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CHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT BEDEHOUSE BANK, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE (BBB97)

A P S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT BEDEHOUSE BANK, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE (BBB97)

Work Undertaken For
Mr D.M. York

February 1997

Report Compiled by
Neil Herbert BA (Hons)

Planning Application No: SK97/237/12/11
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A.P.S. Report No: 38/97

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for a single dwelling at Bedehouse Bank, Bourne, Lincolnshire. The area of development was situated across the suspected route of the Car Dyke, a feature that is believed to date to the prehistoric or Romano-British periods.

Several undated, post-medieval and modern deposits were recorded. The majority of these are likely to have formed as a result of dumping and levelling. A large linear feature, likely to be of considerable depth, was exposed running southwest to northeast through the centre of the development. It is possible that this feature may represent the original course of the Car Dyke.

Finds recovered from the site included several large fragments of post-medieval pottery and glass. Four pieces of unworked sheep horn were also retrieved, though these were unstratified.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On the 14th, 15th and 18th August 1997, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of footings for a single dwelling at Bedehouse Bank, Bourne, Lincolnshire (Fig.3). Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application (SK.97/237/12/11). It was recommended that a condition be imposed on the permission, requiring that the applicant should instigate an archaeological watching brief during the works. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr D. M. York of Construction Management Services and Developments and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a verbal brief for works set by the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The town of Bourne is situated 26km south of Sleaford and 15km northeast of Stamford in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig.1). The site is located *c.* 700m east of the town centre at Bedehouse Bank, a street east of Willoughby Road at National Grid Reference TF1040519781 (Fig.2).

The site and surrounding area lies on level ground at approximately 5.8mOD (Plate 1). Badsey 2 Association fine loamy soils form the surface geology at the site though, to the southwest, is the boundary with soils of the Curdridge Association, typical argillic gley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 101; 153). Both these soils occur at the boundary of the Jurassic limestone and post-glacial fan-gravels.

Extensive boulder clay west of the town continues to support woodland, though it is now mostly replanted softwood. The Fen margin is mainly composed of river terrace gravels and sand to the north, while tracts of Oxford Clay are found in, and south of, the town (Hayes and Lane 1992, 130).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Bourne is situated in an area of concentrated archaeological activity, dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods.

Excavations to the northeast of the town located the remains of a significant Late Iron Age (150 BC - AD 43) and Roman settlement. During the Romano-British period Bourne was a small town built astride the Roman road, King Street, the route of which is fossilised by the courses of North

Street and South Street. Roman artifacts, including the remains of a pottery kiln (SK12.05), have been found along the sides of this road.

The development site lies *c.* 20m west of the present route of the Car Dyke, though it is suspected that the original route of this channel crosses the area of the development (Fig.6). The Car Dyke monument is believed to be of Roman date, though its function is obscure and it has, in the past, been variously considered to be a canal or part of a drainage system. Over 120km long, this watercourse connected the River Witham near Lincoln with the River Nene east of Peterborough (Whitwell 1970, 57). It is a major archaeological monument and no less than ten separate sections of the Car Dyke are protected as nationally important Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Previous investigations have shown the original channel to be about 13m wide at the surface and provided with flanking banks up to 5m wide (Archaeological Project Services 1995, 7).

Archaeological investigations immediately south of the area of development have revealed a large ditch, orientated northeast-southwest, containing pottery dateable to the late medieval or early post-medieval periods (Fig.6; BBM96). This feature is probably related to the Car Dyke and may possibly represent an original course of this monument (Archaeological Project Services 1996).

It is possible that occupation of the Romano-British settlement at Bourne continued into the Anglo-Saxon period. However, evidence is scarce and the majority of finds suggest occupation of this period developed to the northeast of the town (Hayes and Lane 1992, 136).

In AD 1086, the Domesday Book recorded that several mills and fisheries were operating within Bourne (Foster and Longley, 1976). Referred to as *Brune*, the place-name of the parish derives from the Old English meaning 'stream' (Ekwall 1974, 55).

During the medieval period Bourne grew into a substantial settlement, with both a castle and an abbey. The town centred around the abbey church (SK12.04, SMR 33215), which survives as the present day parish church. Earthwork remains of Bourne Castle (SK12.01, SAM 95, SMR 300043) are located to the west of the church. At one time the castle would have consisted of a single motte, a defensive mound, possibly surmounted by a single tower with two enclosures or baileys containing further buildings and a possible stone gatehouse that has since been destroyed (Cathcart-King 1983).

During the medieval period Bourne was also a pottery production centre, evidence for this has been found during excavations at the south end of Eastgate (SK12.03). Excavations almost 1km to the east of the town centre revealed kilns dating from the 14th to the 16th century, though the industry may have started earlier. These kilns produced a distinctive ware that traded as far as Nottingham. Recent evaluation at Potters Close, *c.* 100m north of the development, has revealed the site of a probable post-medieval kiln (Archaeological Project Services 1996).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to ensure that any archaeological features exposed by the groundworks were recorded and interpreted. It was anticipated by the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District that evidence associated with the original course of the Car Dyke was likely to be encountered during the scheme of works.

4. METHODS

A mechanical excavator was used in the excavation of the foundation trenches, to a maximum depth of 1.0m. The sides of the trenches were then cleaned by hand, and inspected for archaeological remains, prior to recording the sections.

Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trenches was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. Thereafter, to assist analysis, a stratigraphic matrix was created and phased. A photographic record was compiled, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20. Additionally, the natural geology was recorded.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Finds recovered from the deposits identified during the watching brief were examined and a date assigned where possible. Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were also examined. Phasing was assigned based on artefact dating and the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. Four phases were identified:

Phase 1 Natural deposits
Phase 2 Undated deposits
Phase 3 Post-medieval deposits
Phase 4 Modern deposits

Archaeological phases are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field to archaeological deposits. A comprehensive summary of these contexts, including their interpretation, appears in Appendix 1.

5.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The earliest layer (011), interpreted as a natural geological deposit, was recorded at a depth of 0.9m below the present ground surface (Fig.4). Consisting of a compact light grey clay, this is likely to have formed as a result of post-glacial deposition. Overlying this were (005) and (010), respectively composed of silty clay and silty sand (Fig.4). These layers are likely to have resulted from a similar formation process to (011).

5.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

A series of possible pits, gullies and dumped deposits were recorded cutting into or overlying the natural deposits.

Four small, shallow cuts (006), (007), (014) and (017) were made into the natural geology (Fig.4). Cuts (006) and (007), interpreted as gullies, formed linear features approximately 0.15m deep and orientated north-south. Cut (007) was not fully excavated, and dimensions are approximate. Exposed only in Section 1, the extent of these features is unknown beyond the southernmost foundation trench (Plate 2).

Deposits (003) and (004) respectively constituted the fills of cuts (006) and (007). Consisting of grey clays, these have been interpreted as deposits that have formed as a result of natural weathering and erosion processes (Fig.4).

Further north, exposed in Section 3, was a cut with gradual sides and a concave base (017). Deposit (016), consisting of a dark grey silty clay, formed the primary fill of (017) to a thickness of 0.34m. This was overlain by (015), the latest fill of (017), containing frequent inclusions of ash and charcoal. Due to the nature of deposit (015), cut (017) has been interpreted as a fire-pit.

Of a similar relative date, cut (014),

interpreted as a small pit, was exposed in Section 2. Deposits (025) and (009), comprising a sandy silt and a silty sand had formed within cut (014) as a result of natural sedimentation (Fig.4).

A sequence of layers, interpreted as dumped deposits, was recorded in Sections 4 and 5, at the easternmost limit of the site. Directly overlying natural deposit (023) was a mid grey silty clay (022), which formed the earliest archaeological layer within these sections. Deposits (020) and (021), respectively overlying (021) and (022), within Sections 4 and 5 are also interpreted as dumped deposits.

Later features, though also undated, were recorded within Sections 2 and 4. Cut (019), with steep sides and a concave base, was recorded cutting into deposit (020). Interpreted as a posthole, this feature is likely to have supported a large timber of up to 0.3m diameter. Deposit (018), a dark grey clayey silt, was contained by (019) and probably formed after the removal of any structural timber. Further south, cut (012), with a steep side and a broad gently sloping base, has been interpreted as a pit. Containing a fill of mid to dark grey silty clay (008), with occasional charcoal inclusions, the function of this feature was not determined (Fig.4).

Subsoil deposit (002), comprising a mid greyish-orange clayey silt, was exposed in Sections 1 and 2. No dateable artefacts were recovered from this layer (Fig.4).

5.3 Phase 3: Post-Medieval Deposits

Exposed at the westernmost extent of the foundation trenches was a series of deposits that produced artefacts dateable to the post-medieval period.

Cut (032), exposed at the limit of excavation within Section 6, was recorded extending from southwest to northeast across the area of the development. This context was not fully revealed by the excavation of the foundation trenches. Interpreted as a large ditch cut, (032) contained deposits (027, 028, 029, 030 and 031). A small number of mollusc shells were recovered from (031). These shells are from both pond snails (*Lymnaea* sp.) and ramshorn snails (*Planorbarius* sp.). Both snails are freshwater snails and therefore indicate that the deposit formed in a watery environment (Gary Taylor *pers comm*).

Abundant artefacts dateable to the 17th-early 18th centuries were retrieved from (030) and (031). These finds included fragments of pottery, glass, and clay pipes. The fills of cut (032) were predominantly silts, varying in colouration from a mid grey (027) to a bluish-grey (030). Deposits (029) and (030) are believed to have formed naturally, though accompanied by refuse disposal, while (027) and (028) are likely to have been dumped (Fig.5).

Overlying, and sealing, the aforementioned sequence was deposit (026), interpreted as a buried soil (Fig.5). Comprising a brownish-black silt this layer contained fragments of glass and pottery that have been dated to the 18th century.

5.4 Phase 4: Modern Deposits

Containing 18th-19th century artifacts, deposit (001), interpreted as topsoil, is of modern date and formed the present ground surface.

An undated brick culvert, (Figure 3), was recorded crossed the site on an east-west alignment. This is likely to have been constructed as part of a local drainage system.

6. DISCUSSION

Archaeological investigations at Bedehouse Bank have revealed a sequence of natural, undated, post-medieval and modern deposits.

Natural deposits

The natural deposits consisted mainly of clays, silty sands and silty clays (005), (010) and (011). It is possible that these have formed as a result of post-glacial deposition, although the close proximity of watercourses may suggest that formation may have occurred more recently within a riverine environment. Due to the limited depth of the foundation trenches it is impossible to fully interpret the origins of these layers.

Pitting, dumping and gullies

Undated deposits were dominant amongst the contexts recorded during the watching brief. The lack of stratified artefactual material is an inevitable result of the machine excavation of the footings, unfortunately this mitigates against a greater understanding any archaeological remains that are exposed.

A pair of small gullies (006) and (007), orientated north-south, were exposed in the southernmost foundation trench (Section 1). These are likely to have silted up naturally. A high proportion of clay within the fills implies probable deposition within a waterborne environment. Due to the gullies only being exposed at Section 1, it is impossible to postulate as to their extent or function.

Small, undated pits (012), (014) and (017) were also recorded at the southeastern extent of the development area. No dateable artefacts were retrieved from these features. Function could only be ascribed to cut (017) due to the nature of (015) the uppermost fill of this feature. The presence of ash and charcoal inclusions within (015) are likely to suggest that (017) was originally cut as a fire-pit. However, it is unknown if the fire-pit relates to regular occupation, or to more sporadic activity, in the vicinity of the area of development.

Possible structural evidence, again undated, was represented by a single substantial posthole cut (019). The size of this feature suggests that it is likely to have been designed to hold a large timber, though no similar features were recorded within the area of the foundations.

Evidence for The Car Dyke

A linear feature, the upper fills of which are dated to the post-medieval period, was recorded across the area of development (032). Orientated northeast-southwest this feature is likely to be of considerable depth. Large fragments of pottery and glass, and pieces of clay pipe, were recovered from deposit (030), one of the earliest fills excavated.

These finds give a secure post-medieval date for the overlying sequence of deposits. However, any underlying deposits, as yet unrecorded, are likely to exist to a much greater depth than those exposed during the excavation of the footings. This raises the possibility that such a large feature may be a remnant natural, or man-made, channel that has been backfilled during the post-medieval period before being completely sealed by soil layer (026). Indeed, analysis of snails recovered from fill (031) have determined that the feature contained freshwater. Previous investigations to the immediate south of the area of development have recorded a similar sequence of deposits (Archaeological Project Services 1996).

In general, the Car Dyke consists of long

straight lengths with occasional bends and re-alignments. However, in the vicinity of the development area, the watercourse presently referred to as the Car Dyke is contorted with several bends and changes of alignment over a distance of only 300m (Fig.2). This is in marked contrast to the predominant pattern of the monument. Thus, for example, only 1km to the south of the present site, the Car Dyke courses for *c.* 1250m in a straight line before bending slightly then continuing for another 1200m with only minor deviations from a direct route.

Therefore, consideration of the general pattern of the monument may suggest that the meandering watercourse around the south and east sides of the development area is misidentified as the Car Dyke. This being the case, it is possible that the Car Dyke maintains its general direct route and passes about 170m west of the investigation area, a course that has previously been postulated (Hayes and Lane 1992, 138; Fig.2). If this more direct route for the Car Dyke is accepted then it raises the prospect that the ditch seen during the investigation may be related to an original Car Dyke, perhaps acting as an overflow channel draining into the Bourne Eau. Moreover, this confusion and uncertainty over the true route of the Car Dyke in this vicinity fosters the possibility that the ditch encountered during the watching brief may, in fact, be the Car Dyke itself (Fig.6). If this possibility is entertained then it would, perhaps, suggest that the ditch bounding the development area and presently known as the Car Dyke is a later replacement, roughly paralleling the line of the original watercourse (Cope-Faulkner *pers comm*).

Unless there are more systematic archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Bedehouse Bank then it is likely that the debate as to the route of the Car Dyke will remain open. It is clear that alterations to the route of original watercourses, and man-made channels, have occurred in the area of, and in near proximity to, the area of development. Dating of these alterations are essential to the establishment of the true route of the Car Dyke and in order that a proper sequence of events is recorded.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations were undertaken during the excavation of footings at Bedehouse Bank, Bourne, due to the possibility of disturbance being caused to a suspected defunct route of the Car Dyke. Recording of any such remains revealed during the excavations was required as a condition of planning permission.

Deposits recorded during the work included a sequence of post-medieval dumped deposits within a large linear feature. It is possible that this feature forms the original extent of the Car Dyke monument. However, it is also possible that the feature recorded during the investigation is an alteration to the original route, or also that it may be an early watercourse previously unrecorded.

Features revealed during the watching brief contained little or no dateable material. The stratigraphic sequence was clear, though little functional material was contained within the deposits. Palaeoenvironmental evidence is likely to be present and sealed within any deeper deposits, which, due to their depth, are likely to be waterlogged. Dateable material, possibly associated with the backfilling of the Car Dyke is locally significant, and is likely to enhance the understanding of the development of the monument within Bourne in response to the growth of the town.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr D.M. York of Construction Management Services and Developments who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor coordinated the work and Gary Taylor and Tom Lane edited this report. Hilary Healey identified and commented on the pottery finds.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Illustrations: Dave Hopkins
Post-excavation Analyst: Neil Herbert

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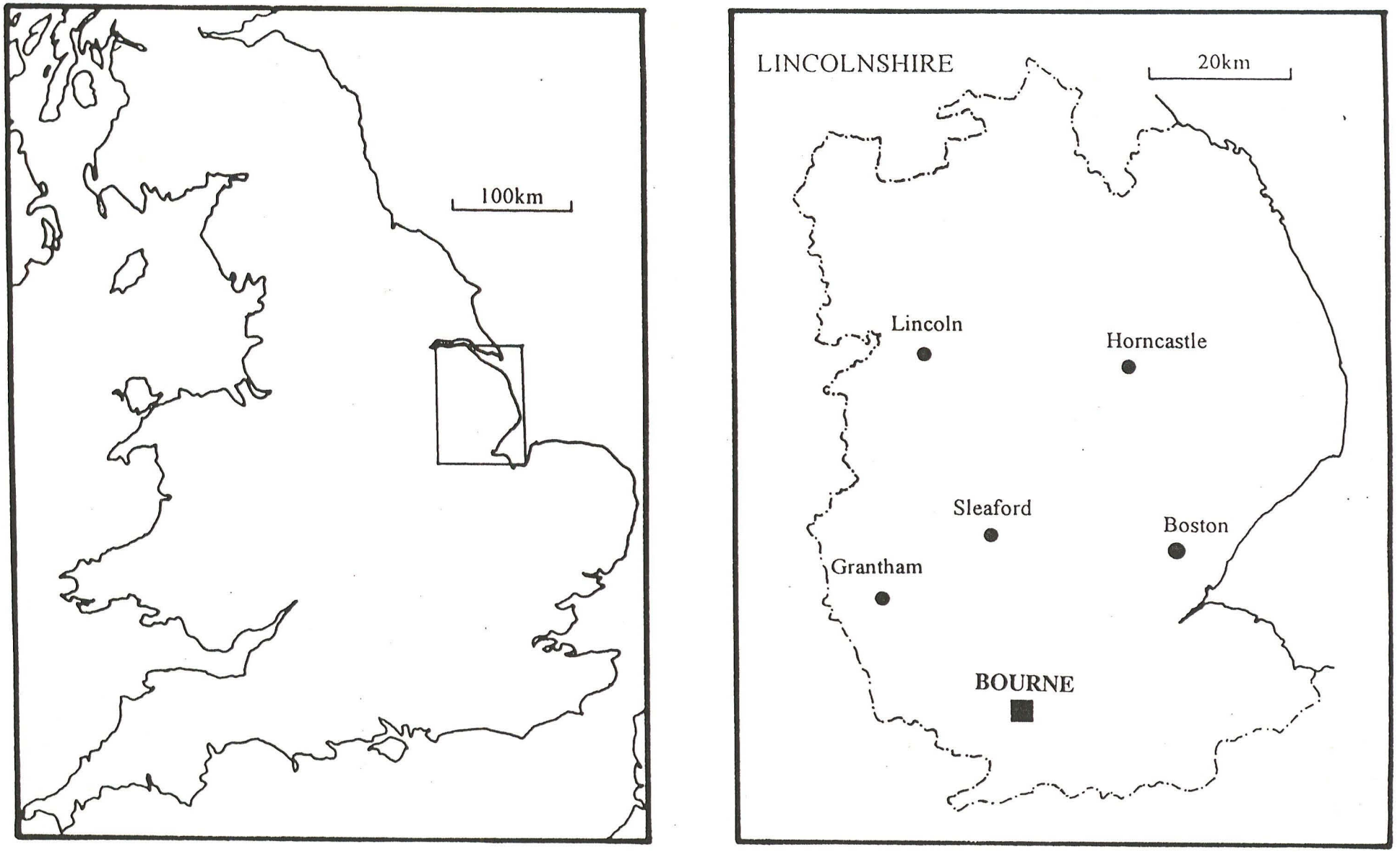

Figure 1: General Location Plan

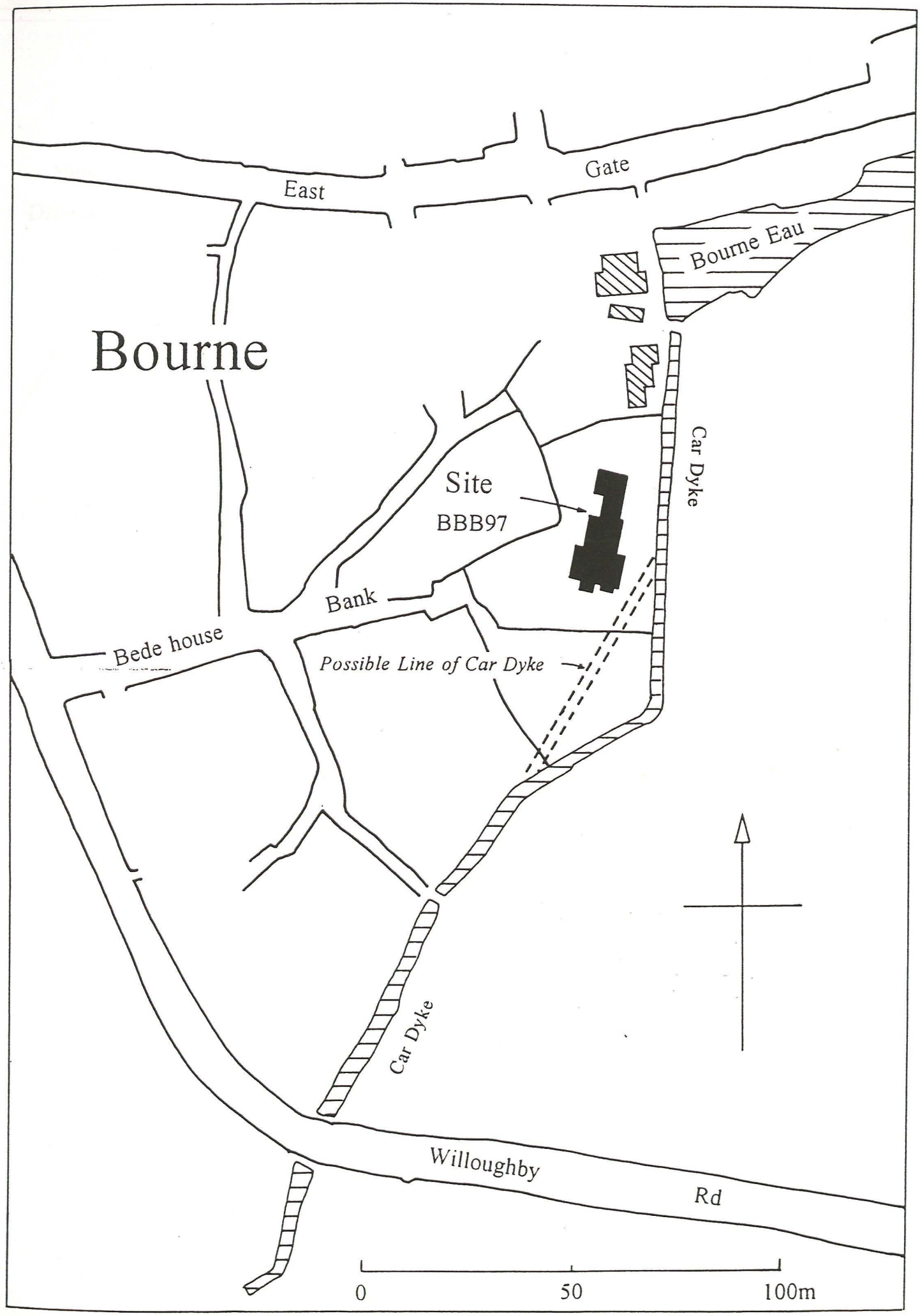

Figure 2: Site Location Plan, showing location of foundations

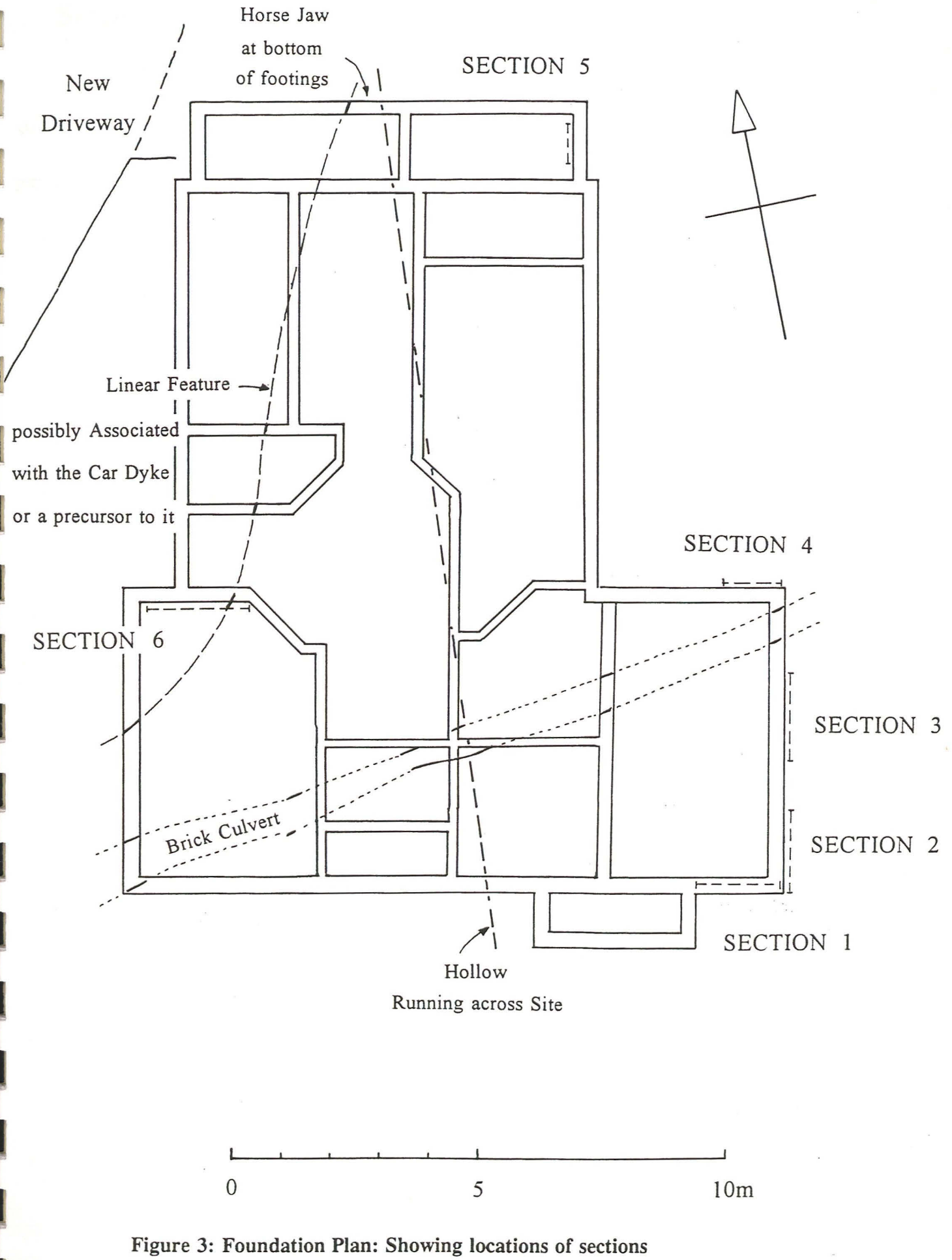

Figure 3: Foundation Plan: Showing locations of sections

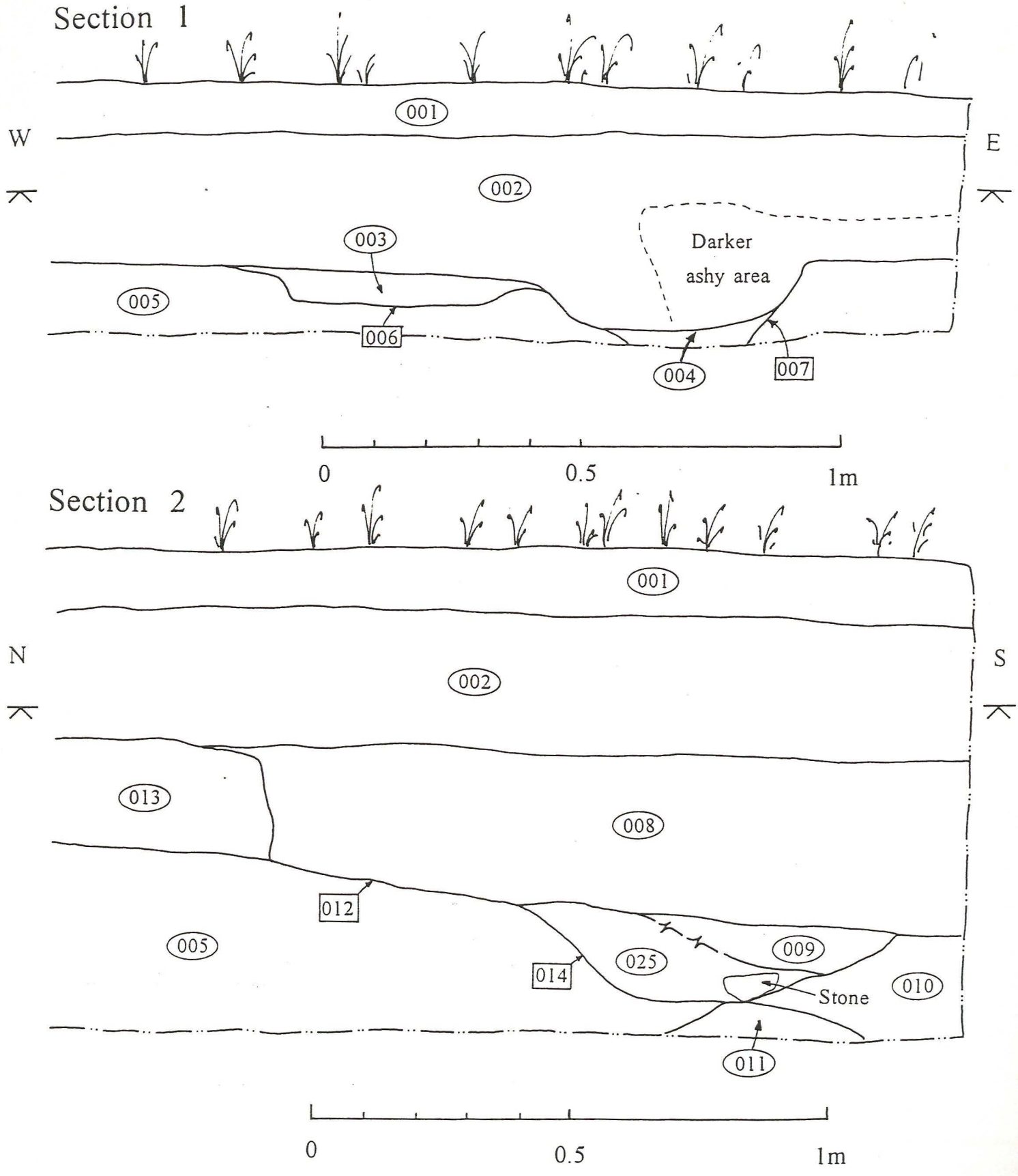

Figure 4: Sections 1 and 2

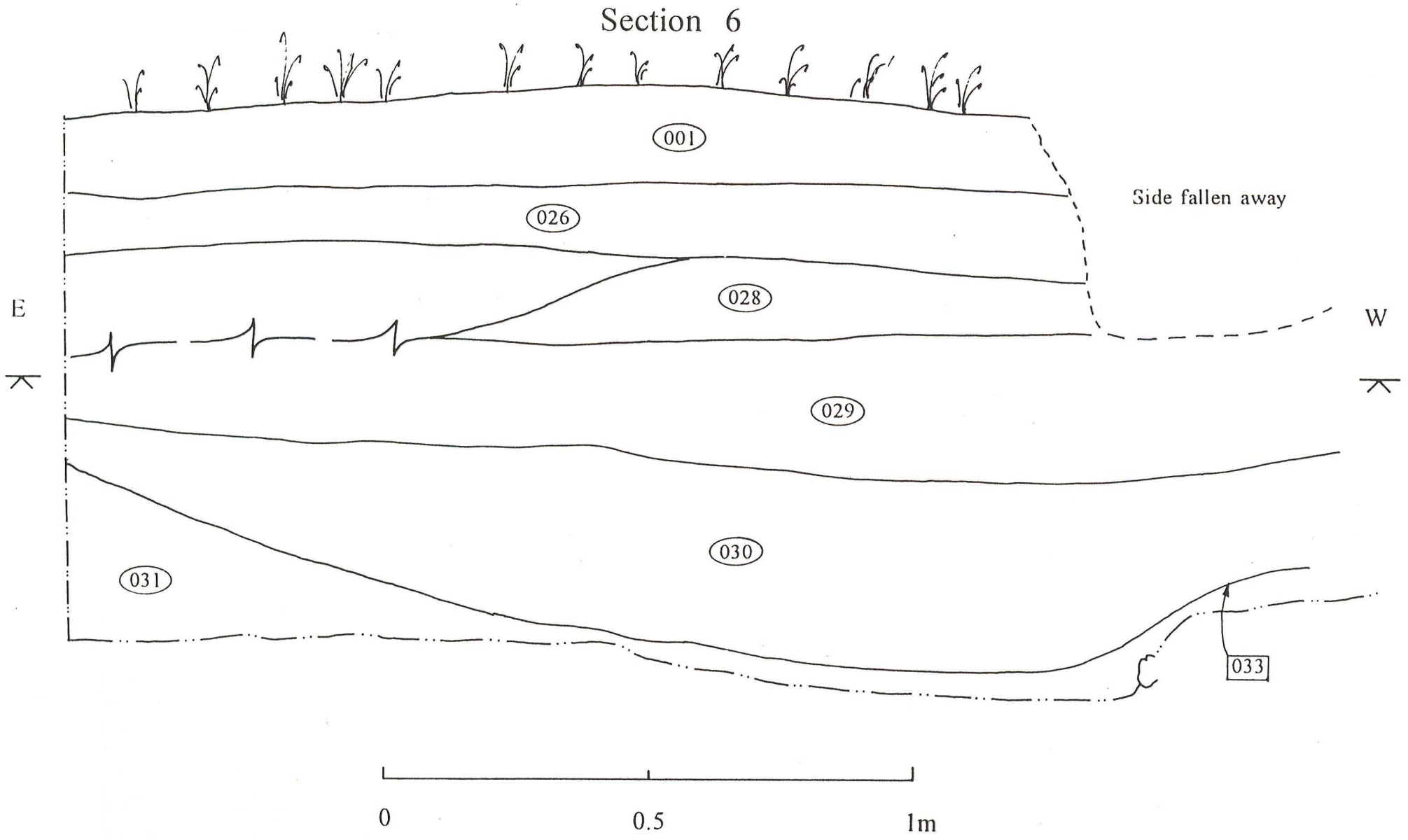

Figure 5: Section 6

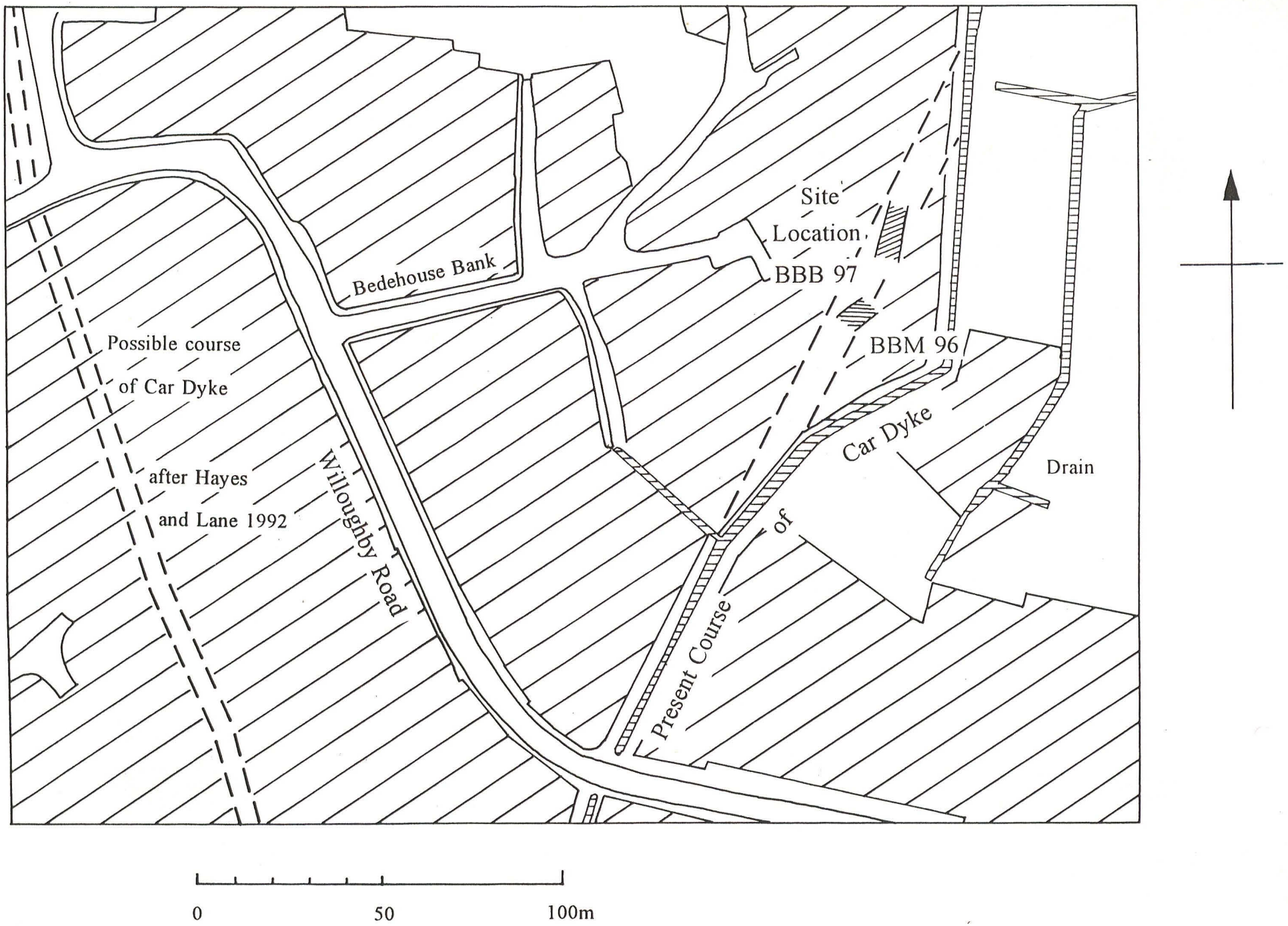

Figure 6: Site Location Plan, showing alternative routes of the Car Dyke

Plate 1 : General Site View, looking north

Plate 2 : Section 1, showing cuts (006) and (007)

Appendix 1

Context Summary

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
001	Moderately compact dark grey clayey silt. Approximately 0.2m thick.	Topsoil deposit.
002	Moderately compact, mid grey-orange clayey silt. Approximately 0.3m thick.	Subsoil deposit.
003	Moderately compact, mid grey silty clay. Approximately 100mm thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (006).
004	Moderately compact, light grey sandy clay. Approximately 60mm thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (007).
005	Moderately compact, light yellow silty clay. Approximately 0.35m thick to LOE.	Natural deposit, overlying (011).
006	Linear cut with shallow sides and a flat base, orientated north-south. Approximately 1.7m long x 1.0m wide x 100mm deep.	Gully, cutting (005).
007	Linear cut with steep sides and a concave base, orientated north-south. Approximately 0.5m long x 1.0m wide x 0.3m deep.	Gully, cutting (005).
008	Moderately compact, mid grey silty clay. Approximately 0.3m thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (012).
009	Soft, light grey silty sand. Approximately 100mm thick.	Natural deposit overlying (025), fill of (014).
010	Moderately compact, light grey silty sand. Approximately 0.2m thick.	Natural deposit, overlying (011).
011	Moderately compact, light grey clay. Approximately 100mm thick.	Natural deposit, exposed at the LOE.
012	Cut of unknown shape with steep sides and a slightly concave base. Approximately 1.4m long x 0.5m wide x 0.35m deep.	Possible pit, cutting (013) and (009).
013	Moderately compact, light grey silty sand. Approximately 0.2m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (005).
014	Cut of unknown shape with shallow sides and a flat base. Approximately 0.74m long x 0.6m wide x 0.17m deep.	Possible pit or gully, cutting (005) and (010).
015	Loose, dark reddish-brown silt. Contains ash and charcoal fragments. Approximately 0.2m thick.	Backfill deposit, overlying (016), fill of (017).

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
016	Moderately compact, dark grey silty clay. Approximately 0.34m thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (017).
017	Cut of unknown shape with gradual sides and a concave base. Approximately 1.0m long x 0.5m wide x 0.28m deep.	Possible fire-pit, cutting (005).
018	Loose dark grey clayey silt. Approximately 0.56m thick.	Fill of (019).
019	Cut of unknown shape with steep sides and a slightly concave base. Approximately 0.3m wide x 0.56m deep.	Posthole cut, cutting (020).
020	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown clayey silt. Approximately 0.1m thick.	Subsoil deposit, overlying (021).
021	Loose, light yellowish-brown silt. Approximately 0.17m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (022).
022	Moderately compact, mid greyish-brown silt. Approximately 60mm thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (023).
023	Moderately compact, mid grey silty clay. Approximately 0.25m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (005).
024	Moderately compact, mid reddish-brown silt. Approximately 0.48m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (023).
025	Moderately compact, light yellowish-grey sandy silt. Approximately 0.17m thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (014).
026	Moderately compact, mid brownish-black silt. Approximately 0.15m thick.	Possible buried soil, overlying (027).
027	Moderately compact, mid grey clayey silt. Approximately 0.15m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (028), fill of (032).
028	Moderately compact, light yellowish-brown silt. Approximately 0.15m thick.	Dumped deposit, overlying (029), fill of (032).
029	Moderately compact, mid bluish-grey silty clay. Approximately 0.3m thick.	Natural deposit, overlying (030), fill of (032).
030	Moderately compact, mid bluish-grey silty clay. Approximately 0.35m thick.	Natural deposit, overlying (031), fill of (032).
031	Moderately compact, light yellowish-grey clay. Approximately 0.3m thick.	Natural deposit, fill of (032).
032	Possible linear cut, orientated northeast-southwest. Dimensions unknown.	Large ditch, exposed at the LOE.

Appendix 2

The Finds

Hilary Healey MPhil and Gary Taylor MA

Context No.	Description	Composite Date
+	6 sherds of modern pottery and glazed tile, 20th century; 5 sherds 19th century pot; 3 sherds 18th century pot; 1 sherd Staffordshire slipware cup, 17th century; 1 sherd Westerwald stoneware, 17th century; 1 sherd medieval pot, 13th-15th century; 1 sherd Roman greyware pot; 2 claypipe bowl fragments, 19th century; 1 claypipe stem, stamped PARNEL[ ], [ ]LAISTOW, 19th-20th century; Neck of glass bottle, 18th century; Oval, blue glass disk	20th century
001	1 sherd Staffordshire Black Glaze, late 18th century; 1 sherd blue and white transfer printed pot, 19th century	19th century
015	2 linked sherds Staffordshire Black Glaze, 18th century; 1 sherd Nottingham salt-glazed stoneware, 18th-19th century	18th-19th century
022	1 piece brick	
026	3 sherds Staffordshire Black Glaze, late 18th century; 1 sherd of Staffordshire speckled/mottled ware, 18th century Neck and base of glass bottle, 18th century	18th century
030	2 clay pipe bowls, 18th century; 2 sherds of Midlands Purple Ware, 18th century; 2 sherds of Staffordshire Black Glaze, 18th century; 2 sherds of Staffordshire speckled/mottled ware cup, 17th-18th century; 3 sherds of Black Glaze with red body, 18th century; 4 sherds glazed red earthenware from a pipkin (hollow handle, 3 legs), 18th century	18th century

031	5 sherds Black Glaze, 18th century; 6 sherds brown glazed dish, 18th century; 3 linked sherds of Staffordshire mottled ware cup, 17th-18th century; 2 sherds ?Lincoln type ware, 17th century; 1 sherd salt glazed stoneware, 17th-18th century; 1 piece brick; 2 claypipe bowls, stamped 'IB', 18th century; 14 fragments of glass bottle base, 17th century; 2 pieces coal	early 18th century

The Roman and medieval sherds recovered as unstratified finds are clearly redeposited. Additionally, some of the earlier post-medieval pieces may be residual.

The claypipes stamped 'IB' recovered from context (031) are probably the products of Isaac Bilby, who was working as a pipemaker in Spalding in the early years of the 18th century until his death in 1728 (Wells 1979, 158). The unstratified claypipe stem stamped with 'PARNEL[ ], [ ]LAISTOW' is a product of F. Parnell of Plaistow, London, who was mentioned in 1908 (Oswald 1975, 142).

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Appendix 3

The Archive

The archive consists of:

32	Context records
5	Scale drawings
1	Photographic Record Sheet
1	Stratigraphic matrix
1	Box 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 entitled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Archaeological Project Services project code:	BBB97
City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number:	123.97

Appendix 4

Glossary

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the period following the Roman era when Britain was invaded, settled and ruled by Angles, Saxons and other peoples from mainland Europe. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
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 interpretation 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.
Dumped deposits	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
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	Part of the prehistoric era characterised by the introduction and use of iron for tools and weapons. In Britain this period dates from approximately 700 BC - AD 50.
Layer	A layer is a term used 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.
Natural	Deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	Following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period when Britain formed part of the Roman empire, dating from AD 43-410.