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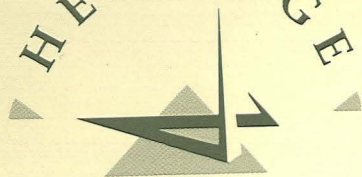
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND AT
GAYSFIELD ROAD,
FISHTOFT,
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For
Riverside Developments

January 1995

Heritage Lincolnshire
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Charity No: 1001463. Company No: 2554738 (England)

FWB 93

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches alongside Gaysfield Road, Fishtoft, Lincolnshire.

The site lies in an area of significant archaeological interest. Numerous prehistoric flint tools and stone axes have been found in the immediate vicinity. Pottery of Roman date has been found just east of the investigation site. Trial excavation of the present site in 1990 also recovered Romano-British pottery and a ditch of the same date. Several Middle or Late Saxon ditches, containing pottery, animal bone and briquetage (from salt-making) were also revealed in those excavations.

One of the earlier excavation trenches was encountered during the watching brief. In addition, two ditches were observed cutting into natural gravels. These are probably extensions of Late Saxon features seen in the earlier excavations. Fragments of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the site.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

During May-July 1993 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for a building development alongside Gaysfield Road, Fishtoft (National Grid Reference TF363421). The village is located in the civil parish of Fishtoft, Boston District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). This work was commissioned by Riverside Developments and carried out by Heritage Lincolnshire.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Fishtoft village is situated approximately 4km southeast of Boston town centre and 7km north of southwest corner of The Wash. The development area is on the east side of Gaysfield Road towards the southern limit of the village (Fig. 2). Located at a height of *c.* 3.5m OD, the investigation site is on a slight rise above the surrounding area. Approximately 1.5km to the southwest is The Haven (part of the River Witham) while half a kilometre to the east is the canalised watercourse, Hobhole Drain.

Local soils are the Tanvats Association, typical alluvial gley soils developed in marine alluvium (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 319). Beneath this marine alluvium is glacial drift that was deposited in a geological basin between the Lincolnshire Wolds and the East Anglian Heights (Harden 1978, 5). These glacial deposits in turn overlie a solid geology of Jurassic clays.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Fishtoft village is located in an area of archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric through to the medieval period. Prehistoric activity in the area is represented by numerous flint tools (B09/004, 005, 009) and polished stone axes (B09/003, 006, 007) found in the immediate vicinity of the present investigation site. Additionally, further flints and pottery of Middle Bronze Age date were recovered during partial excavation of a mound 300m to the southeast (B09/002).

A Romano-British farmstead located approximately 1.5km southeast of the present investigation site has previously been excavated. Romano-British pottery has been recovered from 100m east of the

development area (B09/010).

In 1990, the present development site was subject to archaeological trial trenching. During that evaluation, sherds of Roman pottery and a ditch tentatively ascribed to the period were recorded. Additionally, several ditches of Middle or Late Saxon date were observed. Animal bones and Saxon pottery was recovered from these ditches. Briquetage, probably signifying the proximity of a salt-making site, was also retrieved from the Saxon ditches (Zeffertt 1991).

Fishtoft was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, at which time there was a church and mill in the parish (Foster and Longley 1976, 183). St. Guthlac's Church, at the north end of the village, contains features of Norman date (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 277-8). Medieval pottery was also recovered during excavation of the mound (B09/002) that produced the Bronze Age pottery and flints (see above).

3. AIMS

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

4. METHODS

A mechanical excavator was used in the construction of the foundation trenches, which averaged 1.00m in depth.

The sides of the trenches were cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains prior to recording the sections. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the foundation trenches was allocated a unique reference number

with an individual written description. Natural geological deposits were also recorded. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at scale 1:20. Locations of the recorded sections appear on Fig. 3.

5. RESULTS (Fig. 4)

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. Three phases were identified:

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated archaeological deposits
Phase 3	Modern deposits

Phase 1 Natural Deposits

A deposit of yellow brown stony silt (4) was observed across the entire development area. This material is considered to be a natural deposit of glacial origin.

Phase 2 Undated Archaeological Deposits

In Plot 3, two cut features (3 and 6) were observed in the west and east sections respectively. Filled with fairly uniform deposits of brown silty sand (2 and 5 respectively), these were of very similar size and asymmetrical shape. In consequence, these probably represent parts of a single feature, an east-west gully or ditch.

On the east side of Plot 2, an apparently linear cut feature (8) filled brown silty sand (7) was recorded (Fig. 4). This feature is also interpreted as a ditch or

gully.

Phase 3 Modern deposits

Crossing Plot 1 at the northern part of the development site was an east-west band of mixed deposits. These represent the location of an archaeological trench excavated in 1990 (Fig. 3).

Sealing the natural deposits and archaeological features across the area was a layer of brown silty sand (1). This topsoil provided the present ground surface.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural layers of stony silt (phase 1), probably glacial in origin, were observed across the area.

An east-west ditch (phase 2) was observed in Plot 2. Probably functioning as a land boundary or drainage ditch, this may have been a westwards extension of a feature (f.1) recorded during the 1990 archaeological excavation.

Similarly, a shallow ditch or gully, probably also serving a drainage or demarcation function, was observed crossing Plot 3. As recorded, this feature appeared to possess an asymmetrical cross-section. However, this is almost certainly due to the foundation trenches crossing the feature at an oblique angle. Oriented approximately northwest-southeast, this may also be an extension of a ditch (f.2) encountered during the 1990 excavation. However, the recutting of ditch f.2 was not recognised during the present watching brief.

Pottery recovered from both of the features (f.1 and f.2) encountered during the earlier investigation was Late Saxon

in date. Consequently, if the proposed relationships given above are accepted, then the ditches observed in the present watching brief probably also date to the Late Saxon period.

Mixed, disturbed deposits (phase 3) at the northern side of the site define the location of a backfilled archaeological trench, excavated in 1990. Topsoil constitutes the modern ground surface. Four sherds of Romano-British greyware pottery were recovered as unstratified finds from soils disturbed during the excavation of the foundation trenches.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigation at land opposite the Primary School, Gaysfield Road, Fishtoft, established that natural deposits consisting of stony silt occur within 0.2m of the present ground surface. Two shallow ditches or gullies were observed cutting the natural. These are probably extensions of features recorded during earlier excavations at the site and, as such, are likely to be Late Saxon in date. Fragments of Romano-British pottery were recovered as stray finds during the watching brief.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heritage Lincolnshire wish to thank Mike Smith of Riverside Developments who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Dave Start edited this report. Hilary Healey kindly identified the pottery. Jim Bonnor, the Boston District Community Archaeologist, permitted access to the relevant parish files.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes
Site Assistant: David Brown
Illustration: Denise Buckley
Post-excavation Analyst: Gary Taylor

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foster, C W, and Longley, T, 1976 *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, The Lincolnshire Record Society 19 (Reprint of 1924 publication)

Harden, G, 1978 *Medieval Boston and its Archaeological Implications*

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

Pevsner, N, and Harris, J, 1989 *Lincolnshire*, The Buildings of England (2nd ed, revised Antram, N)

Zeffertt, T, 1991 *Excavations at Gaysfield Road, Fishtoft, Lincolnshire* (Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology unpublished report)

11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed by 'B' are the reference numbers used by the Boston District Community Archaeologist.

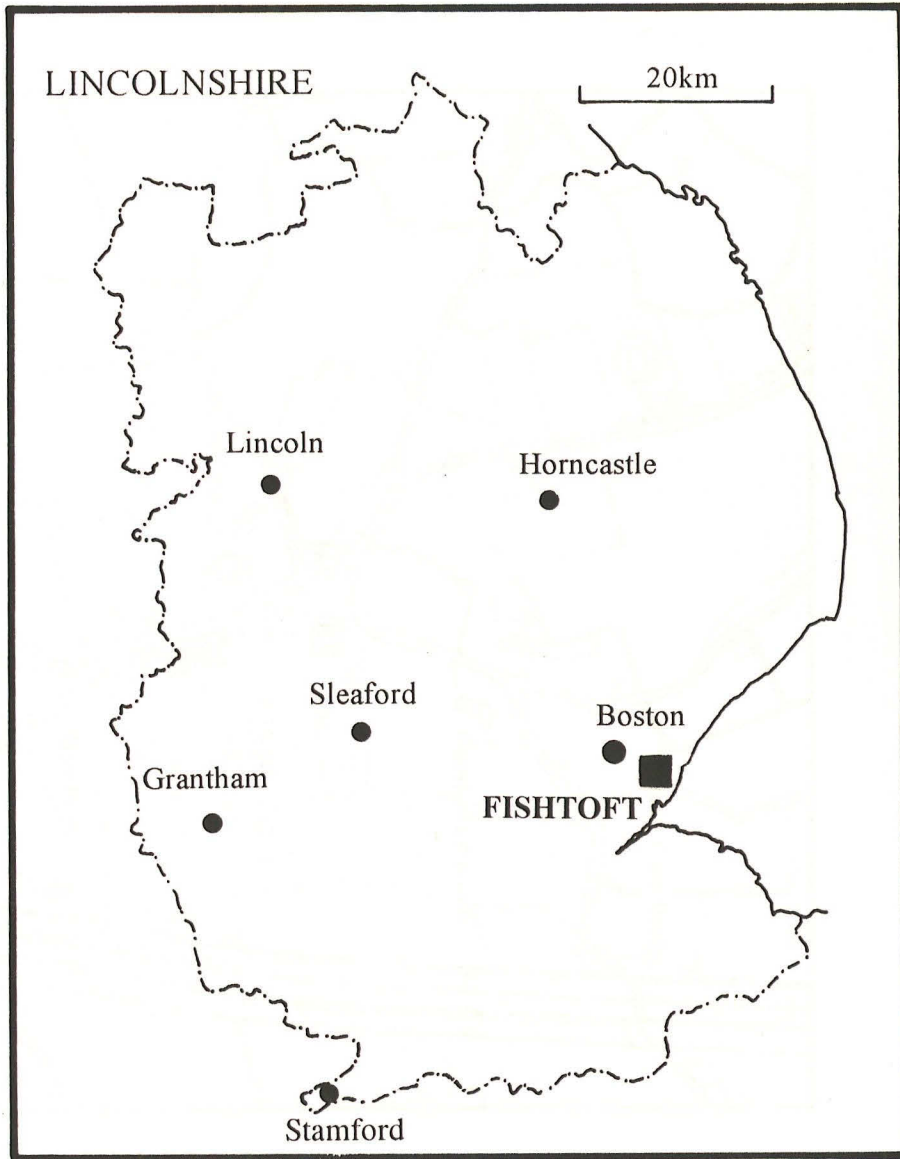
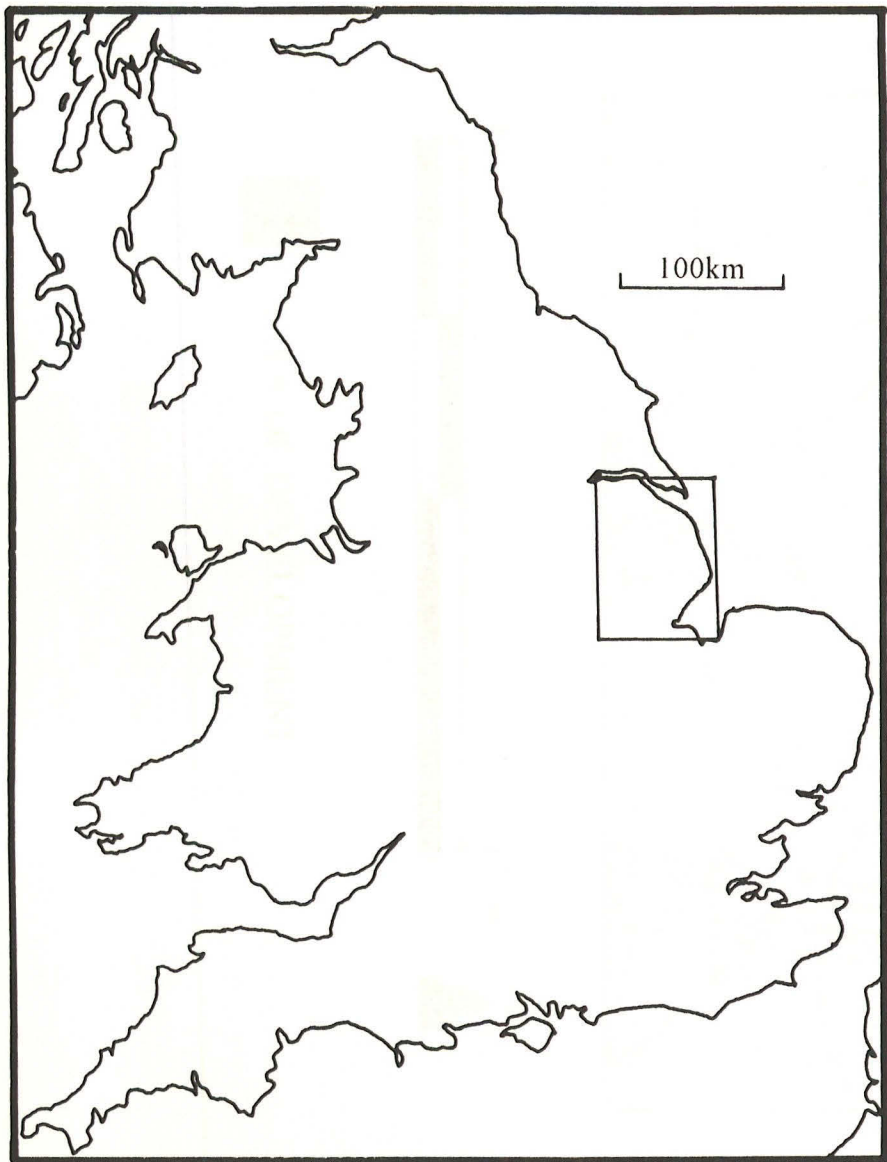
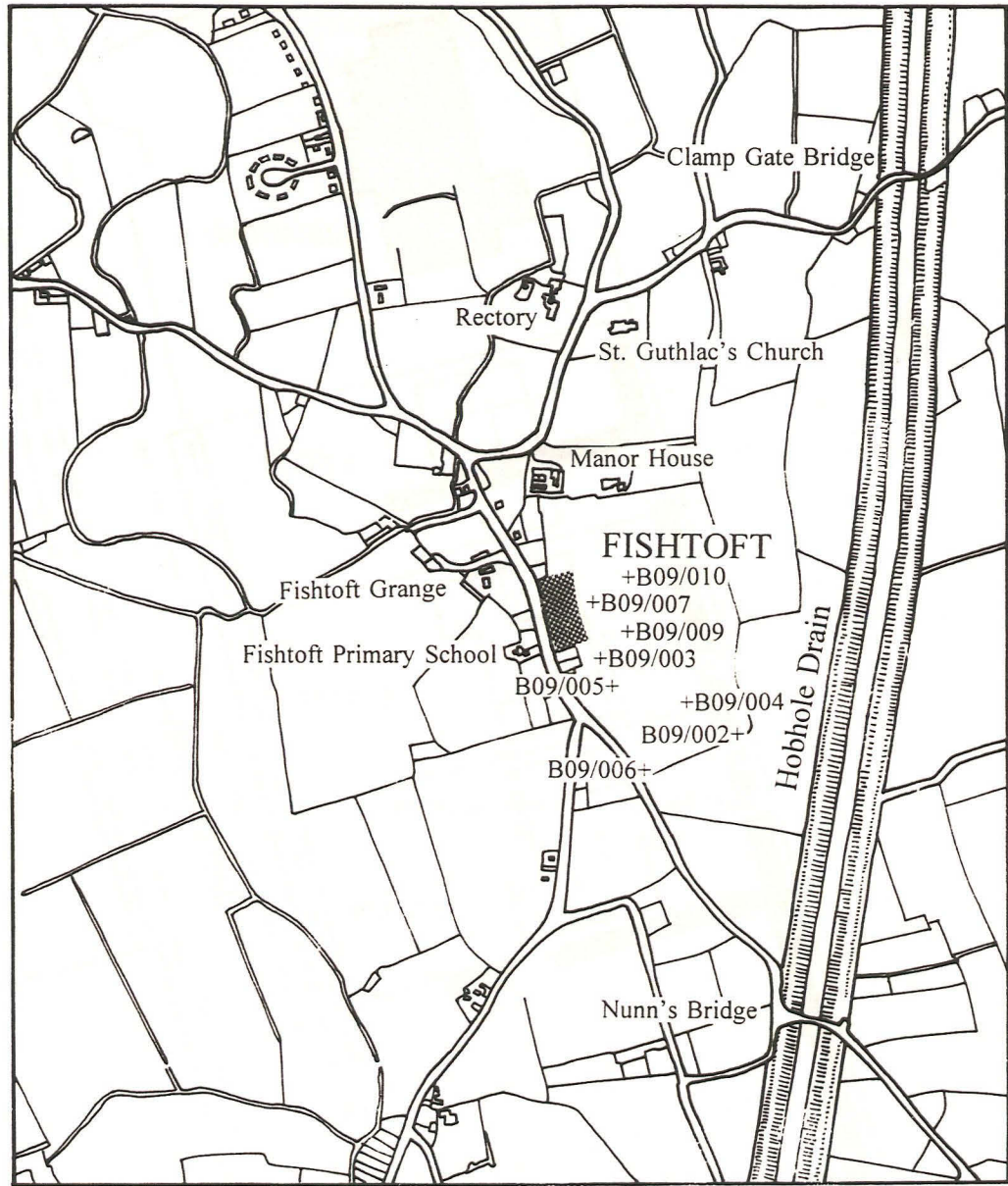


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

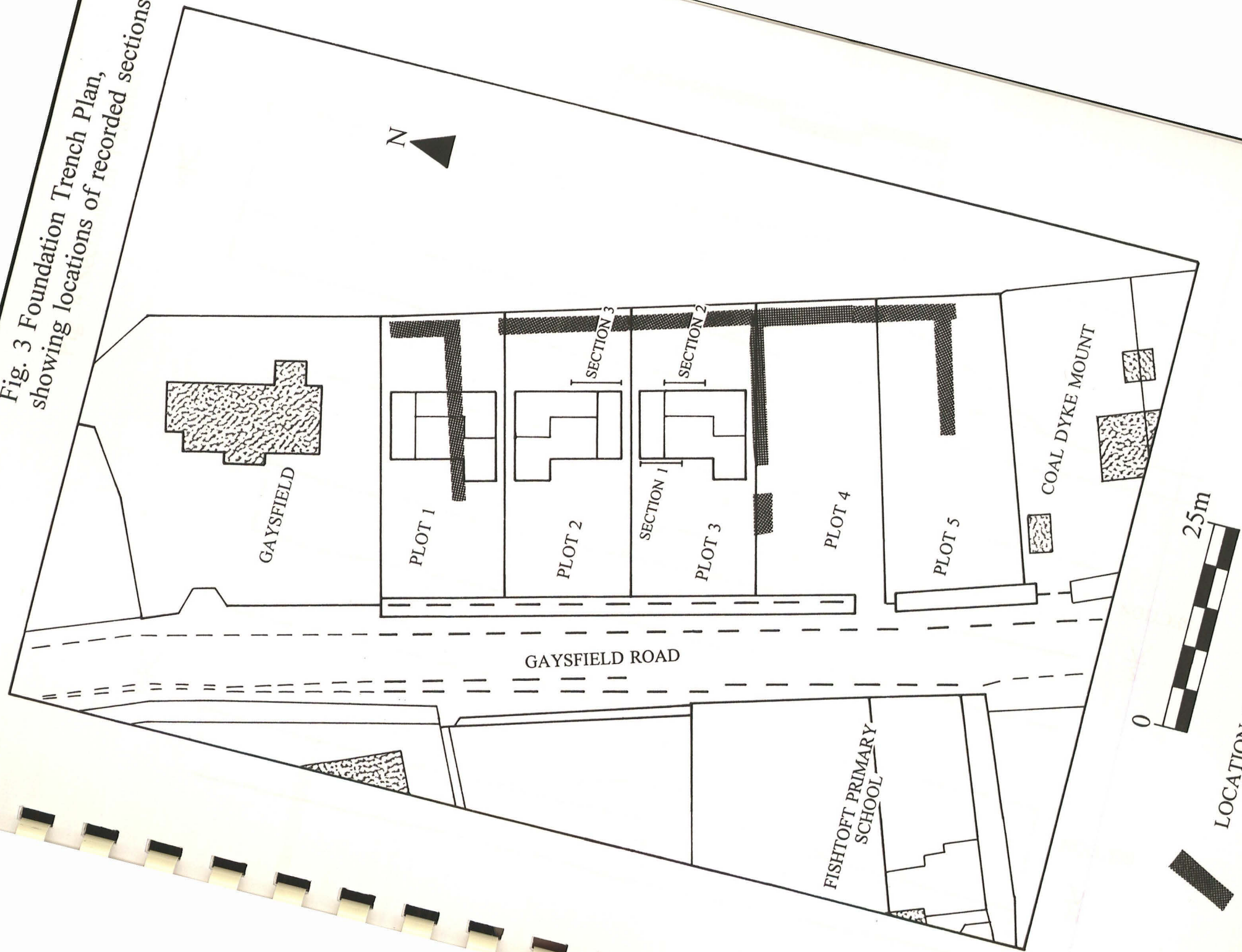
Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



AREA OF DEVELOPMENT

Fig. 3 Foundation Trench Plan, showing locations of recorded sections



LOCATION OF 1990 ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCHES

Fig. 4 Sections of Features

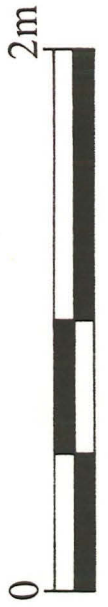
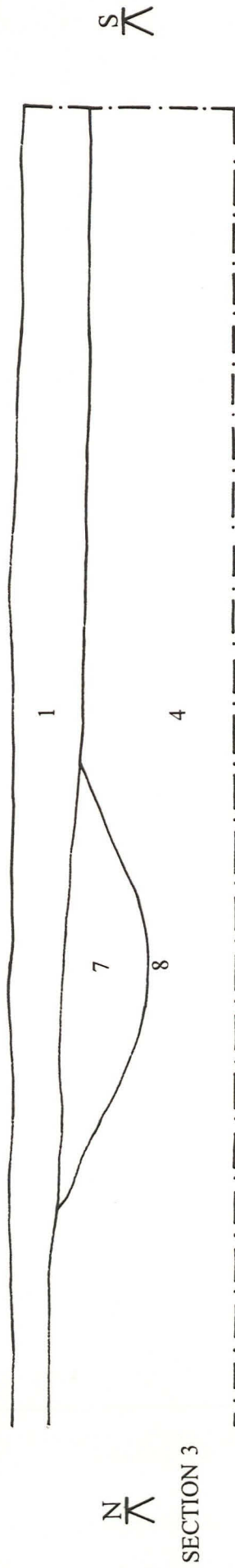
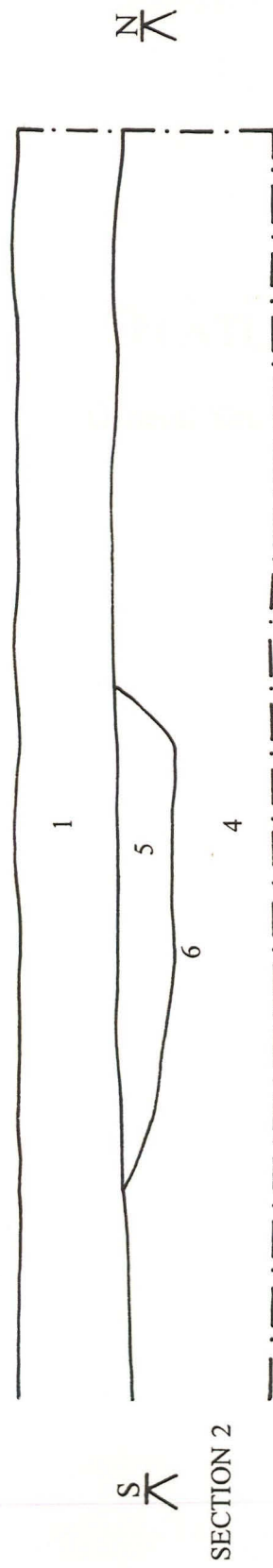
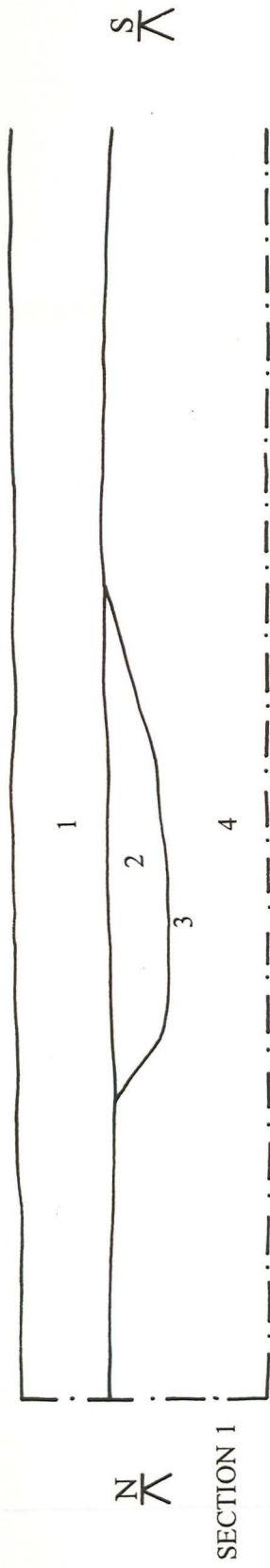


PLATE 1

General Site View

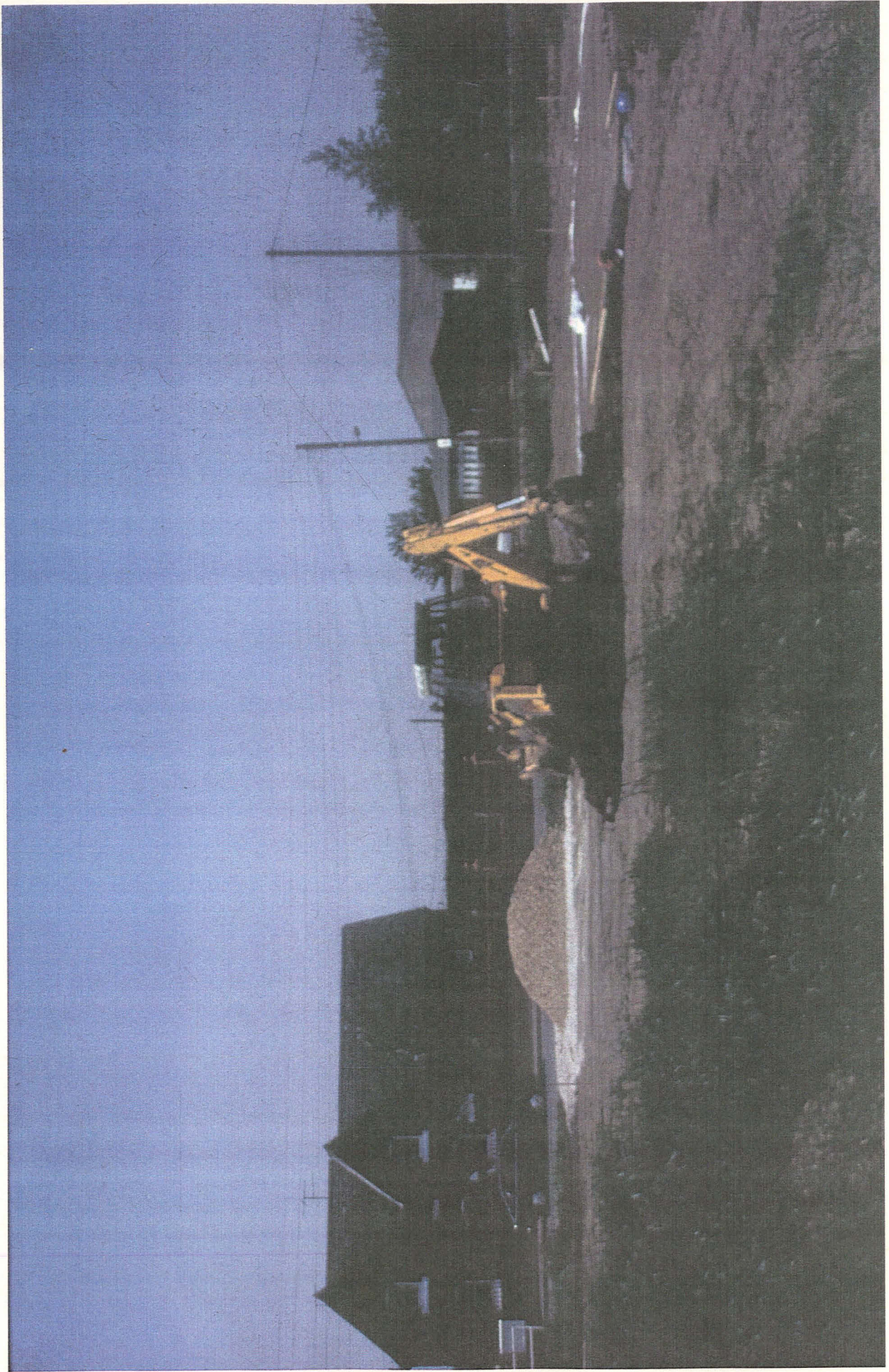


PLATE 2

Detail of Foundation Trenches



APPENDIX 1
Context Summary

Context No.	Area	Description	Interpretation
1	All	Brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	Topsoil
2	Plot 3, Section 1	Brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	Fill of 3
3	Plot 3, Section 1	Cut, 2m wide, 0.2m deep, oriented NW-SE?	Ditch
4	All	Yellow-brown stony silt	Natural
5	Plot 3, Section 2	Brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	Fill of 6
6	Plot 3, Section 2	Cut, 2m wide, 0.2m deep, oriented NW-SE?	Ditch
7	Plot 2, Section 3	Brown silty sand with occasional pebbles	Fill of 8
8	Plot 2, Section 3	Cut, 2m wide, 0.4m deep	Ditch

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 8 Context records
- 1 Photographic record
- 3 Scale drawings
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix
- 1 Bag of finds

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

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

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 57.94