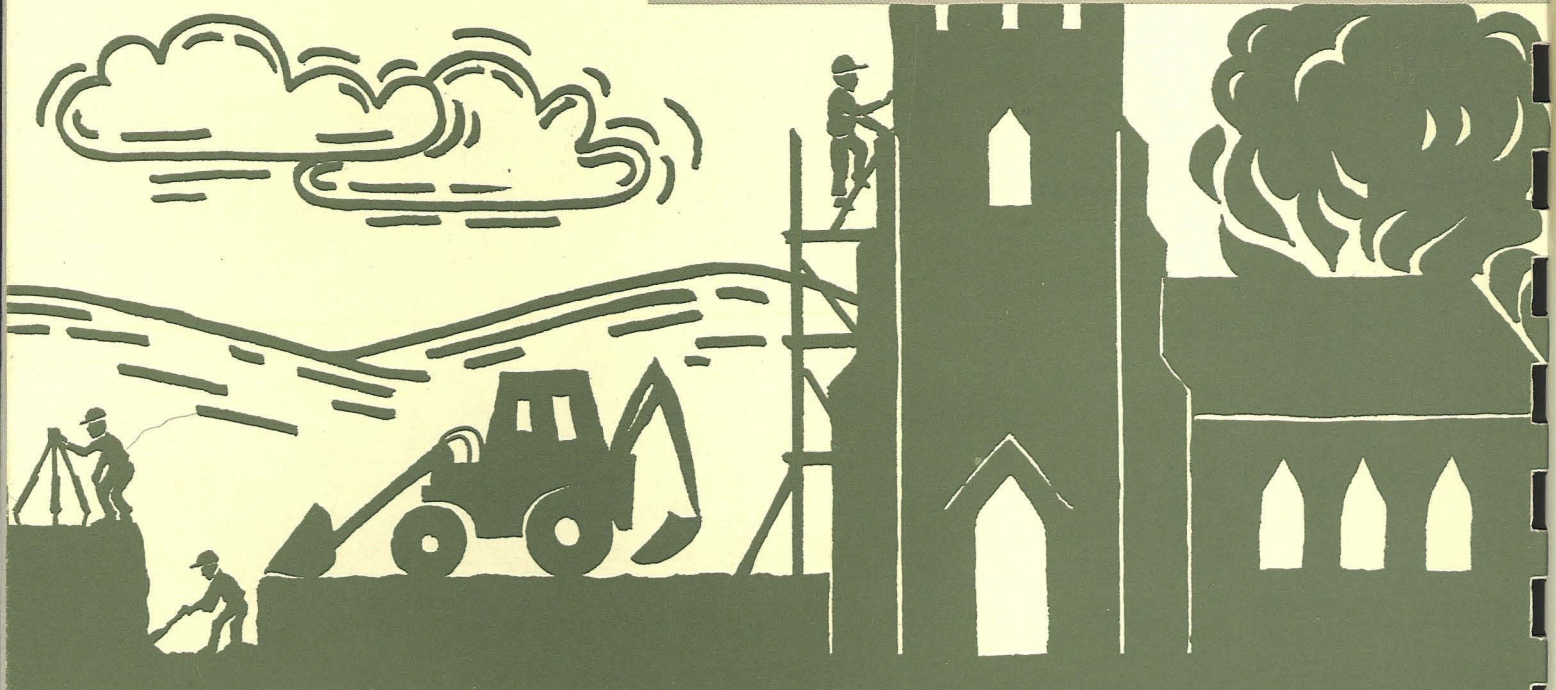


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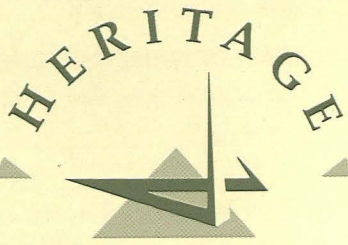
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94/4

Archaeological Watching Brief
at Empingham Road, Stamford,
Lincolnshire.

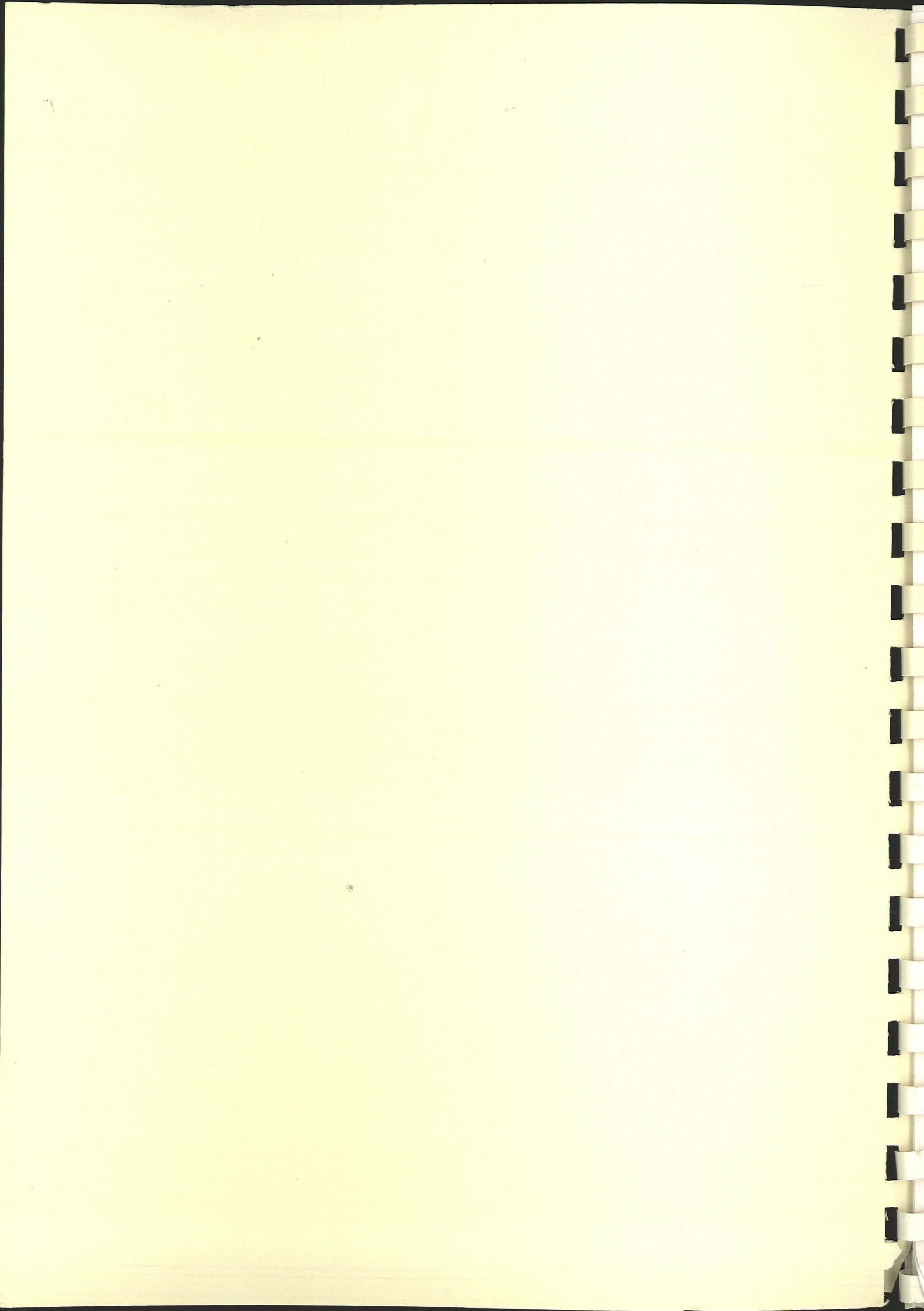
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LINCOLNSHIRE

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
EMPINGHAM ROAD,
STAMFORD,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For
Anglian Water Services Ltd.,

Report Compiled By
Paul Cope-Faulkner

May 1994

Heritage Lincolnshire
The Old School,
Cameron Street,
Heckington,
SLEAFORD,
Lincolnshire NG34 9RW
Charity No: 1001463. Company No:2554738 (England)

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during a water main reinforcement along Sutherland Way, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

The route of the pipe trench traversed an area of significant archaeological interest. A mesolithic flint artefact has been retrieved from the vicinity, and the Roman road, Ermine Street passes north-west to south-east through the site.

Although no archaeological features were observed during the watching brief, an area of stained subsoil probably signifies the previous location of the Roman road.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On the 28th June 1993, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the a water main reinforcement along Sutherland Way, between Empingham Road and Casterton Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire (NGR TF 016 074). Stamford is located in the civil parish of Stamford, South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). This work was commissioned by Anglian Water and carried out by Heritage Lincolnshire.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The town of Stamford is situated approximately 15km southwest of Bourne, 30km southeast of Grantham and 12km west of Market Deeping. Local soils are the Banbury association loamy ferritic brown earths and the Elmton 2 association typical brown rendzinas over Jurassic limestone (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 103; 181).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Stamford is located in an area of archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period. Prehistoric activity in the area is represented by a mesolithic flint artefact (SK69.003), found *c.* 140m west of the northern end of Sutherland Way.

Passing northwest to southeast through Sutherland Way is the Roman road Ermine Street. This major line of communication linked London to York, and much of its length underlies the modern A1. Excavations in 1956 (SK69.115) located *c.* 100m to the west of the site, established the precise position and orientation of Ermine Street. A Romano-British bronze spatula (SMR30752) was retrieved from *c.* 240m east of the southern end of Sutherland Way.

Medieval activity is represented by a papal bulla, a type of seal associated with an edict, probably of Innocent VI (*c.* 1362), found at a point *c.* 350m east of the site (SMR30707).

There is little evidence for any prehistoric settlement at Stamford and the origins of the town

probably lie in the Roman period with the establishment of the Roman town of Great Casterton 3.5km to the northwest of present day Stamford. Apart from the chance finds of Roman date, no evidence for Roman occupation has been found within Stamford itself.

Following the Roman period it is likely that a Saxon settlement was established to the north of a ford or fords (Stamford means 'stone ford') over the Rivers Welland and Gwash.

Stamford was fortified by the Danes in the 9th century. The period of Danish rule had raised Stamford's importance as a town and it had become a prosperous commercial, military and political centre. This status was maintained when it returned to English rule. It had a mint, a market and from the late 9th century had developed as a pottery producing centre, manufacturing exceptionally fine pottery (now known as Stamford ware). This industry was to flourish into the 13th century.

A small castle was established on the north side around 1086. The town's prosperity attracted the religious orders and, during the 12th and 13th centuries, six religious houses were founded on the periphery of the town. The medieval town walls were constructed in stone in the mid 13th century, and probably replaced earlier earth and timber walls.

By the mid 14th century changing markets and production centres began the decline of prosperity and population of the town that was to last until Stamford's revival at the beginning of the 17th century. Improvements in industry and transport (notably the introduction of long-distance coach services on the Great North Road) led to the revitalisation of the town's commercial functions which has lasted through to the present century.

3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present and to determine type, function and origin.

4. METHODS

A mechanical excavator was used in the construction of the pipe trench, which measured 0.6m wide and averaged 1.3m in depth. See fig. 3 for a plan of the route of the trench and location of the recorded sections. The sides of the trench were cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains prior to recording the sections. Each archaeological deposit revealed within the pipe trench was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at scale 1:20. Additionally, the natural geology was recorded.

5. RESULTS

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. Two phases were identified:

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Modern deposits

Phase 1 Natural Deposits

A layer of oolitic limestone, interpreted as natural bedrock, was encountered in each of the sections recorded.

Phase 2 Modern Deposits

Sealing the oolitic limestone in sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 was a brown-yellow silty clay frequently containing limestone fragments. This layer is interpreted as a disturbed subsoil. This subsoil was also encountered in section 5, except that here it was a brown-grey silty clay.

Sealing the subsoil at the northern end of Sutherland Way (section 1) was a layer of yellow brown clay containing 50% limestone fragments. This was sealed by a layer of road tarmac, that in turn was sealed by a layer of crushed limestone. This was overlaid by a layer of tarmac which constitutes the modern road surface.

The remainder of the sections examined revealed only one layer of tarmac constituting the present road surface.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural oolitic limestone (phase 1) was observed across all the area examined.

The disturbed subsoil (phase 2) is considered to have formed through previous agricultural use of the land. Where the subsoil was recorded in section 5 it was noted that it was brown-grey, as opposed to brown-yellow, in colour. This is the position at which the route of the pipe trench crosses the Roman road, Ermine Street. Although no evidence for the road survived, it is possible that the grey colouring is the result of the effects of leaching, which may represent the position of Ermine Street before it was destroyed by the construction of Sutherland Way.

Section 1 revealed two phases of road construction which were not observed elsewhere. Tarmac constitutes the present ground surface.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigation at Sutherland Way, Stamford, established that natural deposits occur within 0.3m of the present ground surface. A change in the colour of the subsoil possibly reflects the position of the Roman road, Ermine Street, before it was destroyed by the construction of the present road. Recent use of the site is represented by modern road construction. No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heritage Lincolnshire wish to thank Anglian Water for funding the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Dave Start edited this report. Ruth Waller, the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist, kindly permitted access to the relevant parish files. Information from the County Sites and Monuments Record was provided by Julia Wise of the Archaeology Section, City and County Museum, Lincoln.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes

Site Assistant: David Brown

Post-excavation Analysts: Paul Cope-Faulkner & Mark Dymond

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Green, C. Rhatz, P., 1959 *Excavation of Ermine Street in Lincolnshire*. Antiquaries Journal 39 pp.77-86

Hodge, C.A.H. Burton, R.G.O. Corbett, W.M. Evans, R. and Seale, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. 13

R.C.H.M.(E) 1977. *The Town of Stamford*.

11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed by 'SMR' are the primary reference numbers used by the City and County Museum, Lincoln, Sites and Monuments Record.

Numbers prefixed by 'SK' are the reference numbers used by the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist.

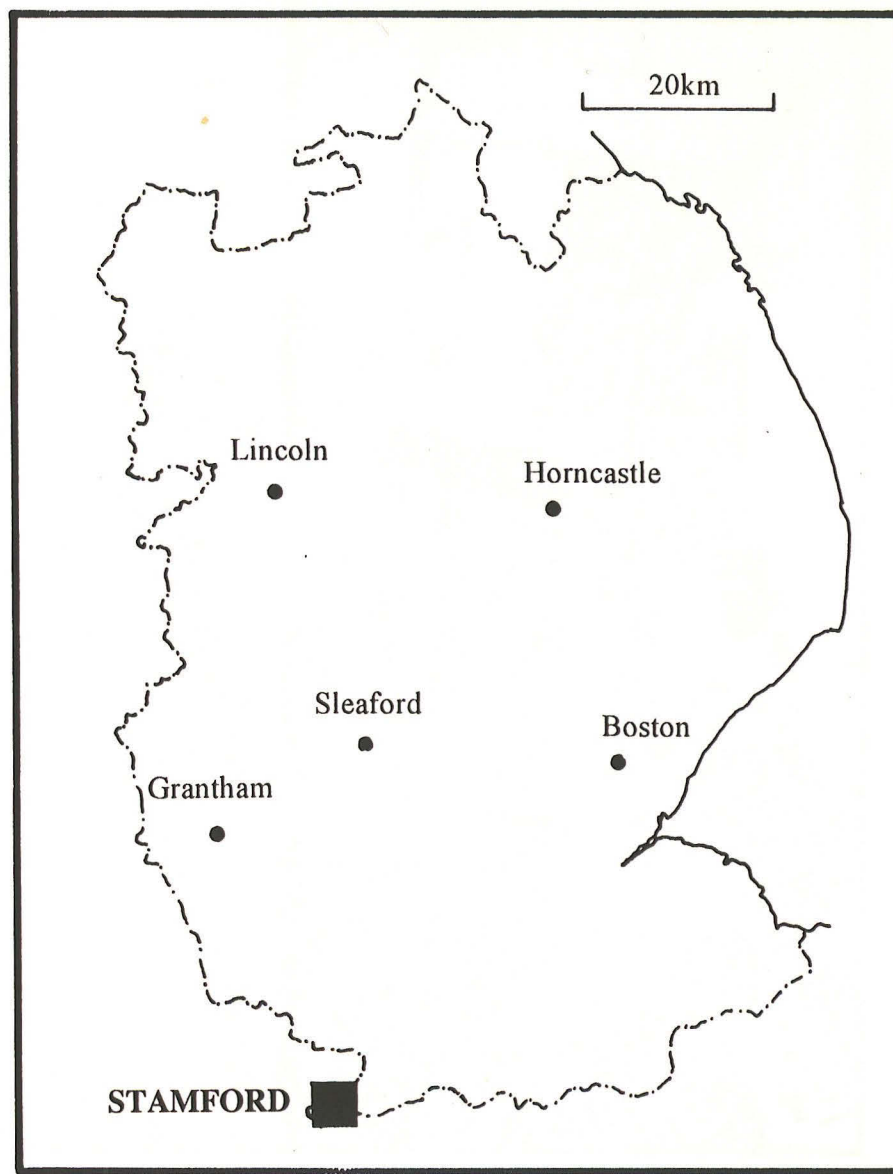
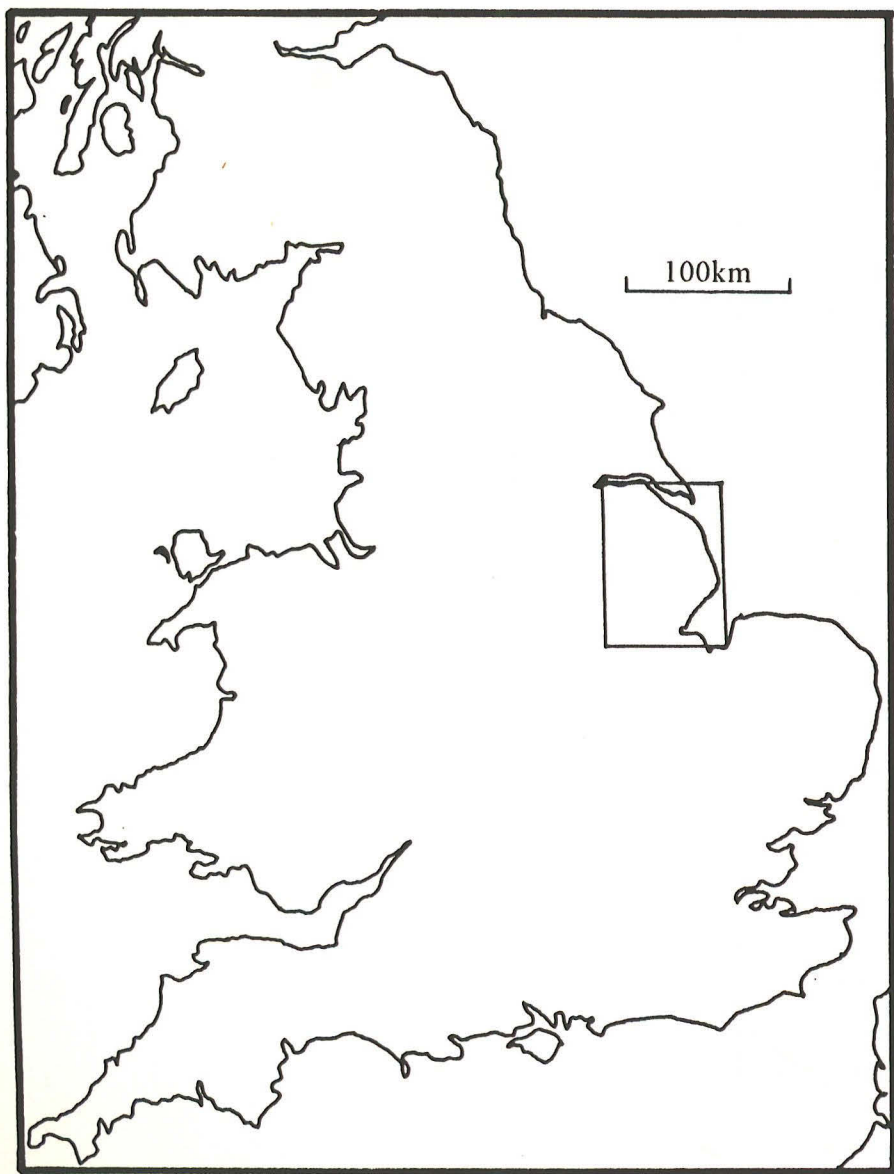
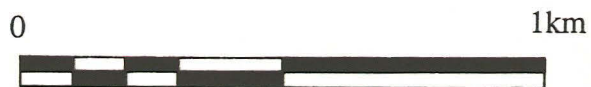


Fig. 1 GENERAL LOCATION

Fig. 2 SITE LOCATION



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Area of Investigation

Fig.3 LOCATION OF RECORDED SECTIONS

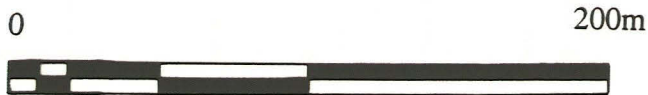
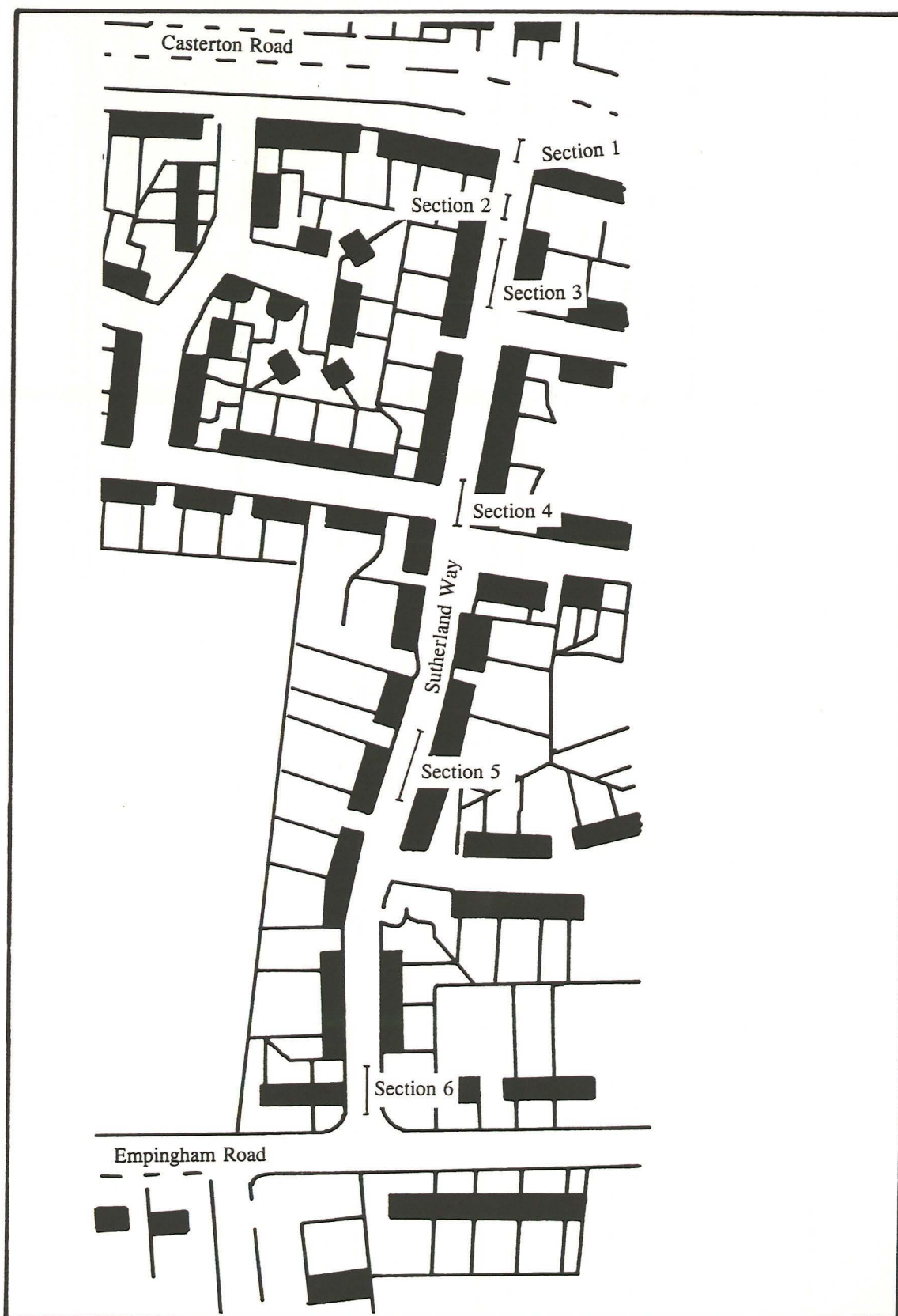
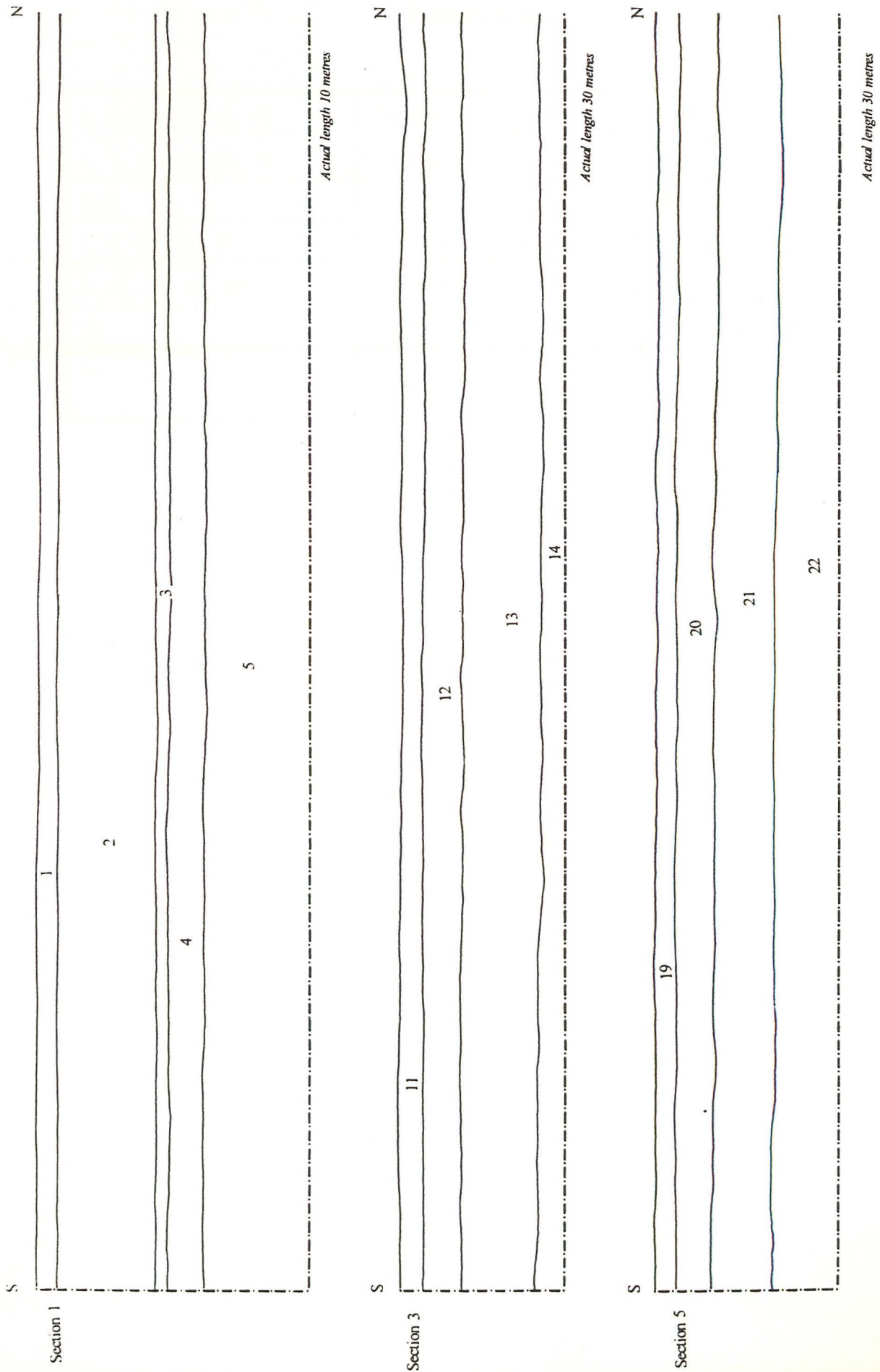


Fig. 4 SECTIONS 1, 3 AND 5



APPENDIX 1

Context Summary

1, 6, 11, 15, 19, 23	Tarmac	Modern road surface
2, 7, 12, 16, 20, 24	Crushed limestone	Make up layer for road
3, 8	Tarmac	Previous road surface
4, 9, 13, 17, 25	Limestone and clay deposit	Subsoil
5, 14, 18, 22, 26	Limestone	Natural bedrock
10	Brown sand and gravel	Natural deposit
21	Brown grey silty clay with rounded flint pebbles	Stained subsoil

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The archive consists of:

26	Context records
1	Photographic record
6	Scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Heritage Lincolnshire
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: