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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT WELLAND BANK PIT,  
Phase 2,  
DEEPING ST. JAMES,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
  
INTERIM STATEMENT**

Work Undertaken For  
Russell Quarry Products Ltd

February 1995



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

**WELLAND BANK PIT  
PHASE 2  
INTERIM STATEMENT**

**1. SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out in advance of mineral extraction at the Welland Bank Pit, Deeping St James, Lincolnshire. The investigation was undertaken as part of an ongoing programme of archaeological examination in the area.*

*Previous work has observed the presence of ditches that were mainly aligned north to south, post and stake holes, a droveway (track) and pits. Although undated, these archaeological remains were sealed by an alluvial deposit of possible late Roman date (based on previous observations of the material elsewhere in the Welland Valley). Additionally, remains of Ice Age animals (mammoth and bison) have been recovered.*

*An extension of the previously recorded droveway was observed, together with several other ditches. A number of pits, sometimes occurring in cross-cutting groups, were revealed. Several postholes were also recorded, including a group that may define the location of a circular structure. No finds were recovered from any of the features, which may suggest that these remains do not constitute actual habitation, though the concentration of features would suggest that occupation must be located nearby. The absence of finds also means that the features remain undated. However, as noted in the previous investigation of the area, the archaeological remains were sealed by flood silts of probable Late Roman date.*

**2. DISCUSSION**

Natural layers of sandy gravel (phase 1), were observed across the area. Sealed by these gravels, though only revealed at the extreme west side of the site, were interbedded layers of grey silt and organic deposits that contained plant remains. These strata were noted at approximately 3m below the present ground surface.

Towards the eastern part of the area, and cutting off the northern corner of the site, was an east-west oriented ditch (137 = 141) or gully (phase 2). Cutting across this was one (139) of a series of four linear ditches or gullies (81, 83, 135 = 143, 139) that traversed the area in an approximately north-south direction. Two of these gullies (81, 83), describing a narrow, parallel arrangement close to the western corner of the stripped area, represent a droveway. This is probably a northwards extension of the droveway seen in the earlier Phase 1 examinations to the southwest (A.P.S. 1994). Generally more substantial than the droveway gullies, the other ditches are possibly ancient, though undated, field boundaries.

Aligned northwest-southeast, a ditch or gully (133) cut across one of the north-south oriented linear features (135 = 143) and apparently terminated close to a second (139). This latter relationship was not clearly established: 133 may come to a butt-end immediately adjacent to

139 or, alternatively, runs into it. Whatever the case, it is clear that the north-south ditch 139 was already in existence when 133 was dug. Probably representing a field boundary, ditch 133 perhaps constitutes the latest activity in the area.

Spatially related to, though of unclear chronological association with, the ditches were several postholes and pits. Additionally, a number of elongated features of uncertain function were recorded. A curvilinear arrangement of five postholes (112-120) was observed immediately east of the unexcavated part of the site. This may represent a small circular structure, though the observed line of postholes extended for only 3m.

Just to the east of the postholes was a group of three intercutting oval pits (127, 129, 131). Approximately 30m to the south, and beyond the modern field dyke, was another pit group (155, 157). No artefacts or environmental material were recovered from either of these pit groups and, consequently, their function is unclear.

Other than the major linear ditches or gullies, most of the features were observed immediately to the northeast of an unexcavated part of the site. The concentration of remains may relate to a focus of activity in the past, or might simply be due to the employment of a more conservative soil stripping regime in that area, many of the features being quite shallow (c. 0.2m deep).

Several soil discolourations (84, 85, 86) were also observed on the western side of the site and are tentatively identified as pits. However, no finds were recovered from them and, hence, there is the possibility that at least some of these are natural features.

From the instances of cross-cutting, several sub-phases of activity are clearly evident and there is a relative chronology of at least three tiers. In the absence of dating evidence, however, all observed archaeological remains have been associated on structural grounds and consigned to the same phase of activity.

Sealing the phase 2 archaeological deposits was a layer of grey to grey brown silty clay. This material is a natural alluvial deposit and is likely to have been the result of flooding from the River Welland (phase 3). This period of alluviation is, like the archaeological features buried beneath it, undated. However, parallels drawn from elsewhere provide indications of possible chronology. At Tye's Drove, 3km to the north in Deeping St. James, and 4km to the northwest of the present investigation area on Deeping Common, archaeological investigations revealed the alluvium to be Late Roman or early post-Roman in date (Lane 1992).

Modern deposits (phase 4) comprised field drains and the dark brown sandy silt topsoil that covered the site.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Continuing archaeological investigation at the Welland Bank Pit, Deeping St. James, has established that natural deposits occur at about 0.8m below the present ground surface.

A number of ditches, postholes and pits cut the surface of the gravels and evidence of past

human activity in the area. A droveway, defined by two parallel gullies observed at the west side of the area, is probably an extension of an identical feature recorded to the south in the earlier Phase 1 investigations. With the exception of this droveway, the ditches are probably all field boundaries or other land divisions.

An arrangement of postholes may represent a small circular structure and occurs in close proximity to a number of pits. However, no occupation evidence was retrieved from any of the features, which may imply that none of these remains functioned as, or were associated with, specific habitation activity. Nonetheless, it is probable that occupation sites associated with the pits and postholes occur nearby.

Most of the ditches are aligned approximately north-south. However, cross-cutting one of these and respecting another was a northwest-southeast ditch, apparently the latest in the sequence. This pattern closely corresponds with that seen during the Phase 1 investigations, where several north-south ditches were crossed by one aligned east-west. No dating was recovered from any of the features. The incidences of cross-cutting do, however, indicate an extended, though not necessarily continuous, period of use of the area.

Alluvium sealed the archaeological deposits. This sequence of natural activity is undated, though comparisons from elsewhere would suggest the flooding occurred in the Late Roman or early post-Roman period. Recent agricultural usage of the site was represented by numerous field drains and a ploughsoil that was developed on the alluvial deposits. No finds were recovered from the pre-alluviation archaeological features during the watching brief.

The archaeological remains recorded here supplement previous discoveries at the quarry and contribute to the evidence of past human exploitation of the Welland Valley. This report constitutes an interim statement. Interpretations given in this report are provisional and may be subject to amendment as post-excavation analysis continues and further evidence is revealed. A full report on the archaeological investigations at the Welland Bank Pit will be produced upon completion of all phases of watching briefs in advance of mineral extraction.

#### **4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Owen Batham of Russell Quarry Products Ltd who commissioned the fieldwork and analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and David Start edited this report. Access to the relevant parish files was kindly provided by Ruth Waller, the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist.

#### **5. PERSONNEL**

Project Manager:	Steve Haynes
Site Assistants:	David Brown, Aaron Chapman
Illustration:	Gary Taylor
Post-excavation Analyst:	Gary Taylor

6. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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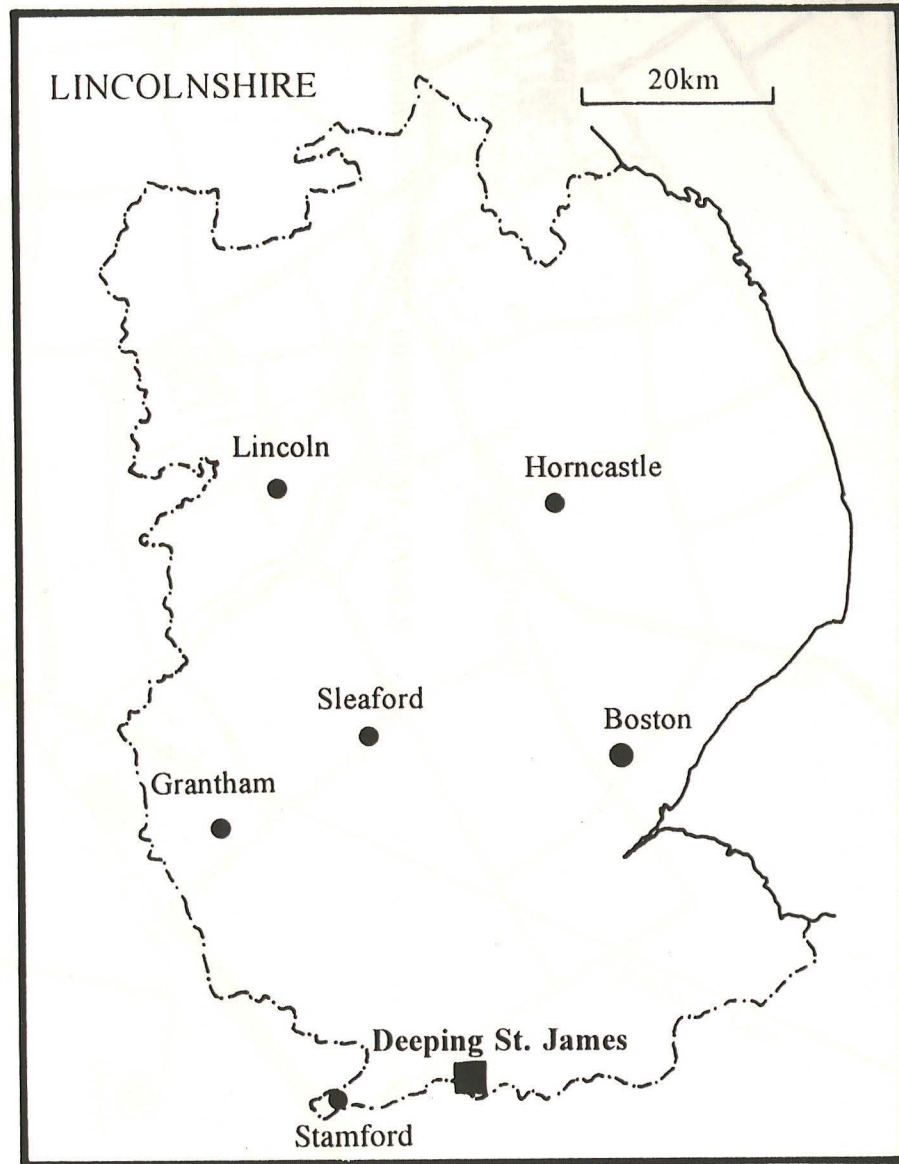
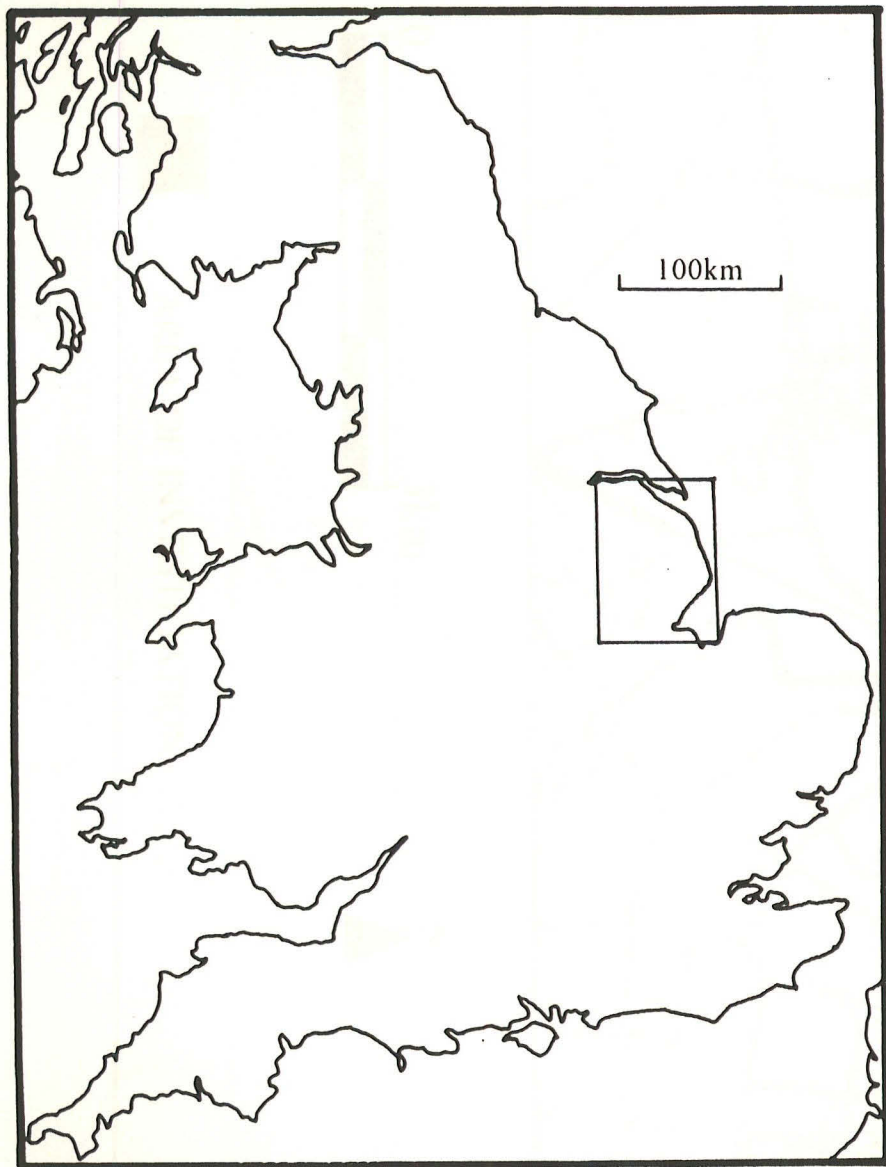
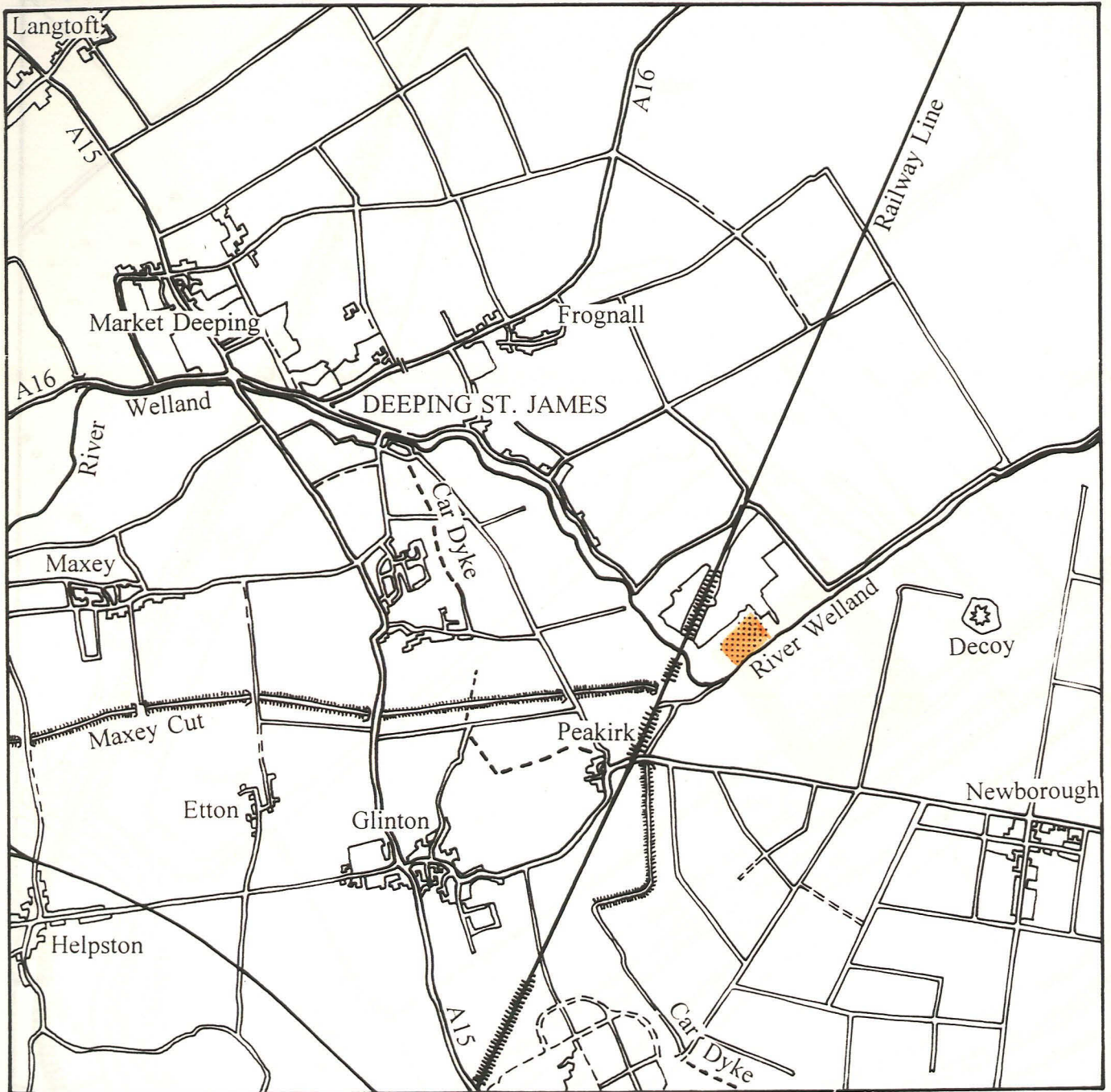


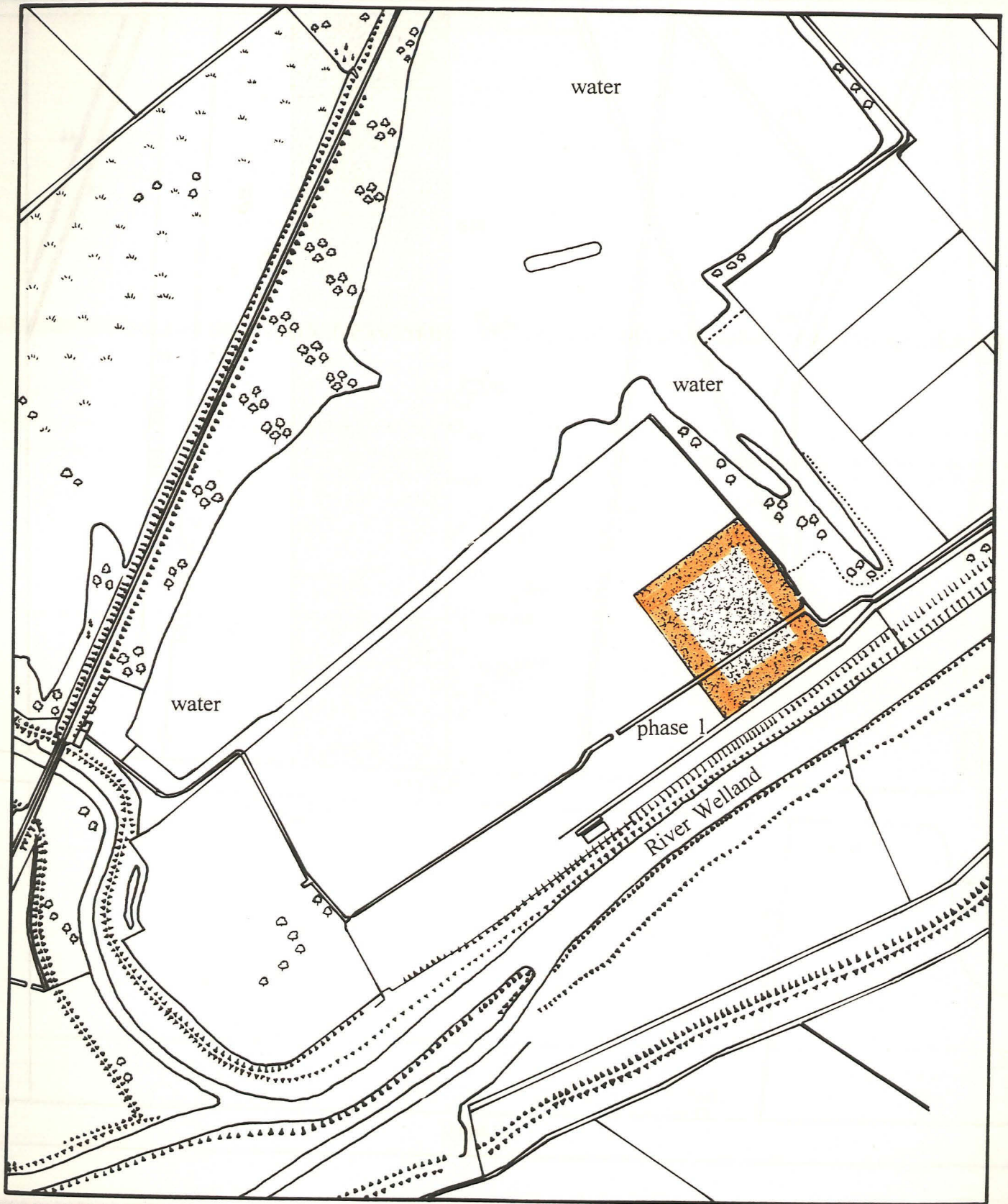
Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Fig. 3 Location of Investigation Site



0 500m



AREA OF INVESTIGATION



Fig. 4 Investigation Area,  
showing Archaeological Features

