



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens:
Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks
for a
New Estate Access Road**

NGR: TF 2675 6920

Site Code: **HBG 95**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **10.96**

Planning Consent: S/086/0647/93

Report prepared for Stamford Homes

March 1996

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Summary

The programme of monitoring groundworks for part of the residential development continued, resulting in the identification of three ditches, two containing small quantities of Romano-British pottery. These features had not been located during the initial evaluation phase in 1993. A peat-filled feature may have been a later ditch but this could not be determined because of the shallow depth of the groundworks.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in October 1995 by Stamford Homes to monitor topsoil stripping and other groundworks for a new estate road within the Banovallum Gardens residential development to the SE of Horncastle (Figs. 1 and 2). The development area was evaluated by trenching in 1993, followed by an unproductive geophysical survey of a small area; house construction in two defined areas has been the subject of watching briefs (Tann 1993, Field 1994, Tann 1995a, Tann 1995b). The estate road crossed one of the two defined areas and was therefore affected by a Condition on the planning consent.

The archaeological background of this part of Horncastle has been detailed in the previous reports. At Banovallum Gardens worked flints have been recovered. Air photographs showing the large Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure in the field to the south also contain cropmarks of a second possible enclosure extending into the Banovallum Gardens development. Part of that ditched enclosure may have been investigated in Trench 5 of the 1993 evaluation but reliable dating evidence was absent. A second enclosure was identified in Trench 2 to the SW of the new road.

The Watching Brief

Topsoil stripping and other groundworks for the road took place on the 13th and 16th October 1995, watched by the author. The area was rough vegetation which had become established on uncultivated land; there were some areas of ground disturbed as a result of nearby building activities and the partially backfilled archaeological evaluation Trenches 4 and 10. The groundworks were intended to remove topsoil and to create a road of appropriate gradient, linking with the existing estate network.

Archaeological observations and features were recorded using a sequence of numbers from 100 to 103, to avoid confusion with the other previous archaeological projects at this location.

100 A broad band of mid-brown silt loam containing pockets of sand and gravel was revealed after topsoil had been removed from west of the road junction in the centre of the monitored works. The soil was interpreted as the fill of a NW-SE aligned ditch about 3.5m wide; three sherds of Romano-British greyware pottery were found on the surface of this ditch at its eastern edge, probably in an early fill layer.

The road disturbed only the uppermost deposits of this ditch and these could only be recorded in the southern section (Fig. 3). A modern land drain had cut across the ditch close to the section but part of the original eastern edge of the feature appeared to survive, showing a gently sloping face cutting the natural chalk.

On the western side of the brown loam ditch fill was a spread of desiccated grey-brown peaty material about 6m wide. Initially this was thought to be a palaeochannel (several of which had been found during the evaluation) but as it appeared to overlay the brown ditch fill it was reinterpreted as evidence for a deliberate or coincidental re-excavation of a ditch on almost the same position. Unfortunately the date of this secondary ditch was not established.

To the east of the dark ditch fills was a parallel ridge of chalk about 10m wide and up to 0.4m high. It appeared to have been higher, as the overlying orange-brown loam subsoil had been entirely removed by cultivation on its crest. The ridge was interpreted as the remains of an upcast bank from excavation and re-cutting of Ditch 100. No buried ground surface was identified beneath the chalk.

101 A single worked flint was recovered from the stripped surface close to the new road junction, approximately midway between Ditch 100 and 102. Although few flints have been found in this field, numerous examples have been found by LAS in the field south of this development, particularly in a concentration about 100m SE of this findspot.

102 At the eastern limit of the new road, a much smaller north-south ditch was revealed. The surviving width was 1.7m and its depth was probably very slightly over 0.7m (Fig. 3). A modern land drain had removed part of its eastern edge but the ditch sides sloped gently down until it formed a 0.2m wide slot. The feature had a chalky silt basal fill, overlain by a thicker deposit of grey-brown loam containing a little gravel and a sherd of Roman samian pottery from Central Gaul (identified as Form Drag. 44, most common in the later 2nd century AD). A worked flint was also recovered. The ditch was sealed by a lighter brown loam subsoil beneath the modern topsoil. Chalk survived to about 0.15m higher on the western side, perhaps implying an upcast bank although that could not be distinguished.

103 The western side of a parallel ditch was exposed in the trench face east of Ditch 102. This feature had a visible fill of orange-brown sandy loam with gravel inclusions, very similar to the subsoil layer. The western face seemed to have a steeply sloping profile but it had been truncated by the modern land drain (Fig. 3). The surviving maximum width was 1.8m and it was 0.6m deep. It was thought that 103 might post-date 102 but this was based entirely on fill colour and the actual relationship is unknown.

Conclusion

Four sherds of uncertainly stratified Romano-British pottery are not sufficient to date the three ditches as of that period, but in the absence of any later finds from this watching brief the possibility exists that two sides of a ditched enclosure of considerable antiquity were exposed by the road. The width enclosed (if 100 and either 102 or 103 are contemporary) is about 60m east-west. There were indications of an internal upcast bank, and the feature may have been recut at least once.

The enclosure is dissimilar to that investigated about 150m to the south in the next field (Tipper 1994). That Iron Age - Roman example was about 50m west east and 60m north-south, with another attached enclosure to the east. A field system (perhaps of Iron Age date) was found in close association. The ditches were between 3.4m and 5m wide and ranged from 1.4m to about 2m deep, with a steeply sloping V profile. An external upcast bank was suggested on the basis of fill deposits.

Part of a small ditched sub-circular enclosure has been tentatively identified in the extreme NE corner of a 1948 air photograph (CUCAP BT/54, 23.7.1948, reproduced as Fig. 4 in Tann 1993). Almost all of this feature appears to lie within the SE corner of the Banovallum Gardens development area, but curving into the fields to both south and east. This feature may have been examined in Trench 5 during the 1993 evaluation. Additionally, there are traces of a very small sub-rectangular enclosure (perhaps with internal features) outside the NE part of that enclosure. Neither of these two recognised features could produce the ditches found in the present watching brief. During the 1993 evaluation an enclosure ditch flanked by gullies was located in Trench 2. This is also unlikely to have formed part of the same feature as 100.

The ground close to Thunker Drain is mixed, with chalk, gravel and clay; some natural deposits in the area of the new road have probably been disturbed and redeposited by a post-glacial course of the Drain. The presence of peat, although now dry, indicates periods of wet ground conditions and it does not appear the most conducive spot for Romano-British habitation. The peat may however reflect a rising water-table in the late Romano-British period: the enclosure ditches although re-excavated may have failed to drain the land and permitted the formation of peat. It is now suspected by the author that some of the features identified as natural palaeo-channels during the earlier site evaluation may have been archaeological in origin.

Acknowledgements

LAS was grateful to Barry Maynard (Stamford Homes) and the groundworkers. The Romano-British pottery was identified by Barbara Davies (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit). Flints were identified by Ian Brooks (Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.).

Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid from field drawings by the author. The report was produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
12th March 1996

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Archive Summary

Archaeological finds: flints, Roman pottery
Annotated copies of developer's plans
Sketch sections and plans
Scale field sections and plans

Appendix 1

Romano-British Pottery from the Watching Brief

(by Barbara Davies, CLAU)

Context 100:

2 Roman greyware base sherds

1 Roman ?greyware base sherd

Context 102:

1 abraded Samian rim sherd (Central Gaul, form Drag. 44); present from Hadrianic period but more common in the second half of the 2nd Century AD.

Appendix 2:

Flint Artefacts from Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle

by Ian Brooks (Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.).

Two flints were recovered from monitoring the estate road construction.

100 A long tertiary flake (34 x 16 x 3.5mm) in a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/2) semi-translucent flint. Partly patinated. The artefact has some post-depositional damage.

101 A squat secondary flake (36 x 51.5 x 11mm) in a dusky yellowish brown (10YR 2/2) semi-translucent flint. A 30mm length of edge damage in the distal left sector of the artefact may be the result of use, possibly as an *ad hoc* scraper.

No date can be given for the two artefacts although the crude nature of the artefact from 101 may tentatively suggest a Bronze Age date. Both artefacts are on flint types common in the tills and other derived flint sources of Lincolnshire and the raw materials were probably collected locally (Brooks 1989, 55-59). The chalk of the Lincolnshire Wolds contains considerable flint resources in the form of both tabular and nodular bands (Wood and Smith 1978). These are generally of poor quality, being opaque, grey and faulted. There are, however, a series of derived flint deposits in the form of tills, gravels and beach deposits. The flint in these is often of a superior quality and is the preferred source of flint for much of the flint assemblages in Lincolnshire.

The flakes were classified as follows:

Primary flakes: a completely corticated dorsal surface; Secondary flakes: a partially corticated dorsal surface; Tertiary flakes: an uncorticated dorsal surface.

The description of the tools follows that of Inizan *et al* (1992) and the flint colours are defined by the Geological Society of America's Rock-Color Chart (Goddard *et al* 1948).

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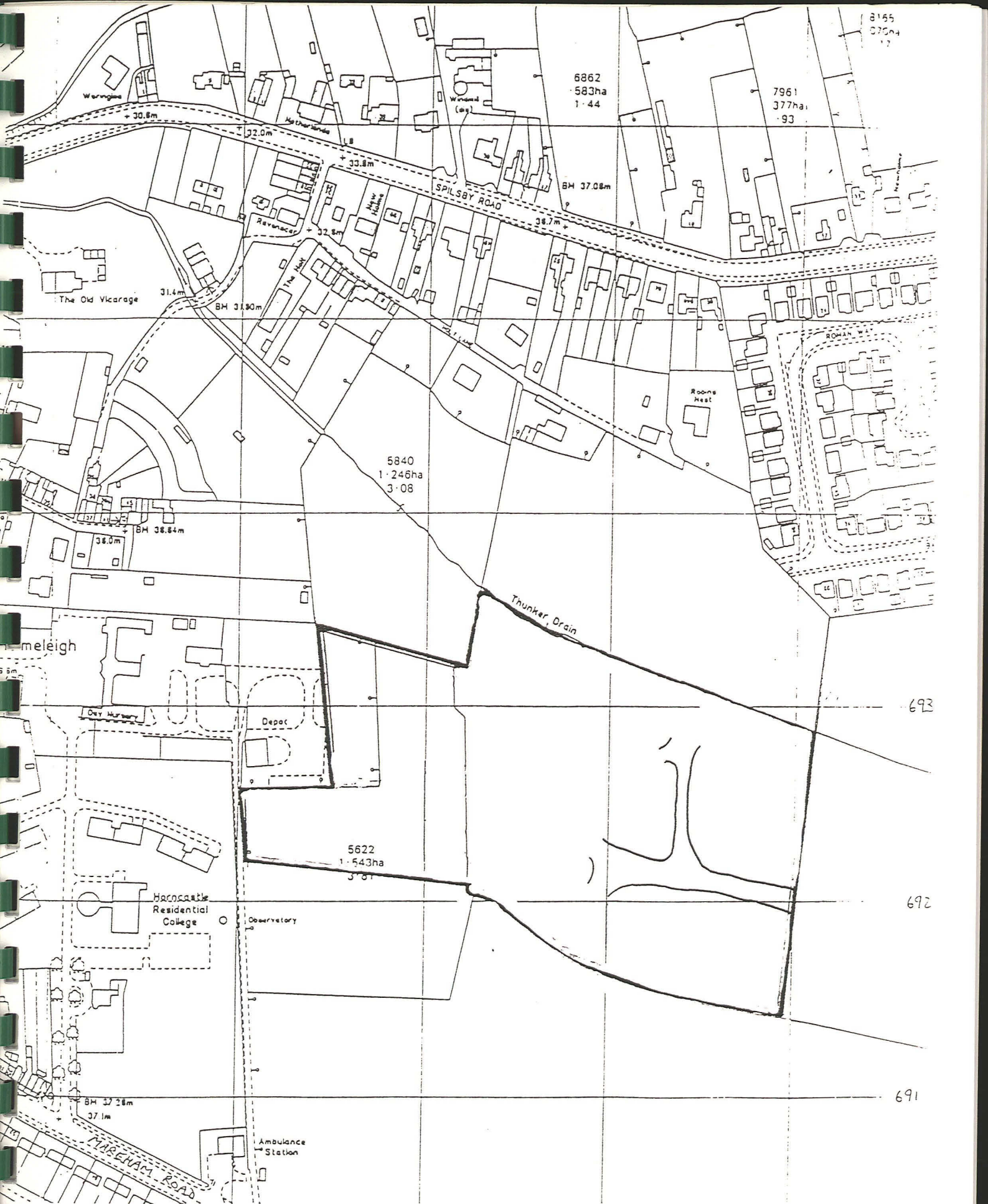


Fig. 1 Location of the Banovallum Gardens development, Horncastle (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map. Crown Copyright; reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 50424A).

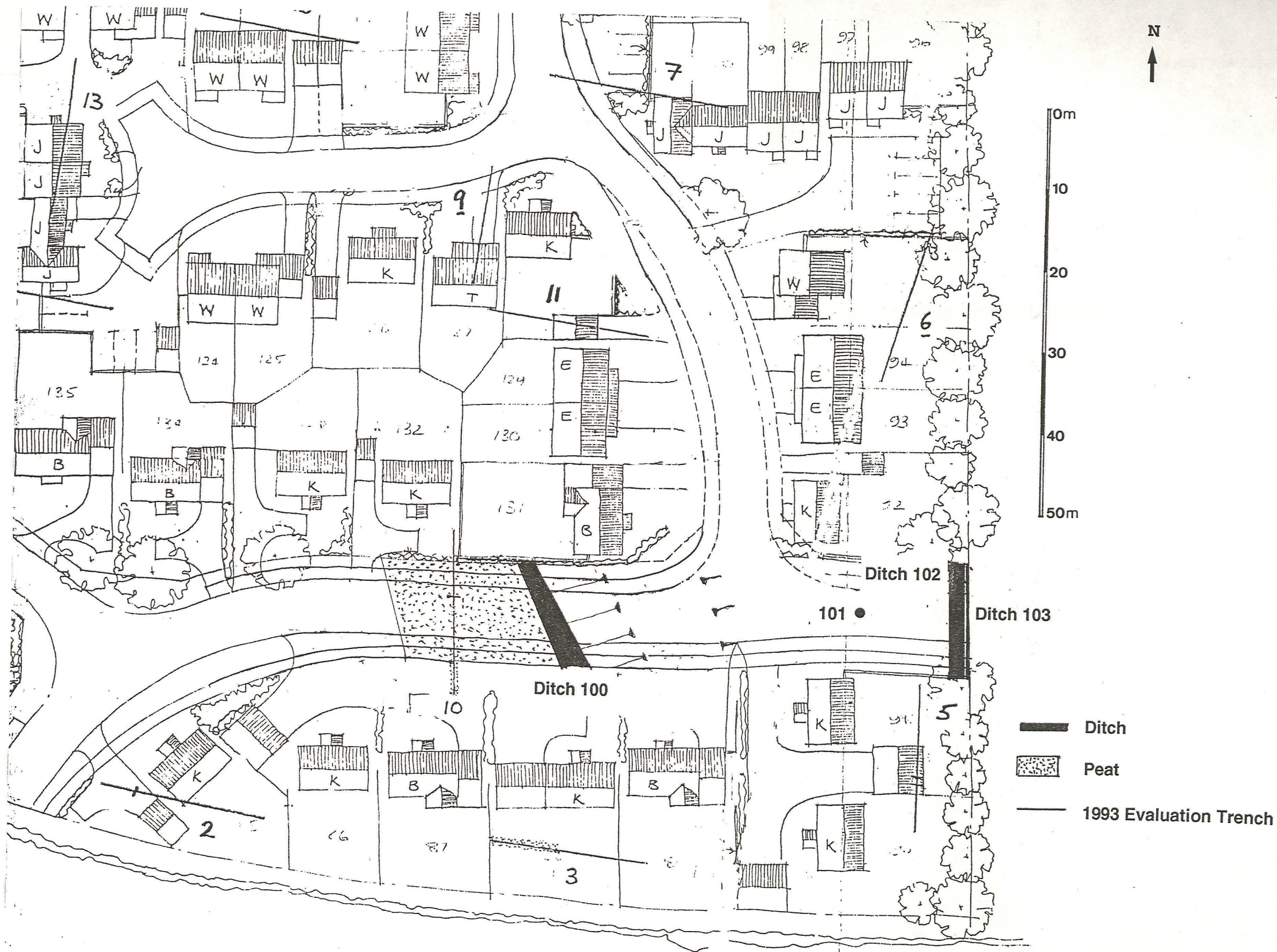


Fig. 2 Position of the Estate Access Road, with features and some previous Evaluation Trenches marked. (Based on a Phase 2 Layout drawing (no. S209.17E) prepared for D.B. Lawrence and Associates).

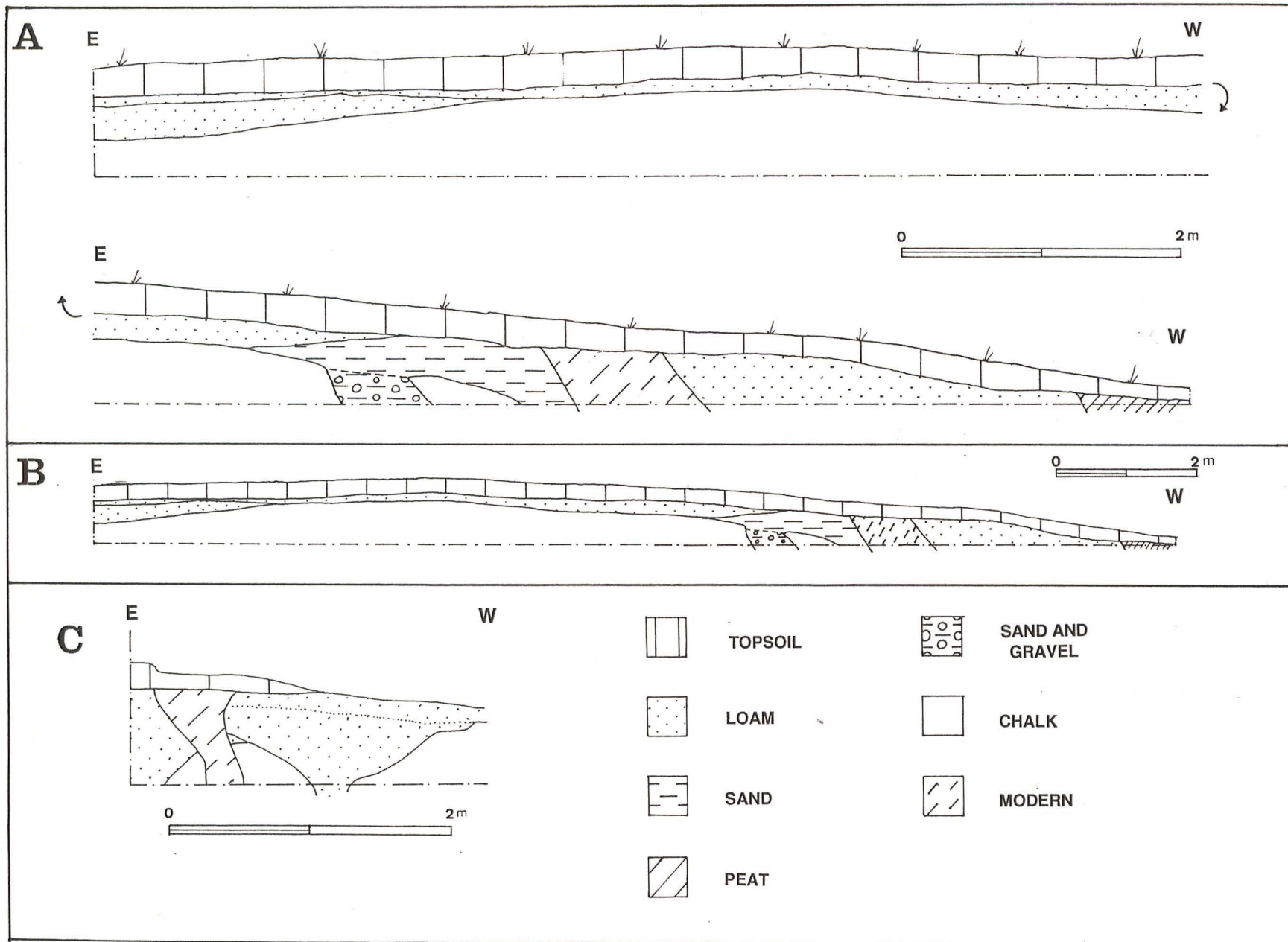


Fig. 3 Sections across the Archaeological Features (McDaid and Tann):
 A: Upcast bank and ditch 100
 B: Upcast bank and ditch 100 (at lesser scale)
 C: Ditches 102 and 103



Pl. 1. Topsoil stripping of the new estate road (looking east).

Pl. 2. Position of the estate road in relation to Trench 2 (background, extreme right), Trench 3 (background, centre) and Trench 10 (cut by road, right of centre). Looking south towards Mareham Lane development.





Pl. 3. Position of Ditch 100 in relation to the existing roads and house development. (Looking west to plots 84, 83 and 135; scale divisions 0.2m).



Pl. 4. Light brown fill of Ditch 100 with adjacent peat-filled feature (looking north; scale divisions 0.2m).



Pl. 5. Section through the upper fills of Ditch 100. The 1m scale marks a land drain cut (looking SE).

Pl. 6. Ditch 100 and its adjacent peat-filled feature formed a distinct north-south aligned ridge, perhaps reflecting a land boundary consistently re-excavated in a different position. Looking east.





Pl. 7. The ridge visible as a marked feature in the field surface (looking SE).

Pl. 8. Section across Ditch 102, showing an adjacent land drain cut and the edge of another ditch. Note that these ditches coincide with the eastern boundary of the developed field. (looking south; scale divisions 0.2m).





PI. 9. Lower fill of Ditch 102 in plan (looking north towards Thunker Drain; scale divisions 0.2m).



PI. 10. View to the east along the new road course. The ground dips between Ditch 102 (far limit of cut) and Ditch 100 (centre of photograph) - this may be the result of internal chalk upcast banks associated with each ditch. In the foreground the chalk is disturbed by various small post-glacial features.



Pl. 11. Undulations visible in sprouting crop to the east of the present Banovallum Gardens development. It is not known whether these are of natural or archaeological origin. (Looking SE).