

LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens

Residential Development: Plot 84

Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: TF 2668 6922
LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 32.93

Report prepared for Stamford Homes Ltd

August 1995

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Introduction

Stamford Homes Ltd commissioned Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) to monitor the mechanical excavation of house footings at Plot 84, Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle in compliance with an archaeological condition on the planning consent (S/086/0647/93). This watching brief formed part of a continuing archaeological input by LAS to this development which has located possible prehistoric archaeological features (Field 1994; Field 1994b; Tann 1993; Tann 1995a). The archaeological background to Horncastle and this vicinity in particular has been described in those previous reports.

Plot 84

Foundations for a single house and adjacent garage were monitored on 3rd July 1995. The house was located on the western side of an estate road and lay at the western edge of a zone marked for further archaeological investigation after the 1993 evaluation and a subsequent geophysical survey. Evaluation Trench 2 in 1993 had encountered a ditch with flanking gully terminals east of Plot 84 and it was hoped that additional information could be recorded about this possible Iron Age feature (Pl. 1).

Land Drains

Four distinct phases of land drain were seen in the trench faces at different depths. The earliest was 0.35m below the present surface, aligned approximately west-east and apparently draining towards the depression in the SW corner of the field. The more recent drains were aligned NE-SW and set at 0.65m below the surface. These drains probably connected with the southern field boundary ditch. A modern plastic perforated land drain was exposed at the SE corner of the house plot in a 0.5m wide gravel-filled trench.

Observation 1

A small gully or pit feature was seen only in the southern face of the north wall trench (Figs. 3 and 4; Pls. 2 and 3). It had a curved base, cut 0.08m into the loose chalk. The width was 0.7m and it contained brown loam identical to the overlying subsoil layer. It appeared to be an artificial feature but may have been a natural hollow on the post-glacial chalk surface.

Observation 2

A larger feature was partly revealed at the NW corner of the house in two trenches (Figs. 3 and 5). It measured 1.10m north-south and in excess of 2m east-west. The feature had been cut through the orange chalky clay subsoil

into chalk, with sloping sides and an almost flat base (Pls. 3-5). The lowest fill was a grey clay 0.12m thick, denoting a waterlogged soil. The 0.2m thick upper fill was a light orange/brown loam derived from the subsoil.

Observation 3

There was evidence of considerable ground levelling on the SW side of the plot, where the topsoil was missing but had been replaced with 0.45m of redeposited stony topsoil, possibly bulldozed from ground to the north where the topsoil depth was 0.2m (Pls. 5-7). The redeposited soil covered a peat layer which dropped in the SW corner but retained a uniform thickness of 0.1m. The stratigraphy suggested that an earlier ground surface had sloped downwards towards the SW, with saturated soil on which had formed peat. The topsoil levelling may have been recent, but the peat was of greater antiquity.

Observation 4

Two deep but narrow peat-filled holes were noted in the trench closest to the field boundary. These virtually joined and were deeper than the trench base (Pl. 8). Their irregular shape was ovoid and narrow. There was no reason to suspect an artificial origin for either feature.

Observation 5

A narrow palaeochannel of natural origin, 1.1m wide, crossed the northern trench of the garage foundations but was not observed in the other trenches (Fig. 3). The channel base was deeper than the trench base (0.75m+ below the surface), pre-dated the orange sandy subsoil and was filled with grey sand in 2 distinct layers. It was aligned north-south and cut into natural sand, approximately at a division between chalk to the west and sand to the east.

Conclusion

No archaeological artefacts were found on this plot and none of the identified anomalies could be proved to be of artificial origin. The 1993 evaluation had noted a widespread natural depression in the NW corner of the field (west of Plot 84) thought to be the remains of a former pond extending into the field corner. Many of the anomalies recorded in the present watching brief can be interpreted as produced in poorly drained ground close to that pond.

Further monitoring of house plots to the east of Plot 84, closer to the ditch in Trench 2 of the 1993 evaluation, may supply an explanation for that ditch and gully; this exercise has shown that the ditch and gully terminals were not associated with extensive occupation features.

Acknowledgements

The co-operation of Mr. Derek Hinchliffe (Site Agent) and the site personnel was once again appreciated.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
8th August 1995

References

Field, N. 1994 *Horncastle Banovallum Gardens: Archaeological Evaluation, Phase 2* Unpublished report by LAS for Stamford Homes.

Tann, G. 1993 *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle* Unpublished report by LAS for Stamford Homes.

Tann, G. 1995a *Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens Development: Archaeological Watching Brief on Plots 49-53* Unpublished report by LAS for Stamford Homes.

Archive:

Observation record sheets : 3

Field sketch plan (annotated) A4

Inked section drawings : 3

Developer's plans etc. : 2

Artefacts : none

Photographs: Film no. 95/23 0-8

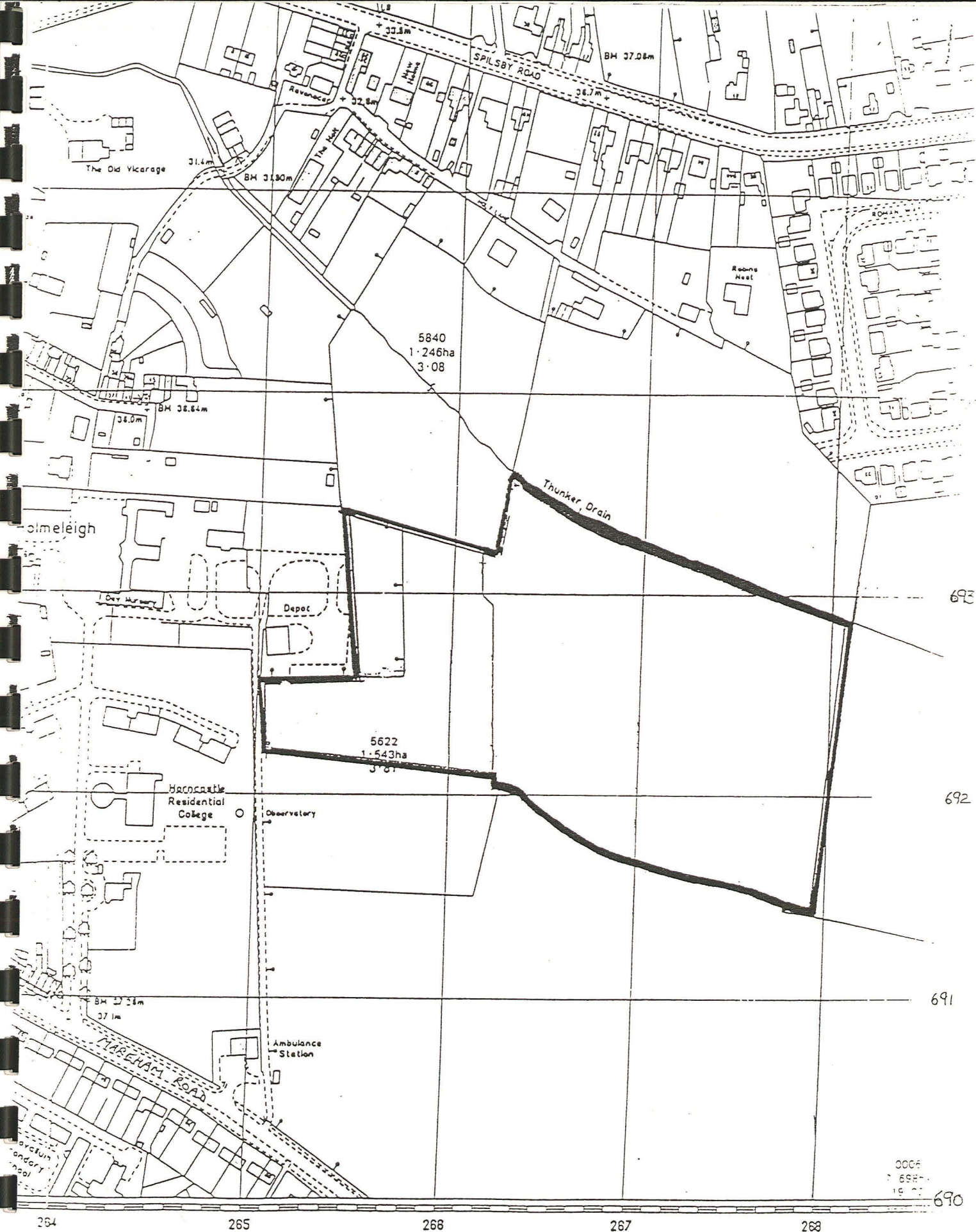


Fig. 1 Location of Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle. Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. Crown Copyright. Licence No. AL 50424A.

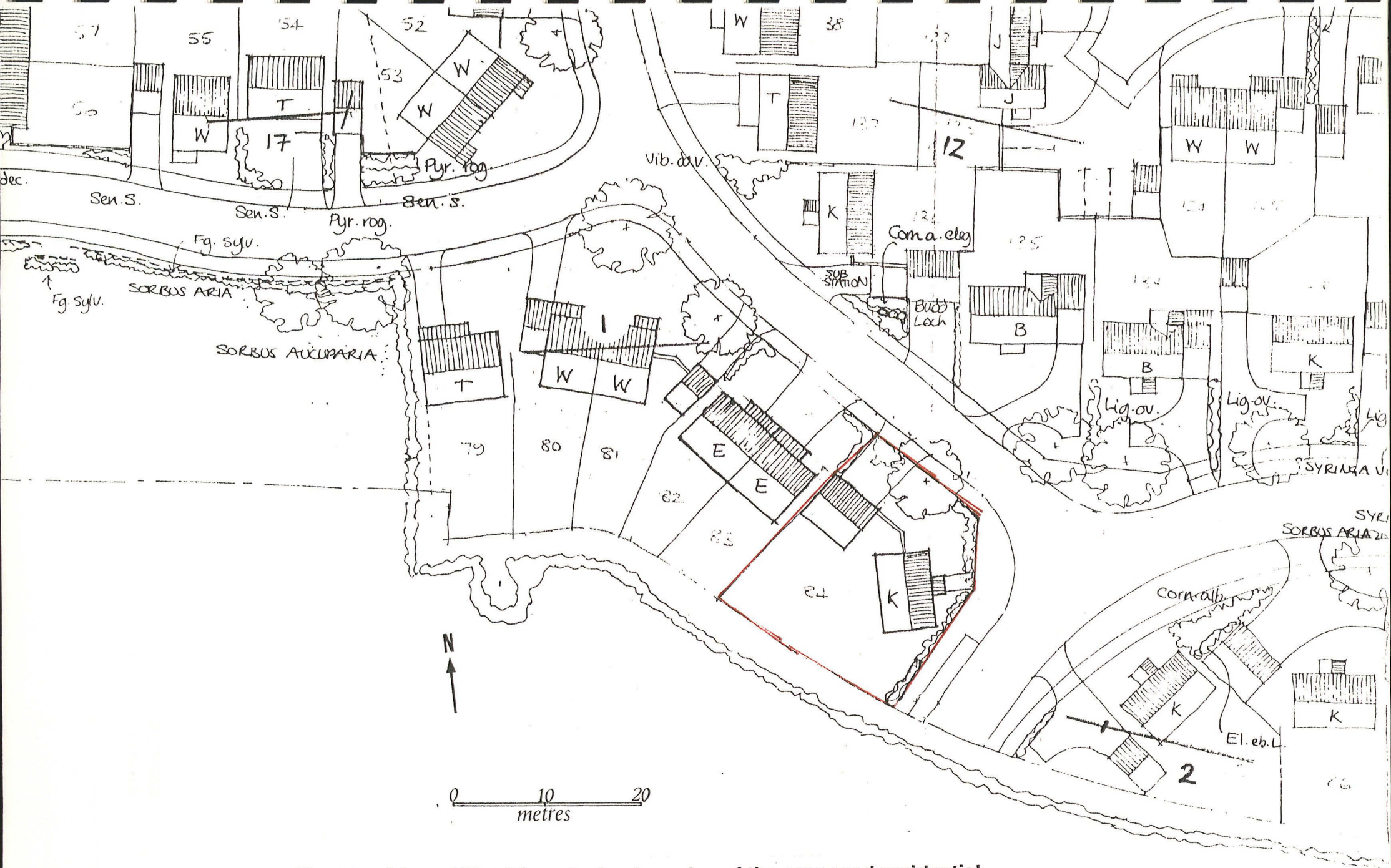


Fig. 2 Position of Plot 84 marked onto a plan of the proposed residential development (after D.B. Lawrence and Associates)

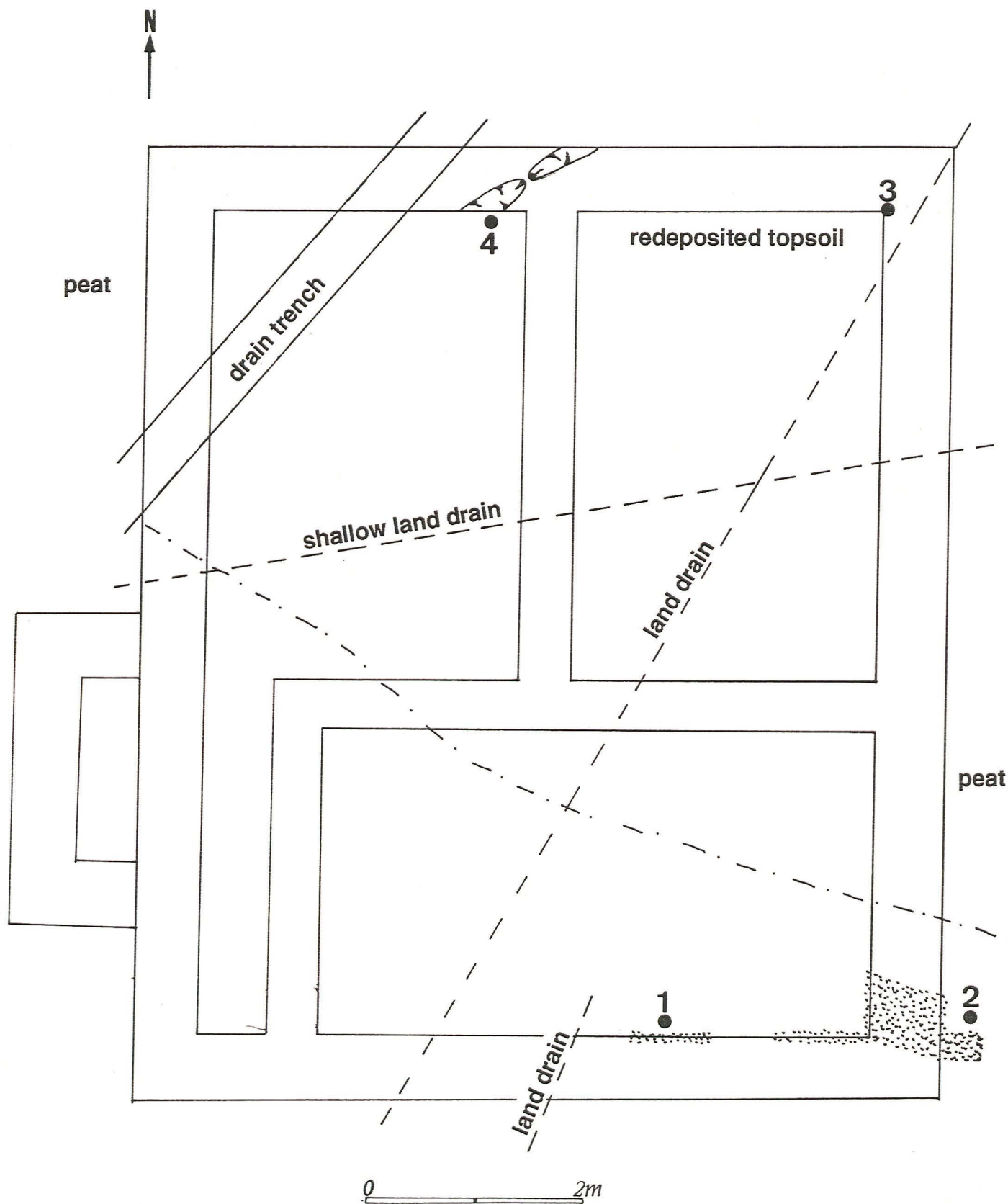


Fig. 3 Plan of the foundation trenches for Plot 84, showing land drains and observed anomalies (based on a plan supplied by Stamford Homes)

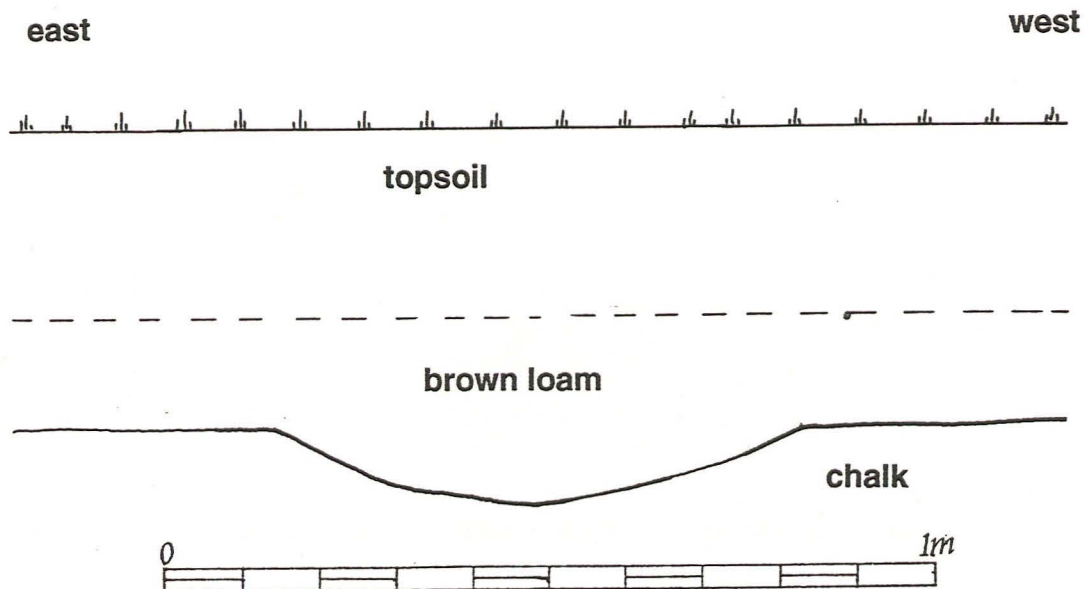


Fig. 4 Section across depression at Observation 1

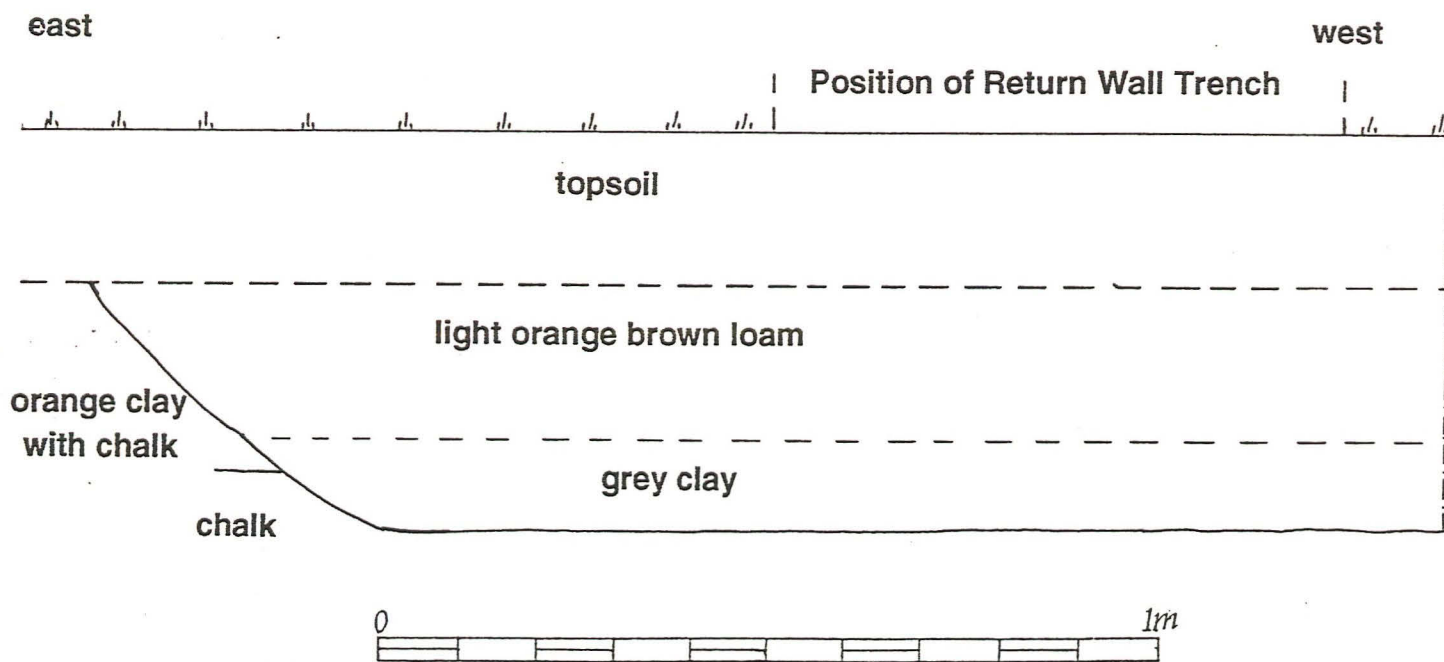


Fig. 5 Section across shallow feature at Observation 2



Pl. 1 Position of Plot 84, Banovallum Gardens. Evaluation Trench 2 was close to the hedge to the right of the dumper. Looking SE.

Pl. 2 Feature (1), cut into natural chalk. Looking south; scale divisions 0.2m.





Pl. 3 NW corner of Plot 84, with (2) in the foreground and (1) visible in the trench face beyond. Looking SE.

Pl. 4 Feature (2), visible in trench faces at the NW corner. Looking SW; scale divisions 0.2m.





Pl. 5 Western wall trench of Plot 84 showing peat above the chalk, sloping downwards into the SW corner.

Pl. 6 Post-medieval land drain in SW corner of the plot, cutting a peat deposit. Looking east.





Pl. 7 Southern wall trench, with chalk rising towards the east. Looking west.

Pl. 8 Detail of peat-filled feature (4) in trench base. Looking west.

