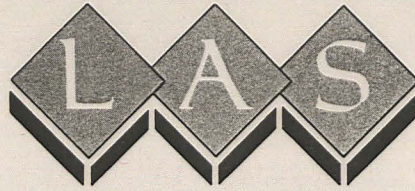


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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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LONG BENNINGTON

NEW PARSONAGE HOUSE

**Archaeological Watching Brief
(Lincoln Museum Accession No. 112.94)**

January 1995

Long Barnings
Archaeological Excavation Field

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Long Bennington Replacement Parsonage: Archaeological Watching Brief

**Planning Application Ref. SK.94/0160
(NGR: SK 8431 4381)**

Summary

A Watching Brief on the site of a new parsonage house failed to locate any evidence for buildings associated with the Cistercian Priory known to have existed in the vicinity. An oblong depression in the centre of the building plot lies close to two previously recorded fishponds which probably belonged to the Priory complex, and has been interpreted as a possible third pond. The lack of finds and the presence of the fishpond suggests that the priory buildings lay elsewhere.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Stuart Long Architect, on behalf of the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Finance, to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with a replacement parsonage. The site was located about 60m south of St Swithun's Church, in the grounds of the existing former vicarage, at the south end of the village. The building plot had been part of a former orchard but was a grass field in 1994; fruit trees remained in the boundary hedge between the plot and the detached graveyard to the west. The site lies close to the Ease Drain, a tributary stream of the River Witham.

Monitoring, by the author and Geoff Tann, took place on four visits during the period September 5th - 13th 1994.

Planning Background

The original planning application to South Kesteven District Council in 1993 (Ref. 706/93), for construction of a new parsonage house, was refused on non-archaeological grounds. An appeal was made against the refusal and an objection was submitted to the appeal on the grounds that no archaeological evaluation was obtained before the application was considered. In 1994 a further application (Ref. SK.94/0160) was approved subject to two archaeological conditions. Condition 8 required arrangements approved by the planning authority should be made for an archaeologist to observe the excavation and record features and finds. Condition 9 required the protection by fencing of the depressions interpreted as fishponds before work commenced. A specification for archaeological works was prepared by LAS (dated 23rd May 1994) in accordance with the Brief prepared by the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist in March 1994.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The village of Long Bennington lies between the towns of Newark and Grantham, within a mile of the Nottinghamshire border on the route of the old Great North Road. It is a narrow settlement, almost a mile in length, which flanks the Great North Road and lies on the west bank of the River Witham. The parish church and site of the medieval priory lie at the south end of the village.

The earliest recorded archaeological remains in the vicinity of the new parsonage house are of Romano-British date and consist of pottery found between Church Lane and the priory site. Roman pottery and building debris have also been recovered from the Ease Drain which forms the eastern boundary of the development site.

The remains of a medieval Cistercian priory or grange was known to have existed in the vicinity of the site and located on several O.S. maps within the boundary of the new parsonage house. A fish pond, almost certainly associated with the cell, defines the eastern limit of the development plot, some 10m east of the new house (Pl. 8) and a second lies to the north in the garden of the old vicarage (Pl. 9). These ponds would have been used for the breeding and farming of fish. Medieval fish ponds were usually only associated with manorial or monastic complexes.

The documented history records that the church at Long Bennington, together with four carucates of land, was given by Ralph de Filferis to the Abbey of Savigny (in Normandy) in 1163. A priory of Cistercian monks, subordinate to the Abbey, was founded at Long Bennington in 1175. During the wars with France this priory was seized by Richard II and given to the Carthusians of St Ann's near Coventry. In 1462 it was granted, with other alien cells, to the Priory of Mountgrace by Henry V. It was finally granted as part of the possessions of Mountgrace to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536.

The precise status of the site is not clear and the cell may only have been a grange. The monk-warden apparently received the title of *Prior* but notices from 1323 onwards imply the presence of only a single monk. The Cistercian order was known to direct its energies into agricultural enterprises, with lay brethren (*conversi*), who lived on outlying farms and granges, undertaking much of the physical work. Despite its small size from at least the 14th century onwards, the Long Bennington cell had a greater financial value than any other alien cell in Lincolnshire.

The Watching Brief

The purpose of the Watching Brief was to record any evidence which might be revealed in the foundation trenches for the medieval priory. Monitoring began on 5th September when the ground clearance and excavation of building foundations commenced. Drains along the north and east boundaries of the building plot had already been dug and manhole 1 (Fig. 2, M1) had been constructed (Pl. 1).

The house footings were mechanically excavated to a maximum depth of 2.2m below the existing ground surface; those for the garage were 1.6m deep. The great trench depth and narrow width (0.45m, except at wall junctions), restricted examination and recording of the trench faces.

The dark brown clay loam topsoil varied from 0.25-0.3m over most of the site, except towards the end where there was a depression in the ground (see below). Here the topsoil was up to 0.50m deep. The brown clay subsoil beneath was about 0.15m thick. Below this was the natural ochre-coloured clay. The deepest trenches, at the SE corner of the house, were over 2m in depth and penetrated the upper surface of the underlying mudstone.

Observations made during the groundworks were recorded on site on a 1:100 scale drawing of the plot and the proposed trench layout, supplied through the contractors (architect's plan AL1, April 1994). They are numbered on Fig. 2, which is based on the architect's drawing, and cross-referred to in the text. A temporary site datum was transferred from the Bench Mark on the church tower. The majority of levels marked on Fig. 2 are O.D. levels transferred from the architect's drawing and relate to ground levels prior to topsoil stripping.

The Sewer Trench

A drainage trench had been dug by hand along the north and east boundaries of the plot prior to the first visit by the archaeologist. It was 0.60m wide and varied in depth from 0.80m at its junction with manhole 1 to the NW, to 0.50m at manhole 3 and 0.35m at manhole 4 (Fig. 2). There was a considerable accumulation of water at the NE angle of the trench (manhole 2) which had resulted in the collapse of the trench sides, where it was too dangerous to carry out any archaeological recording.

A few cattle bones were found in the soil removed from the northern trench but no pottery was seen. The trench had dried out since it was excavated and the soil had been disturbed by tree roots; no archaeological features were visible (Pl. 2).

The east trench cut through a possible shallow gully at an oblique angle (Fig. 2.1) which was c. 1m wide and a maximum of 0.50m deep, beneath the topsoil cover of 0.30m. This was probably the same gully seen at observation 4, see below.

Excavation in the east drain trench for a manhole had disturbed quantities of flat mudstone which appeared to have been part of a drystone wall crossing the site from east to west (Fig. 2.2; Pls. 3-5). The small mudstone pieces were concentrated in a layer between the topsoil and the subsoil at a depth of c. 0.25-0.30m below the ground surface. The maximum surviving width of the wall was 1.30m, on the west side of the trench, and only one course was visible in the trench. Two fragments of medieval green-glazed pottery were found together with the base of a later, 18th century, stoneware vessel.

Ground Clearance

Ground clearance was carried out prior to excavation of the foundation trenches. This comprised removal of ground cover and levelling of the plot which sloped downhill from north to south. Vegetation clearance revealed an oblong depression aligned NNE-SSW (Pls. 6, 7), roughly parallel to the medieval fishpond close to the SE boundary (Pl. 8), which lies south of another fishpond in the old vicarage gardens (Pl. 9). This was tentatively identified as the remains of a third fishpond. The north end of the depression extended into the building plot, but machine levelling and infilling had altered the ground contours at the south end so its full extent was not recorded. Its maximum width was 7.50m and maximum recorded depth of the depression after topsoil removal was 0.52m. Surface levels on the architect's plan suggests that the depth may have been 0.60m.

The Garage

The garage straddled the line of the sewage trench and the south side of the building foundations crossed the shallow ditch previously recorded at Fig. 2.1).

A scatter of stone was investigated to the west of the garage at its north end, but this appeared to have been redeposited material rather than a demolished structure. The stem of a clay tobacco pipe and a few fragments of post-medieval pottery were seen in this area. They included a sherd from a Cistercian Ware jug dating to the 15-17th century and sherds from three vessels dating to the 17-18th centuries.

No other archaeological features were observed in the garage foundations.

The House

The same ditch that was seen in the sewer trench and the garage foundations was recorded at the NE corner of the house foundations which cut through the yellow clay to a depth of 0.80m below the ground surface (Fig. 2.4; Pl. 10). A small area of dense charcoal incorporating two medieval pottery sherds of late 13th-14th century date, was observed at its base; the remainder of the fill in the NE-SW aligned feature was a darker brown clay.

At the northern side of the bathroom footings, a concentration of thin limestone pieces was observed in the topsoil. Below this, further pieces were found in a 0.7m deep feature 1m wide and with a dark clay fill (Fig. 2.5; Pl. 11). This may have been a continuation of the wall observed at a higher level in the sewer trench (Fig. 2.2).

Between the hall and the lobby foundation trenches, limestone pieces were found 0.8m deep below dark clay. The extent was about 2m east-west but it was not clear how the feature was aligned (Fig.2.6).

To the east of this stony area was an area of dark soil, c.0.5m wide, perhaps a pit or large post-hole, seen in the north side of the trench section (Fig. 2.7).

East of the stony area was a second shallow gully, aligned SW-NE, noted in both faces of the east trench (Fig. 2.8; Pl. 12). It was approximately 1.60m wide and 0.7m deep and its fill consisted of dark clay with thin mudstone pieces and charcoal fragments. The same gully was identified crossing two more foundation trenches (Pl. 13, marked by the scales). Its deepest point was at observation 9 where it was 1.25m deep and 1m wide (Fig. 2.9).

The gully was seen in the SE corner of the living room Fig. 2.10; Pls. 14,15). It was about 0.9m wide and apparently shallower at 0.90m deep, but the fill was identical to that seen in observation 9. The gully was identified in the north face of the external wall trench but not in its southern face, and is presumed to have terminated.

A spread of charcoal was seen 0.6m below the stripped surface in the northern face of the southern footing for the dining room (Fig. 2.11; Pl. 16).

At the SE corner of the house plot a possible ditch was sectioned by the foundation trench but the trench depth made safe access impossible and accurate dimensions could not be obtained (Fig. 2.12).

Area North of the New Parsonage House

A replacement electricity supply was being installed into the existing old vicarage building while the groundworks for the new building were in progress, and the opportunity was taken to observe three small intermediate holes hand-dug in the front lawn to direct the moling device. One hole was dug through a deposit of medieval glazed roof-tile fragments and mortar (Fig. 2.13; Pls. 17,18). The tile fragments were from a single ridge tile, possibly manufactured in Bourne. A single sherd from a stoneware jar dating to the 17-19th centuries was also found, together with a plain bone knife handle, probably of similar date.

Old Vicarage Garden

A shallow trench had been hand-dug along the common boundary east of the new parsonage house and south boundary of the garden in preparation for the planting of a new hedge (Fig. 2.14; Pls. 19, 20). Twenty-eight sherds of pottery were found in the adjacent spoil heap. One of the sherds was Roman and two were medieval, of local manufacture and 13-15th century in date. One small sherd was 15-16th century in date. The remaining twenty-four sherd were of 17-18th century date and included pottery from Staffordshire and Yorkshire. In addition there was a piece from a 13-14th century glazed roof tile and second glazed piece of medieval roof furniture, possibly part of a chimney pot.

Discussion

Relatively little was found by way of artefacts or features during the Watching Brief. More pottery was found to the east and north than on the site itself and the mudstone recorded on the site was not large enough to have been wall facing stone, although some might have served as foundation material or used in wall cores. Most of the pottery found in the vicinity dated to a period

long after the demise of the priory and must be domestic refuse from the vicarage. It is of note that pieces from two medieval glazed roof tiles and a possible chimney pot were found which must have come from a building of some importance close by. The evidence is too slight to use these finds as evidence for the presence of priory buildings.

The depression which crossed the south half of the building plot may offer an explanation for this lack of evidence. If it truly was a third fishpond then the priory buildings must lie elsewhere. Unfortunately, the foundation trenches across the depression did not exhibit conclusive evidence of a large backfilled feature. They were too narrow to reveal whether the yellow clay was actually undisturbed natural clay, as it appeared, or whether merely large deposits of backfilled upcast. Possible tip lines of dark material were seen in the western wall trench, extending 5m further north than the identified depression. West of that trench, the incidence of stone fragments in the topsoil reduced abruptly.

After completion of the watching brief a visit was made to the Lincolnshire Archives office to see if it was possible to locate the position of the Priory more closely than the spot marked on the Ordnance Survey maps (e.g. Fig. 3).

Examination of a series of 17th century glebe terriers has provided an insight into the size and character of the former vicarage, which was demolished in 1818. It is described as a timber framed building with a thatched roof. A barn and stable are also described. The terriers all state that the church lay to the north of the vicarage and the priory (or priory lands) were to the east and south. A few of these documents are transcribed in Appendix 1.

The Enclosure Award map, which was drawn in 1794, identifies the vicarage site as the plot of land south of the church which now contains the churchyard extension, the old vicarage and the new vicarage (Fig. 4). It also identifies the priory homestead as lying to the north of the church on the site of Priory Farm.

The manorial history of Long Bennington is extremely complex and by the 18th century there are two manors (i.e. estates) recorded, both of which had lands in Long Bennington and Foston. One was called the Manor of Long Bennington and Foston, the second was known as the Priory Manor of Long Bennington and Foston. The apparent discrepancy in locating the priory may lie in the fact that what is being referred to in the glebe terriers are lands belonging to the priory rather than the priory buildings themselves.

In 1982 stone footings were observed during ground clearance in the farmyard of Priory Farm but their function and date was not established. Medieval pottery has been found in fields to the south-east of the church (Samuels 1991, 9). A small plot of land immediately east of the churchyard which contains earthworks has long been identified by local inhabitants to be the site of the Priory (J. Samuels pers. comm.). The Ordnance Survey

locates the priory site in the gardens east of the old vicarage. The footings of a modern building are all that is visible in the lawn immediately east of the building, except for the fishpond which runs along the eastern boundary. Much further research is required before the site of the priory building complex can be identified with confidence.

Conclusion

Although the Watching Brief did not produce any substantial archaeological remains it identified a possible third medieval fishpond. This evidence, together with the lack of medieval finds suggests that there were no priory buildings on the development site.

Acknowledgements

The Watching Brief was carried out by Naomi Field with assistance from Geoff Tann, who also undertook preliminary preparation of the report. Documentary research was by Jess Tipper and Naomi Field. Jane Young (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit) kindly identified the pottery. Tile archive by Rick Kemp (CLAU). Thanks are also due to John Samuels who supplied information about his research on the village and to the contractors who gave every assistance on site.

References

Primary Sources at the Lincolnshire Archives Office

4/496 A bundle of 8 terriers, dated 1601, 1638, 1664, 5 are not dated.

11/53 terrier date 1697

Faculty Book 4, faculty no. 138d dated 1818

Faculty Book 11, faculty no. 179 dated 1900

Faculty papers 1899/13 dated 1899

LAO Kesteven Award 7 1796 *Long Bennington Enclosure Award and Plan*
Lincs. Archives Office

Published secondary sources

Knowles D. and Hadcock R. N., 1971 *Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales* (2nd edition)

Owen, D.M. 1971 *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* History of Lincolnshire Vol. V.

Page W. (ed.) 1906 *Victoria County History of Lincolnshire* Vol. II

Samuels, J. (ed.) 1991 *Aspects of Local History in Long Bennington* Long Bennington Local History Group

Naomi Field
Lindsey Archaeological Services
18th January 1995

APPENDIX 1

Glebe Terriers

Bundle 4/496

January 17th 1601

Ye grounds by inquisition are found to be inlands no glebe land, some grounds for pasture in value 3 acres and three roods at the most.[illegible.....]partly decayed but not repayed by this incumbent.[illegible]...and one[...] or barn

May 26th 1638

The vicarage hath belonging to it only a house containing three bays, a barne or cate[?] containing other three bays, a piece of ground called the pingle and the yard wherein the house.....

no date Vicar William Horton

The vicarage house 1 parlour, 1 middle room, 1 kitchen, the house and parlour floored with stone, the kitchen with mudd floor, four small chambers floored with plaister, the said vicarage is built with elme [walls] and covered with straw. one stable one bay, one barn three bays built with oyk and covered with straw. outhouses, the homestall containing by estimation 2 acres now [illegible..] **its bounded the pryory east and south the common road west, the churchyard north** fenced with quick and staked hedge. The pryory lands exempted from paying of tyths only 2 acres of meadowground of the same land pays by the hay to the vicar 8 flayles of peastraw and 8 of barley straw to be paid by or from the Impropiator

no date Vicar William Wilson

A true terrier of the glebe lands and bays of building belonging to the vicarage of Long Bennington cum Foston

The vicarage house, brewhouse and stable jointly 6 bays of building the barn 3 bays of building

The vicarage yard and one croft called the pingle are by estimation 2 acres, the lands of the pryory lying east and south, the common way north and the church yard north

no date Vicar William Wilson

....one croft called by the name of the pingle by estimation one acre the pryory east and south the vicarage yard west

no date Vicar William Wilson

The vicarage house 5 bays

one stable 1 bay

one barn 1 bay

The home stall containing 2 acres by estimation the churchyard north, the prior lands east, the common way south and north

APPENDIX 2

Faculty Application 19 March 1818 (Ref. FB4/138d)
Granting of a retrospective faculty to the vicar of Long Bennington (Rev. Montague Earle) after demolition of the vicarage south of the church and construction of a new building in the centre of the village.

The vicarage house of the said parish being a very ancient building was by length of time become so ruinous and decayed as to be totally uninhabitable and unfit for the residence of a clergyman. that there were also other buildings adjoining thereto used as a barn and cowhouse which were also in a dilapidated state that he has caused the whole of the said buildings to be taken down with the exception of a small room about 12 ft square and a small stable. That he has erected upon a new site about the centre of the glebe land more than half a mile from the church in a very eligible situation a new vicarage house. consisting of an entrance hall, 2 front rooms, a dining room containing 22 ft in length and 18ft in breadth, a drawing room containing 18ft in length and 17ft in breadth with 2 chambers over of the same dimensions, a study containing 16 ft square a kitchen containing 19 ft in length and 16ft in breadth, housekeepers room 15 1/2 ft x 11 ft with pantry and scullery and 5 chambers over the same; the extreme length of the front being 44 1/2 ft x 43 ft. The outbuildings consist of a brewhouse, a cowhouse with granaries over the stable and brewhouse, the extreme length of the outbuilding being 27 ft x 17 ft.

**APPENDIX 3
Pottery Finds**

Preliminary Identification by Jane Young

Topsoil (Observation 3)

No. of Sherds	Description	Date
2 (joining)	Cistercian	L15-17th
1 handle	Staffordshire slipware	17-18th
4 (incl. 1 base)	Midland blackware	17-18th

Gully (Observation 4)

1 handle	Lincoln	L13-14th
1	?Nottingham	M13-14th

Electricity Trench (Observation 13)

6 (joining)	roof tile (?Bourne)	medieval
1 base	Nottingham stoneware	17-19th

Hedge Boundary (Observation14)

1	Roman	
2	local medieval (?Grantham)	13-15th
2	Staffordshire slipware	17th
1	Midland Yellow	17th
20	Midland Purple and Black	17-18th
1	ridge tile	medieval
1	roof tile/chimney pot?	medieval

TOTAL 38 sherds

1 Roman
4 medieval
24 17th century and later

2 medieval glazed roof tiles and 1 possible chimney pot

APPENDIX 4 Site Archive

The site archive has been allocated the following site code and accession number by the City and County Museum, Lincoln. It is proposed that all finds together with the paper archive will be lodged at the Museum offices.

Site Code LBP94 Site Accession Number 112.94

Finds (pottery and tile) 1 box
Architect's plans 2 (1 annotated on site)
2 drawn plans for report
Correspondence
Site notes
Research notes
Pottery identification Computer archive
Tile identification Computer archive
Photographs:
LAS Film nos. 94/55 negs. 24-27
 94/56 negs. 6-20
 94/59 negs. 4-13, 15-17

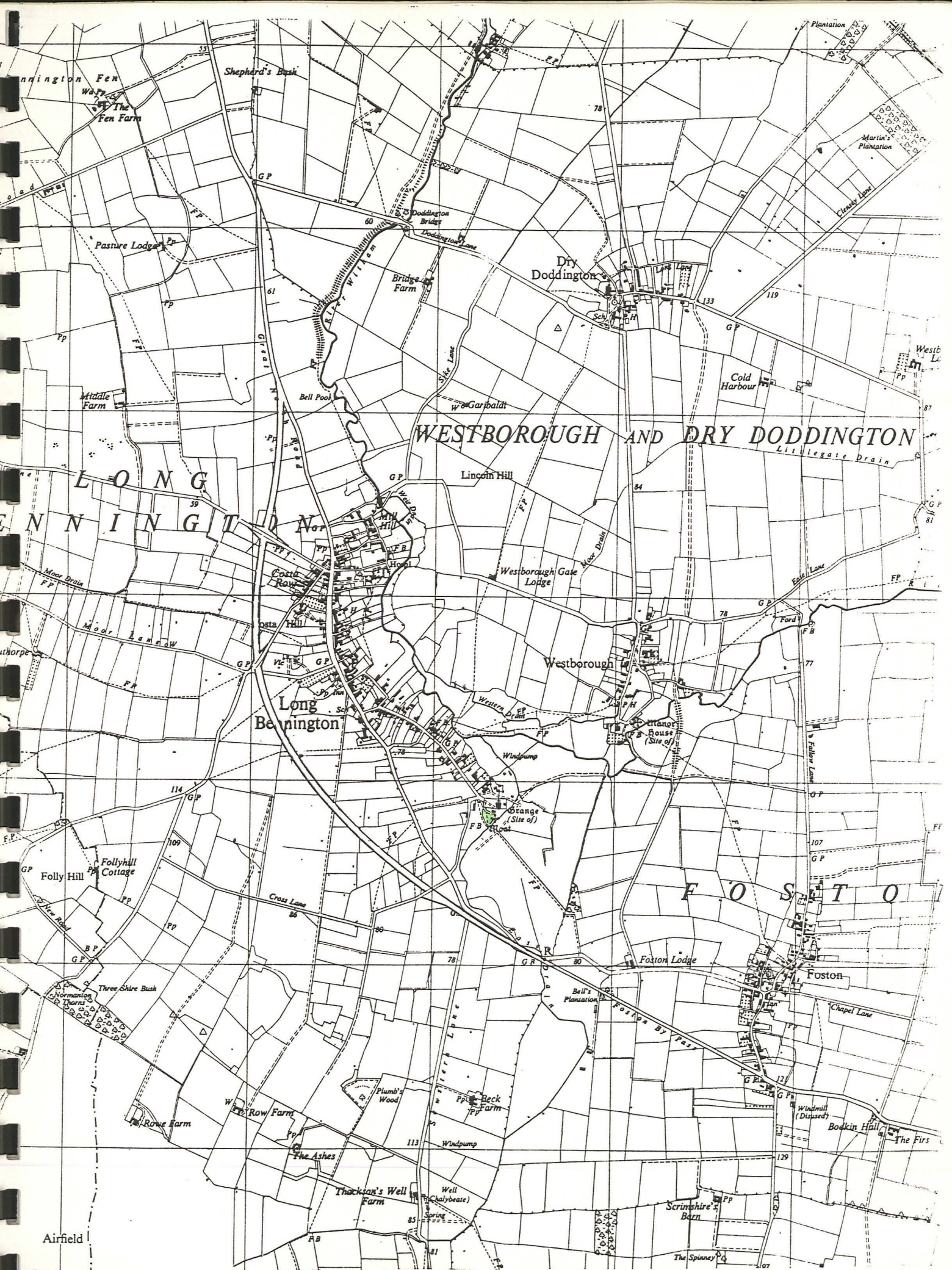


Fig. 1 Long Bennington Parsonage House. Site location, reproduced from the 1955 O.S. 1:25,000 scale map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, Crown copyright. Licence AL50424A

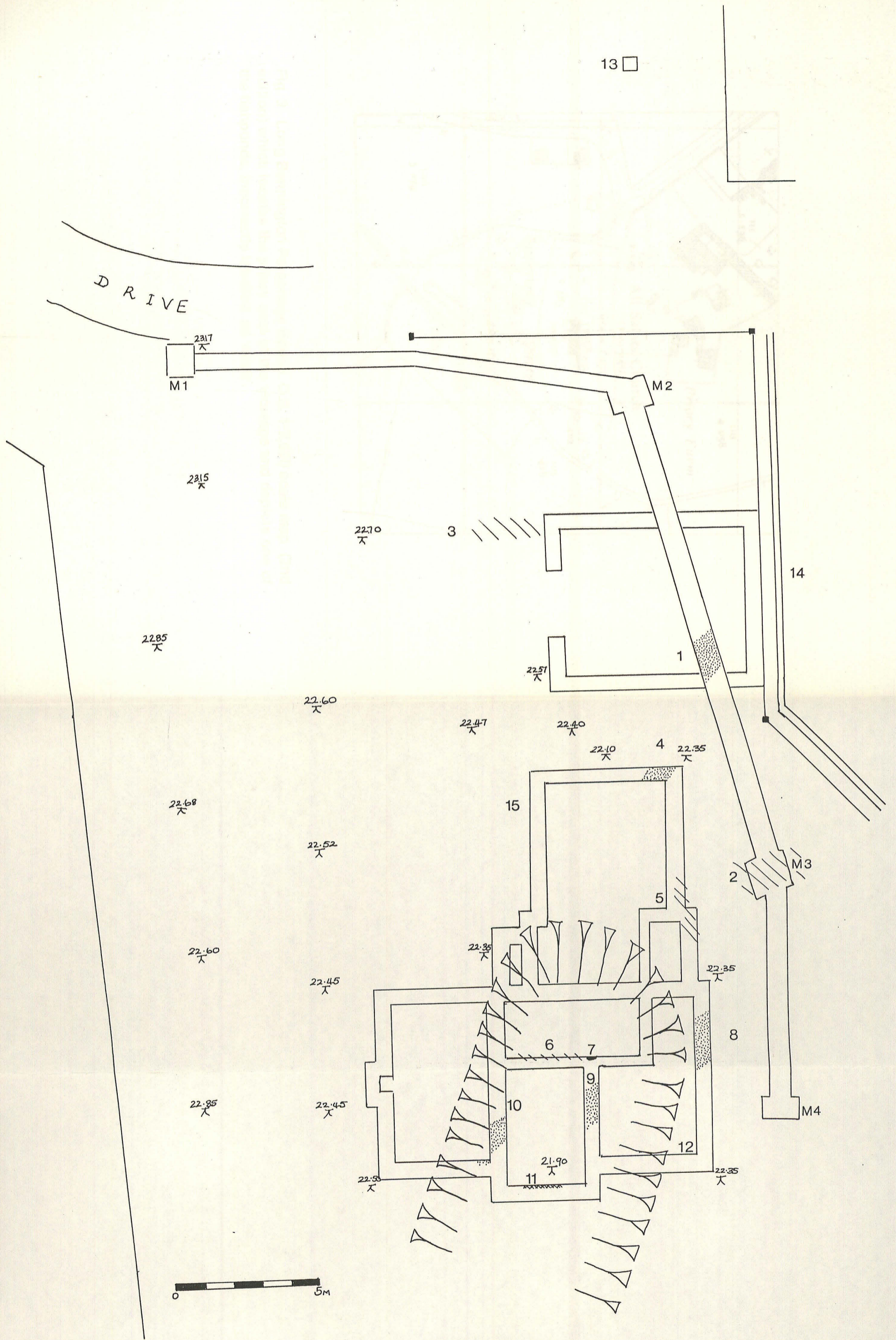


Fig. 2 Long Bennington Parsonage House site plan showing building layout and position of archaeological observations. Based upon Drawing AL1 prepared by Stuart Long Architect.

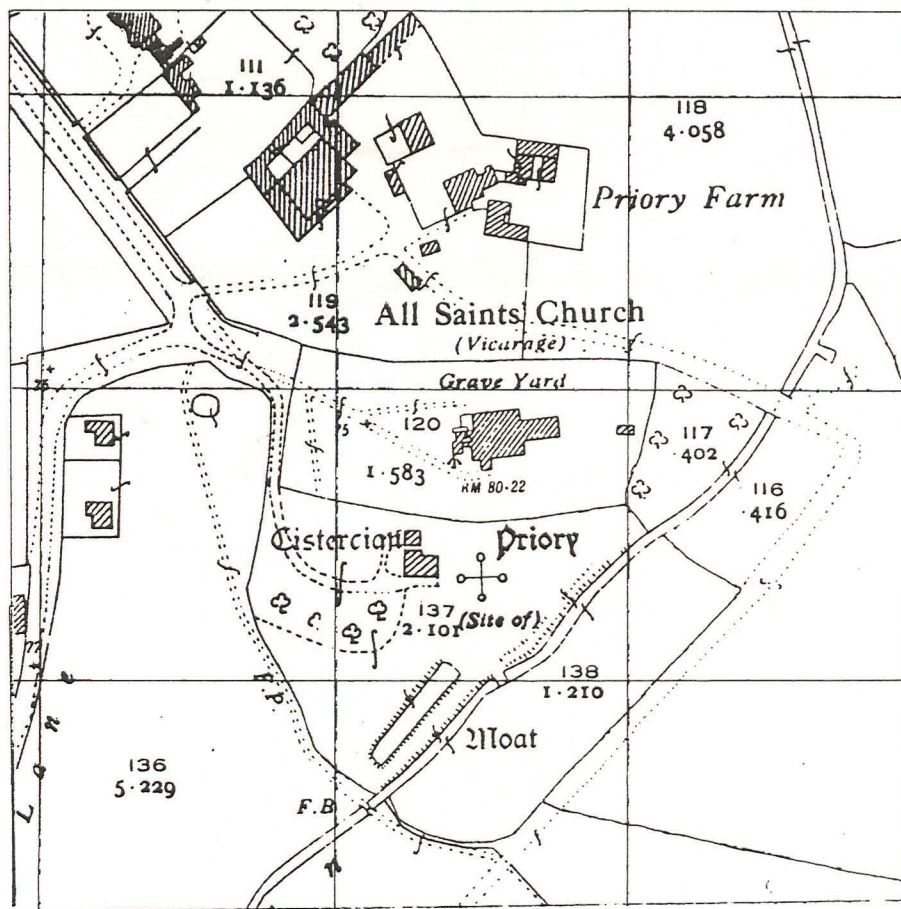


Fig. 3 Long Bennington Parsonage House. O.S. 1:2,500 scale map (2nd edition) which locates the priory east of the vicarage and depicts one of the fishponds, incorrectly labelled as 'moat'.

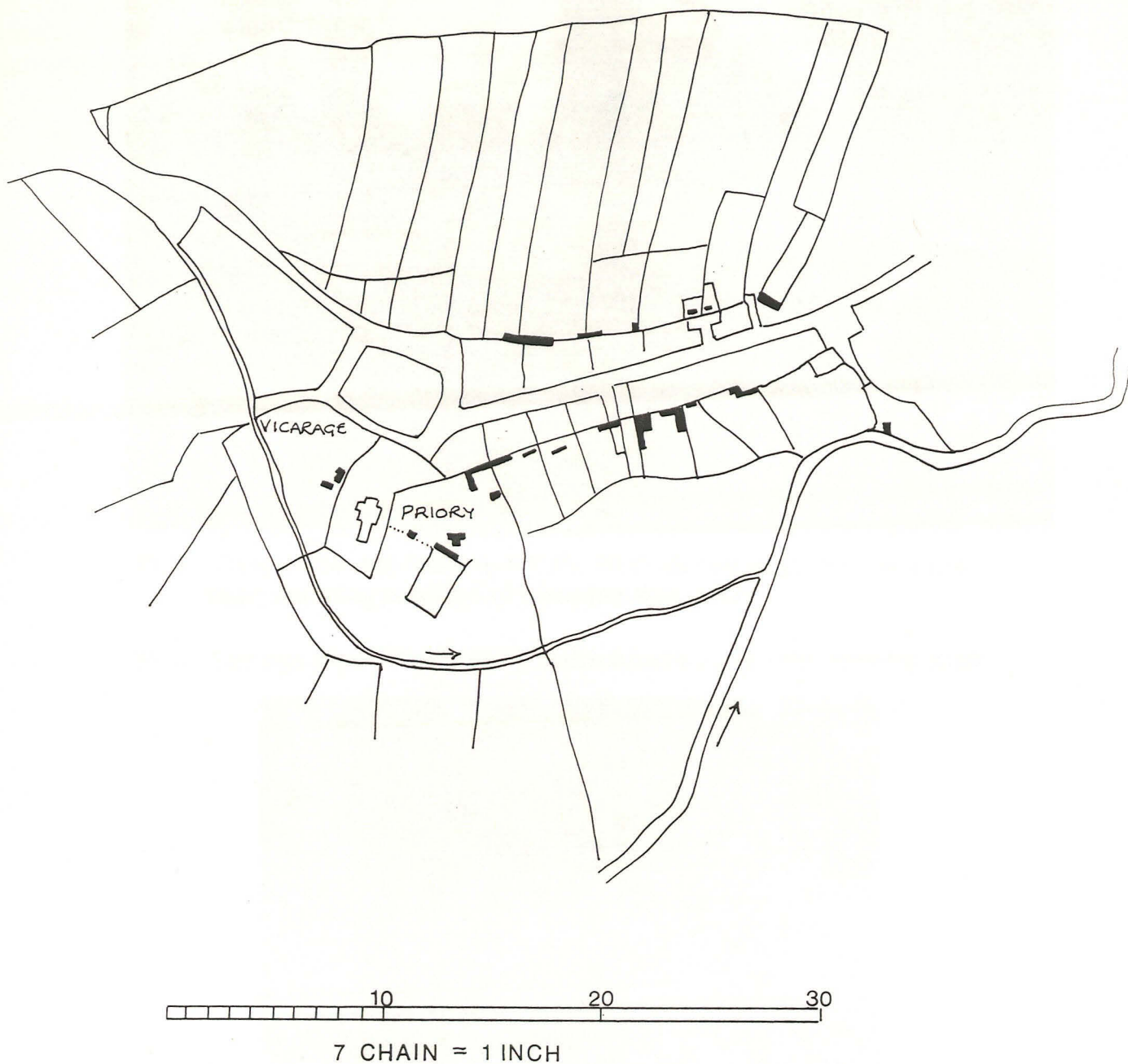


Fig. 4 Tracing of part of the plan of the parish of Long Bennington by Thomas Bainbridge, surveyor, dated 1794 prepared for the Enclosure of the village. This locates the priory north of the church on the site of the present Priory Farm.



Pl. 1 View of the site looking south. Note dense vegetation (centre, rear) marking position of possible fishpond.

Pl. 2 Sewage pipe trench along north boundary of site, looking west.





Pl. 3 Sewage pipe trench along east boundary of site, looking north.

Pl. 4 Remains of stone wall at manhole 4, looking east.





PI. 5 Remains of stone wall at manhole 4, looking west.

PI. 6 View of site, looking south, after clearance of vegetation showing depression in ground to right of bonfire.





PI. 7 View of site, looking north, after clearance of vegetation showing depression in ground marking position of a third fishpond. Church and old vicarage (built 1930's) in background.

PI. 8 Fishpond east of site, looking north.





Pl. 9 Fishpond north-east of site in old vicarage garden.

Pl. 10 Gully at north-east corner of house foundations (observation 4).





Pl. 11 Foundation trench along east side of house cutting through stony deposit (observation 5).



Pl. 12 Gully at observation 8.



Pl. 13 Position of gully marked by scales cut by the house foundations (observation 9 centre, observation 8 rear, looking west).

Pl. 14 Position of gully marked by 50cm scale at observation 8, looking south.

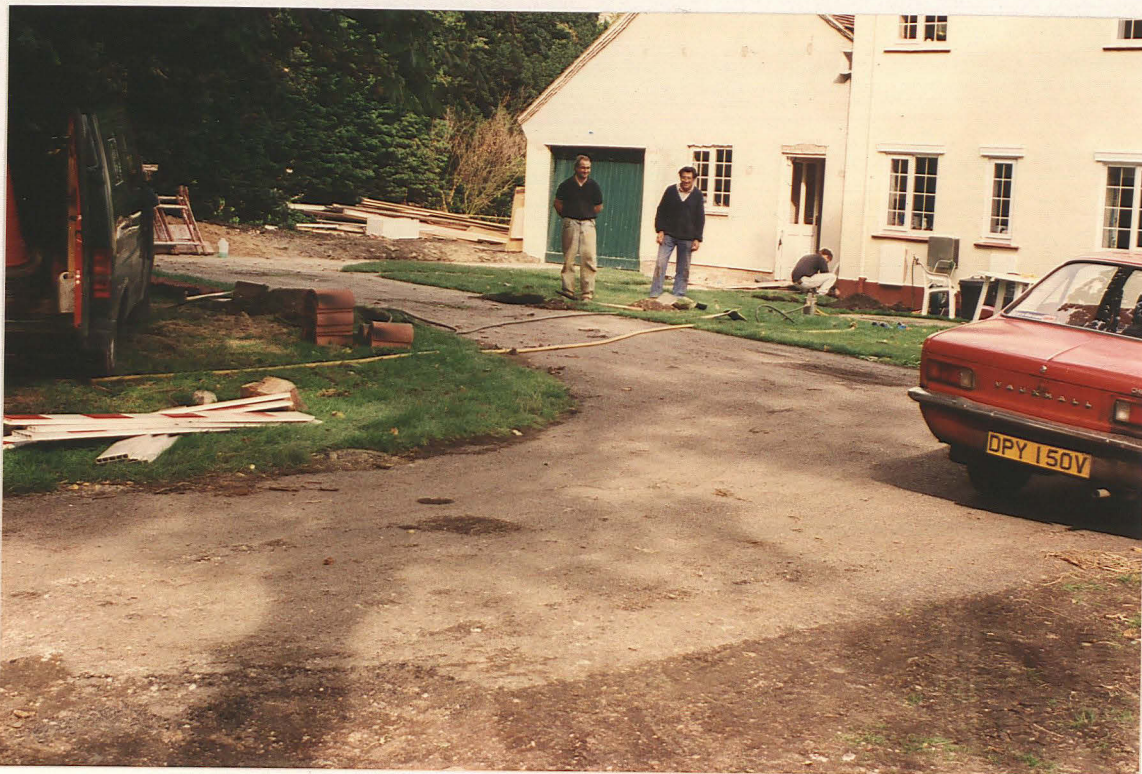




Pl. 15 Gully at observation 10, looking west.

Pl. 16 Charcoal flecks in fill of gully at observation 11.





Pl. 17 Old vicarage garden, north of new parsonage house.

Pl. 18 Old vicarage garden, tile and mortar deposit at base of the hole dug for electricity cable.





Pl. 19 Hedge boundary east of parsonage house, looking north.



Pl. 20 Old vicarage garden south boundary, looking west towards site.

