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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Land to the rear of The White Swan
The Green, Scotter, Lincs.**

NGR: SE 886² 010⁰

Site Code: SWSS 04

Accession No.: 2004.93

WLDC Planning Application: M03/P/1039

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report for

Mr and Mrs A. Turner

by G. Tann

LAS Report No. 744

March 2005

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Conservation
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Highways & Planning
Directorate

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Land to the rear of The White Swan, The Green, Scotter, Lincs. Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: SE 8865 0103

Site Code: SWSS 04

Accession No.: 2004.93

WLDC Planning Application: M03/P/1039

Summary

Monitoring of a single house plot to the rear of the White Swan revealed no significant archaeological remains. There were indications of truncation of levels closer to The Green. Material from that end of the site may have been redeposited elsewhere on the development site. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, but the lack of any early features indicates that the trenches were not in an area close to Anglo-Saxon or medieval occupation.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr and Mrs A. Turner in April 2004 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the rear of The White Swan, The Green, Scotter (Fig. 1). The work was carried out in accordance with general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998). Work commenced April 7th 2004 and the archaeological recording (by G. Tann) was completed in one visit with the agreement of Dr Beryl Lott.

Site Location and Description

Scotter is located in the Trent valley, c. 12km north-east of Gainsborough, on the west side of the River Eau. The house plot is located to the rear of The White Swan public house, on the north side of The Green. The geology of the site comprises wind-blown sands overlying boulder clay.

Planning Background

Planning permission was granted for the construction of a single dwelling and garage with associated access and drainage, subject to an archaeological watching brief being carried out during the groundworks phase of construction.

Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological investigations in Scotter have identified ephemeral evidence of Bronze Age and Saxon pottery (Tann 2001). A series of evaluations and watching briefs have produced medieval pottery, but no significant medieval or earlier features (Farr 2001; Marshall 2002; Williams 2002). There were two manors (estates) in the village of Scotter at the time of the *Domesday Survey* in 1086, both of which belonged to Peterborough Abbey. It was an important and wealthy place in the medieval period. The development site is located close to one of the village greens, in the centre of the village, and there was potential for medieval remains being disturbed by the groundworks (Fig. 2).

The Watching Brief (Fig. 3)

The groundworks were monitored by an experienced archaeologist. Trenches were all excavated to about 0.6m – 0.65m wide. Context numbers were assigned by LAS for recording purposes; these are used in bold in this report, and a summary list is provided (Appendix 1).

Site Preparation

The development site had been stripped of vegetation and some topsoil before the monitoring visit (Pl. 1). An inspection was made of the surface, which showed no archaeological features, and clay tobacco pipe stem fragments were collected from the remaining topsoil **1**. The stripped surface sloped down towards the north. Levels indicated a drop of 0.75m between former ground level beside a garage on the southern side of the plot, and the stripped surface at the north-west corner of the new house. There was a further fall of 1m to the northern edge of the development site, and a noticeable drop between the eastern edge of the plot and the garden of the adjoining property.

House Foundation Trenches

Machining began at the southern end of the plot, close to the rear corner of the existing White Swan premises. In that part of the site, about 0.4m of topsoil had been removed, with up to 0.3m of similar dark brown sandy loam **1** remaining. The topsoil contained fragments of c.19thC clay tobacco pipe stems and one piece of post-medieval pottery (Appendix 1). This layer covered a light brown sandy subsoil **2**, about 0.15m thick, which contained a sherd of medieval pottery. The subsoil lay above the undisturbed natural sand **3** at the southern end of the site (Pl. 2). The thicknesses of these layers were not uniform, with the 'topsoil' layer up to 0.75m thick at the eastern side of the house foundations, and the subsoil up to 0.55m thick (becoming progressively stonier with depth) (Pl. 3). Below the stonier subsoil at the northern end of the foundations was yellow clay **4**, with no overlying sand. Although the full sequence was not seen, the layers suggest that the edge of a glacial or wind-blown sand hill at the southern part of the site has been progressively eroded and mixed with cultivated deposits to the north which have covered lower exposures of clay.

A series of deep pits **5** and **7** was revealed by the western foundation trench. These appeared to have been dug separately, but on the same occasion, with almost vertical faces where these were exposed. The pit bases were about 1.35m lower than the stripped surface, and the features had been backfilled with brick rubble **6** and **8** (Pl. 4). The rubble contained numerous complete hand-made bricks, many of which were mortared. Debris incorporated with the rubble suggested a late-twentieth century date for the pits.

The only other feature identified in the foundation trenches was a north-west/south-east aligned depression **9**, filled with dark brown sandy loam **10**, over 0.6m thick. The fill appeared to have been redeposited, but contained no dating material.

Discussion

The buried brick rubble clearly derived from demolition of brick structures constructed with poorly

mortared hand-made bricks, probably of eighteenth century build. These need not have been on this site, but outbuildings marked beside the public house on a 1907 plan have been removed, and this would seem the most likely source. All the disturbances on the development plot may be associated with repeated expansion of the White Swan buildings and creation of adjacent car parking areas, ranging from demolition of outbuildings, reducing ground levels to produce easier access from the road, terracing the slope to create rear access to an adjoining property, and redeposition of soil (Pl. 5). However, it is surprising that modern material was not found within the upper part of the thick layer 1.

The present ground contours of this part of Scotter village are very uneven, reflecting a combination of natural and artificial landforms. The higher natural sandy deposits survive in places, but have been eroded by natural weathering, human activity and cultivation. Where they have been removed, the underlying clay has been less favoured. Alongside The Green, the roads appear to have cut through the sandy material, forming deep hollows. The front gardens and house sites beside the road are higher, probably on the level of the medieval ground surface. Behind the frontage, the plots slope down to the north and east, towards watercourses. The situation depicted by this simplified description is further complicated by artificial landscaping restricted by land boundaries which may no longer exist.

Conclusion

No significant archaeological remains were found on the house plot, and only one sherd of medieval pottery was found. Much of the western side of the house plot had been disturbed by twentieth century pits which had been backfilled with brick rubble, and deposits at the southern end of the development site had been severely truncated. It was unclear whether the thick layer of dark soil at the northern end of the house site represented soil spread across the site as a result of the disturbances or by natural movement down the slope; the absence of twentieth century material and brick rubble in the dark 'topsoil' suggested that it had not derived from recent earthmoving.

The absence of significant features, and the single medieval sherd from this watching brief, are indications that the foundation trenches were not excavated in an area close to Anglo-Saxon or medieval occupation.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Mr and Mrs Turner and their contractors for their co-operation and interest. The post-Roman pottery was identified by Jane Young. Illustrations were produced by Ian Rowlandson and Doug Young, and the report was edited and collated by Naomi Field.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
March 30th 2005

References

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- Tann, G. 2002 *Land NW of St Peter's Road, Scotter (formerly Home Paddock, Soulby Farm): Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. LAS Report No. 580, April 2002.
- Farr, S. 2001 *Land to the rear of 22 The Green, Scotter: Archaeological Watching Brief*. LAS Report No. 500, January 2001.
- Marshall, D. 2002 *Land off High Street, Scotter (formerly Soulby Farm): Archaeological Evaluation*. LAS Report No. 606, September 2002.
- Williams, M. 2002 *Land NW of St Peter's Road, Scotter: Archaeological Evaluation*. LAS Report No. 592, June 2002.

Site Archive

Developer's plan, and annotated copies
Correspondence
Photographs: LAS film nos. 04/68/1-18
Finds: pottery sherds and clay tobacco pipe stems
Specialist archive list: pottery

APPENDIX 1

Pottery Archive SWSS04

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	weight	part	date
01	STMO	Staffordshire/Bristol mottled-glazed	?	1	11	base	late 17th to 18th
02	HUM	Humberware	jug	1	2	BS	late 13th to 15th

THE FIGURES

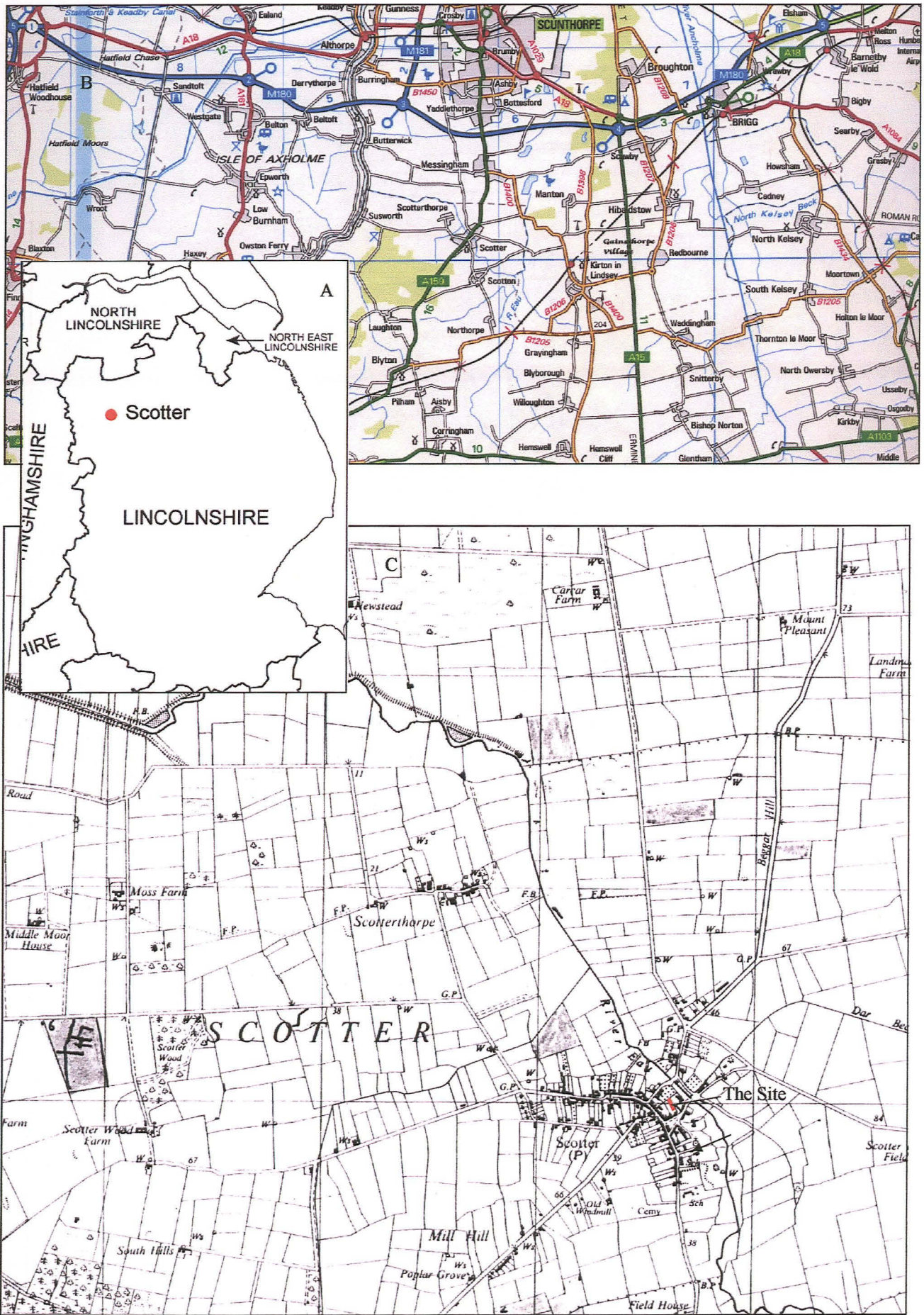


Fig.1 Location of Scotter (c based on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165).



Fig. 2 Location of the Development Site (based on the 1975 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map Sheet SE 80 SE. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165).

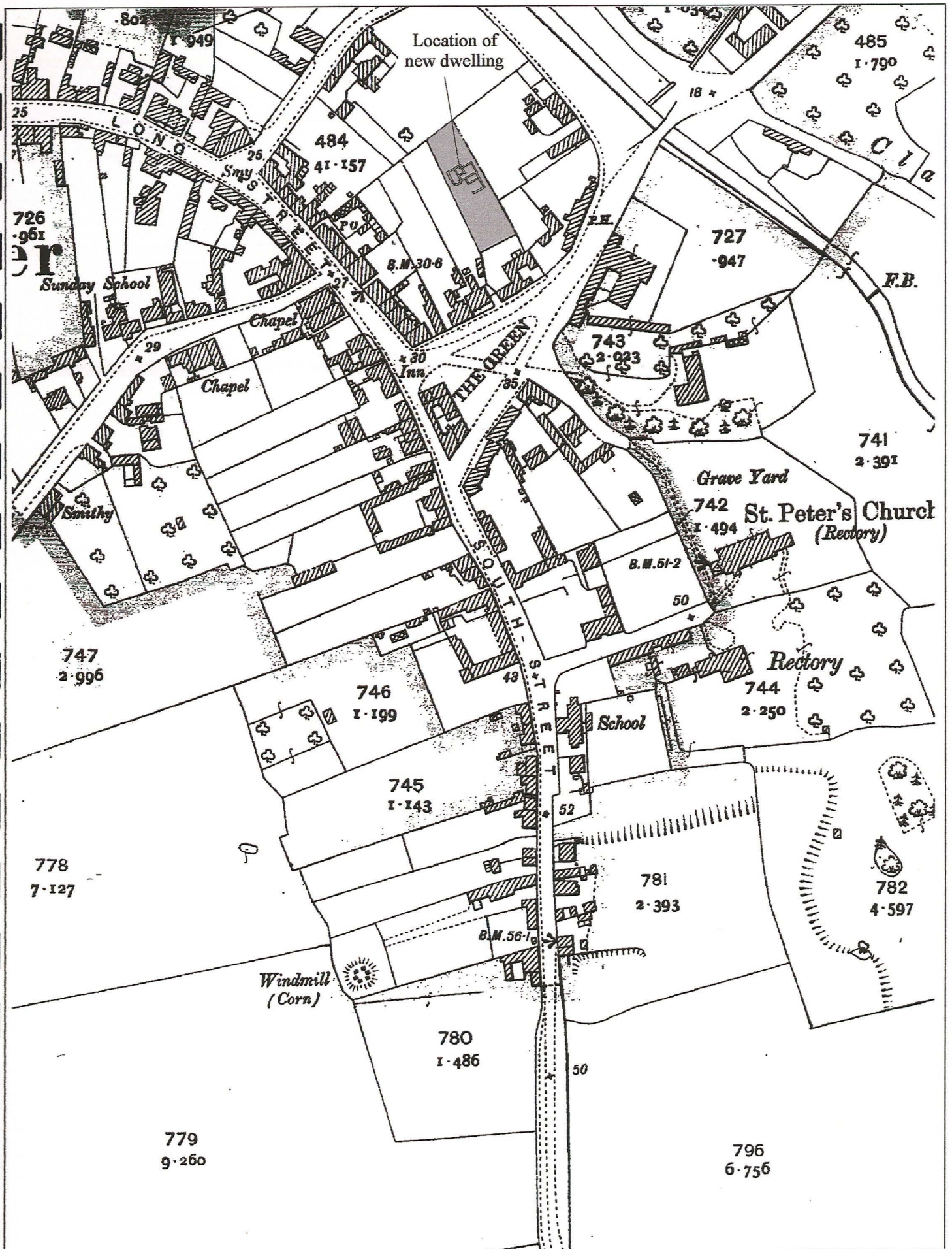


Fig. 3 Environs of the development site in 1905, based on an extract from the 1907 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map Sheet Lincs. 26.15.

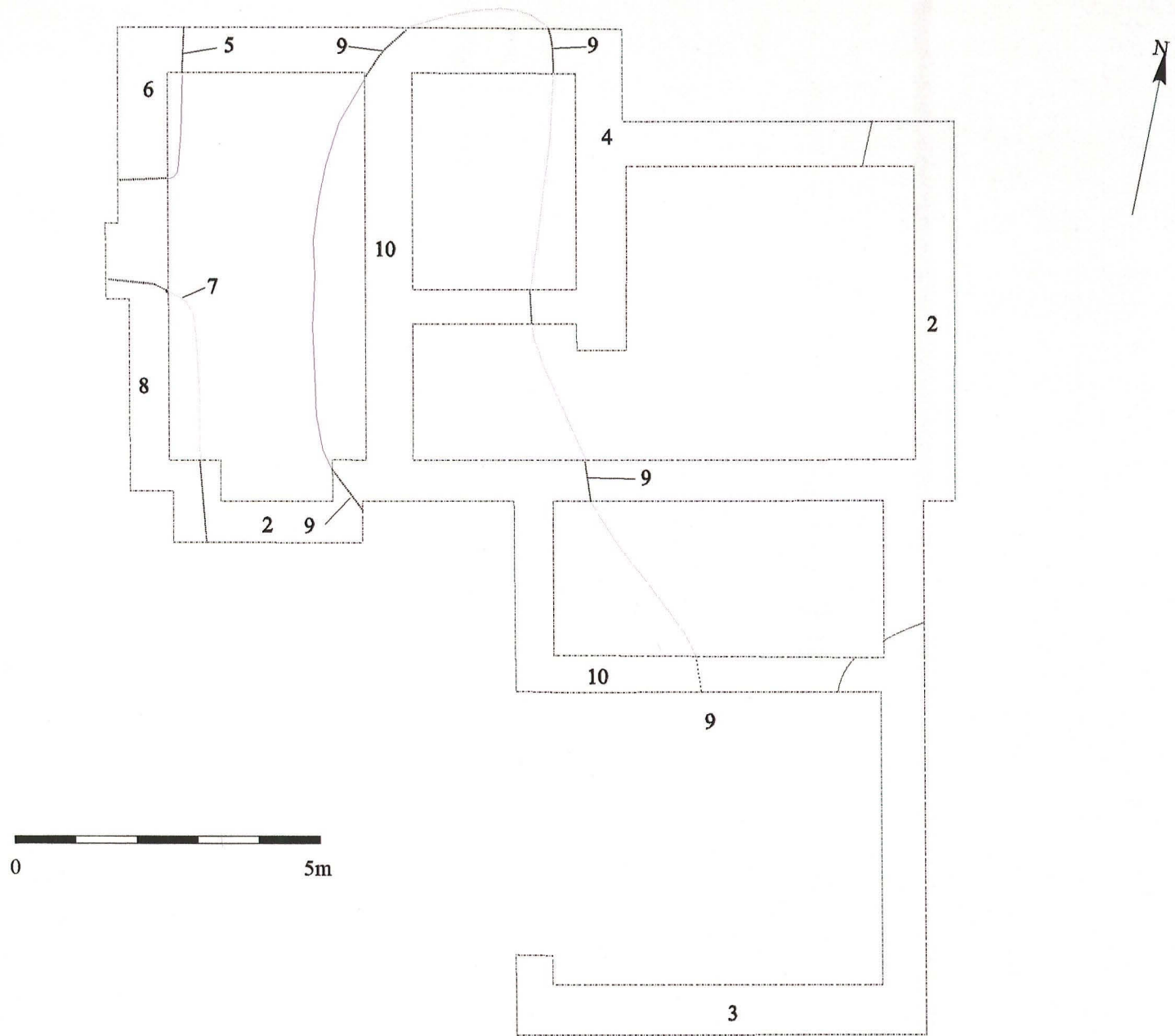


Fig. 4 Plan of the monitored house foundations, showing archaeological features (Rowlandson and Young).

THE PLATES



PI. 1 View of the development site after partial removal of topsoil, looking north.



PI. 2 Deposits visible at the eastern end of the southern foundation trench.



PI. 3 The depth of topsoil and subsoil increased towards the northern end of the foundation trenches. The lawn to the east is considerably lower than the development site, indicating probable artificial changes to the natural slope. Looking south along the eastern foundation trench.



PI. 4 Brick rubble backfilling large pits at the western side of the house plot, covered by a thick layer of topsoil (looking south-west).



PI. 5 Car park of the Old White Swan, showing evidence that the ground has been lowered considerably (looking south across The Green).