

M2/17 *SMR*



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Conservation
Services

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Highways & Planning
Directorate

**St John' Road, Lincoln,
Archaeological Watching Brief.
Planning Application No. 2001/0255/F
NGR: SK97779 72578
Site code: LJR02
LCNCC Accession No. : 2002.258**

**Report for
Mr S. Gregory.**

by

D. M. Young

**July 2002
Report no 600**

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4 St John's Road, Lincoln
Archaeological Watching Brief
NGR: SK 97779 72578
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Planning Application No. : 2001/0255/F

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavations of foundation trenches at St John's Rd. The line of the eastern side of the Newport Earthwork was tentatively identified .

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr. S. Gregory to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a single-storey extension to the rear and a two-storey side extension to the property at 4, St. John's Rd, Lincoln. The work was undertaken to fulfil a condition in Planning Consent No 2001/0255/F imposed by Lincoln City Council. The groundworks began on 25/6/02 and were completed on 1/7/02

Site Location and Description

St John's Rd is a small cul de sac situated to the east of Newport, and to the north of the Newport Arch, the northern entrance to the Roman Upper Colonia (Fig 1). No. 4 is situated to the south side of St John's Rd (Fig 2). Fig 3 shows the position of the trenches excavated in relation to the present dwelling.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the Watching Brief was to record any archaeological deposits disturbed during the excavation of building foundations at the above site and to provide results for accession to the County SMR and the Lincoln UAD.

Archaeological Background

The development site is situated near the eastern limits of the medieval suburb of Newport. Excavations in 1937 (Stanwell and Baker 1938) recorded part of the northern defensive ditch and bank which surrounded the suburb. Map evidence (Fig 4) suggests that the bank and ditch also extended southwards and their projected line passes through 4 St John's Rd. There was extensive Roman occupation in the Newport area along the Ermine Street (approximately on the line of modern

Newport) and it was thought there would be great potential for the presence of Roman remains on the site.

Method

The foundation trenches were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision to depths between 60cms and nearly 2m below the level of the modern overburden. The restrictions placed on the machine, caused by the boundaries of the property were considerable, and the depth of the foundation trenches (nearly 2.0m), along with the instability of the deposits, made it virtually impossible to enter the trenches due to Health and Safety considerations. Recording (section drawing and photography), was undertaken from the safety of the side of the trenches.

A full written (single context) and photographic record of the site was made. A plan of the trenches was drawn at a scale of 1:50 (Fig 3). All deposits were allocated context numbers for recording purposes (Appendix 1). These are referred to in the following text and illustrations. The benchmark on the south-west corner of St. Nicholas with St John the Baptist Church (64.4m) was transferred and used for all site levels. A temporary benchmark with a transferred reading of 63.1m OD was used for all site records.

The work was carried out in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

Results

The site was covered in a layer of concrete and limestone rubble (105) of between 0.10 and 0.30m thick along the driveway and over the entrance area to the rear of the property. This was machined away before the digging of the foundation trenches began in an attempt to minimize the total depth of the trenches. Four separate trenches were excavated over a period of approximately one week, due to the instability of the deposits being machined. Each length of trench was machined, quickly recorded, and the concrete footings laid before any section collapses occurred.

Trench 1

This was the most useful and informative of the excavated trenches with a section of nearly 2m in depth and with the trench positioned across the possible line of the Newport boundary ditch (see section drawing (Fig 5). Context (100) was a grey material with a large clay content, containing a large amount of general building rubble (modern tile, brick, concrete fragments etc), and was of varying depth to a maximum of 0.58 m. This was found to be sealing (101), a thin mortar layer of between 0.04m and 0.10m in depth which, in turn sealed the ground level as it appeared before the

construction of the present building. Context (102), thought to be the original topsoil, was indistinguishable from any subsoil levels. This existed over the whole extent of the trench and also appeared to be the fill of a cut into the limestone brash / cream clay beneath. This cut, (103), appeared to be the western edge of a substantial ditch of north / south alignment and measured at least 0.70m in depth and, assuming the eastern edge of this ditch to be out of the trench, at least 2.5m in width. The limestone brash / cream clay (105) at the base of this feature was extensively weathered.

Two small sherds of pottery recovered from the lower parts of the trench were identified, (Barbara Precious, pers. comm.), as being of late 2nd – to early 3rd century date, but could not be assigned to particular contexts. No other finds were recovered.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was a particularly difficult trench to excavate because of its length, the intended depth of excavation, and the looseness and wetness of the deposits removed. machine driver it became clear that the trench sides would collapse if the trench was opened, Despite the care of the, and left open for any length of time. It therefore became necessary to excavate, record and backfill with concrete in as short a time as possible. Recording was therefore undertaken from the safety of the outside of the trench. Little was evident in section, the same material as in Trench 1 in the main, but with increased quantities of limestone particularly towards the northern end of the trench in the lower parts of the fill. The east facing section presumably formed a longitudinal section along the possible ditch identified in Trench 1.

Trenches 3 & 4

Trenches 3 & 4 were excavated to a lesser depth (0.60m), due to the building regulation requirements, and exposed only previously disturbed modern deposits. This was mainly due to the underpinning work undertaken in recent years.

Conclusion

Although it is certain that some form of large, probably linear, feature was present on the site of 4 St John's Rd, this can not be positively identified as being the Newport Earthworks, although there is a strong possibility that it could be. Both position and alignment coincide with earlier maps which show a ditch with internal bank in this area. The lack of finds of expected date, along with the ditch having a single uniform fill, perhaps suggest that this area was virtually deserted for a long period, whereas the weathering to the limestone brash / cream clay natural seem to suggest that the ditch was open for a long period of time with no dumping occurring on the site.

Contexts Table

Context	Trench	Description
100	1, 2, 3, 4	dark grey material, high clay content, modern tile, brick etc.
101	1	creamy yellow mortar.
102	1, 2	dark grey topsoil / subsoil, some limestone fragments.
103	1	cut of possible ditch.
104	1, 2	creamy clay and limestone brash mixture.
105	1, 2, 3, 4	modern concrete surface, to include limestone make-up.

Acknowledgements

Lindsey Archaeological Services wish to thank Mr S. Gregory for his help and co-operation during the period of the watching brief, and the groundworks team for their help.

D. Young

July 2002

The Figures

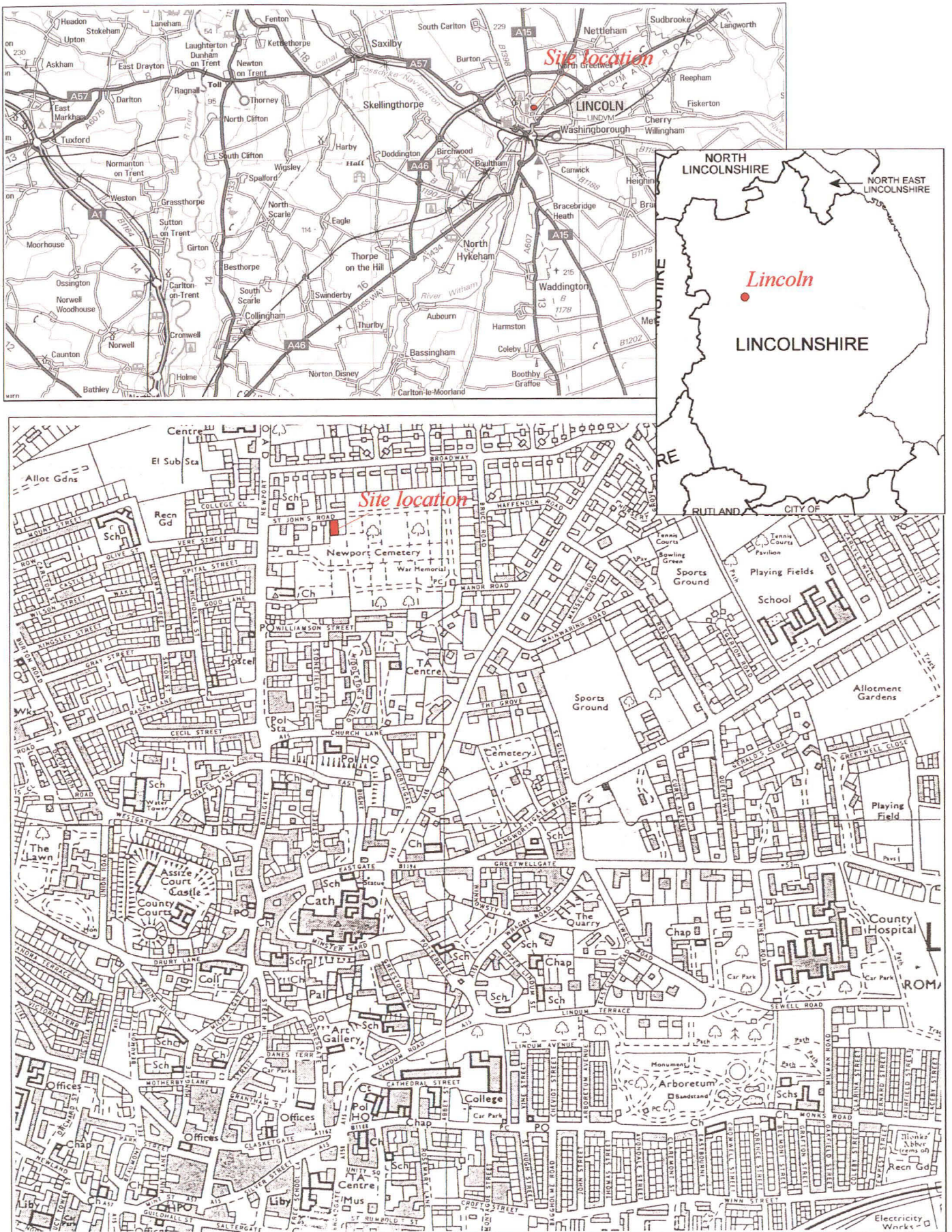
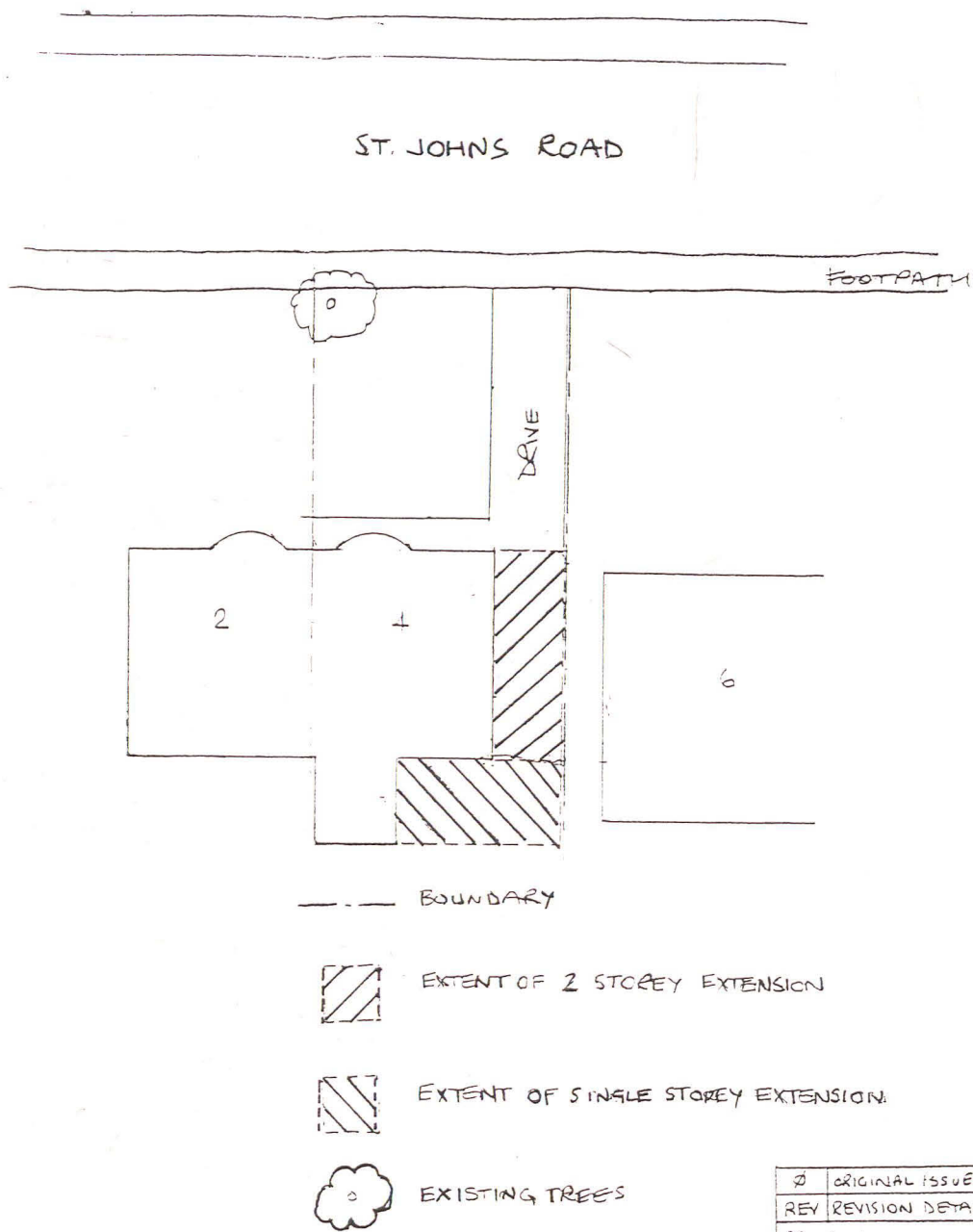


Fig. 1. Site Location Map. Reproduced from the 1976 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. Licence Number AL10002165.



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SCALE: 1:200	DATE: APRIL 01	

Fig. 2. Position of Development on the site of St. John's Rd, Lincoln.

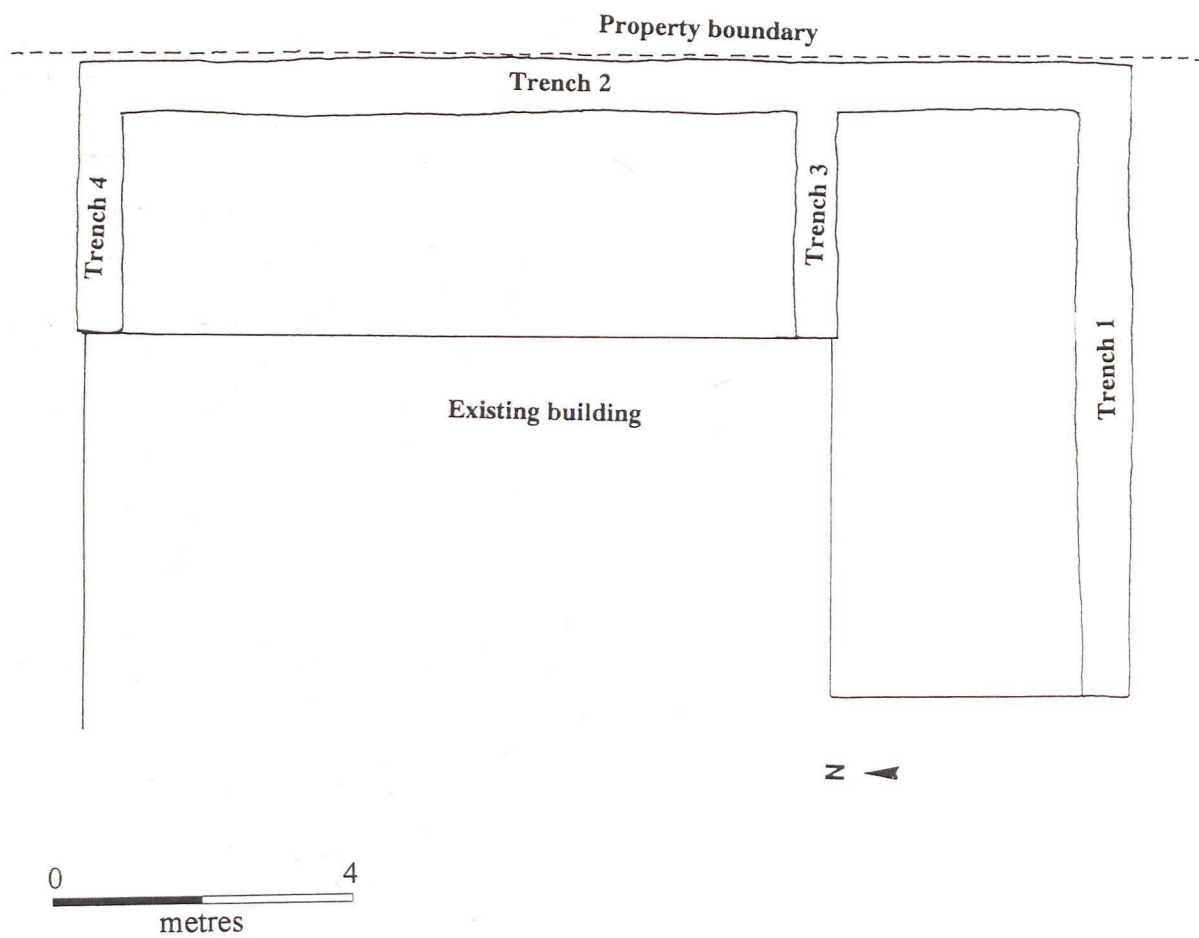


Fig. 3. Plan of the site showing positions of the trenches.

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4 Sep. 2722.

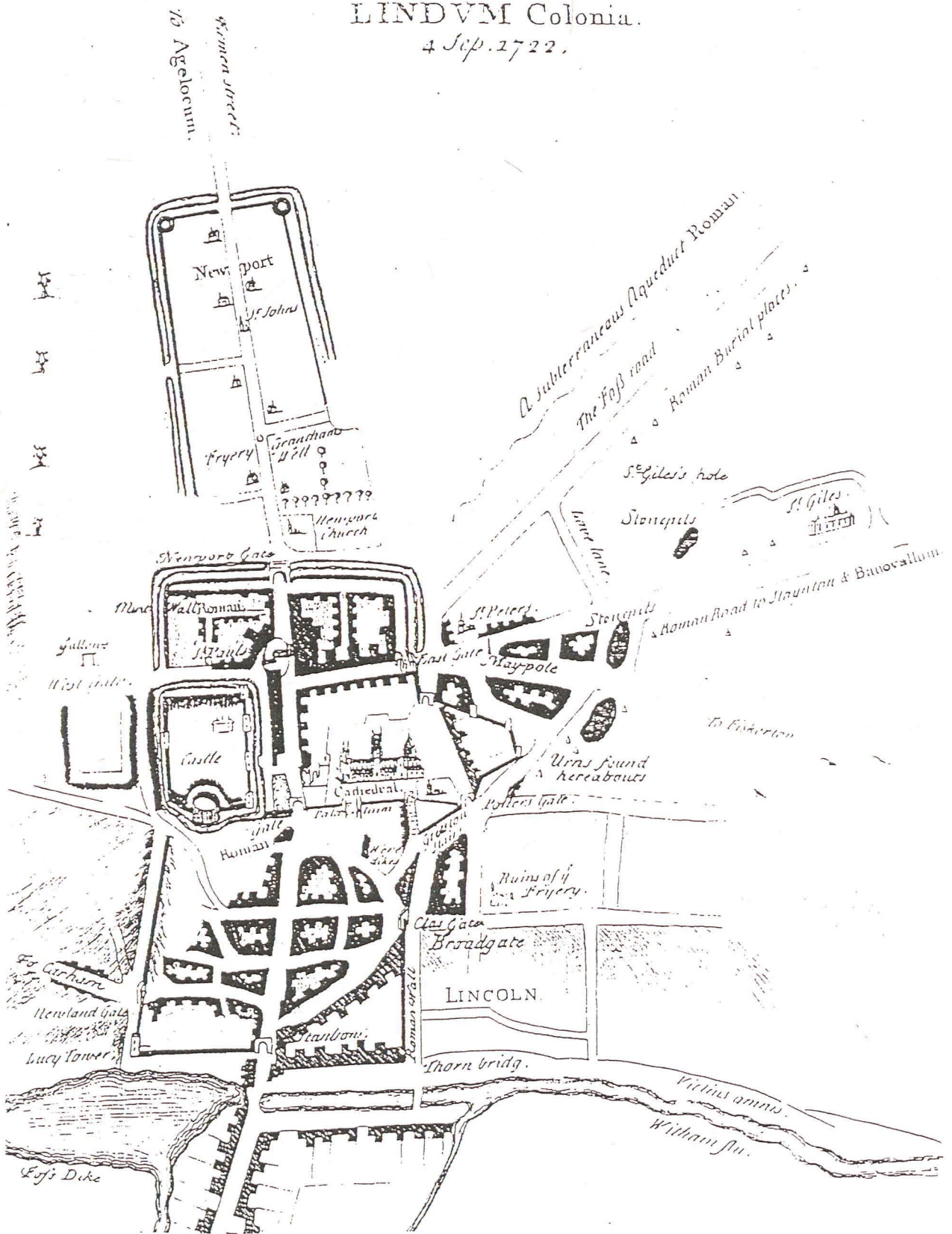


Fig. 4. Drawing of the City of Lincoln (William Stukeley's Survey of Lincoln)

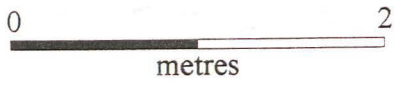
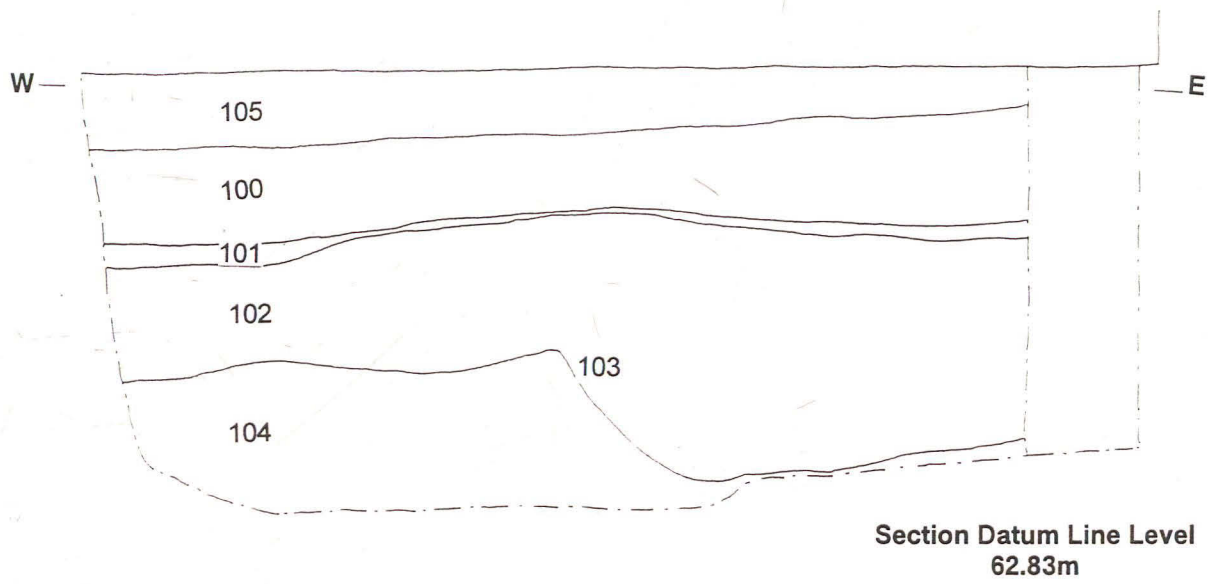


Fig. 5. South Facing Section Drawing of Trench 1, (Scale 1:20)

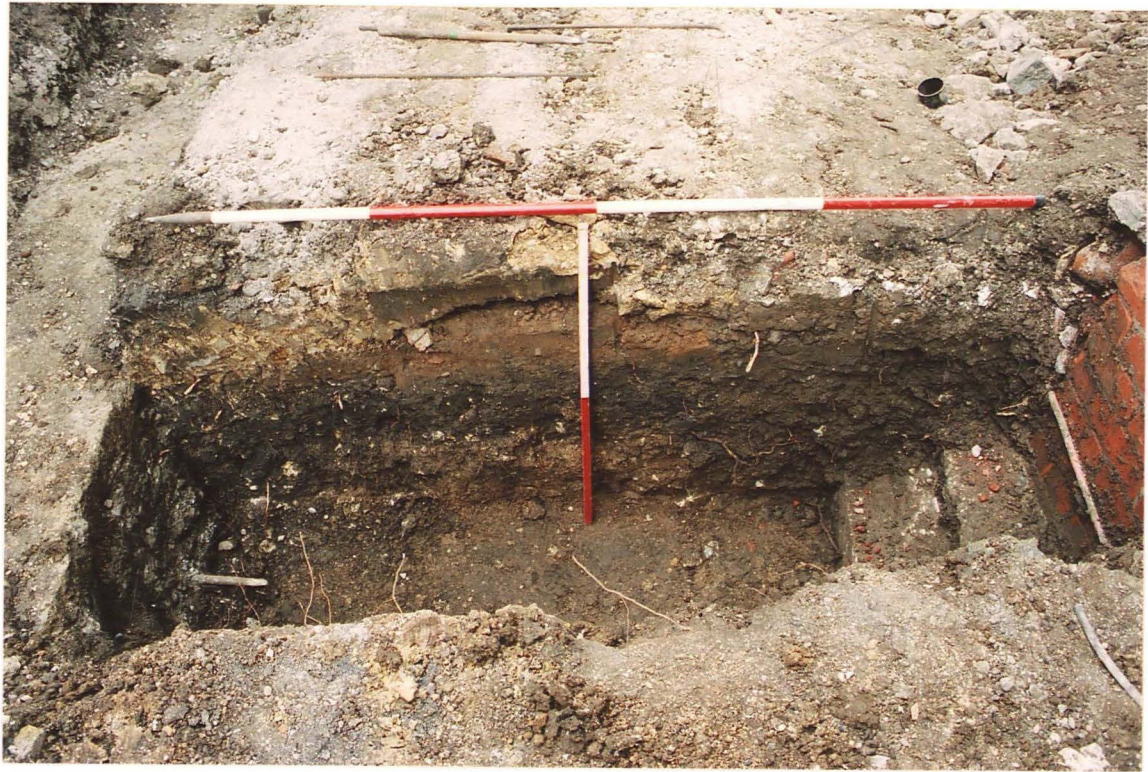
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Pl. 1. General shot of the southern part of the site after the removal of the concrete surfaces and limestone make-up.

Pl. 2. Photograph of the south facing section of trench 1, taken from the south west, showing the dark fill of the cut of the possible ditch.





Pl. 3. Photograph of trench 3 to show the modern deposits in the south facing section , with the earlier cut for the underpinning shown.

Pl. 4 Photograph of trench 4 showing modern deposits in the south-facing section.

