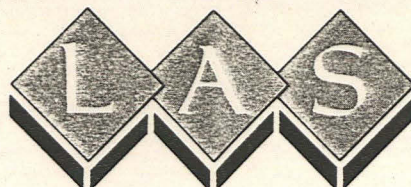


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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Caistor, Yarborough School:
Archaeological Watching Brief
during groundworks for a
New Sports Hall**

**NGR: TA 1220 0146
Site Code CYS 95
LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 43.95**

Report prepared for Land and Buildings Consultancy

August 1995

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Contents

List of Figures	2
List of Plates	3
Introduction	4
Archaeological Background	4
The Watching Brief	5
Conclusion	6
Acknowledgements	6

List of Figures

- Fig. 1** Location of Yarborough School, Caistor (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 survey, Sheet TA 10 SW; Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence No. AL 50424A)
- Fig. 2** Position of the new Sports Hall at Yarborough School (based on an enlarged copy of the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 survey, annotated by Land and Buildings Consultancy. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence No. AL 50424A)
- Fig. 3** Detail of the new buildings, showing the position of plough furrow 2 (based on a plan supplied by Land and Buildings Consultancy)
- Fig. 4** Section across plough furrow 2, showing recent levelling

List of Plates

- PI. 1** Ground conditions at the start of the watching brief. The landscaped ridge can be seen in the foreground beside the school access road, with a previous spoil heap in the background close to the road hedge. The tennis court lay behind the hedge at the left of the photograph. Looking NW.
- PI. 2** Ground clearance had disturbed much of the grassed area before monitoring began, removing part of the chalk bedrock as well as topsoil and subsoil. Looking west across the Sports Hall site; a JCB is breaking asphalt in the fenced tennis court.
- PI. 3** Slight anomalies were seen in the upper chalk bedrock, with small irregular pockets of brown and orange-brown loam. These were interpreted as either natural peri-glacial features or the trails from bushes and small trees. One example is visible in the machined section near the foreground; parts of others are visible on the stripped surface in front of the small spoil heap. (Looking SW)
- PI. 4** Loam-filled plough furrow crossing a trench close to the road. (Looking north; scale divisions 0.2m)
- PI. 5** Section across the plough furrow, showing the layer of rubble spread over this area after clearance of a long jump course. (Looking west; scale divisions 0.2m)
- PI. 6** The site of the Sports Hall Changing Block, with the scale marking the position of the furrow. (Looking west from the access road with the A1084 road on the extreme right)
- PI. 7** Stripping of the former tennis court area revealed only previously cleared bedrock cut by a recent service trench (dark material with gravel in the foreground). Looking SE, with compound area fenced with orange plastic.

**Caistor, Yarborough School:
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Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Land and Buildings Consultancy to conduct an archaeological watching brief on the site of a new Sports Hall and changing block at Yarborough School, Grimsby Road, Caistor (Fig. 1). The main contractor for the work was Topcon (Grimsby).

The new building was to be sited on land to the NE of the main school building, east of some detached classrooms. The western side of the building was constructed on the site of an asphalted tennis court, but the eastern half was positioned on open ground with a landscaped ridge beside a school access road (Fig. 2).

Topsoil stripping was intended to begin on March 6th. Archaeological monitoring took place on 1st and 2nd March 1995 but groundworks were already in progress when the first visit was made. Additional topsoil stripping for a contractors' compound occurred between visits without notification.

Archaeological Background

A walled fort was built by the Romans at Caistor, by which time it was already a settlement of some importance. There has been no recorded evidence of Iron Age occupation in the town area but Caistor High Street is thought to be a prehistoric trackway running across the Wolds to pass by the town. During the Roman period Caistor High Street acquired a military role.

The Roman walled settlement lies on a natural sandstone outcrop with natural defences on all except the east side. Most archaeological work has concentrated on the wall itself and little is known of the accompanying civilian settlement. Large quantities of pottery were found during building work at Caistor Grammar School. It has been assumed that civilian settlement was concentrated close to the present market place for topographic reasons, but 3rd-4th century pottery kilns were excavated in the 1960s, SW of the town. Nearby, beside Navigation Lane several human skeletons have been found and settlement enclosures have been identified from the air.

There may have been an early church at Caistor, perhaps constructed within the walled area in the early 9th century; a dedication inscription was found in the 18th century, drawn but subsequently lost. In the 10th century Caistor had

a mint, and may have been the pre-Conquest capital of the North Riding of Lindsey.

The full extent of the Roman and Saxon settlement at Caistor is not yet known, and it was thought that the groundworks at Yarborough School might provide important information about the size and nature of the town in the past.

The Watching Brief

The monitored groundworks on the site consisted of topsoil stripping, tarmac removal and levelling of a small raised area. Further trenching work was not inspected as the site preparation had already exposed the surface of the undisturbed limestone bedrock.

1. When the first visit was made, the landscaped ridge to the west of the school access road had been breached and most of the grassed area had been taken to chalk bedrock (Pls. 1 and 2). It had been intended to examine the horizon below the topsoil for the presence of ditches, pits or artefacts but in practice the mechanical disturbance had left only small areas where this could be done. It seemed that the natural slope, rising to the east, accounted for part of the ridge, but that soil excavated when the access road was constructed had been redeposited as landscaping.

The bedrock contained small, irregular pockets of orange-brown loam. These were thought to be peri-glacial natural features but the extent of machine disturbance meant that close investigation was of limited use (Pl. 3).

2. A machined trench dug to the north of the grassed area towards the existing hedgeline located a layer of asphalt, gravel and modern tile fragments above an earlier topsoil (Pls. 4-6). There was anecdotal evidence from a workman that this had been part of a long-jump course in the recent past.

Inspection of the trench section located an extensive west-east feature below the topsoil, cut into the chalk. The feature was 1.5m north-south and extended close to the access road. At first this was thought to be a modern service trench or the 'long-jump pit', but it was re-interpreted as a medieval or later plough furrow parallel to the field hedge 8m to the north (Figs. 3 and 4). The hedge includes mature hawthorn bushes and appears to be of some antiquity in its present position. The A1084 road into Caistor is sunken here between the banks on either side and a medieval origin is likely.

3. The compound area was cleared of topsoil close to the main school building. The topsoil layer was 0.25m thick, above 0.1m of sandy loam on the chalk bedrock.

4. The tennis court area was stripped of asphalt and some clearance of the foundation material took place. This area had been levelled before the court was constructed, by removing soil over the entire area. The anticipated

terracing by burying redeposited soil, protecting part of the area, had not taken place. A recent machine cut service trench represented the only feature below the court (Pl. 7)

5. A gas supply to the new building was expected to lead from the existing Gas Meter House south of the school and beside the Caistor Bypass, aligned between two sportsfields (Fig. 2). A spread of limestone was observed in stripped ground close to the Meter House but this was probably associated with either that construction or the groundworks for the bypass. LAS was advised that the gas supply would not be laid along the intended route, and no monitoring of the gas installation occurred.

Conclusion

No finds or features of archaeological interest were found during the watching brief. It is therefore unlikely that there had been Roman occupation on or adjacent to this part of Caistor.

Acknowledgements

LAS was grateful to staff at Yarborough School, Mr D. Debank (Land and Buildings Consultancy) and the site contractors (Topcon) for their co-operation during the watching brief. Further assistance was given by Ian George (Assistant Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section).

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
1st August 1995

Archive List

correspondence
contractors' plans/sections 4 A4 fax copies
Field notes/drawings: annotated plan; sketch section
colour prints Film no. 95/10 14-21

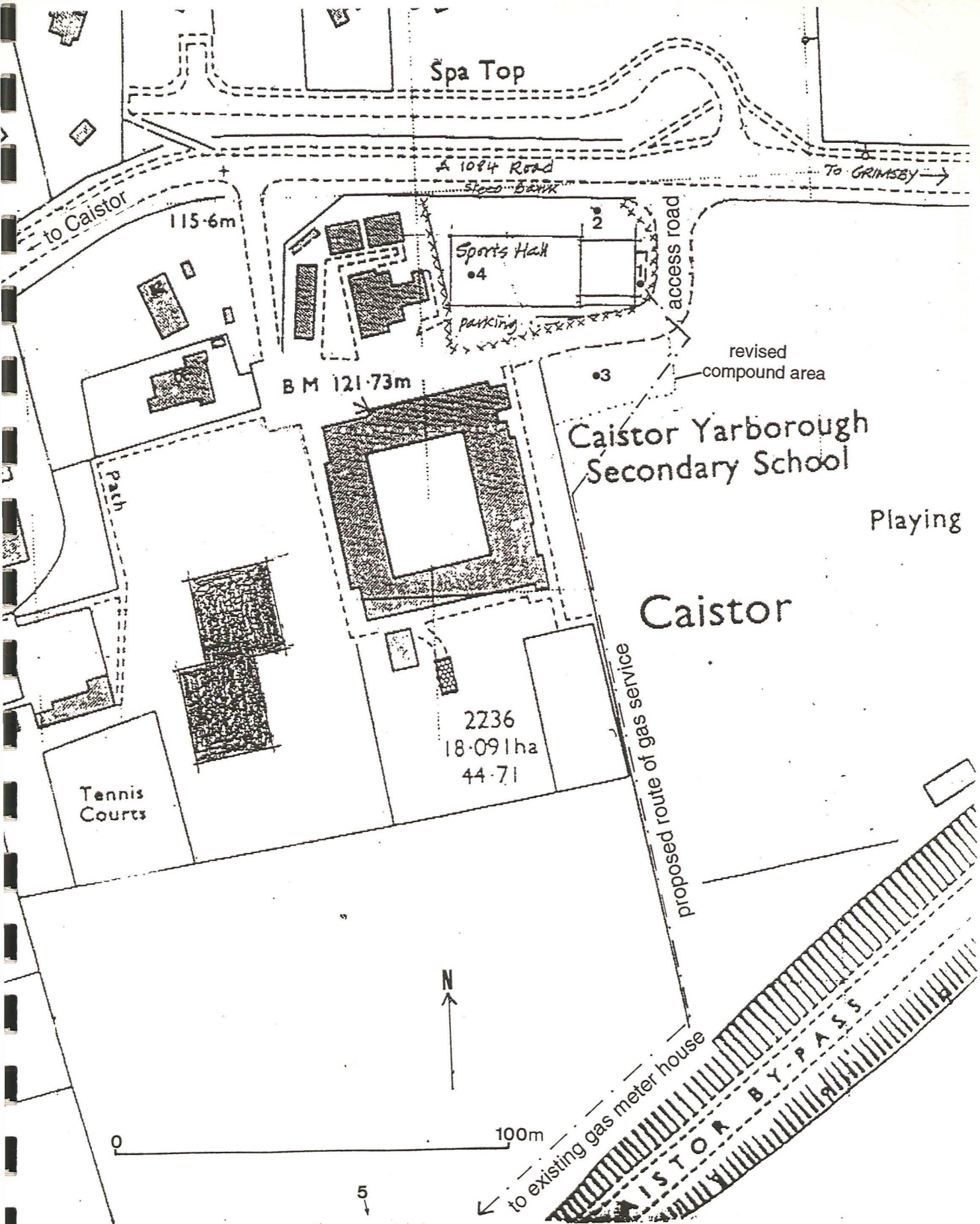


Fig. 2 Position of the new Sports Hall at Yarborough School (based on an enlarged copy of the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 survey, annotated by Land and Buildings Consultancy. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence No. AL 50424A)

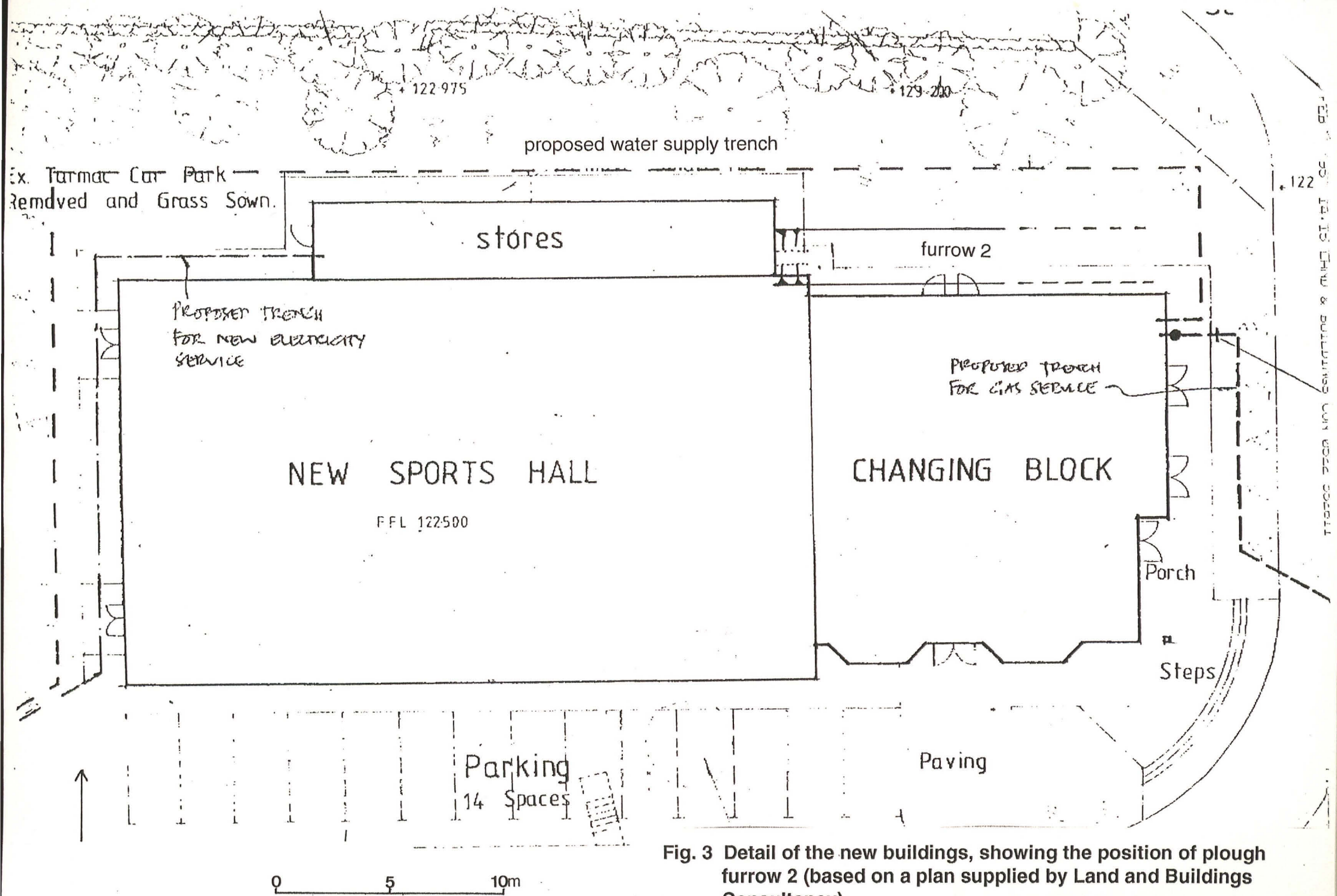


Fig. 3 Detail of the new buildings, showing the position of plough furrow 2 (based on a plan supplied by Land and Buildings Consultancy)

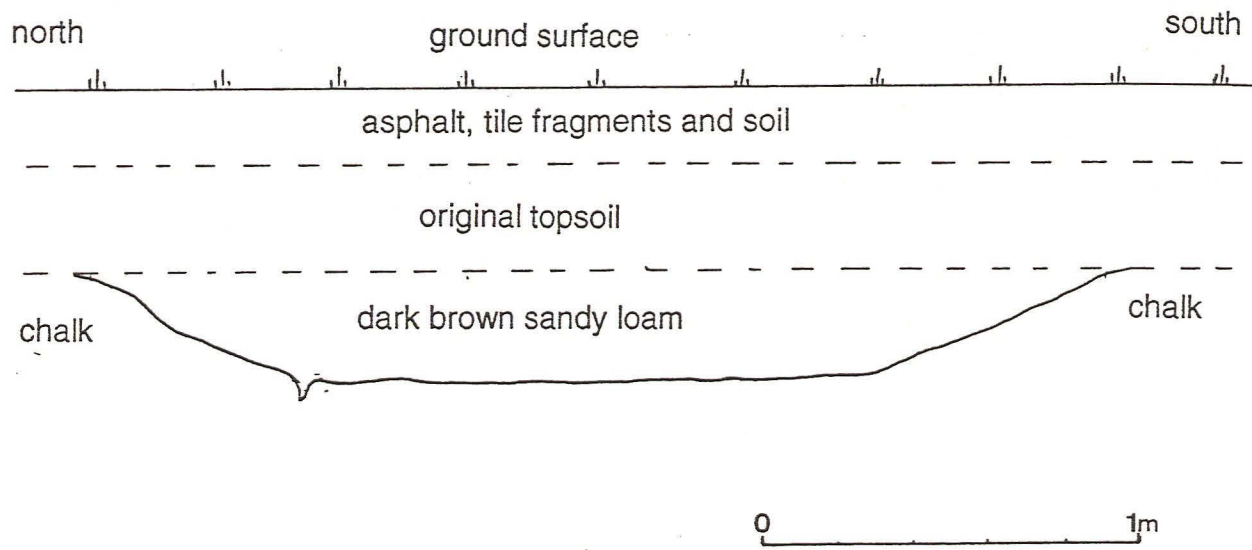


Fig. 4 Section across plough furrow 2, showing recent levelling



Pl. 1 Ground conditions at the start of the watching brief. The landscaped ridge can be seen in the foreground beside the school access road, with a previous spoil heap in the background close to the road hedge. The tennis court lay behind the hedge at the left of the photograph. Looking NW.

Pl. 2 Ground clearance had disturbed much of the grassed area before monitoring began, removing part of the chalk bedrock as well as topsoil and subsoil. Looking west across the Sports Hall site; a JCB is breaking asphalt in the fenced tennis court.





Pl. 3 Slight anomalies were seen in the upper chalk bedrock, with small irregular pockets of brown and orange-brown loam. These were interpreted as either natural peri-glacial features or the trails from bushes and small trees. One example is visible in the machined section near the foreground; parts of others are visible on the stripped surface in front of the small spoil heap. (Looking SW)



Pl. 4 Loam-filled plough furrow crossing a trench close to the road.
(Looking north; scale divisions 0.2m)



Pl. 5 Section across the plough furrow, showing the layer of rubble
spread over this area after clearance of a long jump course.
(Looking west; scale divisions 0.2m)



Pl. 6 The site of the Sports Hall Changing Block, with the scale marking the position of the furrow. (Looking west from the access road with the A1084 road on the extreme right)



Pl. 7 Stripping of the former tennis court area revealed only previously cleared bedrock cut by a recent service trench (dark material with gravel in the foreground). Looking SE, with compound area fenced with orange plastic.