AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING OVERHEAD LINE REBUILD, TORKSEY - NEWTON ON TRENT, LINCOLNSHIRE (TNT00)

APS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING OVERHEAD LINE REBUILD, TORKSEY - NEWTON ON TRENT, LINCOLNSHIRE (TNT00)

Work Undertaken For
Yorkshire Electricity

Report Compiled by
Steve Thomson BSc (Hons) PIFA

January 2002

National Grid Reference: SK7~~580~~ 8380 (7580) and SK7870 8380
City and County Museum Accession No: LCNCC 2000.292

A.P.S. Report No:**12/02**

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with an overhead electricity line rebuild in the area of Torksey and Laughterton, Lincolnshire. The area is archaeologically sensitive and groundworks were likely to disturb archaeological deposits.

During the course of the watching brief a sequence of topsoil, subsoils and natural geological deposits were identified, together with a possible Romano-British occupation deposit. A quantity of pottery of Romano-British and 10th/11th century date was recovered from the topsoil.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Archaeological Watching brief

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

2.2 Planning Background

The archaeology section of Lincolnshire County Council requested that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken in two areas associated with the rebuilding of the overhead line (Figure 2). Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned by Yorkshire Electricity to undertake the archaeological watching brief. The investigation was carried out between the 26th September 2000 and 23rd January 2001.

2.3 Topography, Geology and Soils

The two areas monitored are located in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire. Area 1 is located near Torksey Lock, approximately 14km north west of Lincoln centred on National Grid Reference SK7870 8380. Area 2, immediately east of Laughterton village, lies 3km further south at National Grid Reference SK7580 8380 (Figure 2).

The sites lie on flat, level ground at approximately 5m OD on the east side of the River Trent.

Local soils are of the Wickham II Association, generally fine loamy soils over clayey typical stagnogley soils. Patches of sand and gravel may give rise to inclusions of Quorndon soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 361).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Little archaeological work has been undertaken in Laughterton and consequently its early history is vague. The first element of the place-name is obscure with the second element, 'tun', Old English in origin, meaning 'farmstead or village'. The name has been identified with *leugttricdun*, 'the hill where lettuce is grown', but given that Laughterton lies on flat land this association seems unlikely (Cameron 1998).

The village is not recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, with the earliest known mention in the 13th century (Albone 1998). A deed from the year 1436 provides information relating to field names in Laughterton, including *Weldaille*, *Northredgate* and *Daympolsyk*, though their locations have now been lost (Cole 1911).

An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 1998 revealed evidence of Late Saxon and medieval occupation (Albone 1998).

In contrast, Torksey is located in an area of known archaeological remains. Worked flint implements, dated to the Mesolithic (8300-4000BC), have been found at the junction of the Fosse Dyke (see below) and the River Trent, and Bronze Age (2250-700 BC) flint implements have been recovered from Highwood, east of the village (Hilary Healey *pers. comm.*).

The western end of the Fosse Dyke, an artificial waterway thought to have been constructed during the Roman period (AD43- 410), lies at Torksey Lock. Approximately 19km long, the dyke links the River Witham at Lincoln with the River Trent (Whitwell 1970, 57). Dating of the Fosse Dyke derives from a bronze statuette of Mars found in the primary deposits of the channel.

Pottery kilns dating to the 3rd century AD have been found in Little London, just south of the junction between Fosse Dyke and the Trent in close proximity to the present investigation area (*ibid.*, 58). Other kilns are present along the Trent and together illustrate that the area was used for industrial purposes during the Roman period. There is, however, no evidence for domestic occupation dating to this period from Torksey.

Torksey's location was significant as it allowed the easy transportation of goods to Lincoln (*Lindum*), along the Fosse Dyke and to the neighbouring town of Littleborough (*Vernemetum*) and on to York (*Eboracum*), via the Trent.

During the Saxon period (AD410-1066), Torksey's economically strategic location resulted in the development of a settlement of considerable importance which earned the status of a *burh* (a fortified town). Such status would also have conferred the right to establish a coin mint (Beresford and St. Joseph 1979, 211).

Torksey is first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which states that the Danish army established its winter quarters here in 872, after which the Mercians made peace with the Danes (Swanton 1997, 72).

The Danes also brought potters from France and the surrounding region to establish new kilns. One of these was located at Torksey, and produced the distinctive Torksey Ware (Sawyer 1998, 197), that was traded across much of the Midlands. This pottery production in the Late Saxon period has been identified at several locations around the village including Castle Farm and alongside Main Street (Field 1990, Barley 1964; 1981).

Torksey appears in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and is variously referred to as *Turecesieg, Turcesig* and *Torchesey*. These transliterate as 'Turec's Island of land'(Cameron 1998). Domesday also records that Torksey was larger than Nottingham, and as such formed one of the three largest boroughs in Lincolnshire, called Torksey with Hardwick (Foster and Longley 1976, 11). The buried remains of the medieval town are located between Torksey Lock and the present village and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument (English Heritage 1996, 28).

Torksey's prominent location was the defining aspect of its continuing economic success into the early medieval period. This success was, however, subject to fluctuation and was determined by the state of the Fosse Dyke, which required regular maintenance. There were periods when the Dyke was so silted that it was not navigable, thereby restricting trade (Sawyer 1998, 197).

During the early medieval period the prosperity of the town was illustrated when

the townsmen donated fifty houses to endow the Augustinian Priory of St. Leonard during the reign of Henry II (1154-1189) (Everson *et al.* 1991, xiii). Another seven houses were donated to a Cistercian Nunnery dedicated to St. Nicholas (see Fig. 2) (*ibid*).

After the 13th century, Torksey lost its economic importance. Torksey Castle was constructed in 1560 by Sir Robert Jermyn and is a Grade I listed building (DoE 1985, 53) and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (English Heritage 1996, 28). Only the west facade and rear wall of the fortified mansion still stand. The mansion was occupied for only a century before it was partially destroyed during the Civil War (1642-6).

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to record and interpret archaeological features exposed during the groundworks. The objectives were to determine the form, function, spatial arrangement, date and sequence of any archaeological remains.

4. METHODS

Using a mechanical excavator, holes for replacement electricity poles were excavated *c*.0.60m wide and 1.60m deep. The sides and bases of the holes were inspected to identify archaeological deposits. Spoil heaps were monitored and searched by trowel to recover artefactual material which may have assisted with the interpretation of the site. The depth and thickness of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and representative sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Recording of the deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard APS' practice.

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them, supplemented by artefact dating (Appendix 3).

A summary of all contexts, with interpretations, appears as Appendix 2.

Contexts are described below with the numbers assigned in the field shown in bold and brackets.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis, three phases of deposits were recognised:

5.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits
5.2 Phase 2: Possible Romano-British deposits
5.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

5.1 Phase 1 - Natural deposits

The earliest deposit encountered in Area 1 during the course of the watching brief consisted of a loose, light orangey brown and light grey sand **(101)** which was identified as a natural geological deposit.

In Area 2, a reddish brown clay **(206, 210)** represented the earliest natural geological deposit identified. These layers were in turn sealed by a series of moderately compact sands **(209, 208, 205, 207, 204, 202, 201)** (Figure 6 - sections 7, 8 & 9) which represented natural geological deposits and subsoil.

5.2 Phase 2 Possible Romano-British deposits

A loose, mid-dark brown silty sand **(102)**, a minimum of 0.50m thick, was identified during excavation of pole 4 in Area 1 (Figure 5 - sections 4 and 5). Metal detection of the spoil associated with this layer uncovered a small Roman coin, likely to be of Constantine I, though this artefact was retained by the metal detectorist. Romano-British pottery was also recovered in the vicinity. The limited extent of the excavation for this pole made it impossible to identify any cut features associated with the deposit.

5.3 Phase 3 Modern deposits

The final deposit encountered in Area 1 was a loose, mid-dark brown silty sand **(100, 300)** which represented the modern topsoil. Pottery of the 13th - 15th century and late Romano-British date was recovered both as surface finds and from within this layer in the area of pole 2.

Within Area 2, a loose dark grey-brown sand **(200)** and a moderately compact dark brown clayey sandy silt **(203)** formed the topsoil. Pottery of 20th century and locally made Torksey ware of 10th - 11th century date were recovered from **(200)**.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural sand and clay (Phase 1) were the earliest layers revealed during the investigation and represent natural geological formation. These deposits correspond with those identified previously in the area.

Phase 2 deposits occurred within Area 1 around the excavation of pole 4 and are the only archaeological remains encountered during the investigation. The discovery of a Roman coin and pottery within the vicinity of pole 4 indicate this layer represents Romano-British activity. However, the limited size of the excavation precludes any further interpretation, with the identification of any specific feature impossible. Further Romano-British pottery was recovered from the field surface at pole 2, approximately 200m to the northwest. Given the identification of a Roman coin and ceramics, the possibility of more widespread industrial or settlement evidence being located in the area cannot be discounted.

The final phase of deposits identified in both areas 1 and 2 represented the modern topsoil. Pottery recovered from these deposits showed signs of abrasion likely to be due to ploughing and may indicate the practice of 'manuring'.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations during groundworks associated with the rebuilding of an overhead cable line at Torksey and Laughterton, Lincolnshire were undertaken as the works were likely to disturb archaeological deposits.

Romano-British remains were revealed in a fairly discrete area near Torksey Lock. Due to the limited scale of the excavation no archaeological features were identified but a deposit yielded a Roman coin and pottery of the period. Further Romano-British pottery was found on the field surface a short distance away.

The nature of the soils exposed would suggest that few paleo-environmental indicators (seeds, wood, *etc.*) would survive, other than through charring, though other indicators such as bone and shell would be preserved.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Peter Richardson of Yorkshire Electricity who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Barbara Precious and Jane Young identified the Roman and medieval pottery respectively. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor of APS and this report was edited by Gary Taylor and Tom Lane.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisors: James Albone, Jim Snee and Fiona Walker
Illustration: Mark Dymond and Steve Thomson
Finds Processing : Denise Buckley
Photographic Reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst: Steve Thomson

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

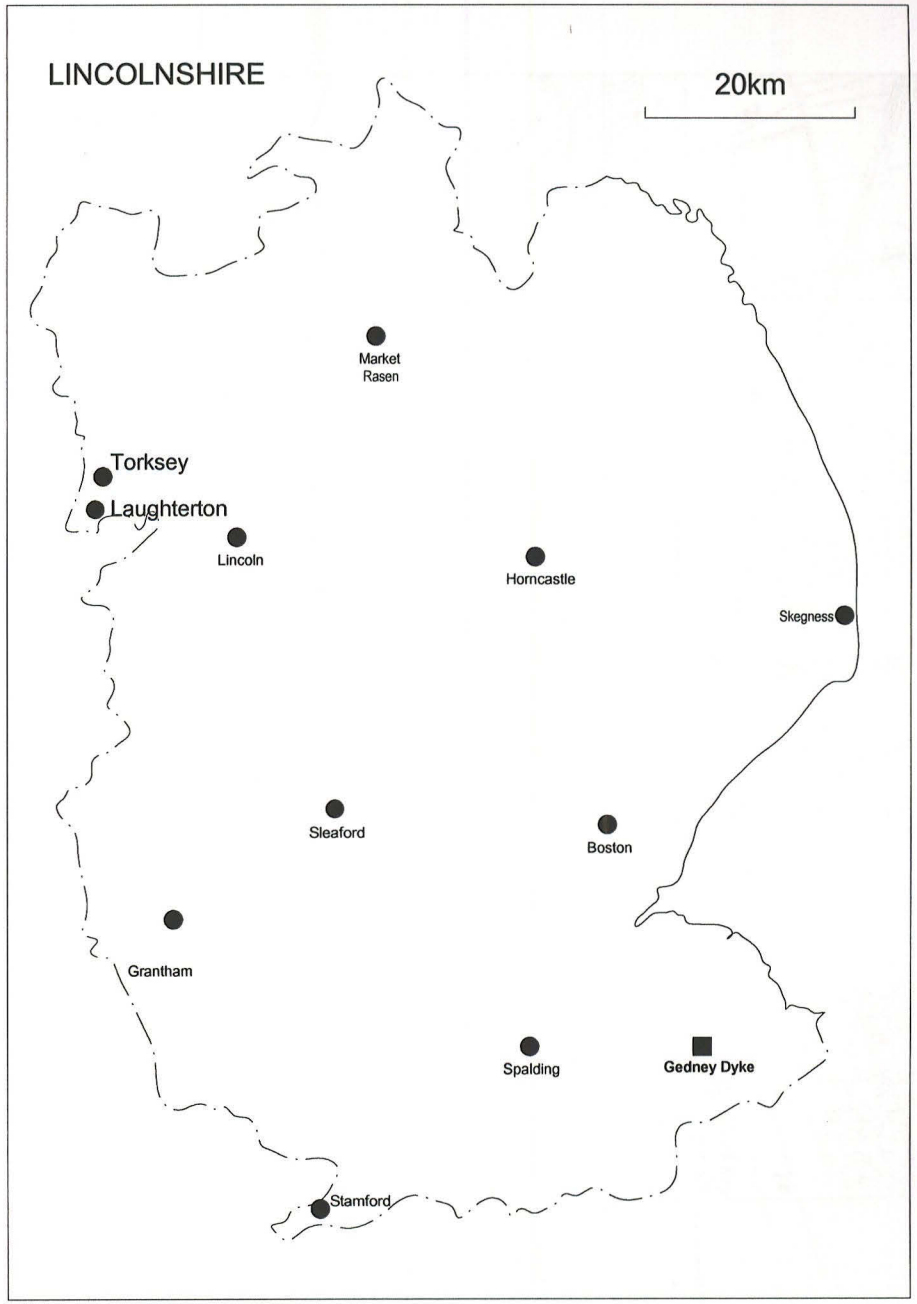

Figure 1 General Location Plan

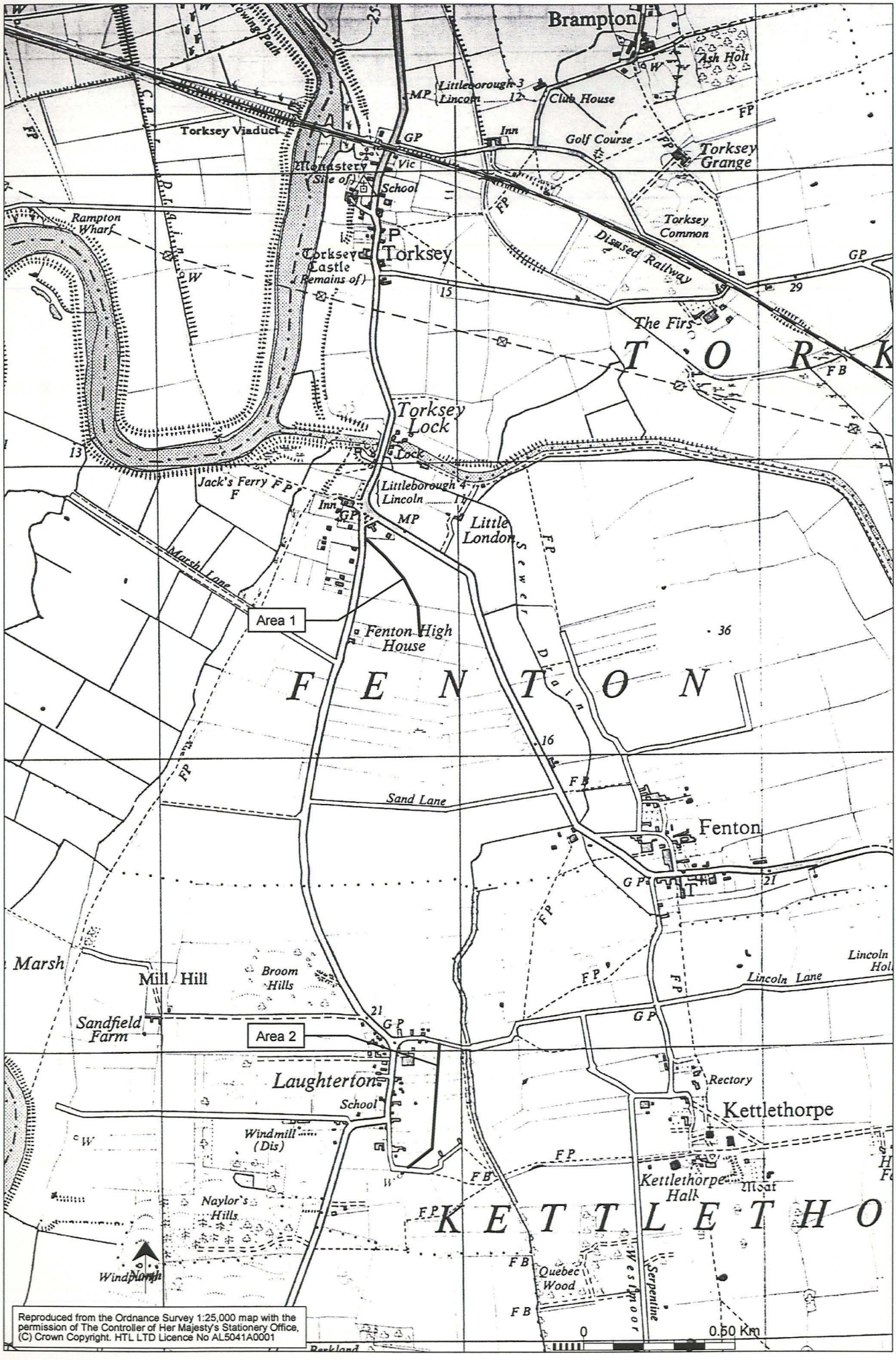

Figure 2 Location plan

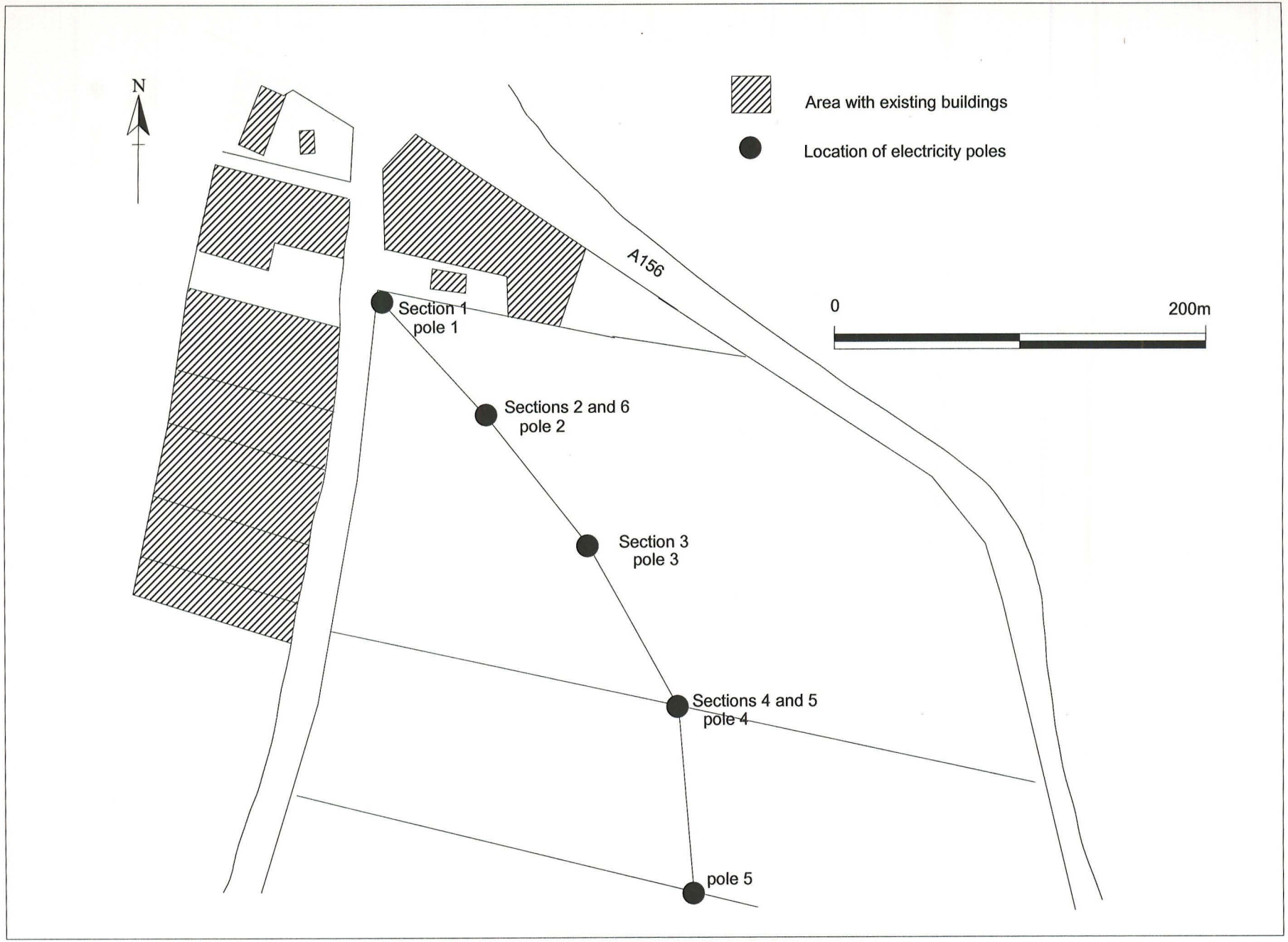

Figure 3 - Area 1 - location of poles and sections

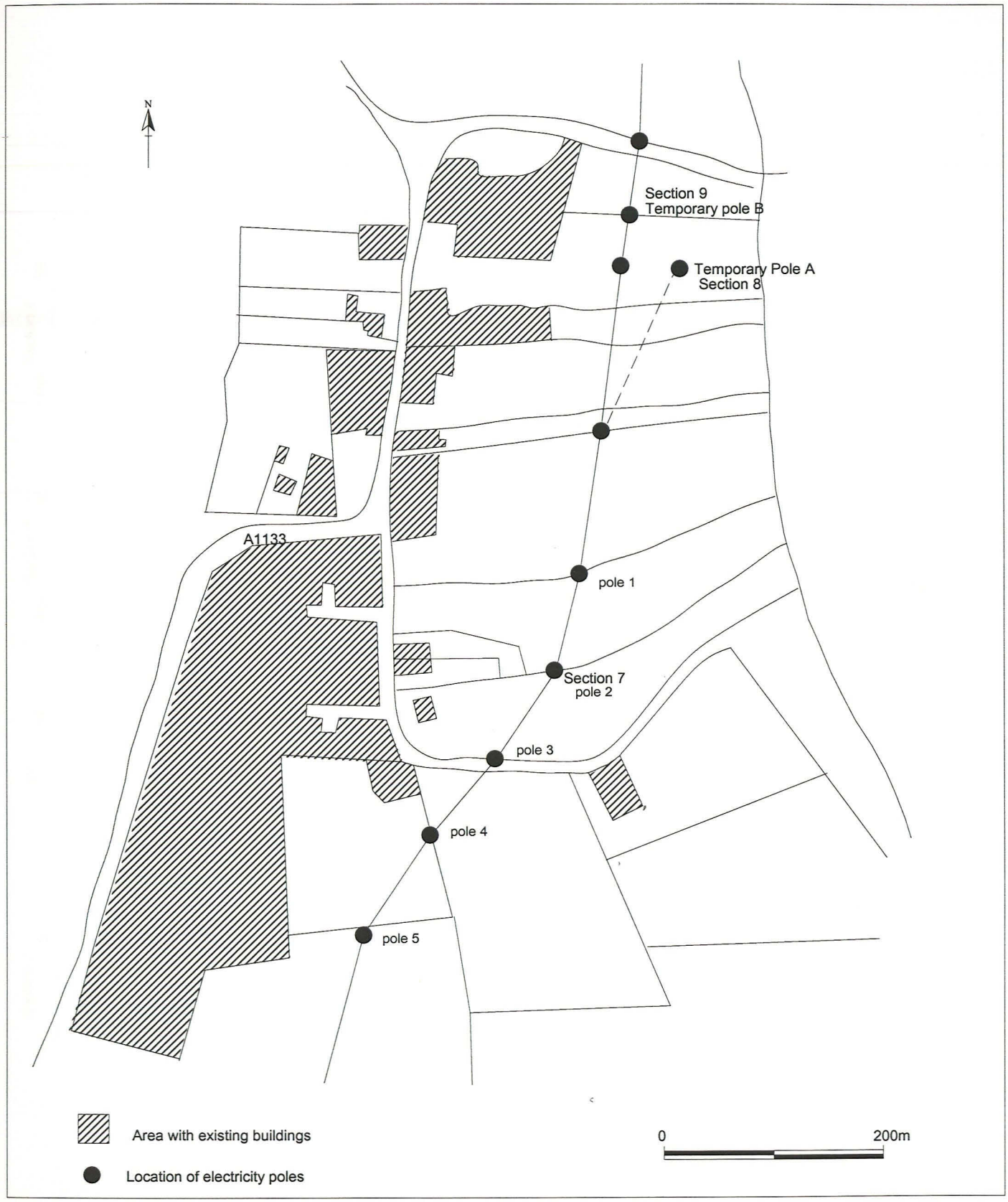

Figure 4 - Area 2 location of poles and sections

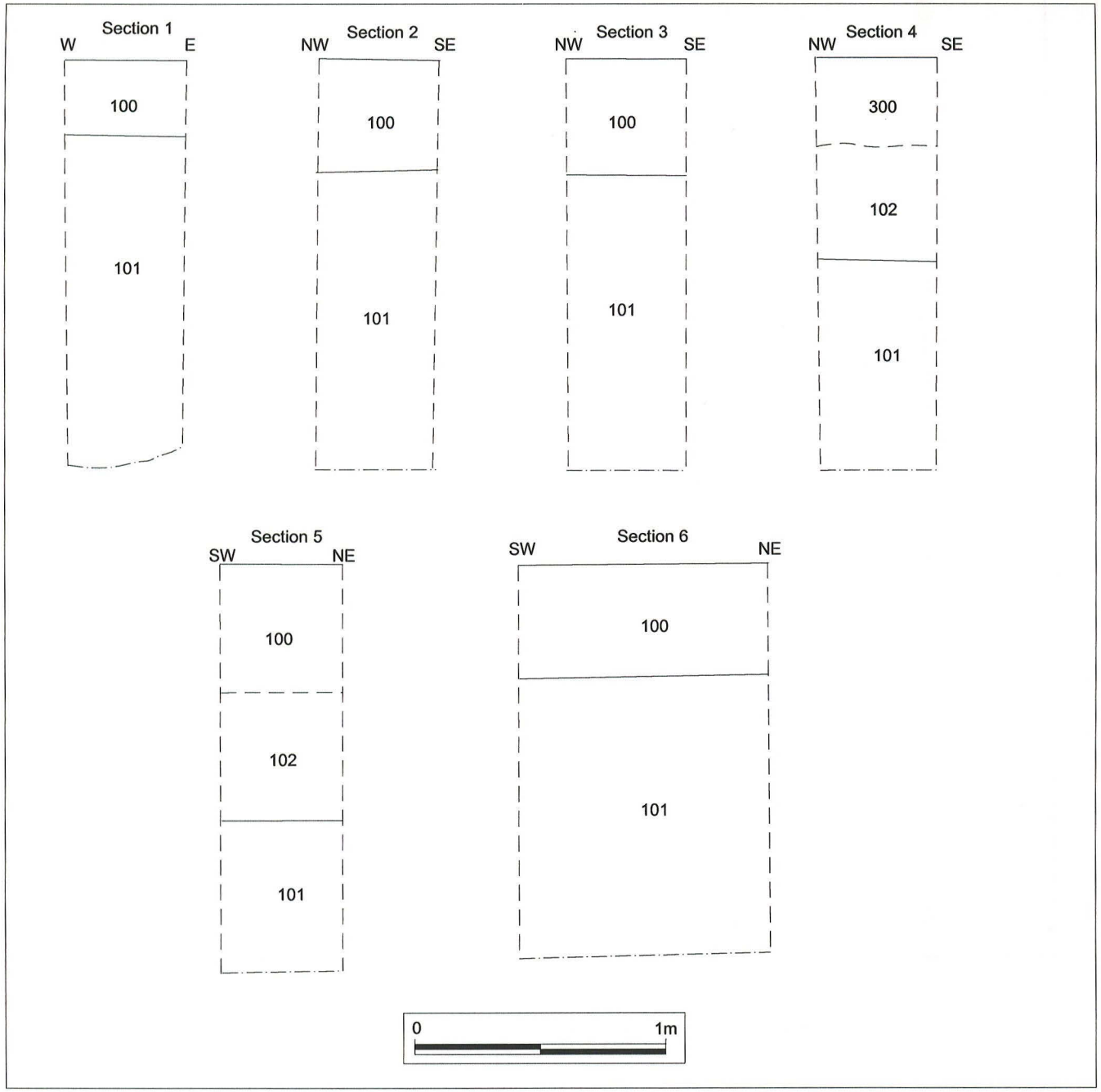

Figure 5 - Area 1 section drawings

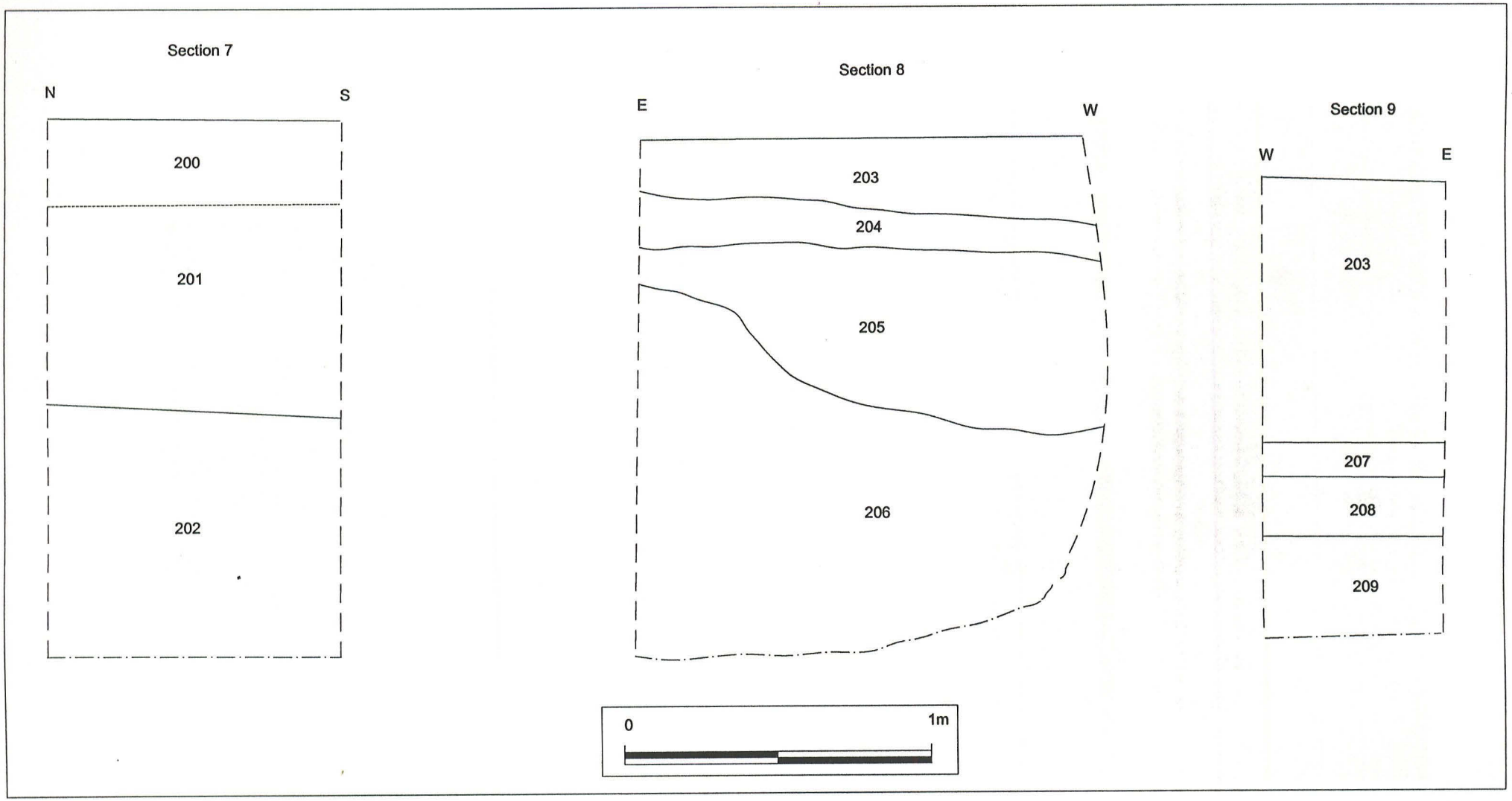

Figure 6 - Area 2 section drawings

Plate 1 Area 1, pole 4 excavation

Plate 2 General view soil profile area 1

Plate 3 General view work in progress area 2

Plate 4 Section 8, area 2

Appendix 1

Context Summary

Context No.	Section	Description	Interpretation
100	1,2,3	Loose, mid-dark brown silty sand, 0.40m thick.	Topsoil
101	1	Loose, light orangey brown and light grey sand greater than 1.30m thick.	Natural geological deposit
102	4	Loose, mid-dark brown silty sand, minimum 0.50m thick	Possible occupation deposit.
200	7	Loose, dark grey brown sand containing occasional stones and ceramic building material fragments, 0.28m thick.	Topsoil
201	7	Loose, mid-grey brown sand, c.0.70m thick.	Subsoil
202	7	Loose, mid-yellow brown sand, greater than 0.80m thick.	Natural geological deposit
203	8	Moderately compact, dark brown, clayey sandy silt, 0.30m thick.	Topsoil
204	8	Moderately compact, light brown sand, 0.20m thick	Subsoil
205	8	Moderately compact, light brownish yellow sand	Natural geological deposit
206	8	Firm, mid-reddish brown clay	Natural geological deposit
207	9	Moderately compact, mid-reddish brown sand	Subsoil
208	9	Moderately compact mid-grey sand	Natural geological deposit
209	9	Moderately compact, light yellow sand	Natural geological deposit
210	9	Firm, reddish brown clay	Natural geological deposit
300	4	Loose, mid-dark brown silty sand, 0.40m thick.	Topsoil

Appendix 2

The Roman Pottery Archive for Torksey, Newton on Trent (TNT00)

by Barbara Precious

CONTEXT	FABRIC	FORM	DEC	NO VESS	DWGNO	ALTER	COMMENTS	JOIN	SHERDS
100	GREY	JBL		1		ABR	BSS; DARKER GREY		2
100	SHEL?	CLSD				VABR	BS GYBN; LIME OR SHELL VOIDS		1
100	GREY	CLSD				ABR	BS DARK GREY		1
100	GREY	JBK					BS THINNER WALLED; PALE GREY; FINER; CF SWANPOOL		1
100	GREY	CLSD					BS PALE GREY SANDWICH; NR SWANPOOL		1
100	GREY	CLSD				ABR	BS SHLDR SHERD; AS SANDWICH		1
100	ZZZ						SURFACE FINDS NEAR POLE 2		
100	ZDATE	CLSD					3C+		
300	GREY					VABR	BS; GRYBN; COARSER FABRIC WITH SOME IRON ORE		1
300	ZZZ						GREY ONLY SURFACE FINDS		
300	ZDATE						RO		

ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	abraded	DWGNO	drawing number	RO	Roman
ALTER	alteration	GREY	grey ware	SHEL	shelly ware
BS	body sherd	GRYBN	grey, burnished	SHLDR	shoulder
BSS	body sherds	JBL	jar/bowl	VABR	very abraded
CLSD	closed	JBK	jar/beaker		
DEC	decoration	NO VESS	number of vessels		

Appendix 3

The Medieval and Later Pottery Archive for Torksey, Newton on Trent (TNT00)

by Jane Young

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	description	date
100	MISC	Unidentified types	?	1	completely leached; probably Potterhanworth; abraded	13th- 15th century
200	TORK	Torksey ware	jar	1		late 9th to mid 11th century
200	WHITE	Modern whiteware	dish	1		20th century

Appendix 4

GLOSSARY

Bronze Age	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
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).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Early Saxon	Pertaining to the period AD 410-650
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Iron Age	A period characterised by the introduction of iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
Late Saxon	Pertaining to the period AD 850-1066
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.
Middle Saxon	Pertaining to the period AD 650-850
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

Appendix 5

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

14	Context records
2	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Photographic record sheets
1	Stratigraphic matrix
1	Bags of finds

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 Museum Accession Number:	LCNCC 2000.292
Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	TNT00

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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