

94/9

**DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AT
STATION ROAD,
STAMFORD,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For
Jelsons Ltd

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A P S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

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proposed development area
of St. Martin's Parish
ap of Lincolnshire
y 1839 Map of the Borough of Stamford
archaeological Sites and Finds
archaeological Detail

1. SUMMARY

A desk-top assessment was undertaken to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the Station Yard, Station Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire. Several archaeological sites and findspots are located in the vicinity of the Station Yard.

Prehistoric activity is virtually absent from the area. A major Roman highway, Ermine Street, bypasses the town, crossing the River Welland a little over 100m west of the proposed development area. Although unknown, the possibility of Roman settlement close to that river crossing and, perhaps, stretching into the investigation site, cannot be discounted. Elsewhere, finds and observations suggest that the town of Stamford occupies a Roman ceremonial area, represented by crematoria and a cemetery.

Wothorpe Road, which passes the northeastern part of the development site, provided the route south out of the original Saxon settlement. This habitation area is believed to have been located on the north bank of the river, in the proximity of Lammas Bridge. However, it is possible that early Saxon occupation may also have been located south of the river, close to the present examination site. Also south of the river, and just west of the proposed development area, is the supposed site of a Saxon burial, though no supporting evidence for this record has been found.

Later settlement was concentrated on the north bank of the river. Part of this northern area of Stamford was fortified by the Danes in the ninth century. A new defended area was built south of the river in AD 918. High Street St. Martin's, a little east of the investigation site, is the favoured position for this late fortified Saxon settlement, though a suggested alternative location encompasses the proposed development area. However, there is little supporting evidence to approve either of these postulated sites over the other.

Remains of medieval date (between 1066 and 1500 AD) are more evident. Station Yard lies

outside the walls of the medieval town and to the rear of an area of houses and shops. Early Ordnance Survey maps record the site of a castle just west of the present investigation site, though this reference lacks supporting evidence. A Benedictine nunnery, one of several religious houses outside the town walls, was founded on the site in 1155. Enclosing the nunnery and associated cemetery was a precinct that encompassed the proposed development area. Entrance to this compound was through a gateway on Wothorpe Road, in the proximity of the northeast corner of the investigation site.

Dissolved in 1536, the nunnery precinct subsequently became part of the estates of the Cecils of Burghley House and was made unavailable for development. However, by 1839 a farm had been established on the site of the nunnery buildings, perhaps incorporating their remains. Construction of the railway between 1846-8 revealed remains of the nunnery, though the greatest disturbance appears to have been at the western end of Station Yard.

Previous excavations in the vicinity suggest that medieval deposits occur within 1m of the present ground surface.

Potential evidence of Roman occupation is considered to be locally important, while early Saxon habitation and Late Saxon fortified settlement would, if encountered, be of regional significance. Remains of the Benedictine nunnery, known to be located on site, are assessed as regionally important. Ancillary buildings and features may be expected within the nunnery precinct and an associated cemetery is known to exist. Ground conditions are inappropriate for geophysical survey.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services were commissioned by Jelson Ltd, to undertake a

desk-top assessment of Station Yard, Station Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site, as detailed in planning application SK.94/0490/69/19. This archaeological assessment was undertaken in accordance with a brief set by the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Stamford is situated 63km south of Lincoln and 17km northwest of Peterborough in the southwest corner of the county of Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Located in South Kesteven District, Stamford lies on the north and south banks of the River Welland, close to the confluence with the Gwash which provides the eastern boundary of the town.

Stamford sits in a narrow valley cut in the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone. Upper Lincolnshire Limestone and the overlying Great Oolite form the northern valley sides. In contrast, the southern part of the town, including the proposed development area, is located on a solid geology of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone (Inferior Oolite). Remains of a River Terrace and recent alluvium fill the valley bottom (Anderson 1982, 1).

Situated in the civil parish of St. Martin Stamford Baron on the south side of the Welland, the Station Yard lies at a height of c. 25m OD. Centred on National Grid Reference TF029067, the proposed development site covers approximately 2 hectares and is located c. 500m south of the town centre defined by All Saints parish church (Fig. 2).

Local soils are the Denchworth Association wet clayey (pelostagnogley) soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 155) and Fladbury 1 Association pelo-alluvial gley soils, developed on clayey alluvial subsoils (*ibid.*, 194).

3. AIMS

The aims of the desk-top assessment were to locate and, if present, evaluate any archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development area. Such location and assessment of significance would permit the formulation of an appropriate response to integrate the needs of the archaeology with the proposed development programme.

4. METHODS

Compilation of the archaeological and historical data relevant to the area of the proposed development site involved examination of all appropriate primary and secondary sources available. These have included:

- historical documents, held in Lincolnshire Archives
- enclosure, tithe, parish and other maps and plans, held in Lincolnshire Archives
- recent and old Ordnance Survey maps
- the County Sites and Monuments Record
- the files of the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist
- aerial photographs
- archaeological books and journals

Information obtained in the literature and cartographic examination was supplemented by a site visit to investigate the present land use and condition; the extent of hardstanding and other firm surfaces; and the appropriateness for geophysical survey. Results of the archival and field examinations were committed to scale plans of the area.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Historical data

Stamford is mentioned as early as AD 658 as the site of a new monastic foundation, though the reference is generally considered unreliable.

However, by the end of the ninth century, Stamford was described as one of the five boroughs of the Danelaw. A reference to the visit of Edward the Elder in 918 indicates that the Danish *burh* lay north of the Welland and also records that the king commanded a new borough be built on the south side of the river (Mahany 1982, 3).

In the Domesday Book of 1086, Stamford is referred to as a royal borough comprising six wards, five of these north of the river. At that time, the sixth ward, south of the river, was located in the County of Northamptonshire. A bridge spanned the river and in the wards to the north were over four hundred messuages, three and a half mills, and a castle. In addition, four churches, one dedicated to St. Peter, were located in the northern part of the town (Foster and Longley 1976, 9-11).

Previously *Stearford* and *Stanford*, the major place-name Stamford - 'stony ford' derives from Old English *stan* and *ford* (Ekwall 1974, 436-7).

Stamford remained in the royal demesne until it was successfully besieged in 1153. Stone walls were erected around the town from the mid-thirteenth century, perhaps replacing an earlier wooden circuit (Mahany 1982, 6). However, by 1340 the castle was in poor repair and described as ruinous in 1347 (Mahany 1976, 227).

Numerous religious establishments were constructed during the medieval period. Of particular significance to the proposed development site is the Benedictine Nunnery of St. Michael. Founded on the south side of the river in 1155 as a cell of Peterborough Abbey, the house was always a small one and was dissolved in 1536 (RCHME 1977, 31).

Documents of the 12th and 13th centuries indicate that the main shopping areas were Red Lion Square, St. Mary's Hill and High Street St. Martin's. Stamford gained prosperity in the thirteenth century from the rich rural surrounds which provided grain, stock and fleece. Wool was woven in the town then sent down the

Welland to Boston for subsequent export to the continent.

Stamford was apparently in decline by the beginning of the fifteenth century, though the sack of the town in 1461 by the Lancastrian army played only a minor role. This situation worsened over the next two centuries such that, in 1624, Stamford was described as a 'poor decayed town'. However, improvements in both industry and transport during the seventeenth century resurrected Stamford's fortunes. Wool, hemp and leather production revived, as did the malting industry. The opening of the canal to Deeping in the 1660s allowed Stamford to play an important role in the distribution of grain, timber and coal, and the introduction of long-distance coach services improved road travel. As a result, the town's importance as a market town and social and economic centre for the surrounding area increased through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century (*ibid*, xli-xliii).

5.2 Cartographic Data

Station Yard is situated on the south side of Stamford town, south of the River Welland. Appropriate maps for the vicinity were examined.

Dating from c. 1600, John Speed's *Plan of Stamford* reveals that the proposed development area was occupied by the precinct of a nunnery. Ecclesiastical buildings were depicted in the west central part of the compound, with the remainder of the area shown as open ground. Additionally, the map records a gateway in the northeast wall of the enclosure (Fig. 3). This gate was located in the proximity of the northern limit of the present investigation site.

Located at the southwestern limits of the built-up area of Stamford, the nunnery faced the walls of the town across the river. East of the nunnery precinct, further buildings fronted High Street St. Martin's, the highway stretching south from the river. Gardens reached back from the street frontage and terminated on the east side of the present

Wothorpe Road. South of the nunnery confines was open ground.

William Murray's 1773 *Map of St. Martin's Parish* (Fig. 4) records the proposed development area as fields. Called 'Nuns Grounds', these fields were bounded to the west by a road, beyond which were buildings. Oriented northwest-southeast, the line of this road is preserved by the present eastern boundary to the High School, which runs between the river and the northwestern perimeter of the investigation area. Further buildings were depicted on the frontage of High Street St. Martin's. Many of these structures were on narrow, elongated plots.

Although of small scale, Anderson's 1779 map reveals the presence of ruins south of the river and west of High Street St. Martin's, in the general area of proposed development. These ruins were apparently located in the vicinity of St Michael's Nunnery. Other buildings lay a little further west (Fig. 5).

Bryant's 1828 *Map of the County of Lincoln* excludes the present investigation site from consideration but is also of too small scale to provide useful information for the area.

Dating from 1839, the *Map of the Borough of Stamford* by Dewhirst and Nichols depicts the area of investigation as fields centred on Nuns Farm. These farm buildings, which lay to the west of a track that traversed the area from the present Kettering Road, northwestwards to the river, are identifiable with the structures shown on Murray's 1773 plan. Located at the northeast corner of the proposed construction area was building with attached yard or garden while, a little to the southeast of the proposed development site, at the junction of Wothorpe Road and Kettering Road, was Fryer's Hospital (Fig. 6).

There is no available tithe map for St. Martin Stamford Baron, within which parish the present investigation area is located. Similarly, the Stamford inclosure award does not depict the area of proposed development.

Dating from 1901, the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map depicts the area in detail. Railtracks, and other features associated with the Midland Station immediately to the south, covered most of the present investigation area. A saw mill was located in the part of the site fronting Wothorpe Road while, to the north of the railway compound, were the pens and stalls of the cattle market. Lying just to the west of the proposed development area was 'The Nuns', identifiable with Nuns Farm shown on Dewhirst and Nichols 1839 plan. This establishment was regarded as being on the site of St. Michael's Nunnery. Immediately to the northwest of The Nuns, the Ordnance Survey recorded the site of a castle, and earthworks falling away westwards to the river. Although this castle site is shown again on the 1905 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch map, no other cartographic depiction has been found to support this interpretation.

Recent Ordnance Survey plans (1971, 1977) reveal that the early twentieth century pattern of buildings and open spaces had largely been maintained. New constructions in the vicinity included Stamford High School, immediately north of The Nuns, and very large, warehouse-type buildings at the southwest side of the cattle yard.

5.3 Aerial Photograph Data

Aerial photographs of Stamford, published or transcribed in secondary sources, were examined for evidence of archaeological remains.

Stamford town centre, and the surrounding area, is recorded on published aerial photographs (RCHME 1977, plates 1 and 2; Start 1993, 106, 107). These reveal that the street plan of the conurbation retains much of its medieval pattern. However, the photographs are not appropriate for showing archaeological remains and, moreover, the present investigation area was not depicted on them.

5.4 Archaeological Data

Records of archaeological sites and finds held

in the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record and the files of the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist were consulted. Other, secondary, sources were also examined.

Details of archaeological and historical remains falling within 300m of the proposed development area are collated here and committed to Fig. 7 and 8. (Note: Italicised grid references are corrections of inaccurate figures in the primary references.)

Map Code	County Sites and Monuments Record	Description	Grid. Ref.	South Kesteven Community Archaeologist's Files
1	22607	St. Michael's Priory reredorter, 1155-1536	TF02780647	SK69.248
2	30600	St. Mary's Church, 13th-15th centuries	TF03040705	SK69.208
3	30601	All Saints' Church, 13th-15th centuries	TF02850714	
4	30602	St. John's Church, c. 1450	TF02930708	
5	30603	St. George's Church, 13th-15th centuries	TF03200707	
6	30605	St. Martin's Church, late 15th century	TF03120678	
7	30606	St. Peter's Church, site of (destroyed 1560). SAM260	TF02730702	SK69.244
8	30608	Site of All Saints' Church, destroyed 1461	TF03170686	
9	30609	Site of St. Mary Bynnewerk Church, destroyed. 1461	TF02520697	SK69.243
10	30615	Site of Austin Friars, 1343-1538, earthworks. SAM11	TF025069	SK69.247
11	30616	Friary of the Sack	TF025068	
12	30617	Site of Benedictine Nunnery; gold ring in coffin, cellar vaulting, burial, pot, carved stone	TF02750656	SK69.248
13	30618	Remains of house of Augustinian Canons, 12th-13th centuries	TF03040681	
14	30619	Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, demolished 1818	TF030068	
15	30622	Site of Sempringham Hall, 13th century	TF02630701	SK69.207

16	30623	Site of Hospital of St. John Baptist and St. Thomas the Martyr, c. 1189 foundations, arch, buttress, walling	TF03040690	SK69.207
17	30624	Lord Burghley's Hospital, 17th century; on site of Hospital of SS John and Thomas	TF03020690	SK69.207
18	30627	Snowden's Hospital, 1604, rebuilt 1823	TF02660717	SK69.207
19	30628	Town Wall extant. SAM108	TF0251406984 -0252606996	SK69.208
20	30629	St. Peter's Gate (documentary)	TF02530694	SK69.208
21	30630	Clement Gate (documentary reference)	TF02650719	SK69.208
22	30634	Water Gate (documentary)	TF03290706	SK69.208
23	30635	Bridge Gate (documentary)	TF03050696	SK69.208
24	30637	Tower of Town Wall, angle bastion	TF02520698	SK69.208
25	30640	All Saints' Vicarage, 14th-15th century	TF02840720	SK69.208
26	30642	St. Clement's Church, (documentary)	TF02700720	SK69.208
27	30643	St. Clement's Vicarage, (documentary)	TF02700720	SK69.208
28	30644	Edwardian burh, AD 918 (documentary)	TF02720659	SK69.202
29	30645	St. John's Vicarage (documentary)	TF029070	SK69.202
30	30648	Churchyard Cross, St. Mary's (documentary)	TF03040705	SK69.202
31	30650	St. Michael the Greater Church (documentary)	TF03070717	SK69.202
32	30652	St. Peter's Parsonage, on site of medieval rectory; developed Stamford Ware	TF02710706	SK69.233
33	30656	St. Thomas's Chapel	TF03050690	SK69.202
34	30666	Saxon defensive ditch	TF027070	SK69.207

35 on map	30667	Castle mound (levelled). Saxon coins and pot, Madonna statuette; well, corn-drier, undercroft. SAM128	TF027070 unlocated near Old Rectory House	SK69.207
36 Not on map	30668	Medieval well, late 13th century jug. SAM128	TF0206 unlocated (castle site; TF027070)	SK69.207
37 47	30668	Castle site - motte ditch, timber buildings. SAM128	TF02860688 (TF027070)	SK69.207
38	30670	Rubble building with 3 splayed arches - remains of castle. SAM128	TF02860688 (TF027070)	SK69.207
39	30673	Pillory (documentary)	TF02860713	
40	30674	Norman arch, 12th century probably reset. SAM106	TF03050693 (TF03030701)	
41	30675	Barnhill, one of last areas of medieval town not built on (see 30734)	TF027072	
42	30677	Ustrina with urns, possibly Roman or earlier. Also arches and paved areas	TF03040716	SK69.106
43	30678	Two Roman urns, stone cist, coin	TF027072	SK69.104
44	30679	Roman pavement, 0.3m below surface	TF031069	SK69.103
Not on map	30681	Roman stone coffin with two skeletons, pot, tear bottle	TF00NW unlocated	
45	30682	Part of 8th/9th century coffin lid; memorial stone	TF03120719	
Not on map	30687	Medieval gold seal ring	TF00NW unlocated	
Not on map	30688	Coin hoard, deposited c. 901	TF00NW unlocated	SK69.239
Not on map	30689	Hoard of Roman coins (Constantinian)	TF00NW unlocated; by Ermine Street	
46	30690	Coin hoard in pot; deposited c. 1465	TF03220707	SK69.241

Not on map	30691	Coin hoard in oak box; deposited 1603-25	TF00NW unlocated; near Old Rectory House and railway bridge	SK69.240
Not on map	30694	Middle Bronze Age palstave (SMR has spearhead)	Unlocated	SK69.004
47	30697	Saxon pottery	TF03010707	
48	30698	Brewhouse of old George and Angel hotel	TF03000708	
49	30699	Building debris, carved stone fragments; early Stamford Ware, iron slag	TF03230720	
50	30700	Excavation- medieval building with hearth and cesspit, pot, roof tile	TF03050687	
51	30701	Early Stamford ware, bone, shell, later medieval pot. Vaulted cesspit, filled in 16th century; 19th century cesspit	TF02900703	
52	30702	Medieval well, pottery; 17th century house	TF03220721	
53	30705	Medieval grain drying plant at King's Mill	TF027069	SK69.211
54	30709	Excavation: outbuilding of earlier St. John's Church; well	TF028069 - incorrect, TF02940706	SK69.224
55	30710	Timber framed building, late 12th century arcade; Saxo-Norman and 13th century pot	TF02980705	
56	30711	Arched tunnel, possible medieval culvert	TF03140701	
57	30712	Pit with clay pipes, 1620-1720	TF031071	
58	30713	Rubble wall (demolished), probably contemporary with adjacent 16th century building	TF03030698	
59	30715	Breadcroft deserted medieval village; medieval pot, packhorse bell	TF023065	

60	30715-7	During cleaning of Mill Stream, many 19th century bottles and clay pipes. Also limestone surface with medieval pot	TF023063	SK69.210
61	30721 (see 30750)	Roman pot and iron slag on probable site of Vaudey Hall	TF030070	SK69.112
62	30725	Saxo-Norman Stamford Ware pottery	TF02650720	SK69.212; SK69.261
63	30727/8	Late Saxon and medieval pot; bronze key and ring	TF03050716	SK69.217
64	30731	Anglo-Saxon iron furnaces	TF032071 (TF03210719)	SK69.201
41	30734	Barnhill, one of last areas of medieval town not built on. SAM255 (see 30675)	TF027072	
65	30739	Two wine bottles from pit associated with Rock House	TF025072	
66	30740	Skeletons	TF025072	SK69.262
67	30743	Stamford mint silver penny	TF024067	SK69.209
68	30744	Remains of 19th century terra-cotta works; moulds	TF03120698	
69	30745	Green glazed Saxon pots	TF03160661	
70	30746	Medieval building, hearth, cesspit, 13th century pot; also Saxo-Norman Stamford Ware, evidence of iron smelting	unlocated (3 High Street St. Martin's) TF03080688	
71	30747	Possible site of Saxon burial	TF02720659	
72	30748	Saxo-Norman Stamford Ware pottery lamp	TF03120687	SK69.238
73	30749	Medieval and later pot and building debris, ?dump	TF032068 (TF032069)	
61	30750 (see 30721)	Roman pot, iron slag at 2.5m depth	TF030070	SK69.112
74	30751	Stamford Ware pot kiln	TF00NW unlocated (TF03230699)	?SK69.222/223
75	30755	Late Saxon iron smelting furnace; Stamford Ware	TF031072 (03130722)	

76	30756	17th century stone-lined cess pit with pot and clay pipe; much 19th century pot	TF03020718	SK69.402
77	30757/ 30758	14th century grain drier, Stamford Ware pot, underground chamber; 12th century coffin lid	TF031072	SK69.216
78	34179	Site of post-medieval cockpit, George Hotel	TF03050687	
79	34776	Electricity Generating Station, c. 1903	TF03240695	
80	BD	Town Wall, site of; mid 13th century-1461	TF02630716	SK69.208
Not on map	BZ	Saxo-Norman pot; ?kilns	TF0207 unlocated	SK69.221
81	No code	Layer of slag and iron beneath modern road	TF03190722-03100719	
82		Ermine Street Roman Road	TF02700640-00230868	SK69.110
83		Saxon ditch; Saxo-Norman quarries	TF032067	SK69.203
84		Medieval stone quarries	TF03090683	SK69.215
85		Iron smelting furnaces, 11th-12th century Stamford Ware pottery	TF031072	SK69.227
86		Iron smelting hearth cut through by Saxo-Norman quarry	TF032072	SK69.230
87		Late Saxon iron furnace	TF03200717	SK69.232
88		Part of 14th-15th century grave slab	TF030069	SK69.254
89		Undated stone wall	TF03260689	SK69.256
90		Stone-built cellar, undated	TF03040717	SK69.257
91		Late Saxon and medieval remains	TF02960686	SK69.264

Located just to the north of the proposed development area are the George and Lammas bridges which cross the river and mill-stream respectively. Recorded in the 17th century but of earlier origin, these align with Wothorpe Road and the medieval North Road south of

St. Martin's. On the basis of this topographical evidence the bridges are considered to represent the most probable position for the first Saxon river crossing. If such was the case, then it is probable that the original Saxon settlement focussed around the bridge-head

(RCHME 1977, xxxviii).

Stukeley, the 18th century antiquary who lived in Stamford, postulated that the site of the Edwardian *burh* was later occupied by the precinct of St. Michael's Nunnery. However, there is no surviving visible evidence to support this suggestion (*loc. cit.*). Similarly, he described the site of a Roman encampment on the west side of the medieval town, though this pronouncement is now held to have little veracity (*ibid.*, xxxv).

Archaeological excavations, carried out within 100m to the northeast of the present investigation area, encountered alluvial deposits at c. 20.3m OD. Cutting these natural layers was a large Late Saxon ditch, perhaps part of the boundary of the Edwardian *burh*. A later ditch was also recognised and considered possibly to represent an enclosure around the late 12th century Hospital of SS John and Thomas, which was located immediately to the east. In addition, a pit that contained pottery of 16th century date was recorded at c. 21.1m OD, and the modern ground surface occurred at c. 21.3m OD (Heritage Lincolnshire 1992).

From before the end of the 10th century through to the 12th, Stamford had a mint. Large numbers of moneyers and dies suggest high level coinage production. Additionally, Stamford was home to a thriving pottery industry through the same period. Stamford Ware, the product, was high-quality ceramic that was distributed widely in Eastern England (RCHME, xxxix-xl).

St. Martin's parish was enclosed in 1796, at which time Burghley Park, part of the Cecil family estates, was extended up to the Great North Road. St. Michael's Nunnery, also owned by the Cecils, was not available for building. These measures prevented any eastwards or westwards expansion of the southern part of the town (*ibid.* xlv).

It would appear that by 1727 all the buildings of St. Michael's Nunnery had been destroyed. A female tomb effigy from the site was recorded by Stukeley and, during railway

construction in 1846, five stone coffins, human bones and an inscribed coffin lid were found. Additionally, building foundations, window mullions and other masonry fragments were discovered, along with coloured glass and a small jet crucifix (*ibid.*, 32).

Situated at the junction of High Street St. Martin's and Station Road is the George Hotel, one of the main coaching inns on the Great North Road (Wright 1983, 32). Remains of a medieval hall, probably 14th century in date, survive within the present structure (DoE 1974, 102). Recorded as an inn from as early as 1568, the building comprises four ranges around a yard and possesses various 17th century elements, including mullioned windows and fire places. On the north side is a single-storey front, built in 1849 when Station Road was cut through the area (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 715-6). Two adjacent houses, which now form part of the hotel, may incorporate remains of a medieval chapel (DoE 1974, 101).

Located at the eastern end of Kettering Road is the Tudor style Fryer's Hospital. Built in 1832, these served as almshouses (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 698).

In the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area are several listed buildings. These include Fryer's Hospital, Stamford town railway station, the George Hotel, Burghley Almshouses, St Martin's Church and a number of other properties on Wothorpe Road and around the High Street St. Martin's area (DoE 1974).

In 1967, the whole of the medieval town of Stamford, together with St. Martins, was designated the first Conservation Area in Britain. Subsequently, in 1974, the conservation area was expanded and the whole area declared of outstanding architectural or historic importance (SKDC, nd).

5.5 Site Visit

In July 1994, a visit was made to the proposed development site at the Station Yard, Station Road, Stamford. Formerly used as a carpark

for the adjacent railway station, most of the area is open space provided with a cinder surface. Immediately north of the proposed construction area, and at a much lower level, is the cattle market. Dumped materials occupy the southern tail of the site and a north-south road crosses the eastern part of the area. East of this road are in-use buildings of Kings Mill Dairy. All of the proposed development site, with the exception of the very southern part of the dairy compound, falls outside the boundary of the Stamford town Conservation Area.

It was considered that ground conditions were inappropriate for magnetometry and resistivity survey.

6. DISCUSSION

Evidence of prehistoric activity in the area is extremely limited. A single Bronze Age metal artefact, and that without accurate location, provides the only indication of prehistoric exploitation of the general vicinity. Moreover, the level of archaeological investigation in and around Stamford would suggest that the lack of finds genuinely reflects limited use of the area in the prehistoric period.

Ermine Street, a major Roman highway, passes over the Welland at Stamford. It was frequently the case that Roman military works were established at locations such as this, where a road crossed a watercourse. Moreover, the antiquary Stukeley described such a fort on the north bank of the river, though this reference is now considered unreliable. However, no Roman military establishment is known at Stamford and Romano-British settlement is believed to focus at Great Casterton, 3km to the northwest. In spite of this, various finds attest a Romano-British presence at Stamford. A cemetery and possibly associated crematorium have been identified near the town centre, while a mosaic floor was observed close to the present bridge. Apart from those associated with the funerary remains, artefacts and general occupation debris is scarce. This evidence raises the possibility that the nature of the Romano-

British presence at Stamford may be ceremonial, rather than habitation.

Significantly greater evidence for use of the area in later periods is provided by documents, sites, findspots and structures of this date. Saxon settlement probably originated around the George and Lammas Bridges, the likely site of the first Saxon river crossing. Wothorpe Road, which lies immediately east of the proposed development site, leads down to this bridging point and probably formed the main route to the town from the south during the earlier Saxon period.

Before the end of the 9th century Stamford was fortified by the Danes and made one of the Five Boroughs in this part of the Danelaw. Established immediately east of the earlier Saxon settlement, this Danish *burh* conferred political, military and economic importance on the town.

About 40 years later, in AD 918, the town submitted to Edward the Elder, bringing the Danish military occupation to an end. Edward also ordered a new *burh* to be built on the south side of the river, though the exact position of this Saxon fortification is uncertain. A situation bisected by High Street St. Martin's is generally considered the most probable location. However, an alternative site, on the area later occupied by St. Michael's Nunnery, has been postulated. This latter location, encompassing the proposed construction area, lacks supporting evidence but cannot be discounted entirely.

Stamford maintained its importance through the later Saxon period and a mint was established in the town towards the end of the 10th century. Additionally, at about the same time a major pottery industry developed. Producing high-quality ceramics, this industry thrived until at least the thirteenth century.

Domesday Book (1086) confirms the prosperity and importance of Stamford, recording a castle, and several mills and churches in the town north of the river.

The present investigation area lies south, across the river from the medieval walled town. Perhaps originating as a wooden circuit, these walls were established in stone from the mid-thirteenth century. Throughout the area of the walled town and also on High Street St. Martin's, maps record narrow, elongated property blocks. These cartographically recorded plots are typically medieval in origin.

Religious houses were founded outside the town walls. Approximately 400m northwest of the proposed development site is the site of the Augustinian Friary, while the Dominican, Franciscan and Carmelite Friaries lay between 700m and 1km to the northeast. However, buildings of the Benedictine Nunnery of St. Michael occupied the western part of the investigation area. Furthermore, cartographic evidence reveals that the whole of the proposed development site is confined within the limits of the nunnery precinct. A gateway to this enclosure opened out on to Wothorpe Road, in the proximity of the northeast corner of the present investigation site.

Mercantile areas were located in the vicinity of the proposed development site on High Street St. Martin's, and in the town centre across the river. However, the secular trading activity would not have infringed the spiritual domain of the nunnery.

It would appear that, following the dissolution, St. Michael's Nunnery was acquired by the Cecils of nearby Burghley House. Although the nunnery precinct was not made available for building, a farm occupied the site of the original ecclesiastical structures from 1839, and maybe at least as early as 1773. These farm buildings may have incorporated remains of the religious establishment.

Stamford's mercantile activities brought general prosperity to the area and invited further exploitation of the commercial opportunities. These economic activities were particularly revitalised by improvements in transport systems in the post-medieval period. A large coaching inn, the George Hotel, recorded from the sixteenth century, was located very close to

the proposed development area.

Excavations on Station Road, in the immediate vicinity of the Station Yard, recorded well-preserved medieval and later deposits. A ditch of apparently Late Saxon date, perhaps part of the defences of the Edwardian *burh*, was encountered at c. 20.3m OD, approximately 1m below the present ground surface.

Station Road was cut through to provide access to the railway station, built 1846-8. Remains of St. Michael's Nunnery were revealed during this major development. However, cartographic evidence suggests that the areas of greatest disturbance caused by railway construction were alongside the main lines and at the western entrance to the Station Yard. It appears that the majority of the Station Yard was constructed at ground level and, therefore, archaeological deposits in the area are likely to be substantially intact.

Hardstanding and buildings cover the proposed development area and ground conditions are unsuitable for geophysical survey.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For assessment of significance the *Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments* has been used (DoE 1990, Annex 4; see Appendix 1).

Period:

Roadside settlement, as potentially located in the vicinity of the proposed development, is characteristic of the Roman period. Similarly, habitation and funerary remains largely identify the Early-Middle Saxon periods. Although fortified settlements are not entirely representative of the Late Saxon era, they do tend to typify the principal towns and cities of the period. Medieval religious activity is recorded on the site. Such establishments and associated features are amongst the major characterisers of the medieval period in Europe.

Rarity:

Remains of Romano-British settlement, potentially located in the area of investigation, are fairly common, though they may possess rare or unusual features. Evidence of Early-Middle Saxon habitation is much more scarce. Anglo-Saxon *burhs*, as located on, or adjacent to, the construction site, are not uncommon. However, if the Edwardian fortified settlement was founded on the present investigation site, then the later history of the area offers a very rare example of the site-type unencumbered by later occupation.

St. Michael's Priory, the precinct of which encompasses the proposed development area, is one of only two Benedictine Nunneries in the County of Lincolnshire.

Documentation:

Records of archaeological sites and finds made in the Stamford area are kept in the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record and the files of the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist. Synopses or syntheses of the historical and archaeological evidence have previously been produced.

Group value:

St. Michael's Nunnery is one of several major religious foundations on the fringes of Stamford. By virtue of their clustering in this general area, the group value of the medieval ecclesiastical remains is moderately high.

Association of potential habitation remains of Roman, earlier Saxon and Late Saxon date, together with medieval and later urban settlement, trading areas, hostelrys and religious establishments, confers moderately high group value to the site.

Survival/Condition:

Very limited post-medieval development has occurred on the site, consequently buried deposits are likely to be well preserved. Moreover, there is no known cellaring on site. No previous archaeological intervention has been made into the site to assess the level of deposit survival, though investigations nearby revealed that medieval deposits in good

condition survive within 1m of the present ground surface.

Fragility/Vulnerability:

As the proposed development will impact the investigation area, possibly into natural strata, any and all archaeological deposits present on the site are extremely vulnerable.

Diversity:

Habitation remains of Roman, early Saxon and Late Saxon date potentially occur in the area. Saxon and medieval funerary activity is also located in the vicinity. These features, together with the religious activity of the medieval period, defined by the Benedictine Nunnery, indicate that the site has high period and functional diversity.

Potential:

Potential is very high that medieval ecclesiastical remains, associated with the Nunnery of St. Michael, survive in the area of proposed development. Moderate potential exists for remains of Roman and Saxon habitation, or Late Saxon defended settlement, occurring in the investigation area. There is very limited potential for any of the medieval urban habitation remains or mercantile activities, located to the east, extending into the construction site.

7.1 Site Importance

In summary, the criteria for assessment have established that the medieval ecclesiastical and the potential Roman to Late Saxon habitation remains are regionally significant. As such, archaeological deposits present on site can be expected to not only enhance the archaeological knowledge of Stamford but also make a wider contribution to the study of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The concentrations of archaeological finds and observations represent occupation and use of this area of Stamford in the past. Moreover, the distribution of recorded sites also reflects the

concerted activities of locally-based archaeologists and antiquarians. Such in-depth reconnaissance allows legitimate inferences to be drawn about past settlement patterns of the locality.

Prehistoric activity is scarcely attested in the area. Similarly, although the major Roman highway, Ermine Street, passes close by the site, there is little immediately local evidence for Romano-British habitation, though the modern town may occupy a ceremonial zone. Notwithstanding, it is possible that some form of, as yet unknown, Romano-British settlement may be located in the area where Ermine Street crosses the Welland.

Saxon occupation originated in the vicinity of the northern limits of the present investigation site, though most probably on the opposite bank of the river. Wothorpe Road, which bypasses the proposed development area immediately to the east, preserves the line of the southern route to the original Saxon settlement. An unconfirmed report notes a Saxon burial from just west of the Station Yard.

Part of the town on the north bank was fortified by the Danes in the late 9th century. This Danish military occupation was terminated in 918 when a new defended settlement was established south of the river by the Anglo-Saxons. Although the area bisected by High Street St. Martin's receives greatest support as the possible location of this new *burh*, a suggested alternative situation encompasses the proposed development site.

Located outside the medieval walled town, the investigation site lies to the rear of an area of general urban habitation. Major religious foundations were extramural and the proposed development area occupies the site of one of these houses, the Benedictine Nunnery of St. Michael. Founded in 1155 (and dissolved in 1536), the nunnery was set within an enclosure that also accommodated a cemetery. A gateway to the nunnery precinct was located on Wothorpe Road, in the vicinity of the northeast corner of the construction site.

Shops and houses were located in the proximity during the medieval and post-medieval periods, but are unlikely to have impinged upon the proposed development site. Similarly, a large coaching inn was situated locally, though did not transgress the investigation area.

Following the dissolution, the nunnery compound became part of the Cecil family estates. As such, the area was kept free from development, though a farm was subsequently established on the site of the ecclesiastical structures, perhaps incorporating their remains. With the exception of the farm the site remained inviolate until the construction of the railway in 1846-8. Nearby Station Road was created at about this same time to serve the railway station.

Medieval deposits are likely to occur within 1m of the present ground surface. No archaeological remains were recognised on the site visit. Ground conditions are inappropriate for geophysical examination. There was no evidence of cellaring and damage, due to railway construction, of any archaeological deposits present on site appears to be limited in extent.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All of the following sources were consulted in the data-gathering exercise. However, as some

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Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Wright, N R, 1983 *A guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Lincolnshire including South Humberside*

11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed with 'SMR' are the primary reference numbers used by the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

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

Department of the Environment publications are indicated by the initials 'DoE'.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England is cited as 'RCHME'.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments are indicated by numbers prefixed 'SAM'.

South Kesteven District Council is referred to by the initials 'SKDC'.

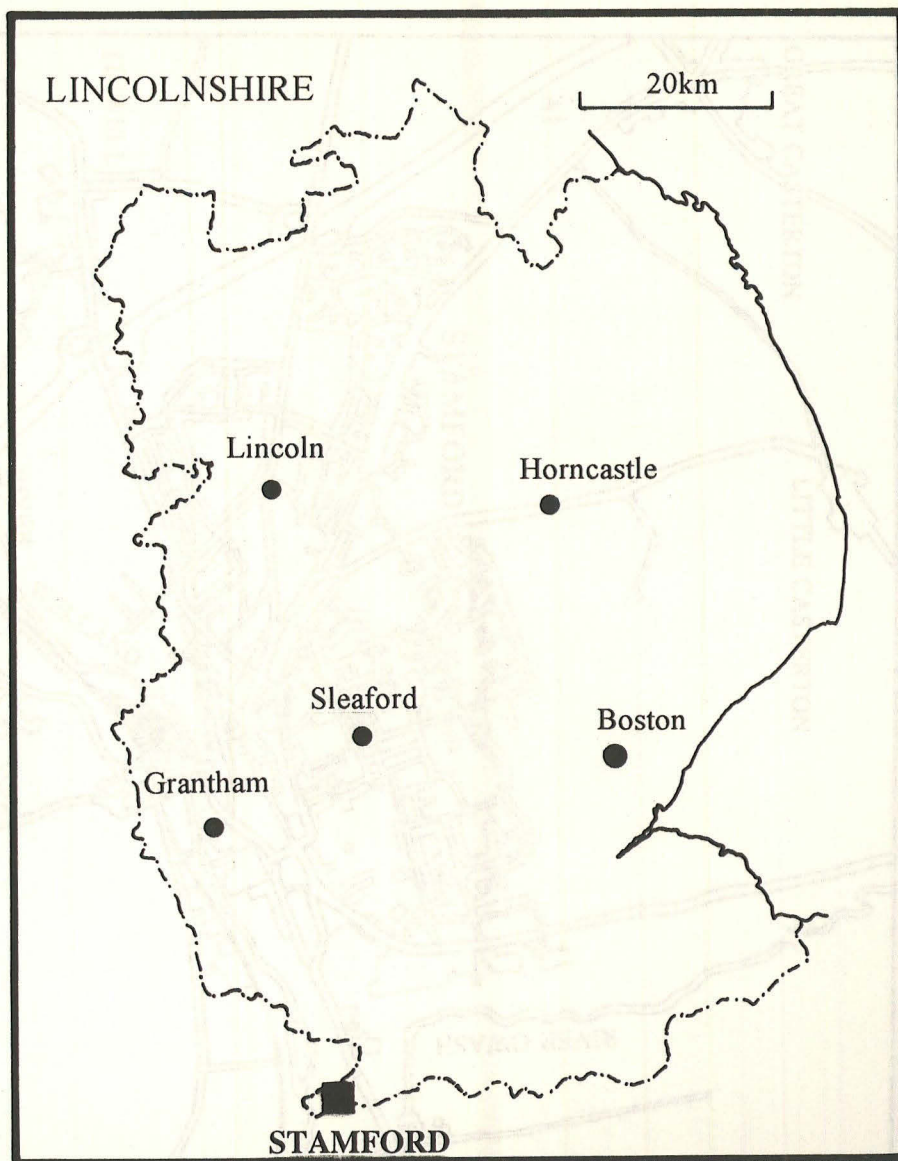
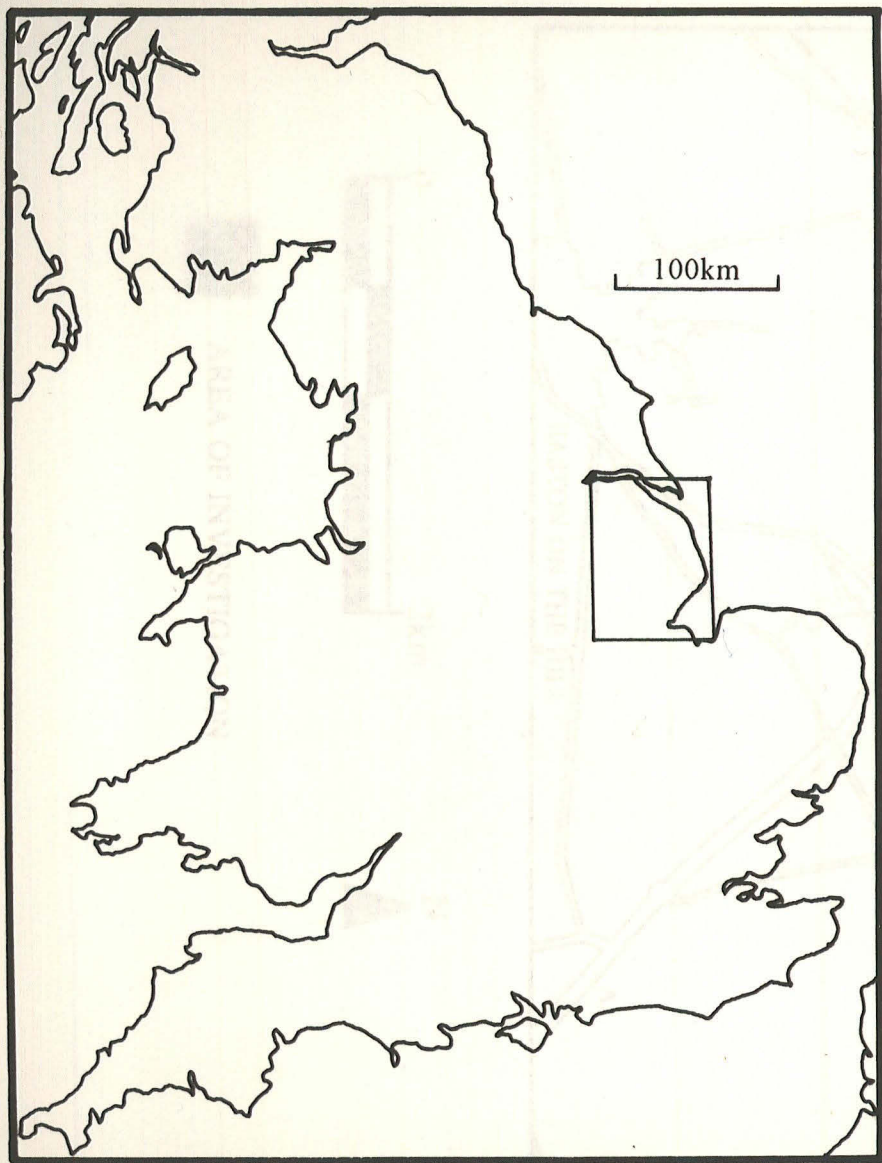
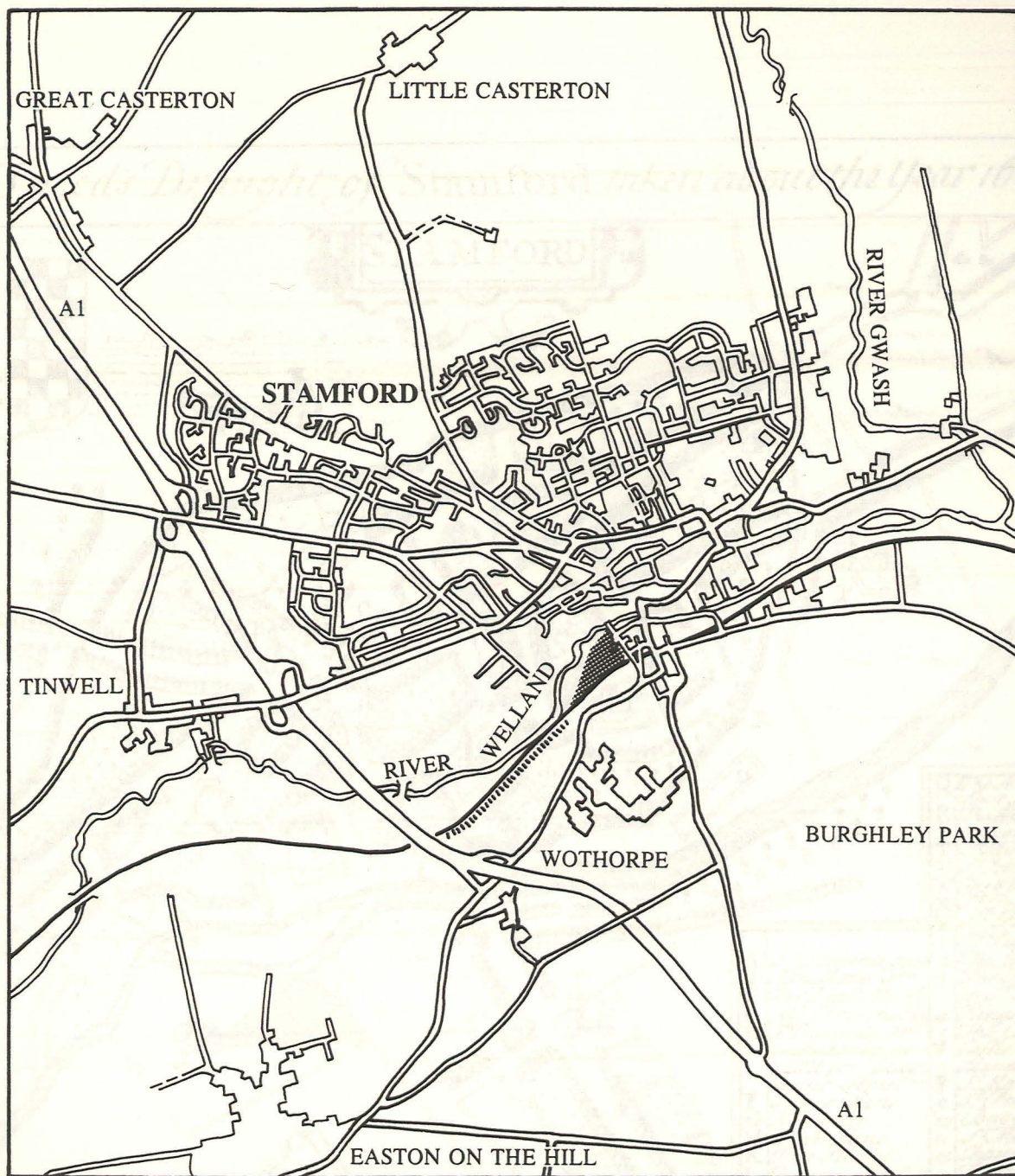


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan
showing proposed development area



AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Fig. 4 Copy of Part of
St. Martin's Parish

Fig. 3 Speed's Plan of Stamford,
showing proposed development area

M^r Speed's Draught of Stamford taken about the Year 1600.

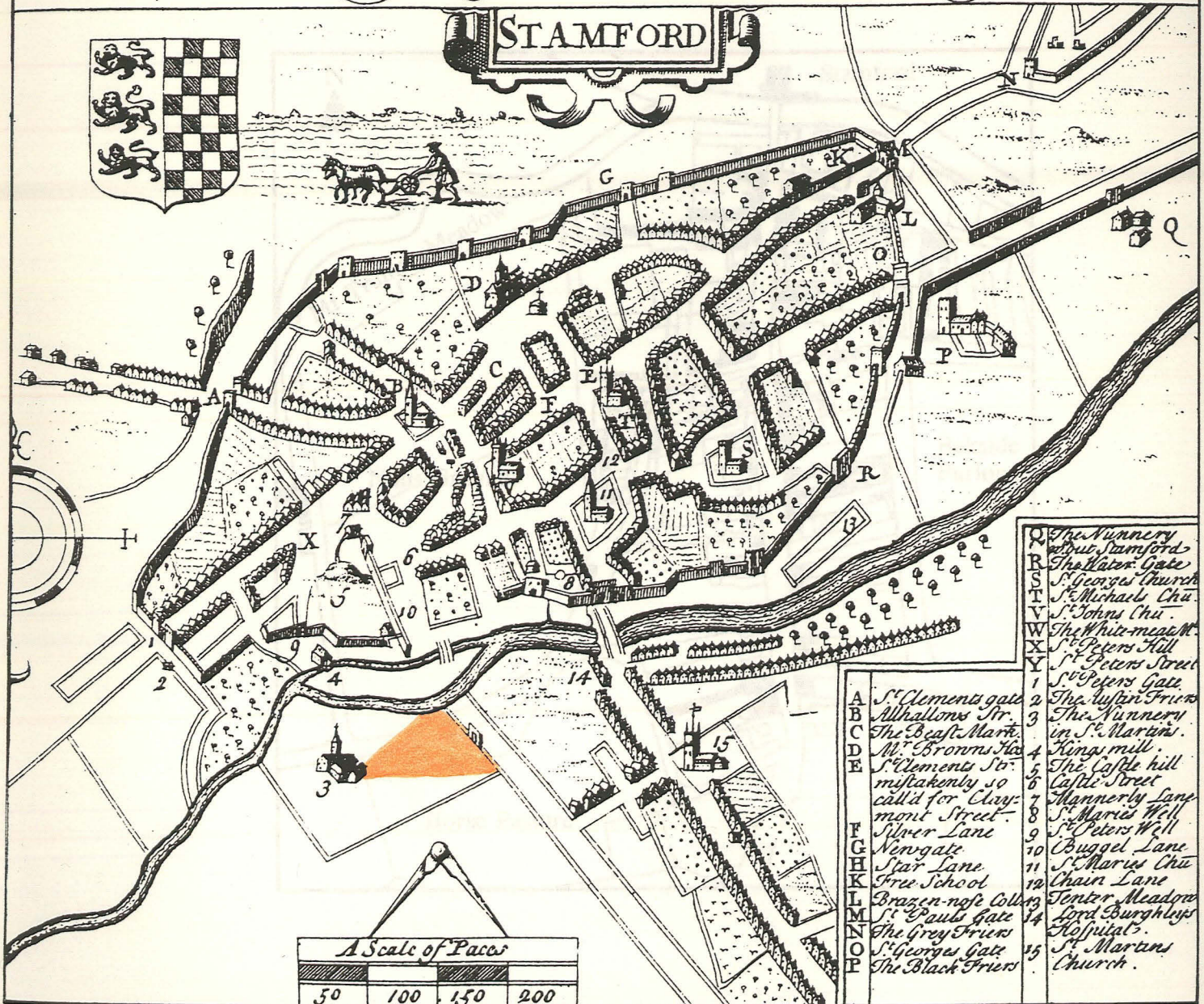


Fig. 4 Copy of Part of Murray's 1773 Map of
St. Martin's Parish

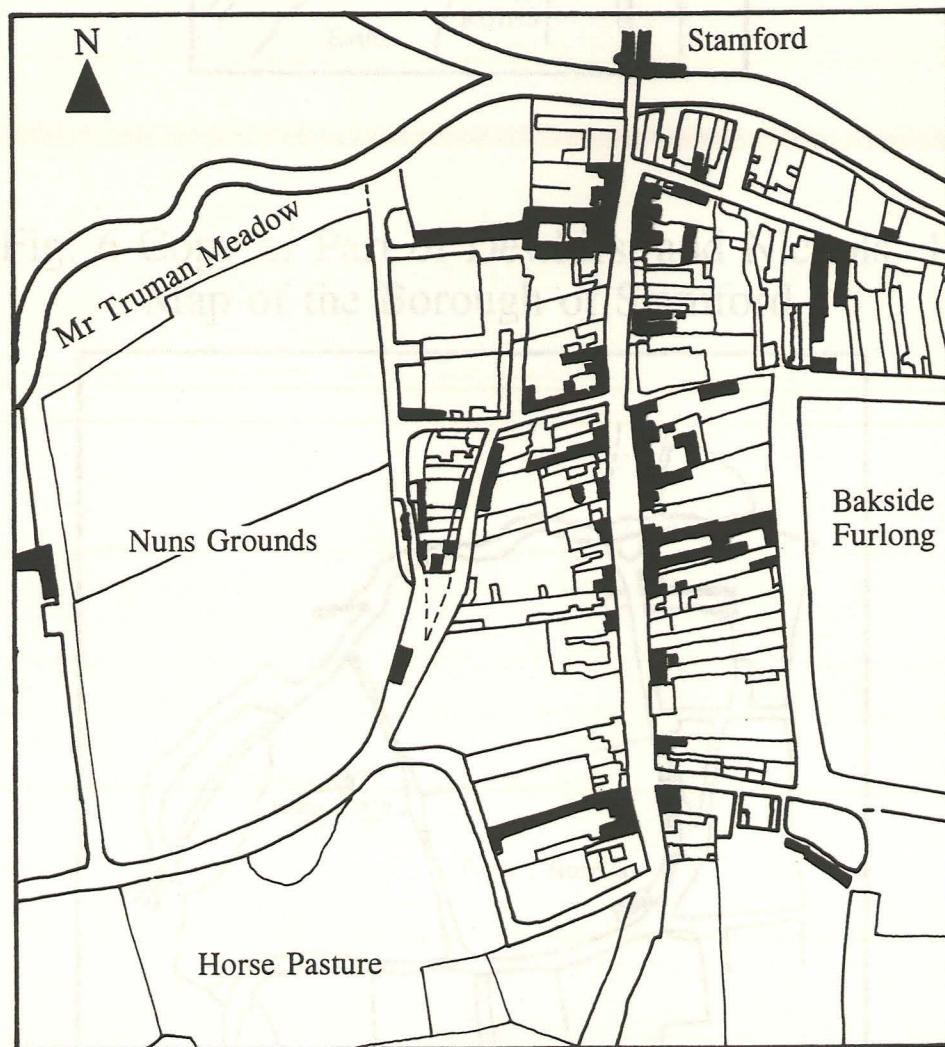


Fig. 5 Copy of Part of Armstrong's 1779
Map of Lincolnshire

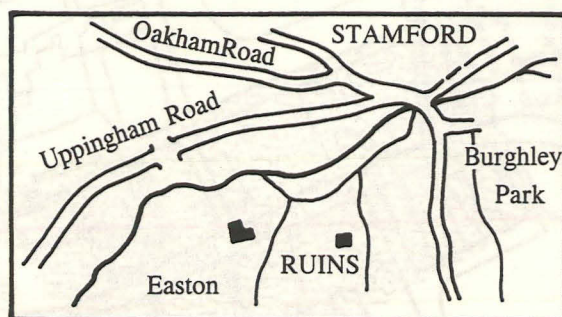
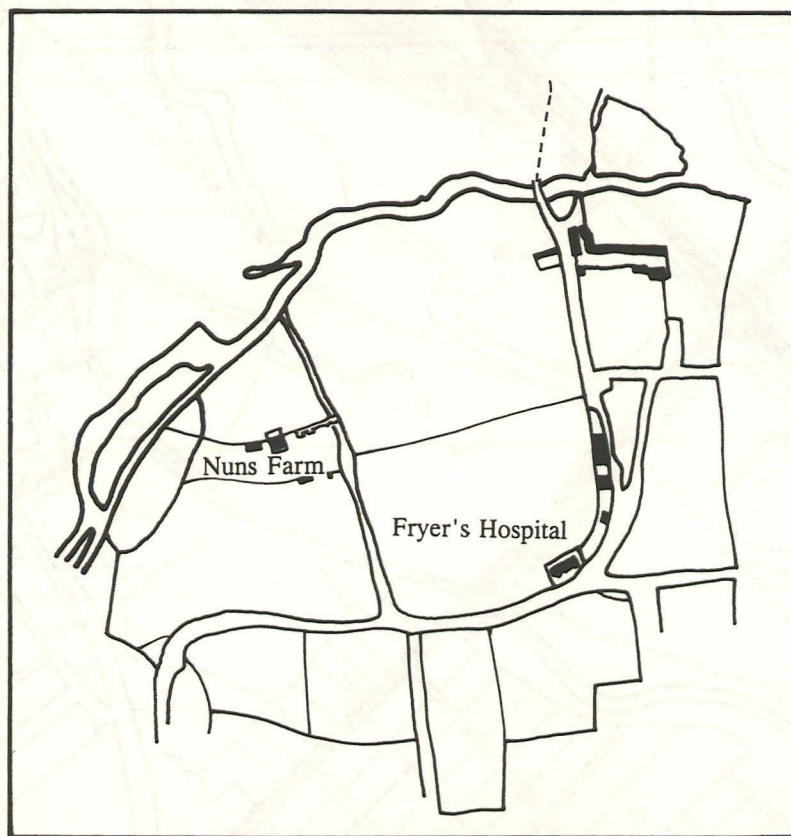


Fig. 6 Copy of Part of Dewhurst and Nichols' 1839
Map of the Borough of Stamford



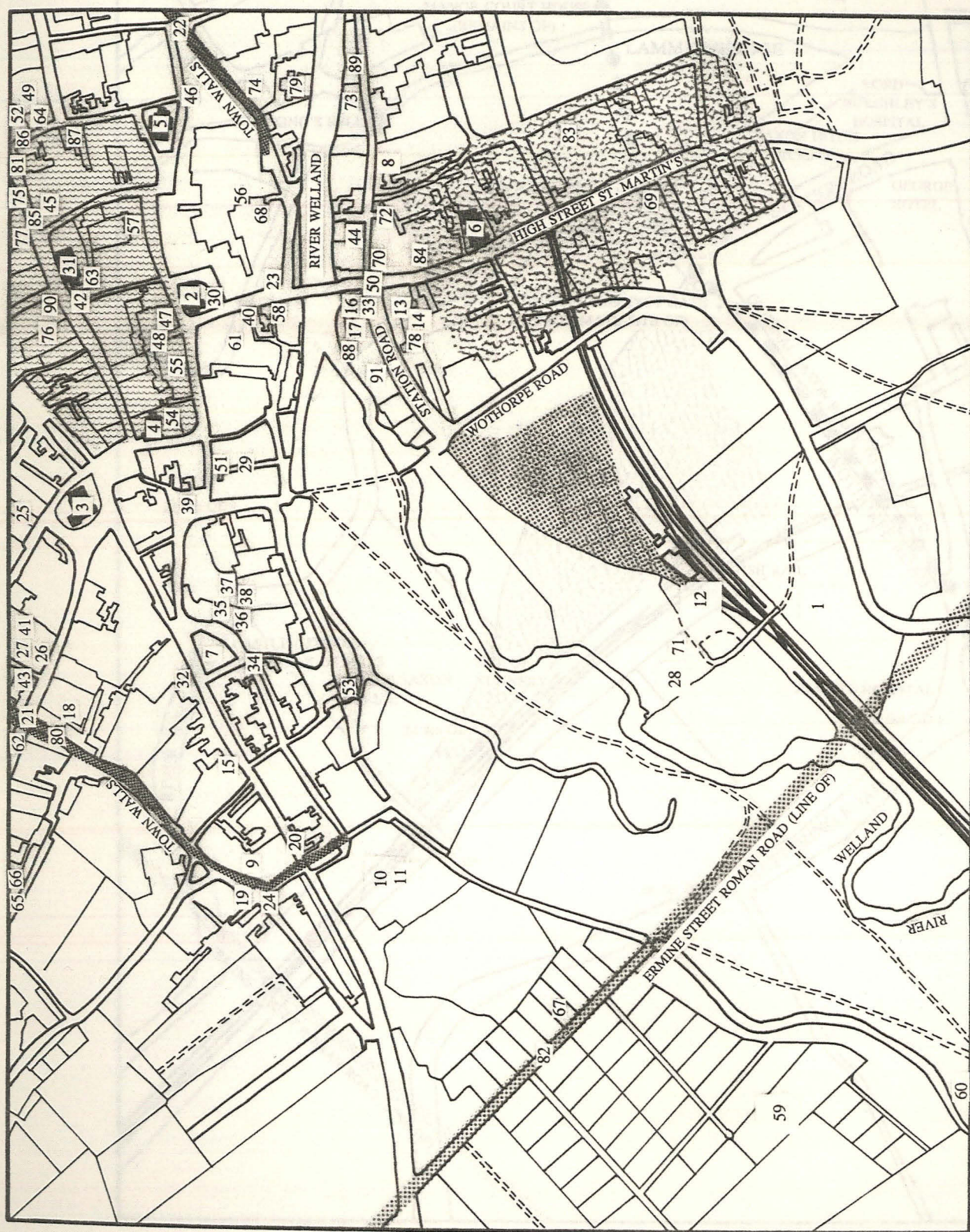
AREA OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

POSTULATED SITE OF EDWARDIAN BURN

POSTULATED SITE OF DANISH BURN

Fig. 8 Immediate Vicinity of Site, with Archaeological Detail

Fig. 7 Site Location Plan,
with Recorded Archaeological Sites and Finds



N

500m



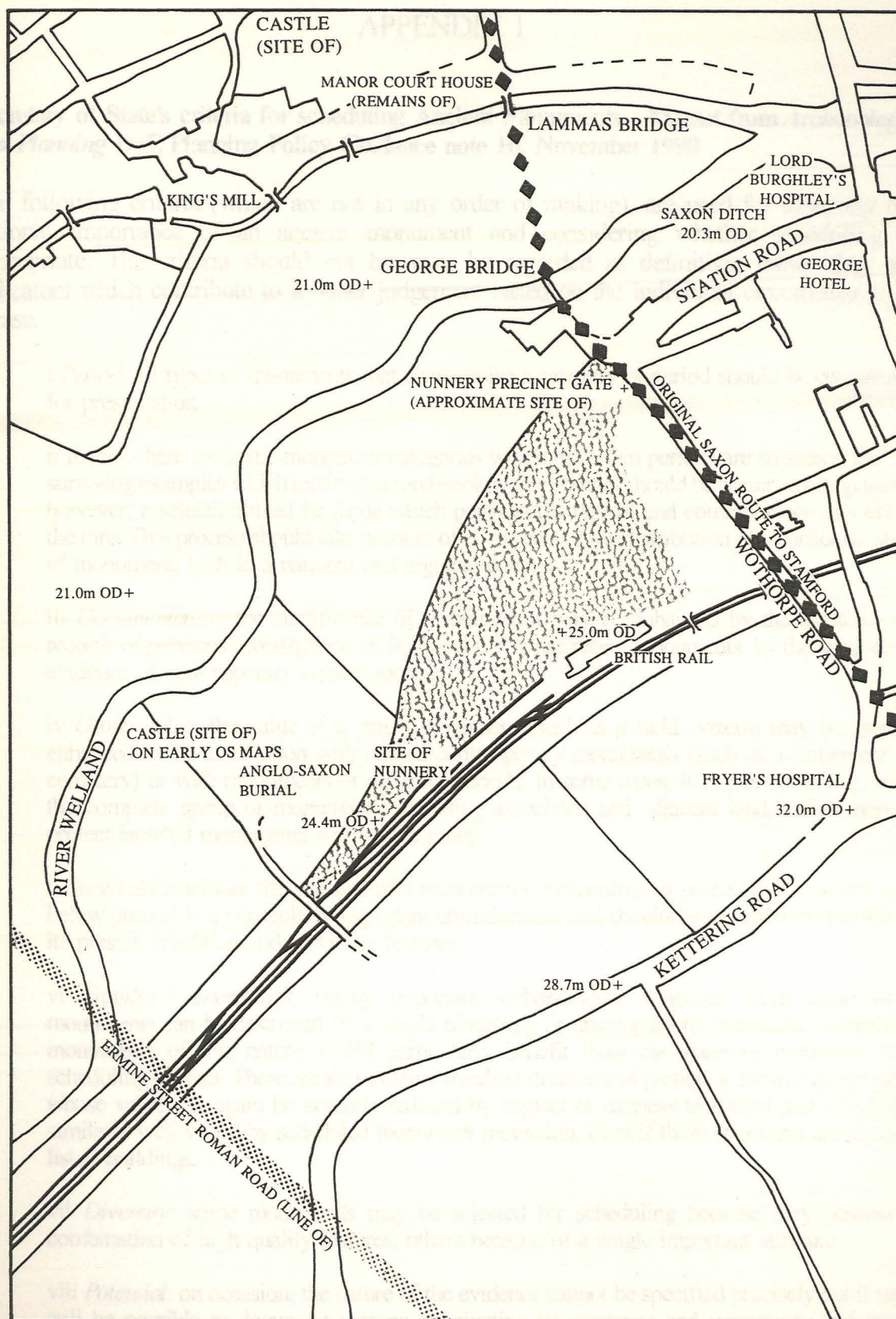
AREA OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

POSTULATED SITE OF EDWARDIAN BURH

POSTULATED SITE OF DANISH BURH

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Fig. 8 Immediate Vicinity of Site, with Archaeological Detail



22.0m OD+

GROUND SURFACE HEIGHTS



AREA OF INVESTIGATION

APPENDIX 1

Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling Ancient Monuments - Extract from *Archaeology and Planning* DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16, November 1990

The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking), are used for assessing the national importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. The criteria should not however be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

i *Period*: all types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation.

ii *Rarity*: there are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monument, both in a national and regional context.

iii *Documentation*: the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.

iv *Group value*: the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement or cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.

v *Survival/Condition*: the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.

vi *Fragility/Vulnerability*: highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or unsympathetic treatment; vulnerable monuments of this nature would particularly benefit from the statutory protection that scheduling confers. There are also existing standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment and which are similarly well suited by scheduled monument protection, even if these structures are already listed buildings.

vii *Diversity*: some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, others because of a single important attribute.

viii *Potential*: on occasion, the nature of the evidence cannot be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons anticipating its existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for scheduling. This is usually confined to sites rather than upstanding monuments.