

95/6

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
LAND WEST OF THE
OLD SCHOOL HOUSE,
AISTHORPE,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(ABL94)

Work Undertaken For
G. W. Dickinson Associates
on behalf of
Mr M. Sinclair

January 1995



A P S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

LINCOLNSHIRE
COUNTY MUSEUM
22 MAY 1953
CITY AND COUNTY
MUSEUM

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches on land west of the Old School House, Aisthorpe, Lincolnshire.

The site lies in an area of significant archaeological interest. Pottery of Roman date (50-400 AD) has been found adjacent to the site and the major Roman road Ermine Street provides the eastern boundary of the parish. Masonry of late Anglo-Saxon date (900-1050 AD) is located in the nearby church. Surrounding the church, and close to the development area, are remains of a shrunken settlement of medieval date (1066-1500 AD).

Beneath the topsoil, natural deposits of clay and silt were recorded across the entire site. No archaeological remains were revealed and no artefacts recovered during the watching brief.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

In July 1994 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for a dwelling and adjacent garage on land opposite the Old School House, Aisthorpe. Approval for the proposed development was sought through the submission of planning application number W1/71/94. Permission was granted subject to a standard negative condition for archaeological monitoring. The work was commissioned by G. W. Dickinson Associates on behalf of Mr. M. Sinclair, and carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeology Section of Lincolnshire County Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The village of Aisthorpe is situated approximately 10km north of Lincoln and 16km southeast of Gainsborough in West Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Aisthorpe is located at the base of the scarp of the Jurassic limestone Lincoln Edge. Local soils are of the Wickham 2 Association, typical stagnogley soils developed on glacial drift, and Banbury Association loamy ferritic brown earths resting on shattered ironstone (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 351; 103).

The development area (National Grid Reference SK94538030) is located at a height of c. 23m above sea level, 100m northwest of the parish church of St. Peter in the centre of the village (Fig. 2).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Aisthorpe village is located in an area of archaeological remains dating from the Roman through to the post-medieval period. Ermine Street, the major Roman road north from Lincoln, provides the eastern boundary of the parish. Romano-British pottery and flue tile has been found immediately east of the development site, and on the cliff edge, approximately 1km to the east.

The place-name Aisthorpe means 'eastern thorp (hamlet or farm)', deriving from Old English *East-þorp* (Ekwall 1974, 4), and probably signifies an Anglo-Saxon foundation for the settlement.

Fragments of at least two Late Saxon interlace slabs are built into the church and a cross-base of possible Saxon date is located in the churchyard (SMR50597). These remains imply the presence of a Late Saxon ecclesiastical establishment and a church is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 (Foster and Longley 1976,

202). However, the present parish church of St. Peter was rebuilt in 1868 (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 92).

Remains of a shrunken medieval settlement surround the ecclesiastical foundation. Substantial stone walls have been revealed immediately southeast of the church and other indications of buildings have been noted on both east and west sides of St. Peter's.

Approximately 200m to the north of the development site is Aisthorpe Hall. Of late 17th century date, the hall was extensively altered in 1821 (*loc. cit.*).

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to identify surviving archaeological deposits and, if present, record them in detail to enable their date, function and origin to be determined.

4. METHODS

A mechanical excavator was used in the excavation of the foundation trenches which averaged 1m deep. See Fig. 3 for plan of the trenches and location of the recorded sections.

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. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Additionally, the natural geology was recorded.

5. RESULTS

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. Two phases were identified:

- Phase 1 Natural deposits
- Phase 2 Modern deposits

Phase 1 Natural Deposits

Deposits of silty clay (2) overlying pebbly clay (3) were encountered across the entire development area (Figs. 4 and 5). These layers are considered to be natural in origin.

Phase 2 Modern Deposits

Sealing the natural clays and silts over the whole of the investigation site was a brown sandy silty clay topsoil (1) that contained moderate quantities of flint pebbles.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural layers of clay and silt (phase 1), probably glacio-fluvial in origin, were observed across the area. These materials may have been deposited by the ice flows themselves or may have been laid down in Lake Humber. This body of water, which washed the western slopes of the Lincoln Ridge and stretched from Grantham in the south northwards to York, was formed by glacial melt waters in the latter stages of the Ice Age (Wilson 1958, 75-9).

Topsoil constitutes the modern ground surface (phase 2).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigation on land opposite the Old School House, Aisthorpe, established that natural deposits of silty clay occur within 0.45m of the ground surface. No archaeological remains, known to be located in the vicinity, were disturbed by the excavation and no artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Mr. G. W. Dickinson of G. W. Dickinson Associates who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Dave Start edited this report. Mark Bennet of the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section kindly provided information from the county archaeological Sites and Monuments Record.

9. PERSONNEL

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

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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 13 (Harpden)

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

Wilson, V., 1958 *British Regional Geology East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire* (HMSO)

11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed with SMR are the primary reference numbers used by the Sites and Monuments Record of Lincolnshire County Council.

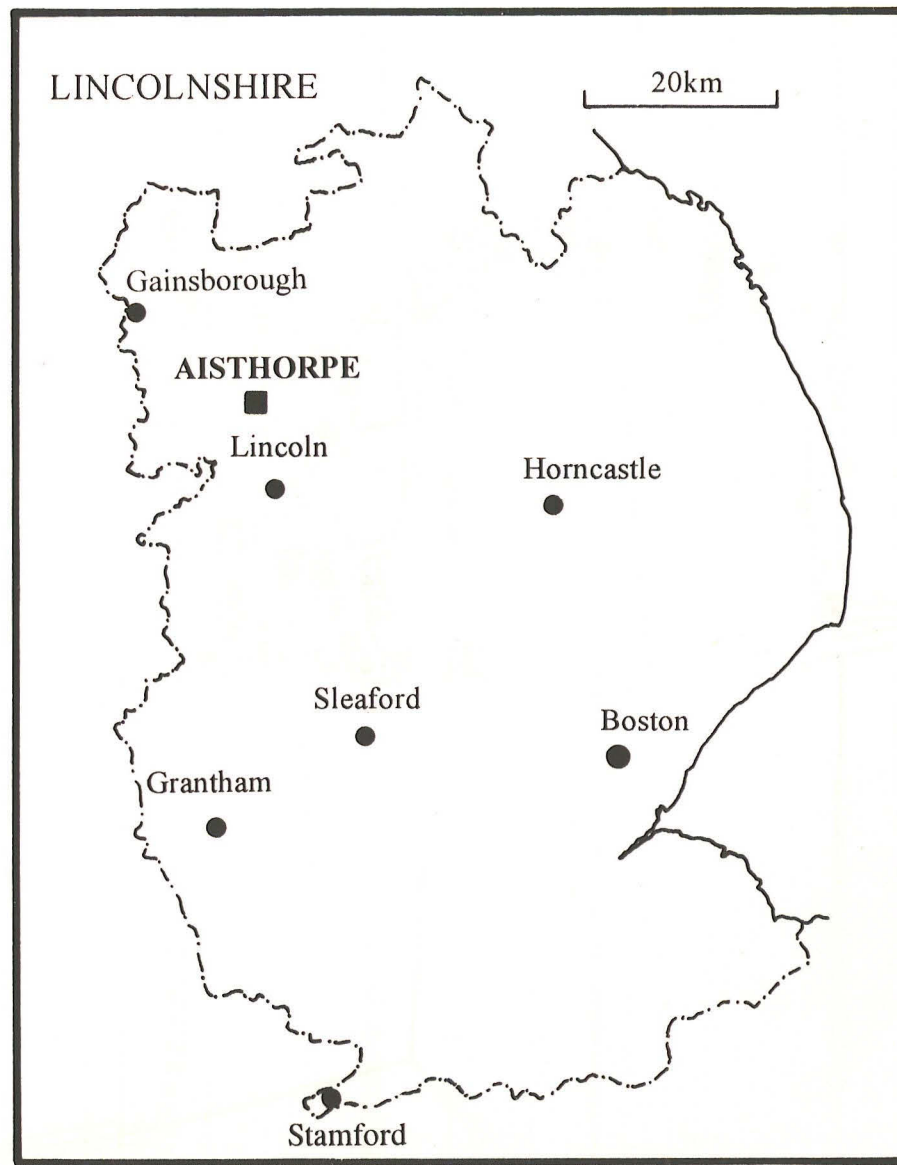
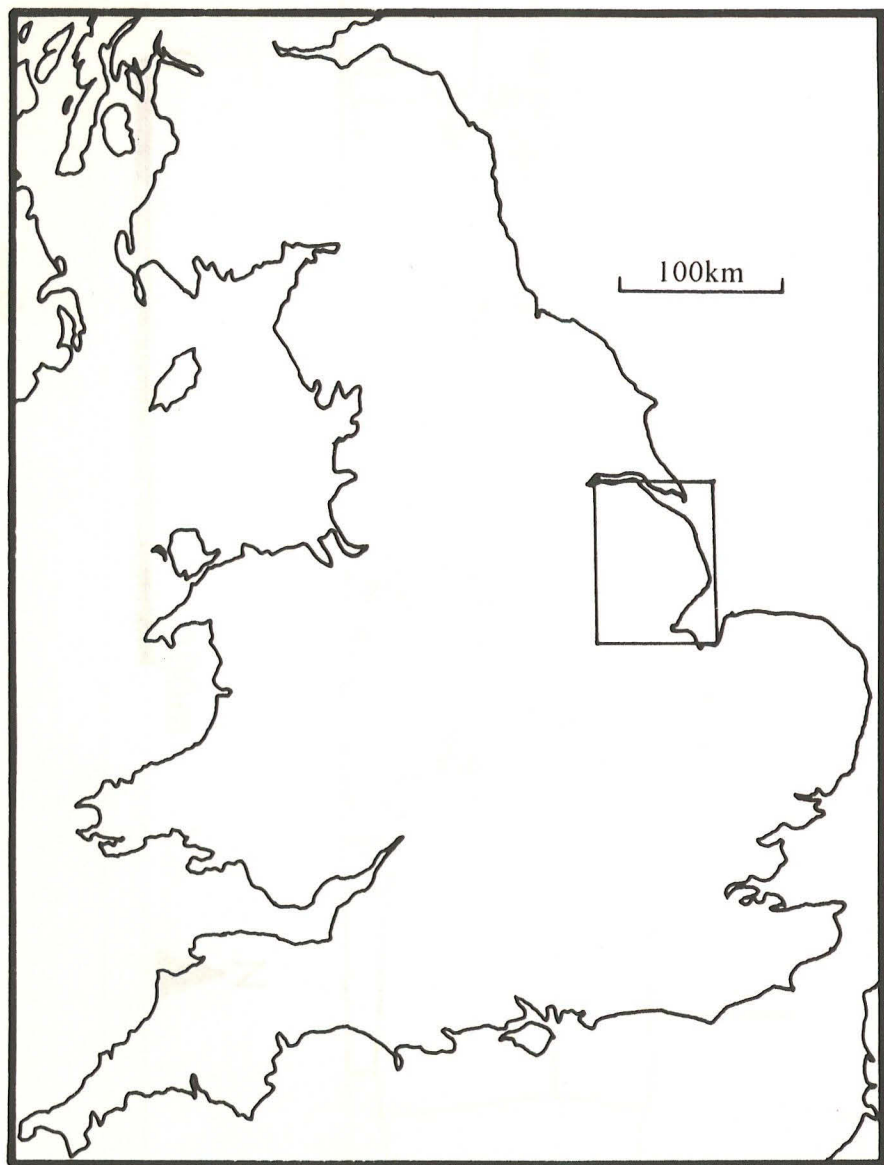
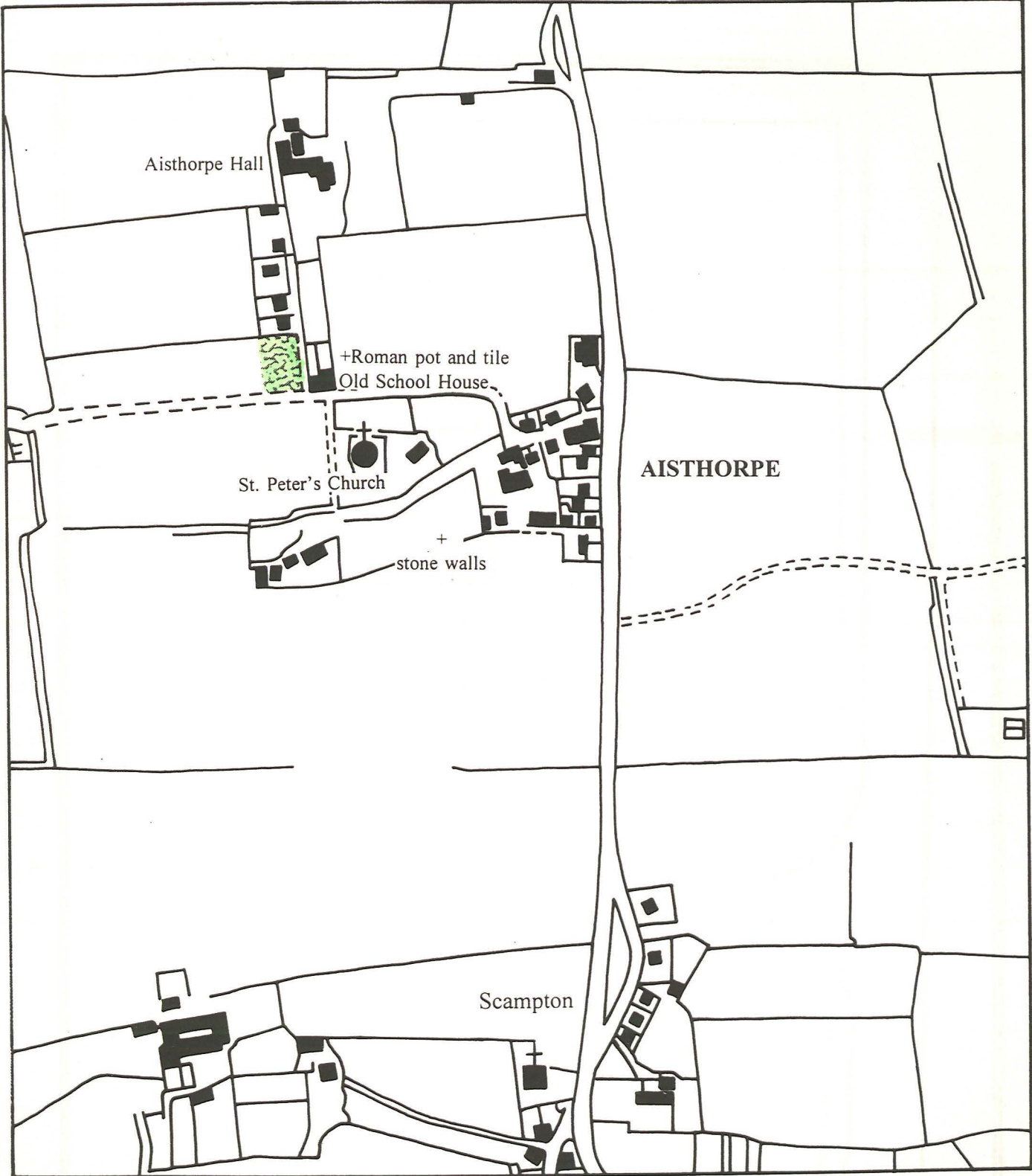


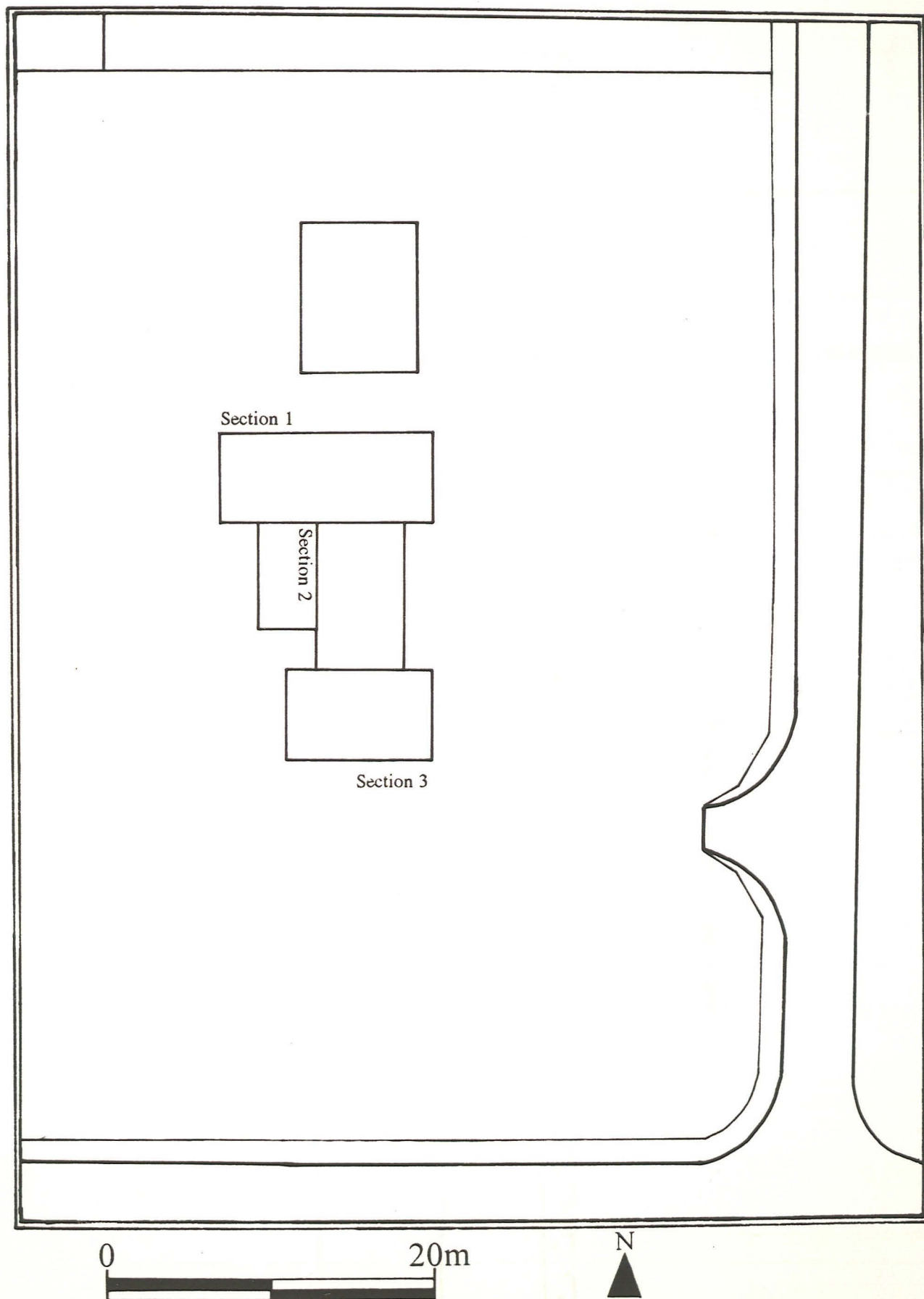
Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



AREA OF DEVELOPMENT

Fig. 3 Site Plan, showing location of recorded sections



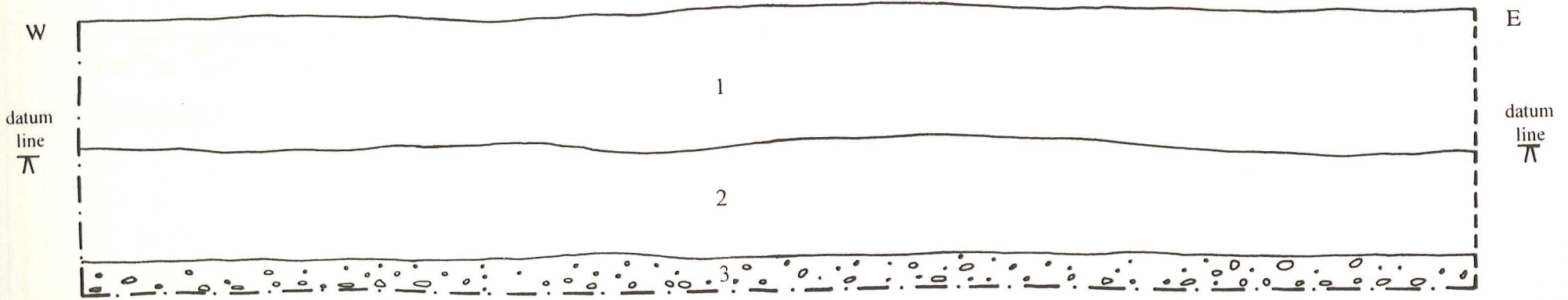
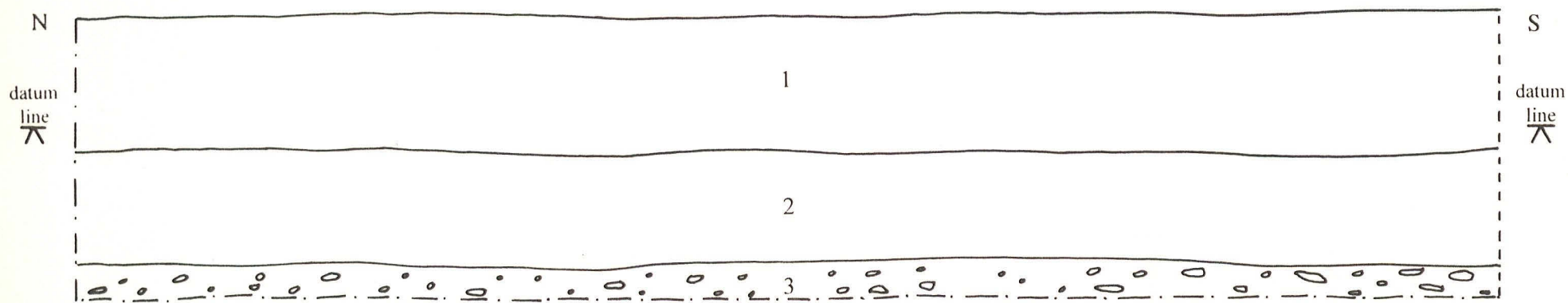
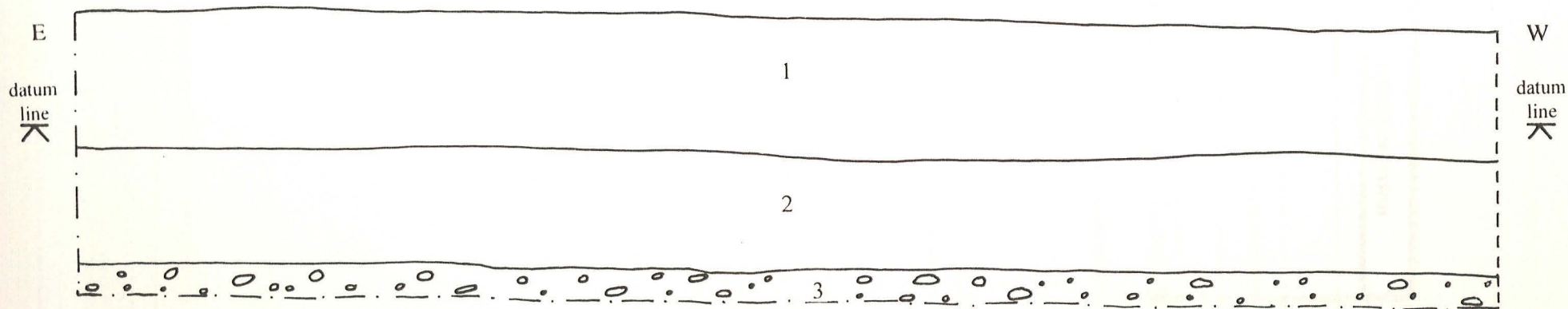


Fig. 4 Section 1



SECTION 2



SECTION 3

Fig. 5 Sections 2 and 3

APPENDIX 1

Context Summary

Context No.	Description	Interpretation
1	Grey brown sandy silty clay with flint pebbles, <i>c.</i> 0.45m deep	Topsoil
2	Orange-brown silty clay, <i>c.</i> 0.4m deep	Natural subsoil
3	Brownish grey clay with frequent pebbles	Natural

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 3 Context records
- 1 Photographic record (note: camera fault - no surviving photographs)
- 3 Scale drawings
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: ABL94
City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 62.95