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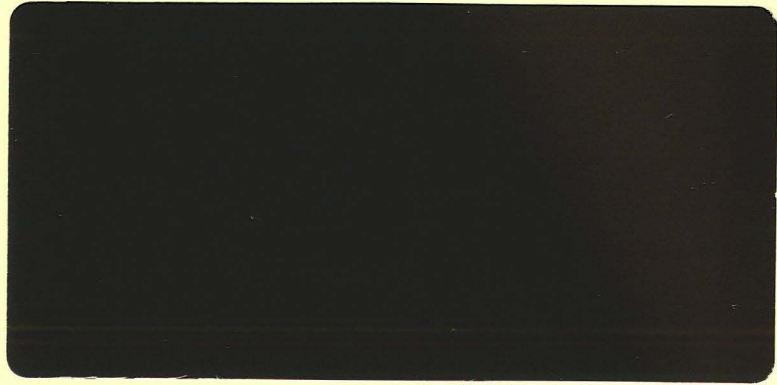
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
FOR A DEVELOPMENT AT  
OLD ABBEY FARM KIRKSTEAD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(KAF 95)**



**A P S**  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
FOR A DEVELOPMENT AT  
OLD ABBEY FARM KIRKSTEAD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(KAF 95)**

Work Undertaken For  
STEVEN DUNN  
(Chartered Architect)

October 1995

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during alteration of an existing farm building and the construction of an extension and garage at Old Abbey Farm, Kirkstead, Lincolnshire.*

*Kirkstead Abbey, built in 1187 and dissolved in 1537, is located in the fields north of the development area. Though few structural remains of the abbey survive, the area contains extensive earthworks associated with the religious site. This investigation revealed deposits related to the construction of the 18th century farmhouse. Reused medieval (c.1066-1500) bricks and masonry, probably derived from the abbey, were also revealed.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

During October 1995, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Steven Dunn (Chartered Architect) at Old Abbey farm, Kirkstead, Lincolnshire (TF19086099).

This work was carried out during the restoration and extension of the former farm house and the construction of a garage. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning applications S/215/0294/95 & S/215/0295/95. Permission was granted subject to a standard negative condition for archaeological recording. This work was carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Kirkstead is situated 20km northeast of

Sleaford and 24km southeast of Lincoln, in the civil parish of Woodhall Spa, East Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig.1).

The development is situated approximately 500m south of the former Cistercian Abbey and its earthworks (Fig.2).

The site and its immediate surrounds form an area of slightly undulating ground sloping westward down to the River Witham. Ground surface lies at c. 15m O.D.

Local soils are of the Blackwood Association dominated by deep permeable sandy and coarse loamy soils, in glaciofluvial drift, (Hodge *et al.* 1984)

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

Aerial photographs show a multi-vallate earthwork 500m east of the investigation area. Although undated, on morphological grounds this enclosure is probably Iron Age or Romano-British (Fig.2)

An Anglo-Saxon shield boss was retrieved from the River Witham, though without definite location, in the region of the development site. This artefact provides the only evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the vicinity.

Kirkstead Abbey was founded in 1139 by Hugh Brito son of the then Lord of Tattershall. When the site of the original building proved unsuitable due to its brushwood and marshland surrounds, the abbey was re-established at its present location in 1187.

In 1537, the abbey was dissolved. Subsequently, the buildings were defaced and the lead melted down (Page 1906, 135-6).

When the antiquarian William Stukeley

visited the site during the early 18th century, the entire south transept gable was still standing. However, the only structural remains of the abbey now surviving comprise a solitary masonry fragment that represents the southeast angle of the transept. Other structural remains surviving on the site belong to St. Leonard's chapel built *c.* 1230-40. This is one of the finest examples of 13th century church architecture in Lincolnshire (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 417-8).

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of *c.* 1m using a mechanical excavator. The sides of each trench were cleaned and examined to identify any archaeological features.

Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a reference number with an individual written description. Exposed natural geological deposits were also recorded.

A photographic record was compiled, and sketch sections and plans were drawn at scale 1:20.

### 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. Three phases were identified:

- Phase 1 Natural deposits
- Phase 2 Undated deposits.
- Phase 3 Modern deposits

#### 5.1 Phase 1 Natural Deposits

Revealed in the lower parts of the trenches across the entire area were layers of sands and gravels (002, 008, 009, 014, 015). Interpreted as natural deposits, these were at least 0.35m thick and were capped by iron oxide.

#### 5.2 Phase 2. Undated Deposits

Cutting through the natural was a large pit feature (003) located under the north wall of the garage (Fig.4). Approximately 20m further west was a large well (006), 1.2m in diameter and at least 2.3m deep (Fig.3). This was constructed of unmortared brick in stretcher bonding pattern.

#### 5.3 Phase 3 Recent Deposits

A very loose light grey to mid brown topsoil ranging from 0.20 - 0.30m in depth covered the area. The topsoil (007 and 013) contained plastic, iron fragments and possible redeposited medieval masonry.

Cutting the topsoil close to the farmhouse buttress (018) was a feature of unknown form and function (011 and 012; Figs. 3 and 4). This is most likely a disturbance dating back to the last century when extensive alterations to the farmhouse were carried out.

Located 4m west was a brick floor comprising re-used 15th century bricks (016) placed on a sand bed (017).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at Kirkstead Old Abbey Farm revealed a sequence of natural to modern deposits.

Natural glaciofluvial sands and gravel occur within 0.20m of the present ground surface. These were truncated by an undated pit. Topsoil sealed the area and medieval masonry and bricks were identified during the investigation. These materials were probably brought from the nearby abbey to the site to be reused in the construction and alterations of the farm.

A well and brick floor associated with the farm were also identified.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Steven Dunn Chartered Architect and Randall and Corder Building Contractors for commissioning the work. Thanks are also due to Lincolnshire Pheasantries for funding the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis.

Steve Haynes coordinated the work and David Start edited this report. Background information was provided by Mark Bennet of Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Records Office

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes  
Site Supervisors: René Mouraille,  
Mark Sansom  
CAD Illustration: Sue Unsworth  
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley.  
Post Excavation analysis: René Mouraille

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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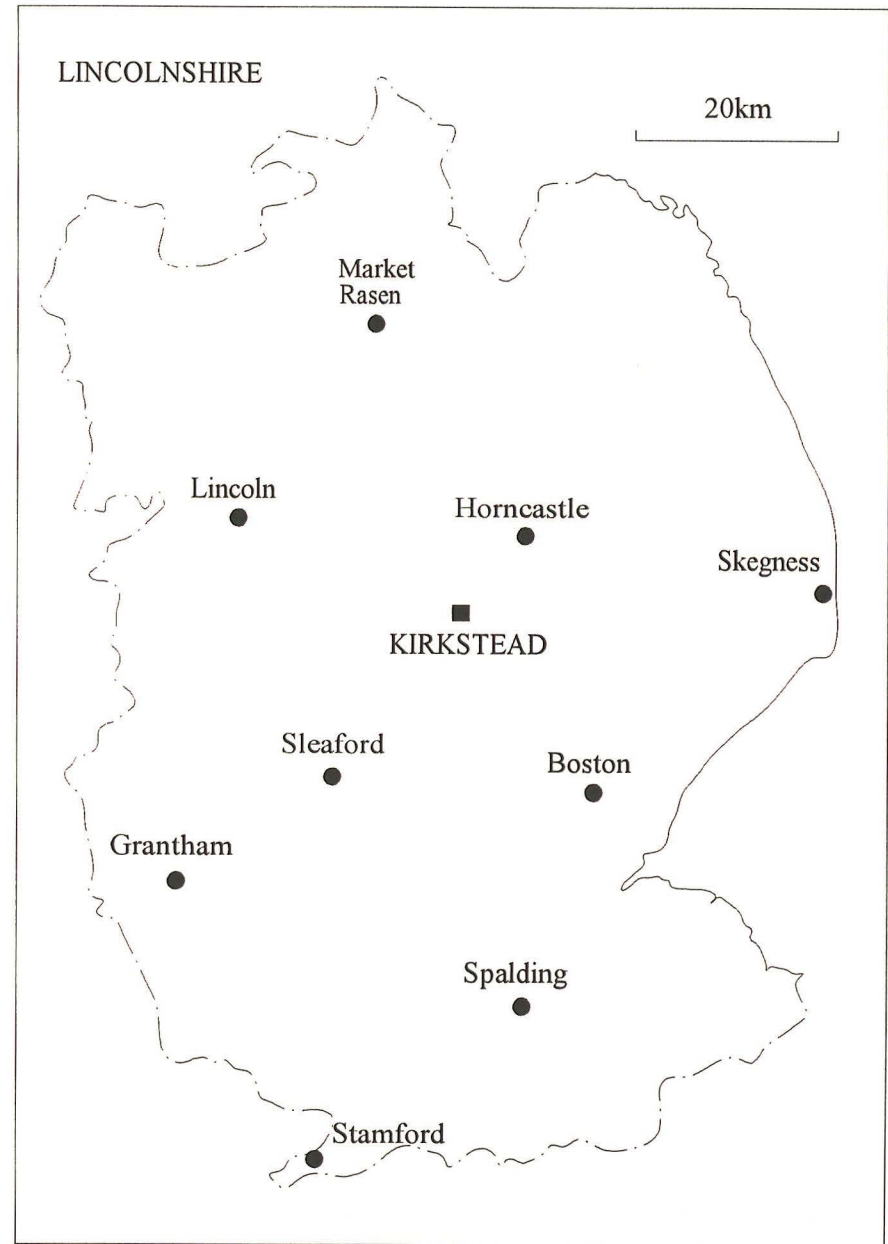
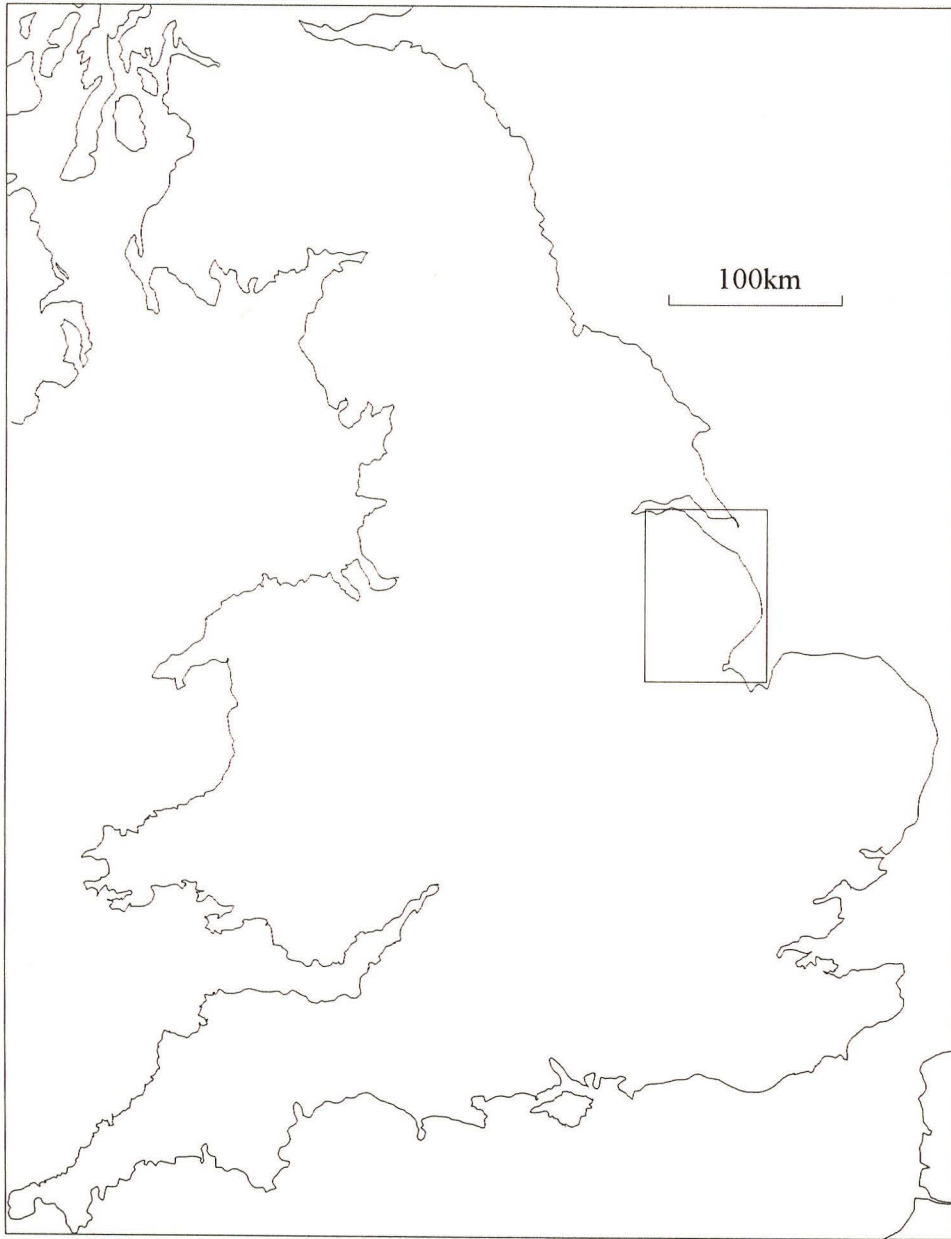
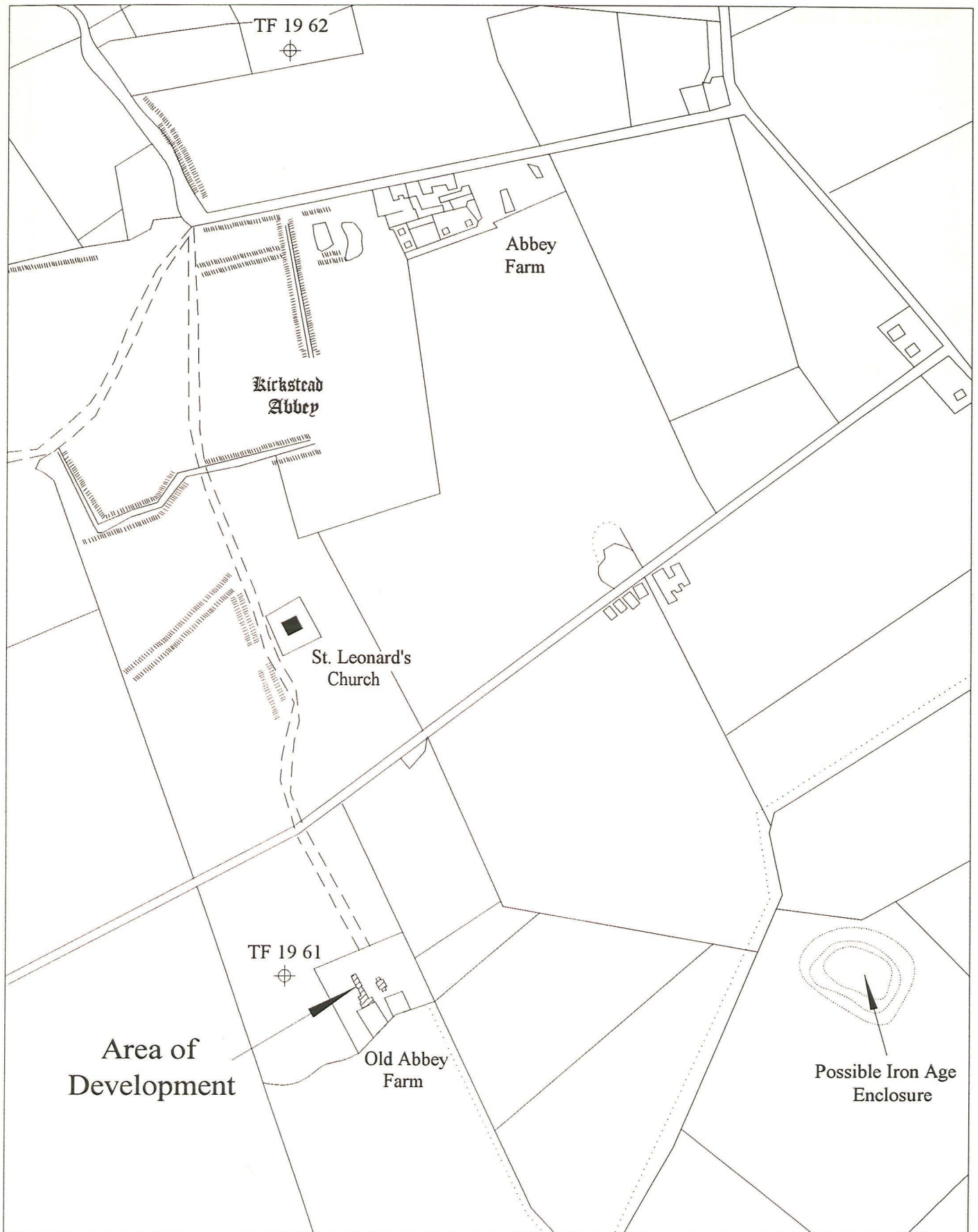


Figure 1: General Location Plan



Figure 2: Site Location Plan



0km

0.5km

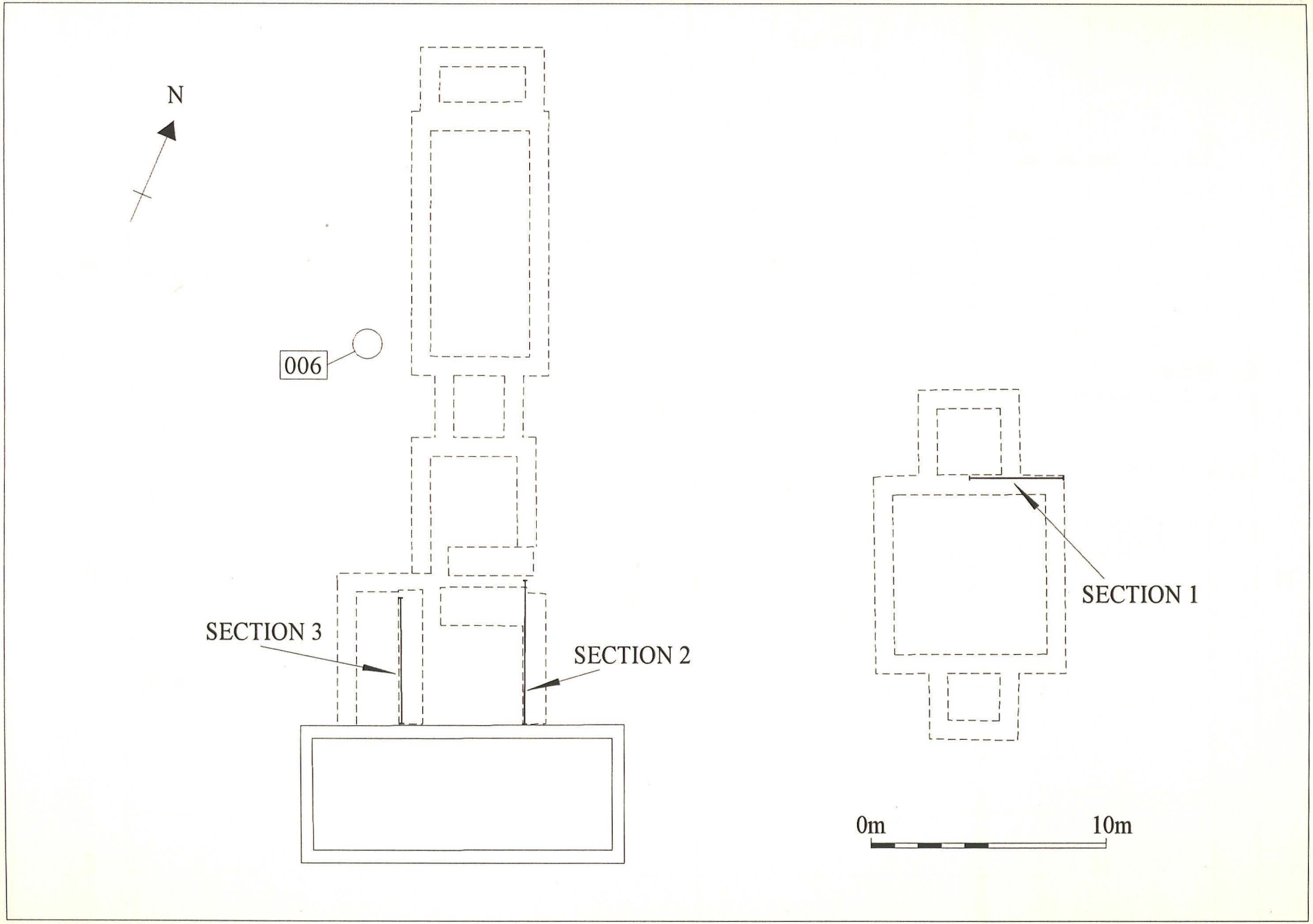


Figure 3: Area of development, showing locations of features and sections

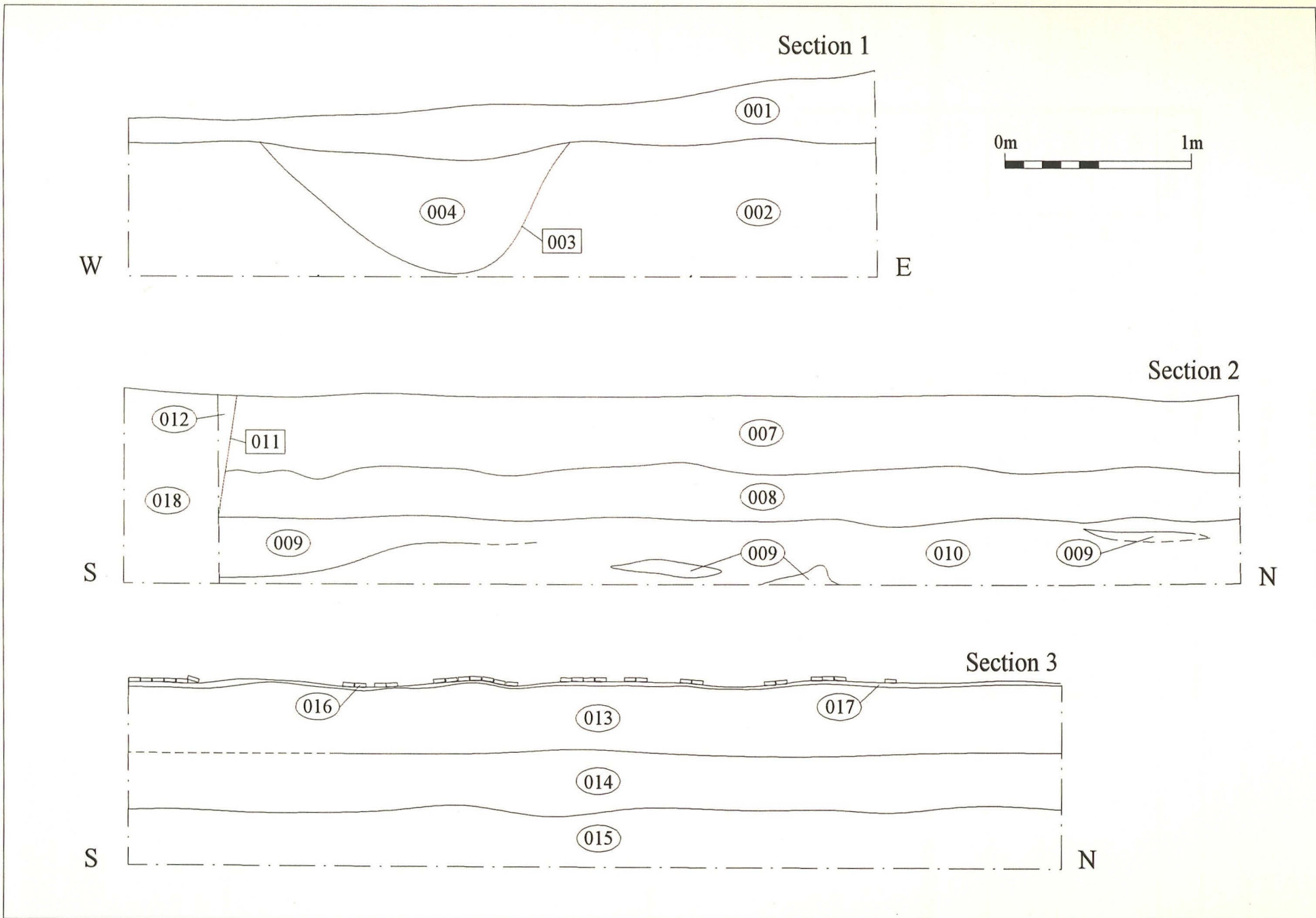


Figure 4: Sections 1 - 3

## APPENDIX 1

### Context Summary

Context	Description	Interpretation
001	Demolition and farmyard debris	Dump deposit
002	Natural gravel	Post glacial fluvial deposit
003	Cut, c. 1.6m wide, 0.6m deep	Cut for pit
004	Gravelly silt	Fill of cut 003
005	Topsoil and building debris	Demolition layer/ Store site of building materials
006	Brick built circular structure	Well
007	Dark brown silt deposit	Topsoil layer
008	Sharp sand deposit	Post glacial fluvial layer
009	Sharp sand deposit	Post glacial fluvial layer
010	Fine sand layer	Post glacial fluvial layer
011	Cut, minimally observed, at least 0.4m deep, 0.1m wide	Cut of uncertain form and function
012	Dark brown sandy silt	Fill of cut 011
013	Dark brown silt layer	Topsoil
014	Mixed gravel	Post glacial fluvial deposit
015	Fine sand layer	Post glacial fluvial deposit
016	Brick surface	Brick floor
017	Sand layer	Bedding for brick floor
018	Stone buttress	Former extension wall

## APPENDIX 2

### The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 18 . . Context Records
- 2 . . . Photographic Records
- 4 . . . Scale Drawings
- 1 . . . Site Matrix
- 1 . . . Box of finds

All primary records are currently kept at:

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

City and County Museum Accession number	174.95
Archaeological Project Services project code	KAF95