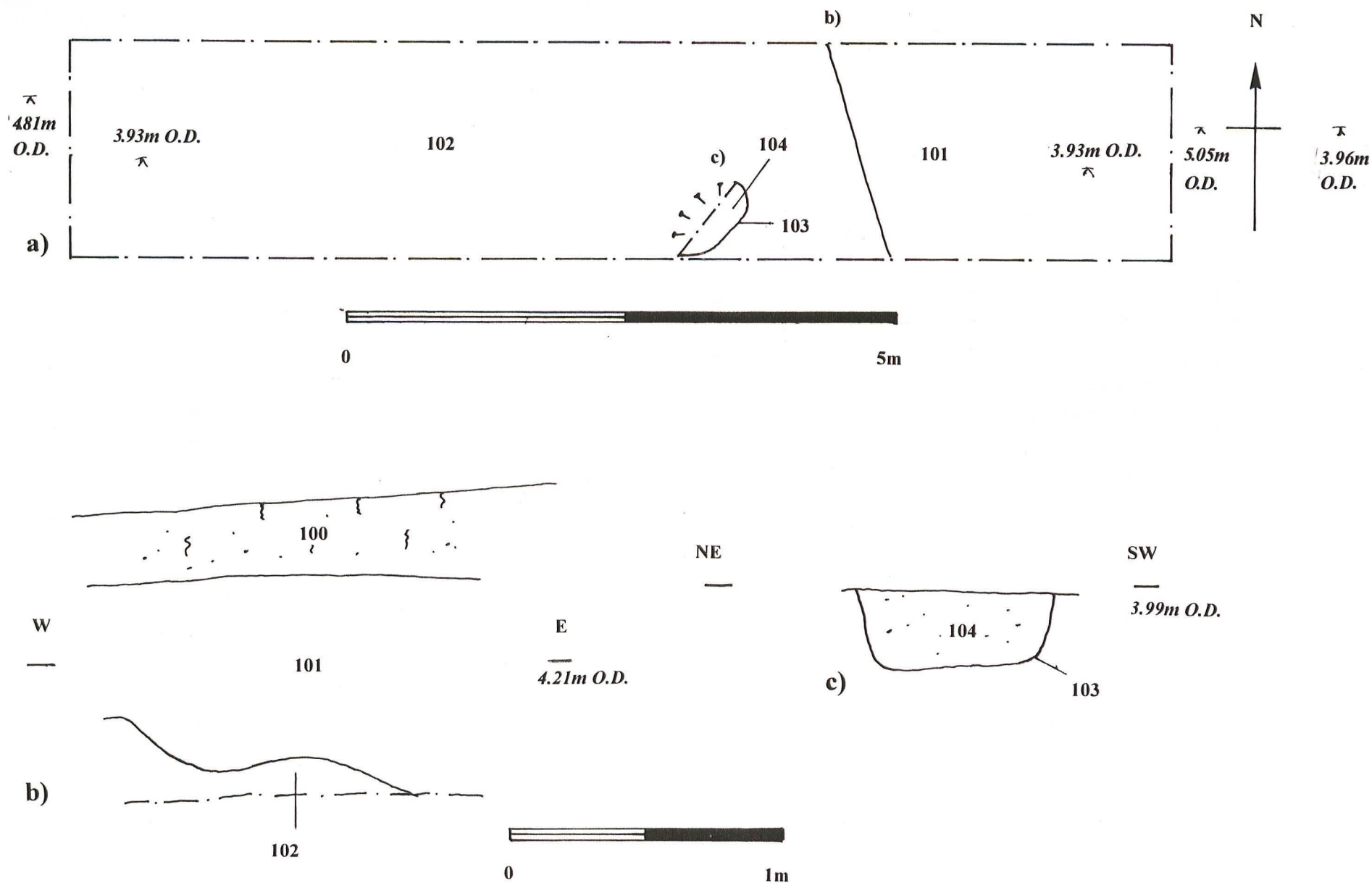


Fig. 4 Trench 1. a) Plan b) Section at east end of trench showing fall in natural towards the street. c) section through pit 103.

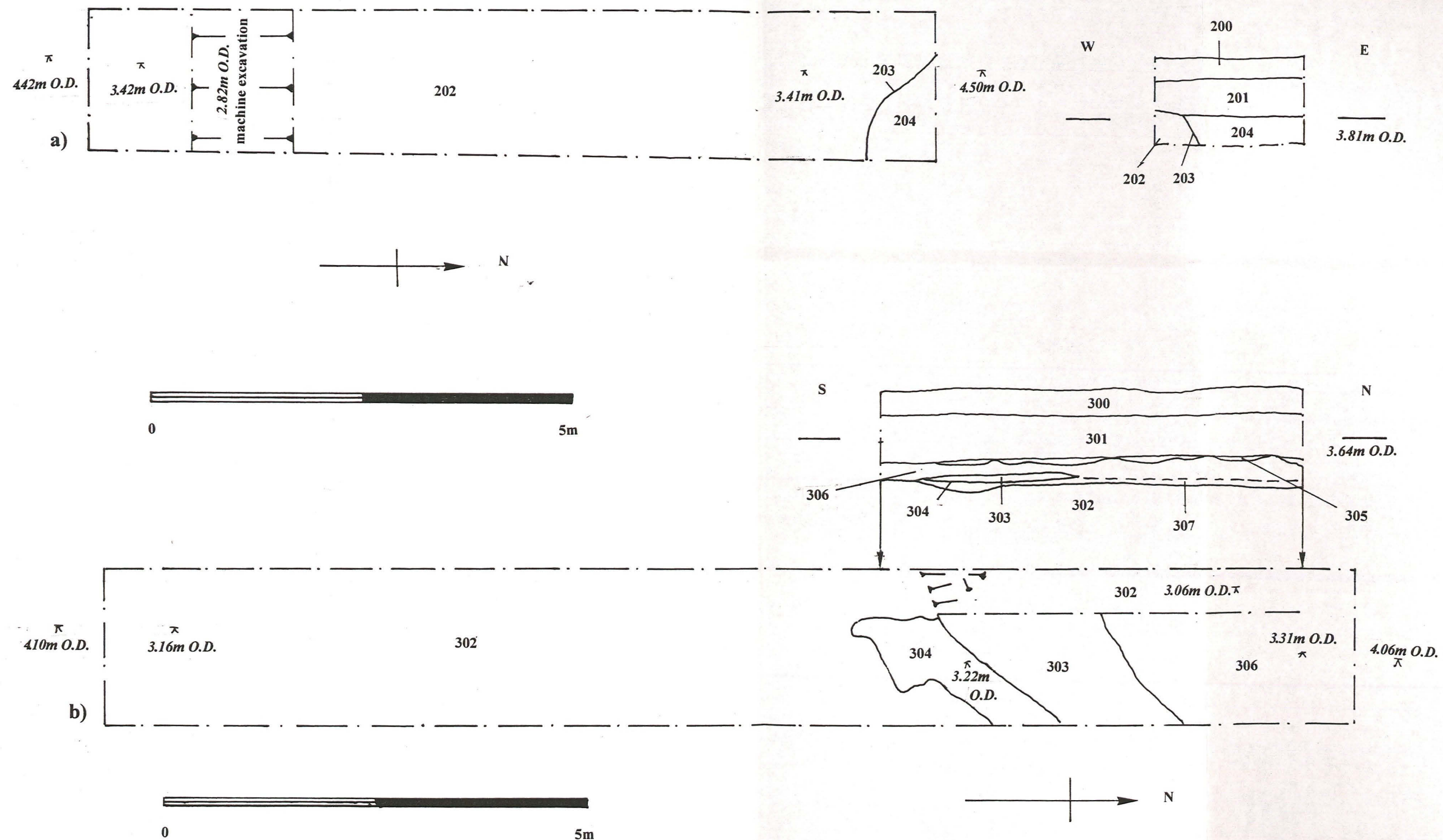
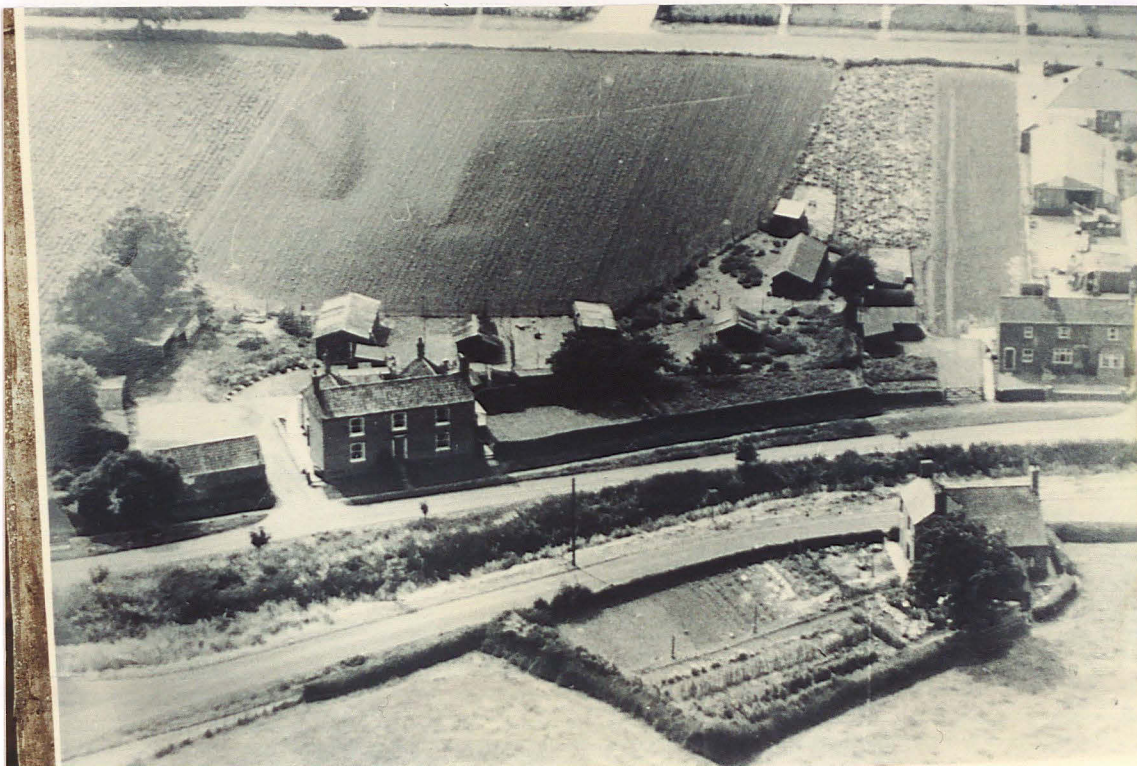


Fig. 5 a) Trench 2 plan and section b) Trench 3 plan and section.

THE PLATES



Pl. 1 High Street Bicker. Aerial view of site to right and rear of house. Copy of photo belonging to the client, taken in the 1960s.

Pl. 2 High Street Bicker, view of farm house prior to rendering showing stone quoins and brick tumbling in the gable end. Copy of photo belonging to the client.





Pl. 3 High Street Bicker, general view looking east.

Pl. 4 Trench 1 looking east.





Pl. 5 Trench 1 looking west. Scales 2m and 1m

Pl. 6 Trench 1, pit 103, looking east. Scales 0.30m and 0.20m





Pl. 7 Trench 2 during excavation, looking east.

Pl. 8 Trench 2 looking north-west. (Machine excavation in foreground revealed further natural silts.) Scales 2m and 1m





Pl. 9 Trench 2, north section showing post-medieval pit with pot sherd left of scale. Horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 1m intervals.

Pl. 10 Trench 3, looking south. Scale 2m and 1m





Pl. 11 Trench 3 , sondage along west section, Scales 2m and 1m.



Pl. 12 Trench 3, west section, showing lenses of charcoal and burnt clay. Horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 1m.