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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND ADJACENT TO RECTORY ROAD, RUSKINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (RRR95)

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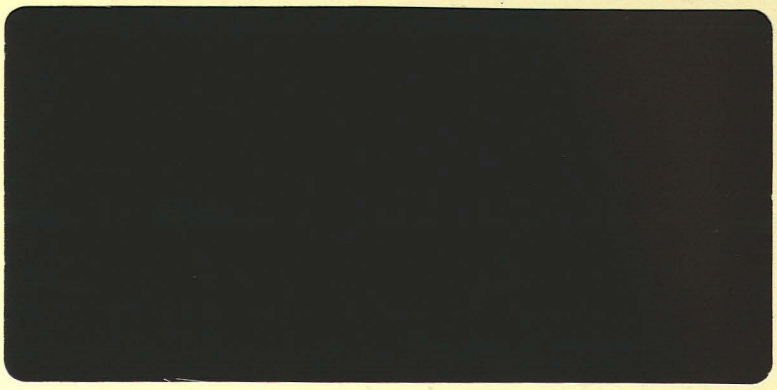
9/1/96



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND ADJACENT TO RECTORY ROAD, RUSKINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (RRR95)

Work Undertaken For
Land and Buildings Consultancy

November 1995

CONTENTS

List of Figures

1. SUMMARY

An evaluation was undertaken to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at land south of Rectory Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire.

Situated in an area of dense archaeological activity the earliest remains consist of prehistoric trackways and enclosures identified from aerial photographs. Finds of prehistoric date have also been made from the area and consist of Acheulian (c. 200,000 bc) hand-axes and Neolithic (4000-2000 bc) polished axes. Romano-British activity is restricted to finds of Roman coins and the presence of the course of a Roman road, Mareham Lane, that connected Bourne to Lincoln.

Anglo-Saxon activity is represented by a large inhumation and cremation cemetery located to the northwest of the investigation area with a possible second cemetery to the northeast.

Investigations revealed a series of deposits, of presumed agricultural activity overlying natural sand and gravels. Later, a building used as a poultry shedwas constructed on the eastern side of the investigation area.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Between the 30th October and 2nd November 1995, Archaeological Project Services were commissioned by the Land and Buildings Consultancy to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to proposed development on land south of Rectory Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire, as detailed in planning application N/52/407/95. The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief set by the North Kesteven Community Archaeologist

2.2 Topography and Geology

Ruskington is situated approximately 23km southeast of Lincoln and 5km north of Sleaford, close to the Fen Edge, with the Fens lying to the east (Fig. 1). The village is situated in the civil parish of Ruskington, North Kesteven District (NGR TF 079508). Located towards the southern extent of the village, the investigation area is located at *c.* 10m OD (Fig. 2).

Local soils are the Ruskington Association and comprise Ruskington and Ickford series gleyic brown calcareous earths and Newsleaford series gleyic brown calcareous sands, occuring over glaciofluvial sand and gravel (Hodge *et al*, 304).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Ruskington is located in an area of archaeological activity dating from the prehistoric to medieval periods.

Situated over a kilometre west of the investigation area, cropmarks, identified from aerial photographs, show prehistoric trackways and enclosures (NK52.47). North of these, more than a kilometre northwest of the site, ring ditches, possibly representing burial mounds, have also been identified from aerial photographs (NK52.18). Approximately 420m east of these are further ring ditches (NK52.5). Located 480m south of the investigation area a mid-Acheulian hand-axe, a middle Bronze Age palstave axe and a ditch and curvilinear arrangement of masonry were discovered (NK52.16). Situated *c.* 690m southeast a pyriform mid-Acheulian hand-axe was retrieved (NK52.4). Immediately southeast and northeast of this were recovered two flint axes (NK52.17 and NK52.14). Approximately 900m west of the site a Neolithic polished flint axe was

found (NK52.40), and over a kilometre to the east (NK52.12) worked flints have been retrieved.

Located *c.* 180m southeast of the evaluation area is the route of the Roman road Mareham Lane (NK52.21 and NK52.34), aligned northwest-southeast, that linked Bourne with Lincoln, via Sleaford. Adjacent to the road, cropmarks representing enclosures (NK52.34) have been identified. Roman activity is also evidenced by chance finds of Roman coins (NK52.6,7,8 and 9), located northeast, west and southeast of the site. Roman coins have also been retrieved more than a kilometre southeast (NK52.48), and were found in association with human skeletal remains.

Ruskington is probably best known for the Anglo-Saxon inhumation and cremation cemetery ((NK52.1 and (NK52.10), located 720m northwest, which has yielded more than 180 inhumations, dated to the 5th-6th centuries. Situated between 350 and 430m north of the investigation area are two findspots from which Anglo-Saxon weapons were retrieved. East of these, 640m northeast of the site, is the location of another Anglo-Saxon cemetery (NK52.10), documented by the antiquarian Trollope (1872, 295).

The earliest documentary evidence for the existence of Ruskington comes from the Domesday Survey of 1086, wherein it is referred to as Reschintone, a name probably deriving from the Old English, the suffix of which '*tone*' may be attributable to Scandinavian influence (Ekwall 1974, 397). Situated 380m northeast of the site is All Saints Church, a 12th century construction (NK52.32).

Recent archaeological investigations in Ruskington have revealed a Bronze Age inhumation cemetery (Pre Construct Archaeology 1994b) to the east. To the northwest, prehistoric pits and enclosure ditches were uncovered (Pre Construct Archaeology 1994a and 1995b) and a Roman ditch was uncovered to the north (Pre Construct Archaeology 1995c).

Ordnance survey maps show the site to have been relatively free from activity. However, a long rectangular building is shown which was ascertained to be a poultry shed.

3. AIMS

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability, documentation, quality of setting and amenity value. The purpose of this identification and assessment of deposits was to establish their significance, in order to facilitate recommendations for an appropiate strategy that could be intergrated with any proposed development programme.

4. METHODS

Four trenches were opened (A, B, C and D on Fig. 3) and were located to provide sample coverage of the development site. All four trenches were opened by machine before they were cleaned and examined. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at a scale of 1:20.

5. ANALYSIS

Records of the deposits and features identified during the evaluation 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

Phase 1 Natural Deposits

Located at the base of all four trenches was a deposit of brownish yellow sand containing frequent gravel (Contexts 10, 16, 20 and 35). This was identified as natural of probable fluvial origin.

Phase 2 Undated Deposits

Cutting natural deposits in the centre of Trench A was a north to south aligned linear feature (Context 15). Measuring 70mm wide, it was exposed for a length of 0.62m. Interpreted as a ploughmark, it was filled with a mid grey brown sandy silt (Context 14).

Cut into natural deposits at the western end of Trench C was a sub-triangular feature (Context 4, Fig. 5). Exposed for a length of 0.18m, this measured 0.21m wide and 0.09m deep. The function of this feature was not ascertained. A light greyish brown silty sand represented the fill (Context 5).

Phase 3 Modern Deposits

Sealing phase 1 and 2 deposits and present in all trenches was a layer of predominantly yellowish brown sand (Contexts 3, 13, 19 and 25). This was identified as the subsoil.

Located at the eastern end of Trench C was a similar deposit of sand, although of yellowish grey colour (Context 8). Interpreted as subsoil, subsequent activities in this area had altered this deposit.

Cutting subsoils 3 and 8, in Trench C, was a north to south aligned linear feature (Context 7). Observed across the width of the trench, this feature was 0.49m wide and was filled with greyish brown silty sand, that contained brick and concrete fragments, and brownish yellow coarse sand (Contexts 6 and 9). Identified as demolition material, the cut represents the former position of a wall.

Cut into the subsoil in Trench D, was a linear feature aligned northwest to southeast (Context 27). Though the cut was not visible the position was marked by the route of a ceramic land-drain (Context 28). A backfill deposit of light brown coarse sand (Context 26) resembled the subsoil layer.

Overlying the subsoil at the northern end of Trench D was a deposit of light brown silty sand (Context 24). This was identified as a former topsoil, present only in Trench D. Overlying 24 at the north end was a thin layer of light brown pea gravel (Context 23) that was further overlain by a brick surface (Context 22) measuring 1.6m by 1m. Interpreted as a brick floor, the gravel deposit represents a bedding deposit.

Cutting the former topsoil 24, at the southern end of Trench D, was an indeterminate feature (Context 29). Exposed for a length of 1.8m and a width of 1.6m, a depth of 0.3m was recorded. A series of dump deposits filled this feature, and included a grey brown silty sand (Context 30), mortar (Context 31), yellow sandy gravel (Context 32), yellow brown sand (Context 33) and a layer of brown silty sand (Context 34). These have been interpreted as demolition deposits filling a pit feature.

Sealing deposits in Trenches A, B and C was a mid greyish brown silty sand (Contexts 2, 12 and 18) that was identified

as the modern topsoil. This was further overlain by a brown sandy silt turf layer (Contexts 1, 11, 17 and 21).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural (Phase 1) deposits are represented by a dense sand and gravel layer derived from alluvial activity.

Undated deposits (Phase 2) take the form of a linear ploughmark, suggesting former use of this area as agricultural in origin, and a small feature that may be a posthole of uncertain use.

Modern deposits (Phase 3) indicate agricultural activity in the form of a land-drain and the presence of a building formerly located towards the east of the investigation area. Recent topsoil and turf layers are also present.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For assessment of significance the *Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments* has been used (DoE 1990, Annex 4; See Appendix 2)

Period
Only recent activities were recorded on the proposed development site. However, undated deposits could represent earlier activity of probable agricultural nature.

Rarity
None of the deposits encountered are considered to be rare.

Documentation
Records of archaeological sites and finds in the Ruskington area are kept by the Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven. No synopses or syntheses of these have previously been produced. A report of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery is in press (Atkin and Healey).

Group value
Low group value was ascertained by the nature of the deposits encountered.

Survival/Condition
Sealed beneath topsoil archaeological deposits would have been well preserved if encountered. Ploughing has taken place, but damage would be limited.

Fragility/Vulnerability
No deposits were considered to be in danger from proposed development of the site.

Diversity
Low functional diversity is indicated by the predominantly agricultural nature of deposits encountered.

Potential
Potential for archaeological remains existing within the immediate areas of investigation is low.

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNIQUES

The strategy of using trial trenches to locate and evaluate archaeological deposits was, on the whole, effective. No archaeological deposits are likely to be destroyed by development at the site.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations of land to the south of Rectory Road, Ruskington have revealed natural deposits at a depth of between 0.28m and 0.4m across the site. Two undated feature were encountered and are likely to be associated with agricultural

activity at the site. Later deposits indicate the presence of a building, that of a poultry shed, situated towards the east of the development site.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Mr C F Scott of the Land and Buildings Consultancy who commissioned the investigation and analysis. The work was coordinated by Steve Haynes and this report was edited by Dave Start. Hilary Healey, the Acting Community Archaeologist for North Kesteven District Council permitted examination of the relevant files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

11. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Haynes
Research: Mark Dymond
Supervisor: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Site Assistant: Mark Sansom
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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DoE, 1990 *Archaeology and Planning*, Planning Policy Guidance note **16**

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Heritage Lincolnshire 1994b *Archaeological Watching Brief of a Development at Reynolds Farm, Ruskington, Lincolnshire* (Unpublished MS).

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**.

Pre-Construct Archaeology 1994a *Land off Westcliffe Road and Lincoln Road, Ruskington* (Unpublished MS).

Pre-Construct Archaeology 1994b *29 Station Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire* (Unpublished MS).

Pre-Construct Archaeology 1995a *The Allotment Gardens, Lincoln Road, Ruskington* (Unpublished MS).

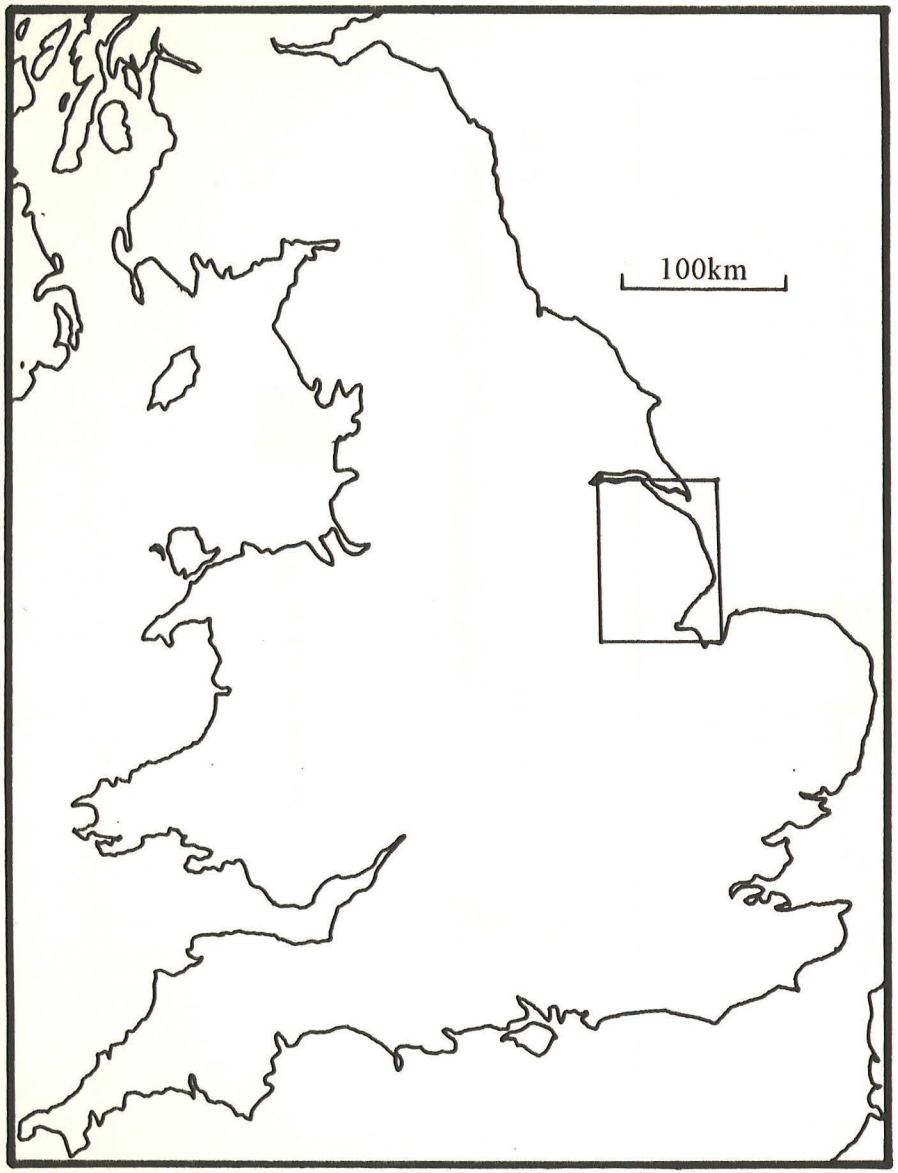
Pre-Construct Archaeology 1995b *Land off Lincoln Road and Westcliffe Road, Ruskington* (Unpublished MS).

Pre-Construct Archaeology 1995c *Land off Millview Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire* (Unpublished MS).

Trollope, E., 1872 *Sleaford and the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn, in the County of Lincoln.* William Fawcett.

13. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed with 'NK' are the primary reference numbers used by the North Kesteven District Community Archaeologist.



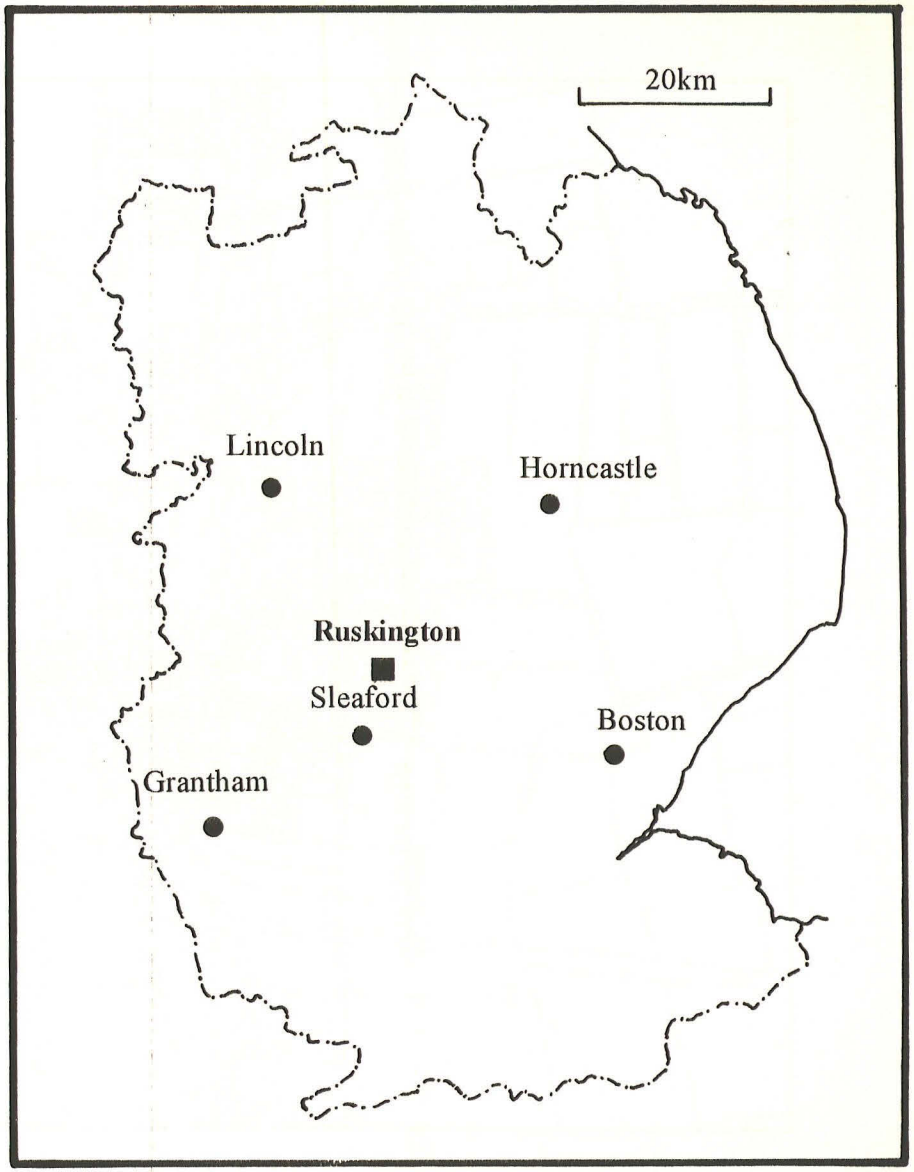
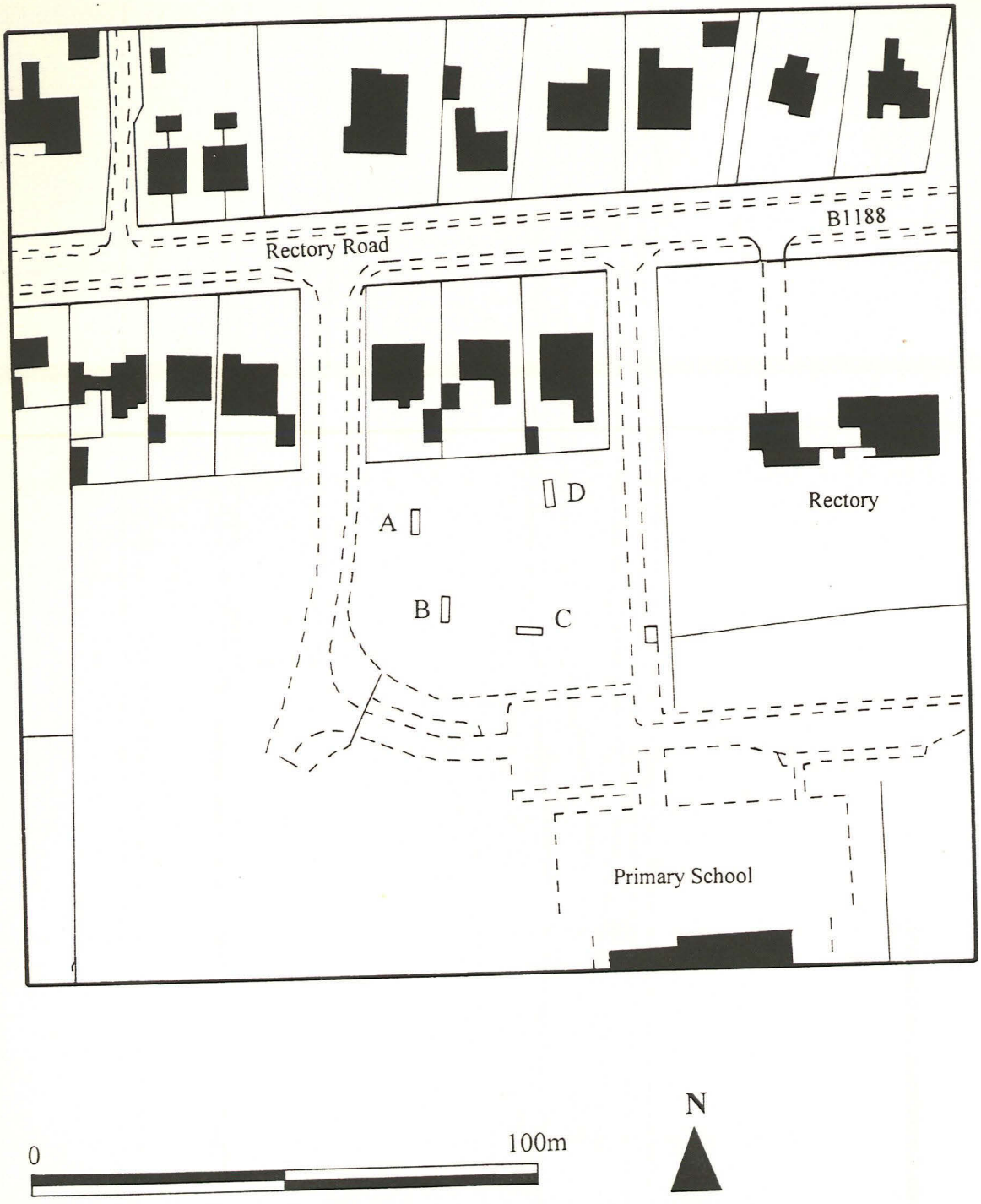


Fig. 1 GENERAL LOCATION PLAN

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan

Fig. 3 Trench Location Plan



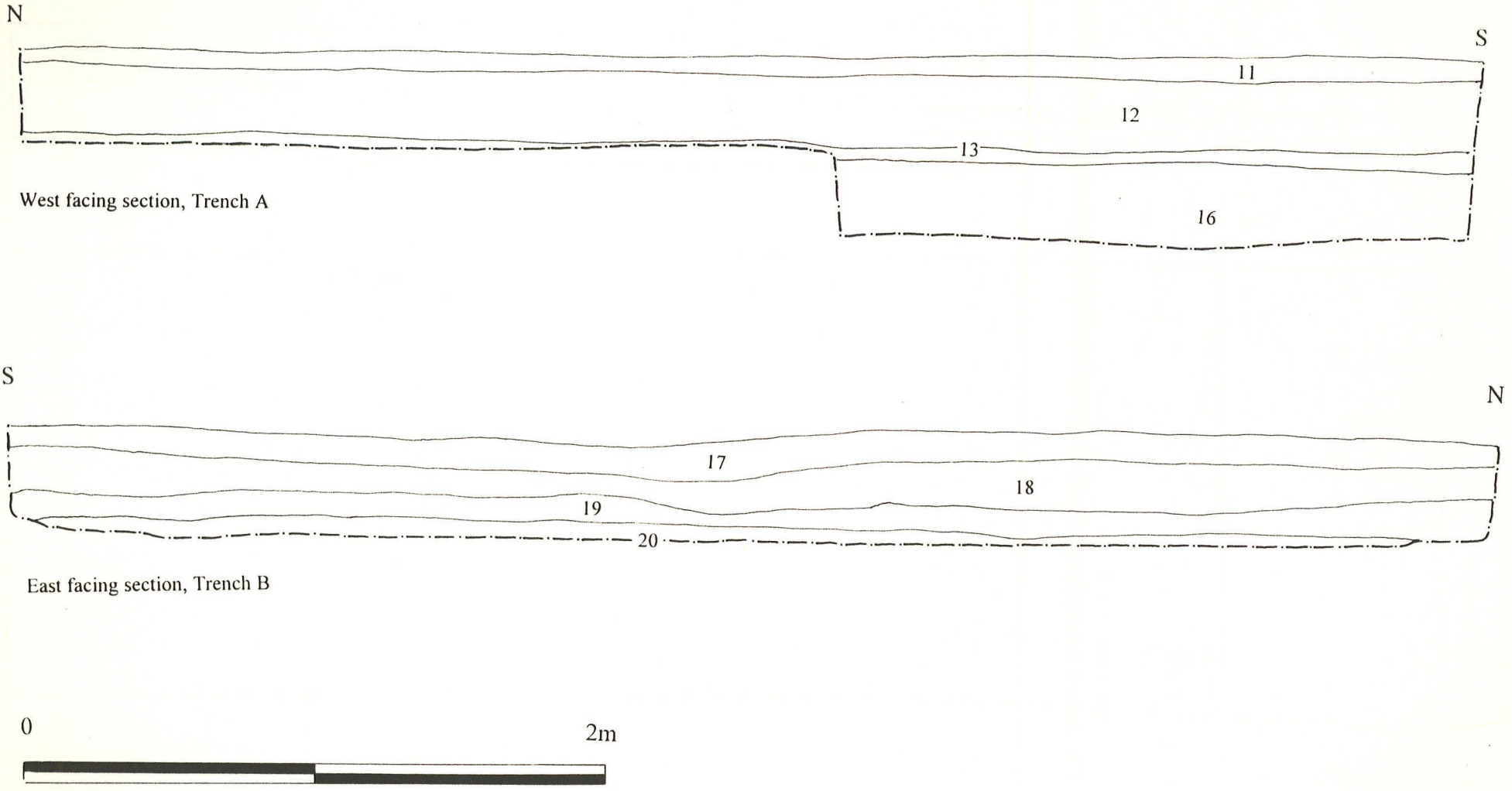
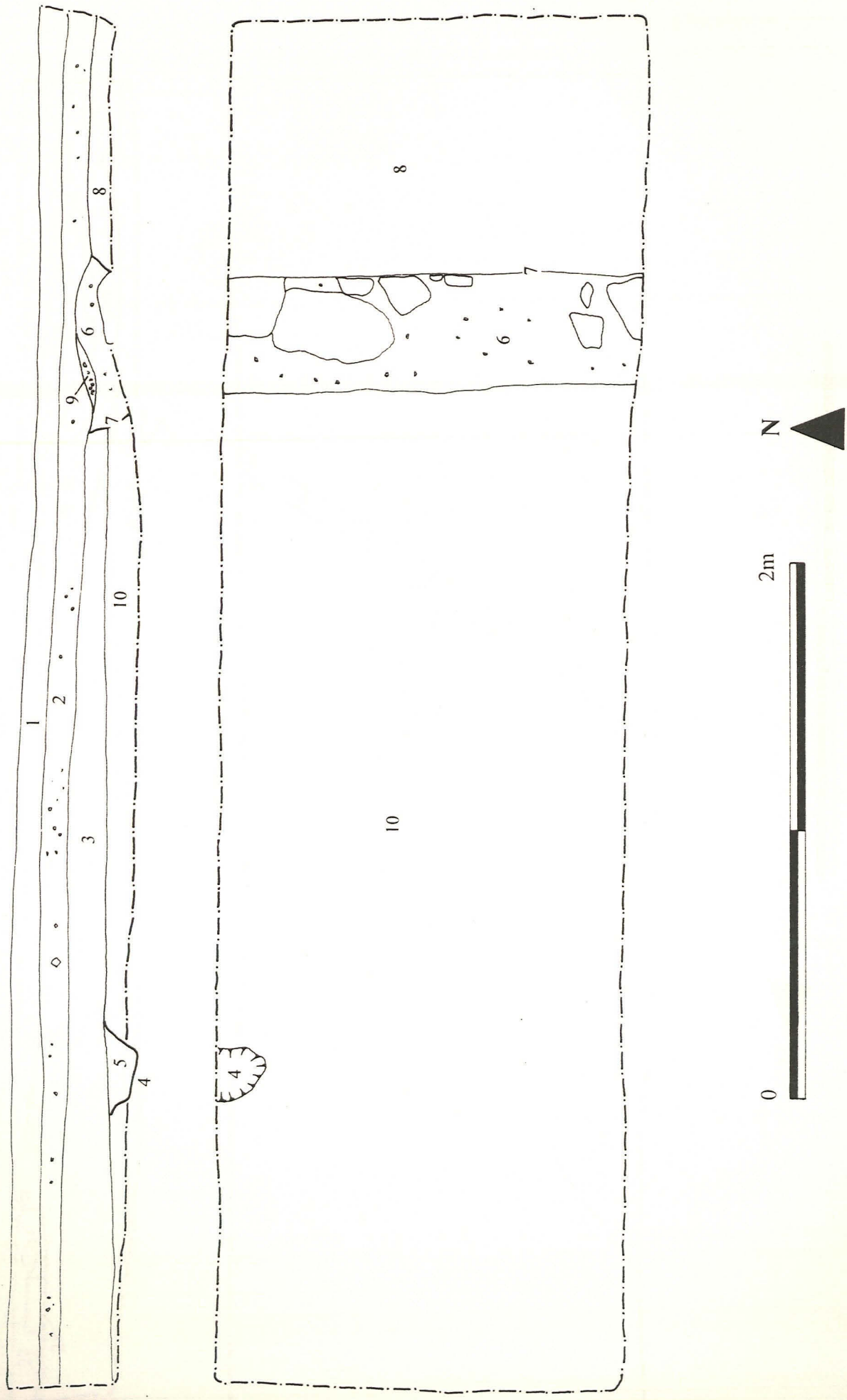


Fig. 4 Sections, Trenches A and B

Fig. 5 Plan and Section, Trench C



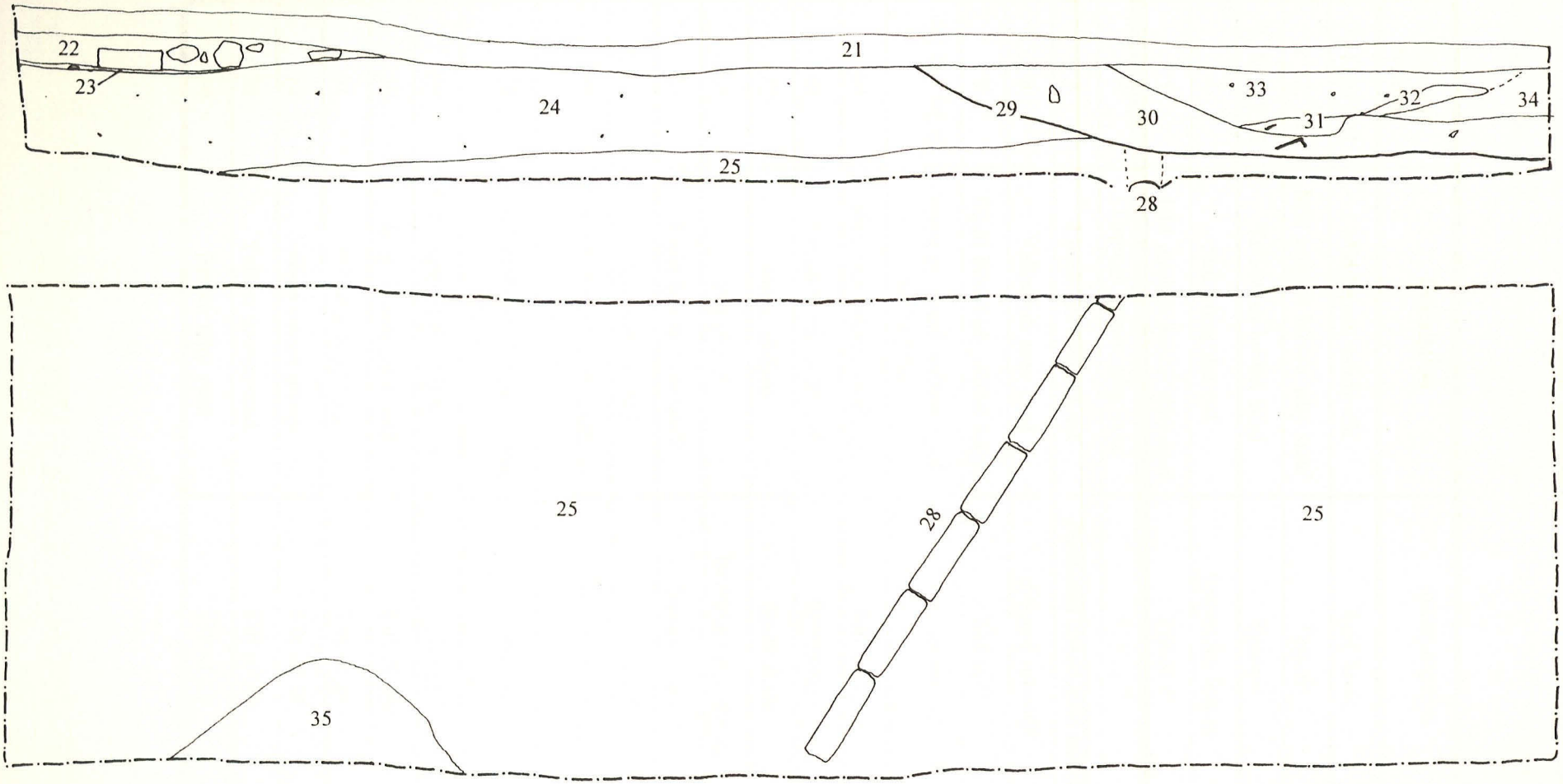


Fig. 6 Plan and Section, Trench D

APPENDIX 1

Context Summary.

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
1, 11, 17,21	Mid brown sandy silt	Turf layer
2, 12, 18	Mid greyish brown silty sand	Topsoil
3, 13, 19,25	Yellowish brown sand	Subsoil
4	Sub-triangular cut	Uncertain feature
5	Light greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 4
6	Greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 7
7	Linear north-south cut	Presumed foundation trench
8	Yellowish grey sand	Altered subsoil?
9	Light brownish yellow sand	Fill of 7
10, 16, 20, 35	Light brownish yellow sand with gravel	Natural deposit
14	Mid grey brown sandy silt	Fill of 15
15	Linear north south cut	Ploughmark
22	Brick surface	Brick floor
23	Pea gravel	Bedding layer for 22
24	Light brown silty sand	Former topsoil
26	Light brown sand	Fill of 27
27	Presumed northwest southeast linear cut	Cut for land-drain
28	Hand-made, U-shaped ceramic pipes	Land-drain
29	Cut, exposed for 1.8 by 1.6m	Pit cut
30	Grey brown silty sand	Fill of 29
31	White mortar dust	Fill of 29
32	Yellow sandy gravel	Fill of 29
33	Yellow brown sand	Fill of 29
34	Brown silty sand	Fill of 29

APPENDIX 2

Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling Ancient Monuments - Extract from *Archaeology and Planning* DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16, November 1990

The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking), are used for assessing the national importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. The criteria should not however be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

i *Period*: all types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation.

ii *Rarity*: there are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monument, both in a national and regional context.

iii *Documentation*: the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.

iv *Group value*: the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement or cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.

v *Survival/Condition*: the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.

vi *Fragility/Vulnerability*: highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or unsympathetic treatment; vulnerable monuments of this nature would particularly benefit from the statutory protection that scheduling confers. There are also existing standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment and which are similarly well suited by scheduled monument protection, even if these structures are already listed buildings.

vii *Diversity*: some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, others because of a single important attribute.

viii *Potential*: on occasion, the nature of the evidence cannot be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons anticipating its existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for scheduling. This is usually confined to sites rather than upstanding monuments.

APPENDIX 3

The Archive

The archive consists of:

35 . . Context records
2 . . . Photographic records
10 . . Scale drawings
1 . . . Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

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

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 179.95

Archaeological Project Services, project code: RRR95