

M4/14



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Thorngate House, Broadgate, Lincoln  
Archaeological Observation and Recording**

NGR: SK ~~97761 71181~~ SK 97770 71180

Site Code: LBTH 04

LCNCC Accn No.: 2004.162

Planning Application No. 2004/0204/F

**Report**

**for**

**Lincoln Thorngate Ltd**

**by**

**Mick McDaid**

**LAS Report No. 766  
August 2004**

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Conservation  
Services  
28 AUG 2004  
Highways & Planning  
Directorate



EVENT: LI 5938 WB

INTERVENTION: LI 10014

EXCAVATION: LI 10015

EVENT: LI 5940 Borehole  
Survey

PRN 70455 Medieval

## Contents

List of Figures and Plates

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Site Description	1
Planning Background	2
Archaeological Background	2
Aims and Objectives	3
Method	3
Results	4
Discussion	5
Archaeological Potential of the Site	6
Impact of the Development on the Archaeological Remains	6
Acknowledgements	7
References	8
Contents of Site Archive	8
Appendix 1 Context Summary	
Appendix 2 Tile Archive (J. Young)	
The Figures	
The Plates	

## List of Figures

Fig. 1 Location of the development site, Thorngate House. Based on (A) 1:50,000 OS Map and (B) 1:125,000 OS Map, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165.

Fig. 2 Trench Locations and position of the medieval town wall.

Fig. 3 Trench 1 section and plan.

Fig. 4 A) Trench 2 section and plan.

B) Trench 3 section and plan.

Fig. 5 Borehole 1 results.

## List of Plates

Pl. 1 Location of Trench 1 looking north-east.

Pl. 2 Trench 1 showing stone wall 104 under brick wall 101. Deposit 105 is to the east. Scales 1m. Looking North.

Pl. 3 Trench 2. Stone wall 203, looking north. Scales 1m.

Pl. 4 Trench 2. Robber trench 206, looking north. Scale 1m.

Pl. 5 Trench 3. Wall 308 sealed by demolition layer 304. Looking east-north-east. Scale 1m.

Pl. 6 Trench 3. Eastern deposits, looking west. Scales 1m.

Pl. 7 Trench 2. Robber trench 309, looking north. Scales 1m.

Pl. 8 The augering of Borehole 1.



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Archaeological Observation and Recording**

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Planning Application No. 2004/204/F

**Summary**

*The watching brief at Thorngate House has established the possible location of the medieval town wall (approximately north/south in alignment) originally noted in the yard north of the Green Dragon. The width of the robbed town wall was different at the south end of the site from that of the northern trench and the evaluation. This may indicate the presence of a gatehouse between Trench 3 and the evaluation. It has also revealed that a floor, probably contemporary with the floor recorded during the excavation, is present to the east of the town wall, denoting a building which may have fronted onto what is now Broadgate. Deeply buried silts recorded in the borehole survey may represent the fill of the medieval town ditch beneath this building. The City Archaeologist has requested that after clearance of the site and prior to commencement of any landscaping or construction works for the new building the area exposed must be cleaned and recorded archaeologically. After completion of the recording a decision will be made by the City Archaeologist as to the extent of any further archaeological excavation and recording required, which will require a scheme of works to record the archaeology which cannot be protected.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Lincoln Thorngate Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief of the above site in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998) and the letter set by Heritage Services Section, Department of Planning, Lincoln City Council dated 7/5/04. Work commenced on 19/07/04 and was completed the same day.

**Site Description**

The development site is located on the west side of Broadgate, on the east side of Thorngate, south of St Swithins Square and the north of the Green Dragon Public House (Figs. 1 and 2). It was occupied by an office block known as Thorngate House, with its open and ground-floor car parking areas. The Site lies wholly within Conservation Area No. 1 (Cathedral and City Centre).

### **Planning Background**

Planning permission was granted for demolition of the existing building and the construction of a multi-storey unit comprising a mixed residential and commercial development with integral parking facilities. Permission was granted subject to an archaeological condition which requires that

“no development, geotechnical investigation, site clearance or other enabling work shall take place on the site until details of the measures to be taken to preserve and/or record the archaeological content of the site, which shall include a timescale for the investigation, have been submitted to and approved by the local Planning Authority. All archaeological work shall thereafter proceed in accordance with the approved programme.”

The council requested that any foundation design for the new building should avoid disturbing the medieval town defences. It was agreed that as a first phase of archaeological recording trenches should be excavated, under archaeological supervision, in an attempt to locate the alignment of this wall.

### **Archaeological Background**

The site is located just outside the south-east corner of the lower Roman city walls in an area which was enclosed in the medieval period by an extension to the Roman defences of a single north-south wall leading to the river and terminating in a tower.

In the pre-Roman period it may have been covered by springs, streams and pools. Waterside installations of unknown extent were constructed east of the Wigford causeway in the Roman military era (c.AD60-90). A quayside area developed east of the High Bridge, on the north side of the river banks throughout the Roman period. The line of the River Witham was close to Saltergate and progressively moved south to its present position through a gradual artificial infilling of the ground. It is believed that the process of reclamation began during the Roman period and continued until the present course of the river was reached some time in the 14th century, when Waterside North is mentioned for the first time in documentary sources. The slope of the ground suggests that Thorngate House is positioned on the river bank.

The site lies in the medieval parish of St Swithin and is thought to cross the line of the extended east wall of the town defences which separated the lower city from the adjacent suburb of Butwerk. In the medieval period a wall with a turret at its south terminal was constructed running south from the corner of the Roman defences to the new water's edge (an as yet unknown location). It was thought likely that the wall crosses the proposed development site. The turret was recorded as still standing in 1758 and being in the grounds of the Green Dragon PH (demolished in 1956 and east of the building currently known as the Green Dragon). The area to the west of this wall continued to be used as a quayside but the precise position of the river's edge over time is not known, although it has been recorded further west under the present Waterside Centre. Thorngate which forms the western



boundary of the site formed the approach to the medieval crossing of the Witham at Thornbridge, while the gate between the City and Butwerk stood on the river bank a short distance to the east (possibly on land south of the site).

Thornbridge was also the location of the staple where wool, hides and lead were traded (Hill 1948, 160). The houses of leading merchant families lined the northern river bank, possibly forming a frontage preserved in the line of the Witch and Wardrobe (16<sup>th</sup> century) and the merchant's house now known as the Green Dragon (late 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century).

Evaluation trenching at the south end of the site in 2002 revealed medieval deposits of 13-14<sup>th</sup> century date less than 1m below the existing tarmac surface. These included a large clay floor surface, and the limestone footings of a wall 1.10m wide aligned approximately north-south which may be the remains of the medieval town defences recorded as being built in the 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Aims and Objectives**

In general terms the purpose of the enhanced watching brief was to

- establish the presence or absence of the medieval town wall, locating the feature within the development area
- provide information for accession to the County SMR and the Lincoln UAD

### **Method**

A borehole survey was conducted on the site by LincsLab to establish ground conditions. This survey was monitored by an archaeologist who made notes of the depth of soils penetrated. This was followed by trenching to locate the medieval town wall. Three trenches, one located in the north-east corner of the proposed new building layout (Trench 1). The other two were placed to the north (Trench 2) and south (Trench 3) of the original evaluation trench and were excavated using a 5 tonne mini excavator, under archaeological supervision.

Archaeological recording was carried out by a team of three experienced archaeologists and the trenches were hand-cleaned at intervals to reveal features in plan. A full written (single context) and photographic record will be made of the site, to include site plans at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate, and section drawings at 1:20. A plan of the trench was made with section drawings of at least one side. A full photographic record was made during the progress of the excavation to cover each feature together with general site shots. LAS operates a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years based on MOLAS and CAS models.

Context numbers were assigned for recording purposes and these are used in bold in the report text and summarised in Appendix 1.

## Results

### Trenching

#### Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3, Pl. 1 and 2)

This L-shaped trench had 0.60m deep topsoil, **100**, which sealed 0.50m thick levelling deposits **102** and **103**, composed of light grey and light brown sand silts often mortar rich. Below was a 1.40m wide north/south aligned modern brick wall, **101**, over 4 courses deep, over 0.40m in depth, whose eastern side utilised an earlier wall, **104**. Wall **104** was built of limestone blocks up to 0.30m in size, was on the same alignment as **101** and appeared to mark the western extent of deposit **105**, light brown, friable silt sand, possibly a floor surface, which produced 3 fragments of medieval flat roof tile, 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century in date.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 4, Pl. 3 and 4)

After removing tarmac, **200**, and underlying concrete, **201**, a limestone hardcore layer, **210**, was exposed, giving the modern deposits a depth of 0.28m. Beneath was a dark grey silt clay, **211**, 0.14m deep. The post-medieval levelling deposit noted in the 2002 evaluation trench. 0.50m wide limestone wall **203** was the continuation of the stone wall noted in Trench 1. Within Trench 2 the wall was 1 course deep. 0.14m, was within a construction trench, **205**, over 0.75m in width, whose eastern side was only visible due to its fill (**204**) being identical to **211**. The wall cut a 0.24m deep grey brown sand silt layer, **202**, which sealed a light grey clay floor. This floor was to the east of a 1.86m wide robber trench, **206**, filled by brown grey silt clay, **207**, with mortar and limestone inclusions. The earliest deposit was brown silt clay, **208**.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 4, Pl. 5 - 7)

Identical post-medieval and modern deposits were recorded in this trench as in Trench 2 (**300** tarmac, **301**, concrete, **302**, sand bedding and **303** was the continuation of **211** but was 0.40m thick). Limestone wall **308** was the continuation of wall **203** in Trench 2. It too was 1 course deep (0.14m). It was sealed by brown mortar rich sand, **304**. Below **304** was grey brown silt, **305**, only 0.04m deep, which in turn covered 0.05m deep brown sand, **306**, not dissimilar to **304**.

To the west of **308** were grey silt clay layers **311** and **312**. Beneath these levelling deposits was a north/south orientated, 1.40m wide, robber trench, **309**, filled by dark grey brown sand silt, **310**. Possibly cut by the robber trench were stones **313**, 0.30m wide whose function could not be determined due to the size of the test pit. A possible alluvial layer, **307** and **314**, was the earliest deposit exposed within the trench, although no finds were recovered to date it.

#### Borehole Survey (Fig. 5, Pl.8)

The modern tarmac was 0.08m deep sealing limestone chippings 0.30m deep. Next was a 0.12m thick deposit containing bitumen above 1m deep dark brown clay sealing a 1.50m thick dark grey silt containing charcoal and shell fragments. Limestone was encountered at c.3m below the ground level, above dark yellow brown sand silt, 0.50m deep. Next was dark grey silt with limestone fragments. c.4.50m below the ground level was a dark grey brown sand



clay, Monitoring ceased at c.7m after dark grey silt with possible peat inclusions was gone through. The core was retained for environmental assessment to be carried out by James Rackham.

## Discussion

In any attempt to understand the archaeology on the former Thorngate House site we must refer to the 2002 evaluation. Only by combining the information of the excavation with the findings of the observation and recording can an attempt at deciphering the complex archaeology be attempted.

In 2002 significant medieval archaeological remains were exposed at a depth of 0.50-0.60m below the existing car park and sealed by a Victorian levelling deposit c. 0.15m thick. The evidence from the 2004 observation and recording suggests brick buildings fronting onto Broadgate and St Swithins Square, are possibly those shown on the OS map of 1888. These were cleared in the 1960's, prior to the construction of Thorngate House. These included a 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century limestone wall, **125**, and an earlier wall, **156**, which may be part of the lost medieval town defences. To the west of the walls were the remains of a clay floor, **111**, at least 10m in length and probably belonging to a public building.

The stone wall, **104**, recorded in Trench 1, which was also present in Trenches 2 (**203**) and 3 (**308**) appears to be the same stone wall recorded during the 2002 evaluation as **125** which was dated by material from its foundation trench **128/129** to the 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The orange brown sand **304**, which sealed wall **308** may equate to the demolition layer **109** and **126**, recorded in the evaluation trench as sealing wall **125**. Possible demolition layer **105** in Trench 1 may also be part of the same deposit. This material was below the 15<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> century pits suggesting that a 15<sup>th</sup> century date is possible for the wall. Such a late date would rule out **125** as been the town wall.

The robbed-out earlier wall, recorded as **156** in the 2002 evaluation trench, was noted in Trench 2 as robber trench **206**. The width of the robber trenches suggests that this wall would originally have been c.2m wide. In the evaluation report (Field 2002) it was suggested that **156** might be the remains of the medieval town defences. Wall **156** appears to have been incorporated into a later building, which straddled the wall. In Trench 2 floor surfaces **111** and **209** to the west and east of the robbed wall, respectively, may be contemporary with wall **206**, although floor layer **209**, to the east, did not have a direct relationship to the robber trench. A robber trench, **309**, in Trench 3 was on the same alignment but was only 1.40m wide suggesting it may not be a continuation of the same wall. The layer below floor, **209**, brown grey clay **208**, may be the same deposit as **307** and **314** in Trench 3, the change in soil consistency being due to **307**'s closer proximity to the water course to the south. The levels of these deposits also suggest a slope to the south.



Any interpretation of the borehole deposits must remain tentative, given that nothing was seen in plan or section but the depth of silts is suggestive of the presence of a large ditch in the presumed location of the medieval city ditch. In 1383 the mayor and citizens were leasing the tower belonging to the city defences and part of the city ditch, suggesting that the ditch was presumably filled in by the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1948, 157-8) The evidence the evaluations in 2002 and 2004 suggest the presence of medieval buildings constructed over the city walls and ditch.

### **Archaeological Potential of the Site**

Research Agenda Zones have been identified as part of the LARA Lincoln Archaeological Research Assessment) programme for the city (Stocker and Vince 2003). The importance of this part of the city lies in its proximity to the river and the Thornbridge crossing, as well as the presence of the staple on the development site itself where wool, hides and lead were traded (Hill 1948, 160). The houses of leading merchant families lined the northern river bank, possibly forming a frontage preserved in the line of the Witch and Wardrobe (16<sup>th</sup> century) and the merchant's house now known as the Green Dragon (late 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century). The building recorded during the evaluation and watching brief may be a public building connected with the staple. Further evidence for the extent, character and function of this building may be revealed during development of the site.

The line of the medieval city defences runs through the eastern part of the site, parallel to Broadgate, and evaluation in both 2002 and 2004 has established the presence of two phases of a stone wall which may be the city defences. The associated medieval town ditch may have been encountered during the borehole survey in the north-east corner of the site but the small scale of these investigations makes interpretation of these deposits only tentative. There is, as yet, no recorded link between the putative medieval town ditch and wall

Later medieval floor surfaces and walls overlie the presumed city walls indicating removal of the defences and expansion eastwards. This confirms documentary evidence that the city ditch was probably already filled in by the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, and that although the tower survived until 1728 (Hill 1948, 158) the city defences in this area were short-lived.

### **Impact of Development on the Archaeological Remains**

Evaluation in 2002 and 2004 has demonstrated that in the area of the car park east of Thorngate House there is an almost complete absence of late medieval/early post-medieval features because the ground was cleared and levelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Deposits of 15-18<sup>th</sup> century date have largely been removed, leaving medieval deposits close to the modern ground surface. This makes these horizons more vulnerable to modern development,



especially in view of the fact that the whole of the present building will be removed to immediately below existing slab level.

Previous excavation to the west of the site has established that the ground levels drop from Saltergate towards the present river and that the intervening area is filled-in river bed. Beneath the medieval levels will be Roman remains and excavations to the west of the site undertaken prior to the construction of the Waterside Centre located the Roman waterfront next to Saltergate. Land was gradually reclaimed to create the modern narrow river channel. Although the nature and depth of the existing building foundations is unknown (all endeavours to locate the architect's drawings for Thorngate House have drawn a blank) there is no doubt that archaeological deposits will be encountered immediately beneath the current floor slabs. The only point in doubt is whether these remains will be of 13-14<sup>th</sup> century date as found in the car park or of even earlier date.

The City Archaeologist has requested a foundation design for the new building which will minimise the impact on the archaeological deposits, which have clearly been demonstrated to exist on the site. The footprint of the new building will extend over almost the whole plot. The finished foundation design has not been finalised but it will be of piled construction with intervening groundbeams. Piles will be at approximately 5m centres and groundbeams will be excavated to a depth of 0.65-1.00m. There will also be two lift shafts as well as service trenches. The foundation design will position piles to avoid the walls located during the 2004 investigations but archaeological remains are likely to extend across the whole of the site and disturbance to significant archaeological deposits is inevitable wherever the piles are located.

In order to ensure greatest flexibility in positioning the piles, in case obstructions are encountered, the whole of the present floor slab will be removed. The City Archaeologist has requested that after clearance of the site and prior to commencement of any landscaping or construction works for the new building the area exposed must be cleaned and recorded archaeologically. After completion of the recording a decision will be made by the City Archaeologist as to the extent of any further archaeological excavation and recording required, which will require a scheme of works to record the archaeology which cannot be protected.

#### **Acknowledgements**

LAS would like to thank Lee of Lincoln Thorngate Ltd for arranging site access, Richard Humphrey of Lincs Lab and Gayler Surveying Services for supply of the survey plan used in Fig. 2. The watching brief was carried out by Mike Garrett, Mick McDaid, Richard Pullen and Geoff Tann.

Mick McDaid and Naomi Field  
August 2004

## References

Field, N. 2002, rev 2004 *Thorngate House, Broadgate, Lincoln Archaeological Evaluation*. LAS report 626.1

Hill, Sir F 1948 *Medieval Lincoln*. Reprinted 1990, Paul Watkins Publishing, Stamford.

Jones, M, Vince, A and Stocker, D. 2003 *The City By The Pool*. Oxbow Books.

## Contents of Site Archive

33 context sheets

1 plan at 1:10, 3 plans at 1:20 and 3 sketch location plans

3 section drawings at 1:20

Photographs LAS film nos 04/62/28-29, 04/ 95/6-24

4 tile fragments

Correspondence



**APPENDIX 1**







**APPENDIX 2**



**Thorngate House, Broadgate, Lincoln**  
**Archaeological Watching Brief**  
**Tile Archive Report**  
**Site code:LBTH 04**

context	cname	full name	type	sub type	description	date
105	PNR1	Peg, nib or ridge tile	LSWA		abraded, cracked during firing	M12 - 14
105	PNR1	Peg, nib or ridge tile	F1			13 - 16
105	PNR1	Peg, nib or ridge tile	F1	4c		L14 - M16

Three medieval flat roofing tiles, one with a type 4c suspension nib, dating to between late 14<sup>th</sup> - mid 16<sup>th</sup> century.



**THE FIGURES**



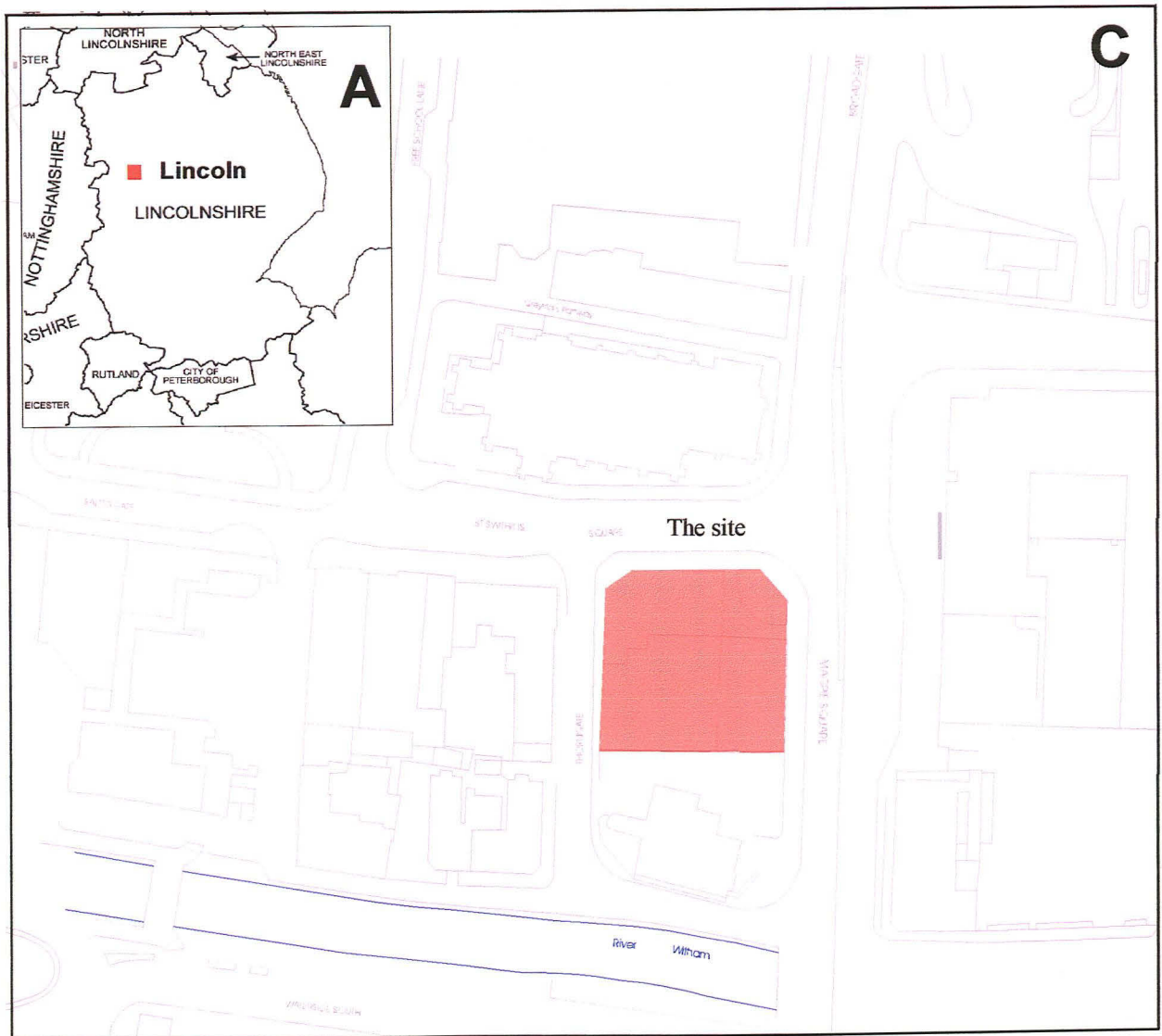
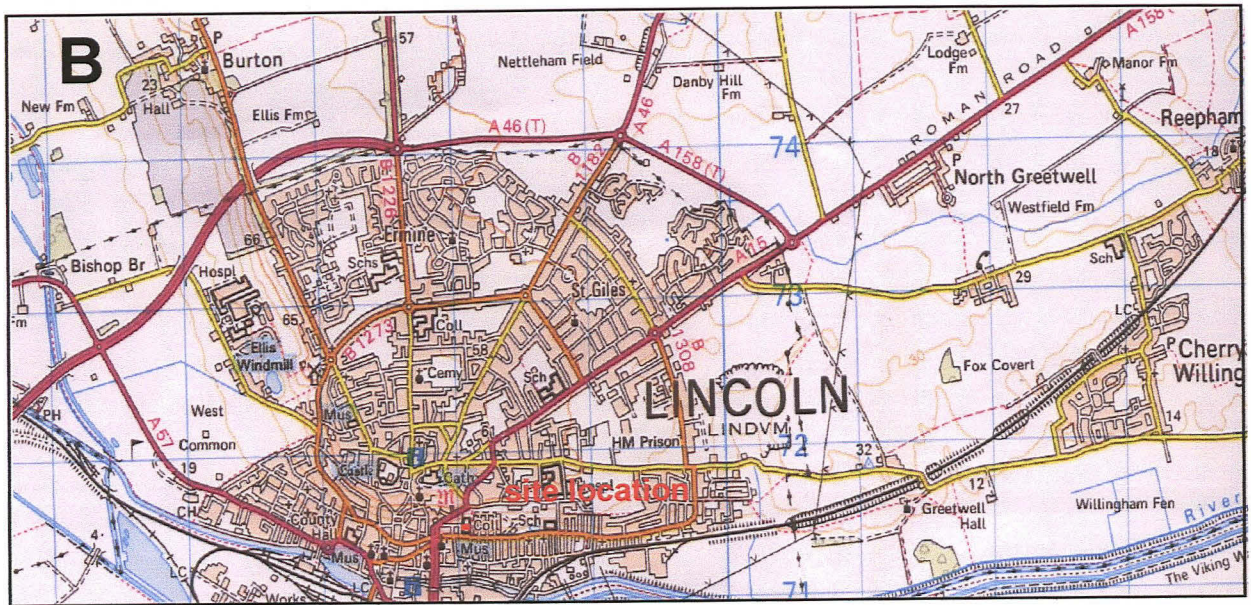


Fig. 1 Location of development site, Thorngate House. Based on (A) 1:50 000 OS Map and (B) 1:12500 OS Map, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165.



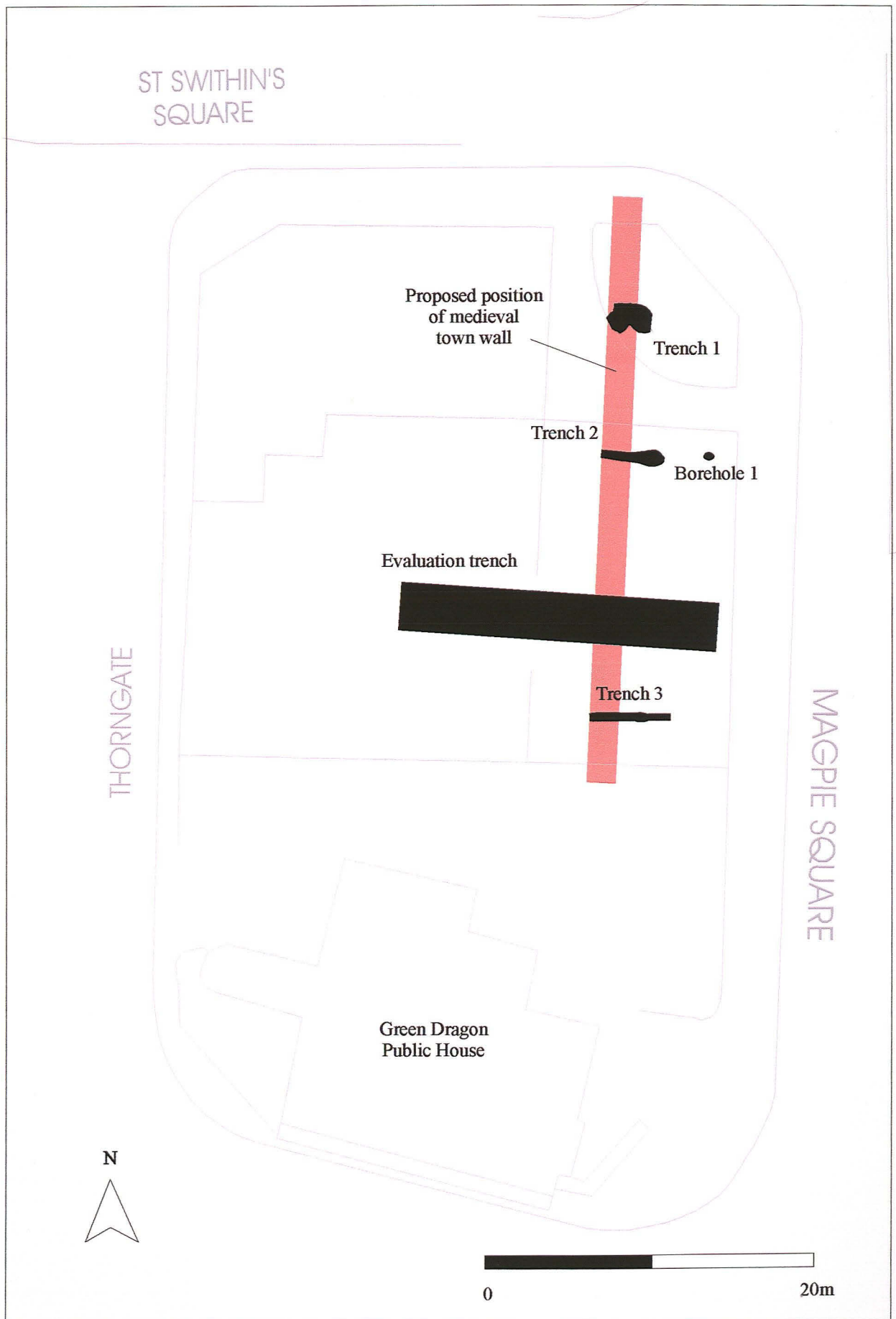


Fig. 2 Trench Locations and position of the medieval town wall.

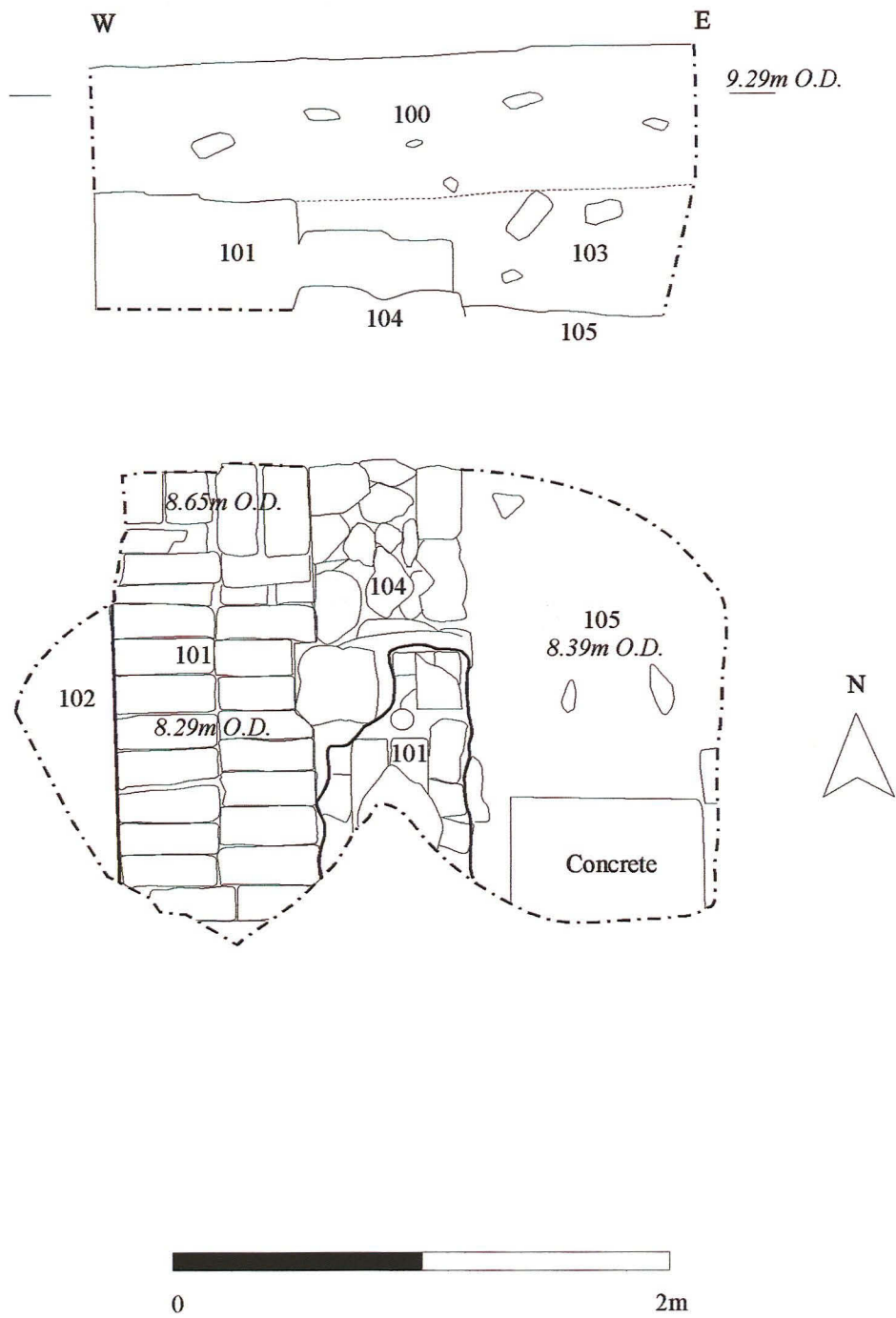
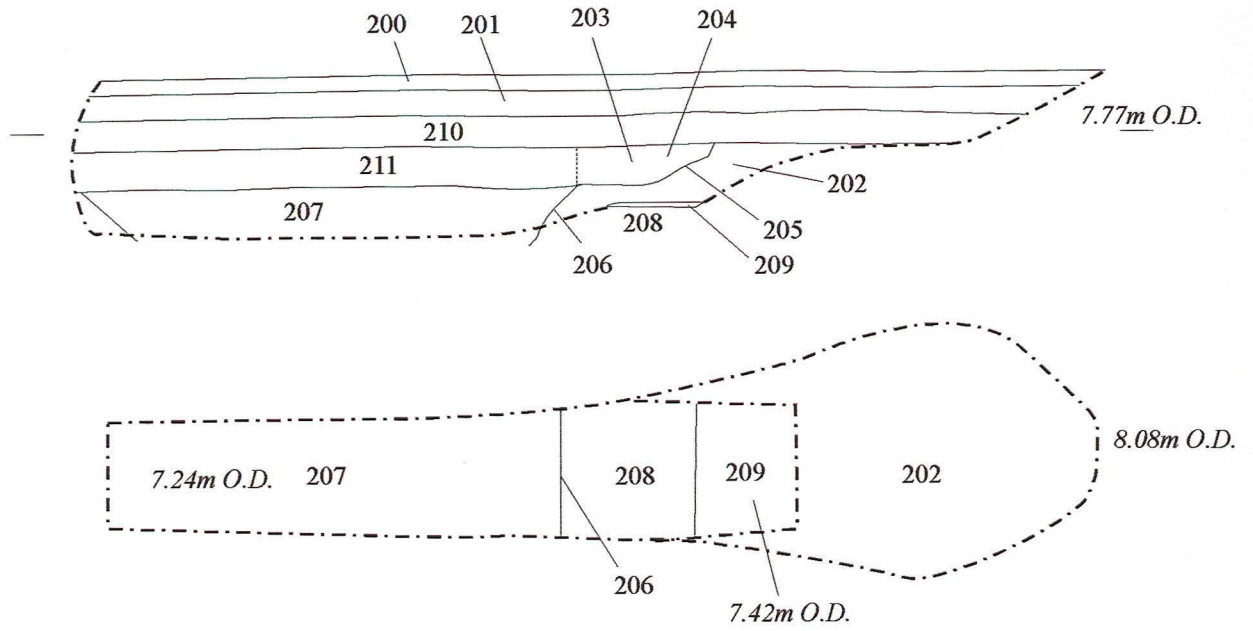


Fig. 3. Trench 1 section and plan.



A



B

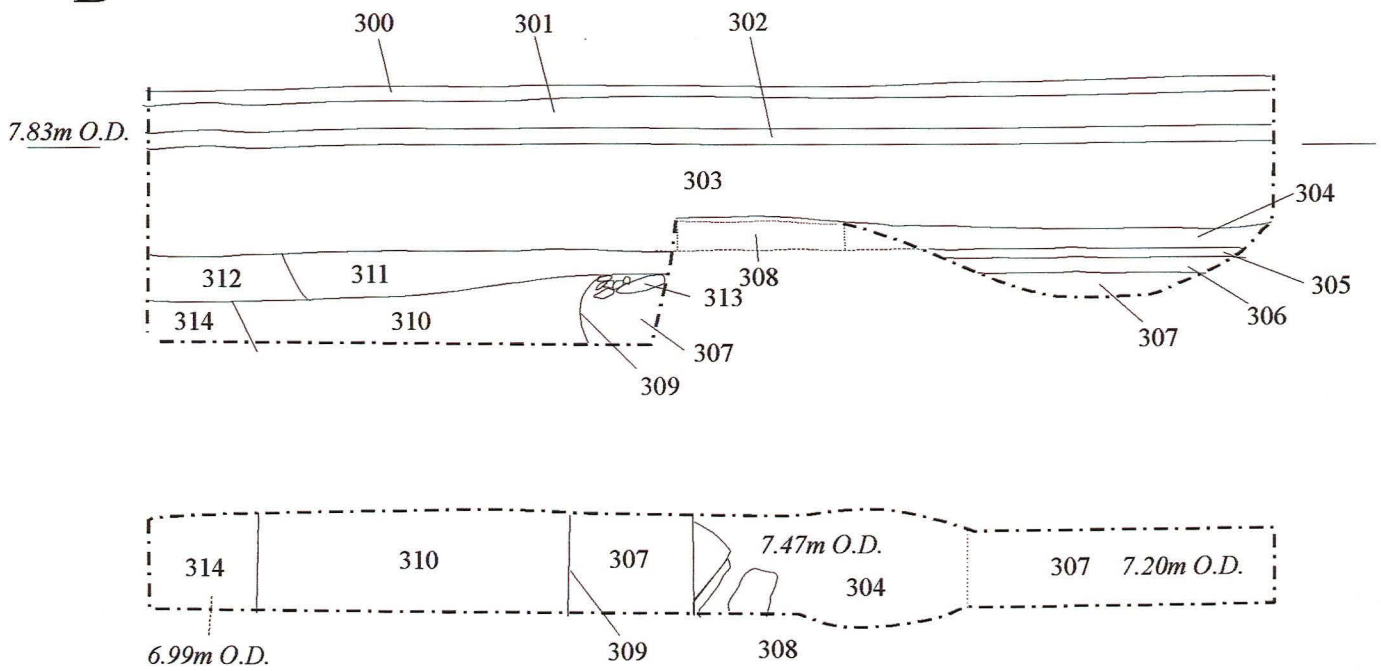


Fig. 4. A) Trench 2 section and plan.  
B) Trench 3 section and plan.

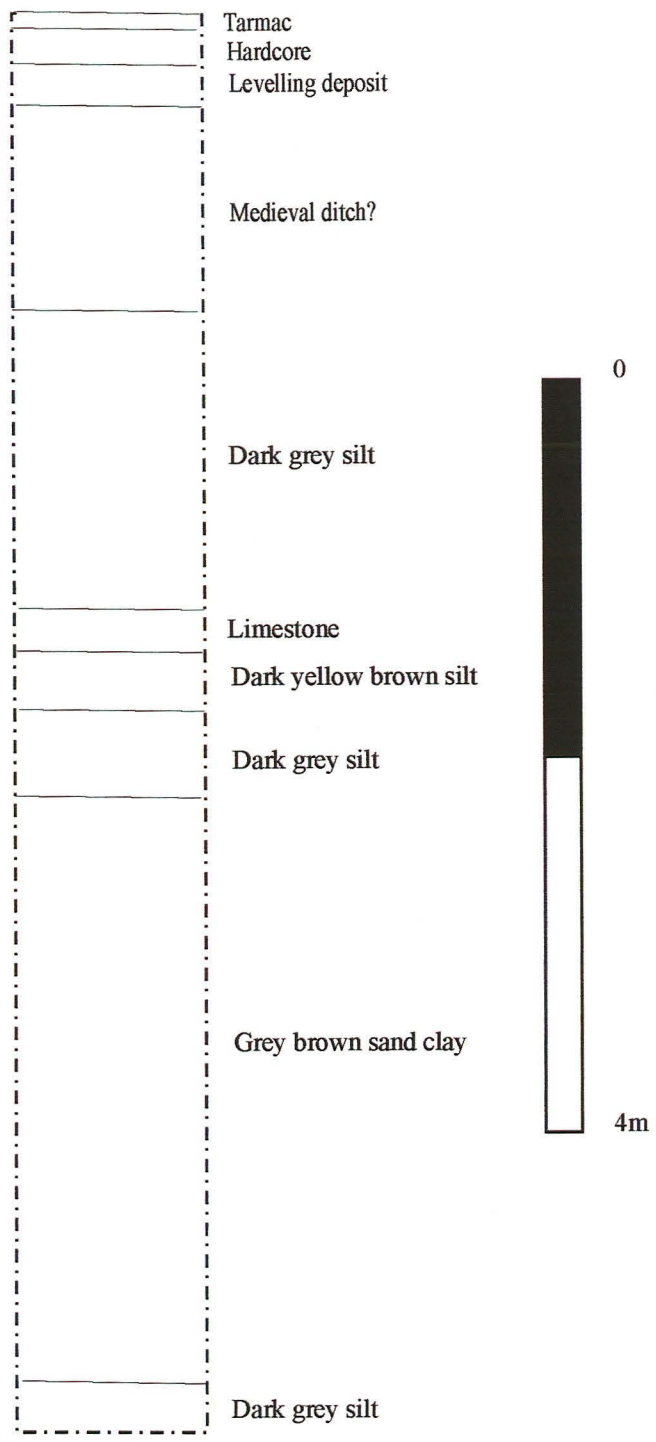


Fig.5 Borehole 1 results



**THE PLATES**



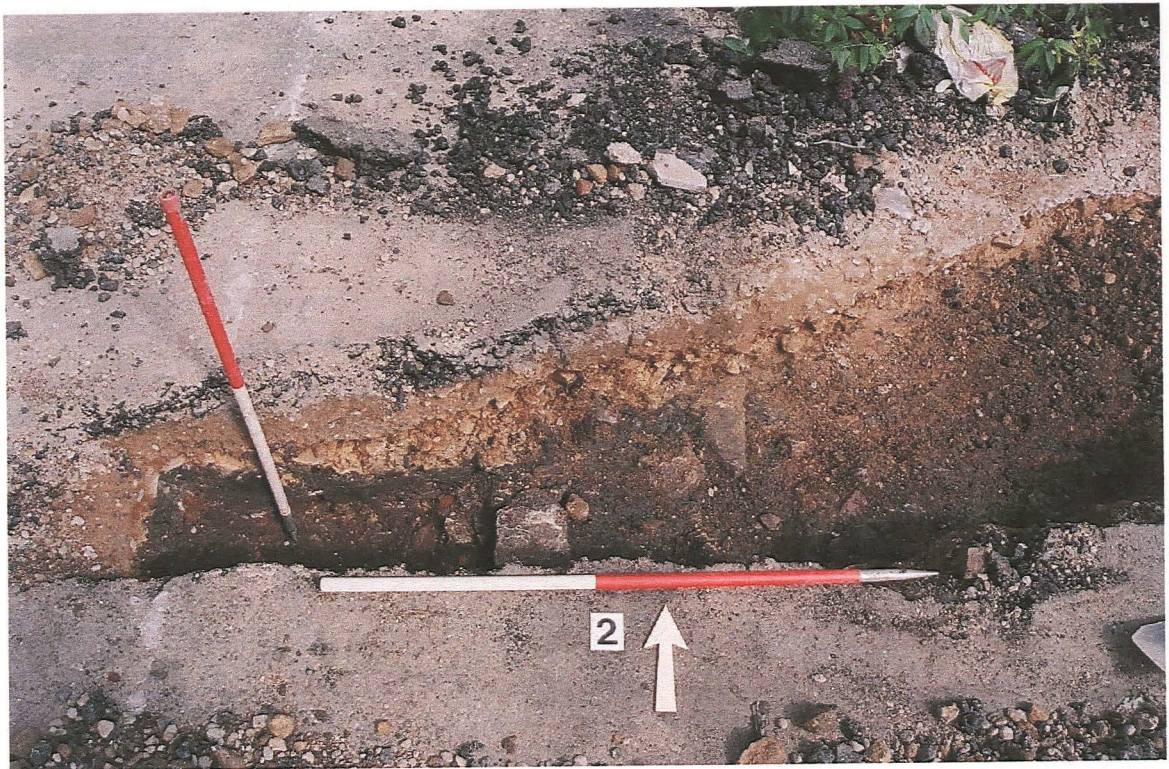


Pl. 1 Location of Trench 1 looking north-east.



Pl. 2 Trench 1 showing stone wall 104 under brick wall 101. Deposit 105 is to the east. Scales 1m. Looking North.





Pl. 3 Trench 2. Stone wall 203, looking north. Scales 1m.



Pl. 4 Trench 2. Robber trench 206, looking north. Scale 1m.



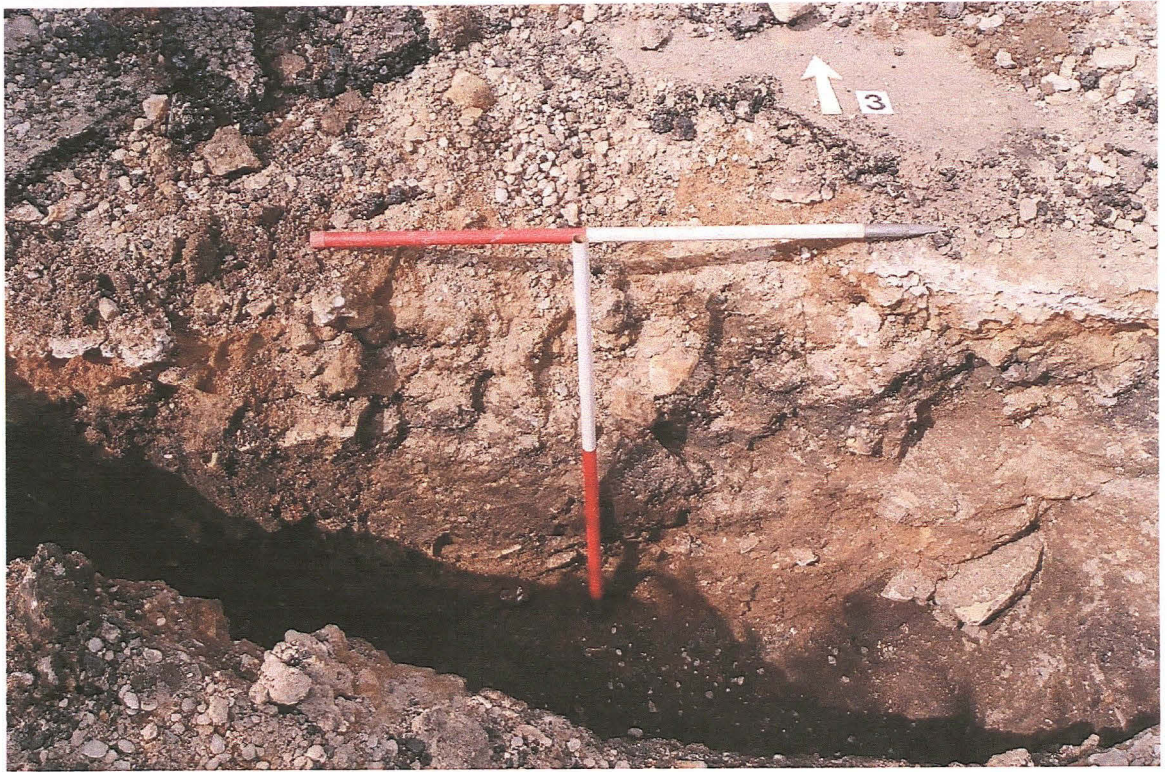


Pl. 5 Trench 3. Wall 308 sealed by demolition layer 304. Looking east-north-east. Scale 1m.



Pl. 6 Trench 3. Eastern deposits, looking west. Scales 1m.





Pl. 7 Trench 2. Robber trench 309, looking north. Scales 1m.



Pl. 8 The augering of Borehole 1.