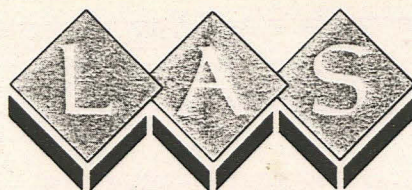


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# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

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## LAND ADJACENT TO PRIORY HOUSE MARKBY ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report

for

Mr and Mrs Windsor

June 1996

Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section  
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Fig. 2. 1:2500 scale survey of Markby Priory earthworks annotated in 1964 by Ordnance Survey investigator. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. Licence no. AL50424.

Fig. 3. Plan of foundation trenches with arbitrary spot levels and showing northern edge of moat. (Based on architects plan, drawing no. 1128 021 scale 1:50. (M. V. Clark)

Fig. 4. Plan of site based partly on original proposal plan, showing surveyed north edge of the moat and (sketched) south edge and bank. (M. V. Clark).

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# Land Adjacent to Priory House, Sutton Rd, Markby

## Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: TF4885 7899  
Site Code: MPH 96  
LCNCC Accession No.: 75.96

### **Summary**

*Excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling, west of Priory House, revealed the northern edge of the moat which surrounds Markby Priory, showing that the properties fronting the south side of Sutton Road have encroached onto the Priory site. No securely datable finds were made.*

### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr and Mrs A. Windsor to undertake an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Mr and Mrs Windsor to fulfil a planning condition set by East Lindsey District Council and in accordance with the general requirements of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

The purpose of the Watching Brief was to record any archaeological deposits disturbed during groundworks at the above site.

### **Archaeological Background**

The parish of Markby lies near the coast in the Outmarsh zone of the Lincolnshire Marsh. This area was subject to post-glacial flooding and in the Roman period consisted largely of saltmarsh with many salt production sites. There were continuing marine transgressions, resulting in flooding of the saltmarsh which occurred between the late Iron Age and into the post-Roman period in different parts of the Outmarsh which means that Roman and earlier deposits lie buried beneath the marine silts.

The distribution of Anglo-Saxon settlements on the eastern fringe of the Middlemarsh to the west, suggests that the Outmarsh was still not permanently settled at this time, although it may have been suitable for seasonal grazing. Markby is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, which indicates that the settlement was in existence in by the late Saxon period but it was sokeland belonging to other estates. It is not known if there was ever a manorial complex in the village. The present settlement is shrunken, if not deserted and the main focus of the village is the church which lies within the Priory complex.

### **The Site**

The development site lies just north of the priory complex and fronts onto Sutton Road, the main road which runs through the village (Pl. 1). The works on the site comprised the construction of a single two-storey dwelling and detached garage.

The development plot lies close to, and north of, the north-east angle of the moat, which encloses the site of the Augustinian priory, founded by Ralf FitzGilbert in the twelfth century, and now only visible as earthworks under pasture (Figs. 1 and 2; Pl. 2). It was thought that medieval and earlier remains might be present on this plot of land.

According to local information, there were once cottages occupying the strip of land between the internal bank to the filled-in moat, and Sutton Road. The existing Priory House, to the east and the bungalow to the west were built in the mid 1970's. At the same time, the plot for the present development was cleared of trees and rubble, and roughly levelled, superfluous top soil being used to fill the now ducted east-west drainage ditch that had been cut into the filled-in moat. The faint profile of a large filled-in ditch, with a high south bank, is visible in the south lawns of the bungalow (Fig. 3).

East of the plot, where the drainage ditch is still open (Pl. 3), the south scarp rises almost as an integral part of the north side of the moat bank, whose present profile is probably little altered from the original. Most of this bank is covered with, or lined by trees and undergrowth and at least 1.50m above the surface level of the building plot (Pl. 4).

#### **Method**

A watching brief was conducted on 30th May 1996 during machine excavation of foundation trenches. The house covered an area c13.35m east-west x 9.00m north-south, mid-way between the road and the moat bank (pls. 5, 6). The trenches were 600mm wide and excavated initially to a depth of 1.00m. Surface levels were taken using an arbitrary datum were as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

The southern wall trench was excavated first, revealing a few well-defined continuous layers which, upon the cutting of the first north-south trench, were identified as layers or lenses comprising the fill of a potentially large ditch. The problem of recording a representative section to its full depth was resolved after discussions between the builder and the building inspector which resulted in excavation through the layers of fill to a stable bed of clay (Pl. 7). It could not be established with certainty if the apparent base of the ditch (whose level was also the new trench depth) was simply a wide ledge or its actual base. A degree of upper disturbance from a stand of trees and subsequent clearing and truncation had occurred, but the minimum original depth at this point was estimated to be in the order of 1.40-1.60m. The present water table is at approximately 1m depth from existing ground level, i.e. near the top of the organic layer 6.

The recorded ditch profile extended 3.40m northwards into the building plot and was dug into the natural buff-orange silty clay, 10, (Pls. 8, 9). The primary fill in the exposed profile, 7, was a grey-green silt. Above the primary silt was a black organic layer, 6, 0.26m thick, which contained wood, twigs, bark and animal bone (Pls. 10, 11). Two pieces of roof tile were retrieved by the contractor which may have come from the top of this layer. Above was a

thin lens of silt, **5**, similar to **7** which was overlain by a thick mixed deposit of grey-brown clay, **4**. This was a maximum of 0.66m thick and contained pockets of soil, possibly indicating deliberate infilling of the ditch. The uppermost fill of the ditch was **3**, a dark brown-black clayey soil. Pieces of plastic and occasional tile immediately over **3** infer that the latter was partly truncated during the 1970's clearance (Pl. 12). **3** is the only layer on site which resembles the colour and texture of a mixed topsoil material although its profile and present isolation after the deposition of **1** and **2** over it gives it the appearance of a lens of fill. At the south-west angle of the building trenches layer **3** was enlarged and darker and almost entirely filled with the rotted remains of tree stumps and roots; this being a corroboration of the account of the tree clearance in the 1970's.

**2** appears to be the subsequent main infill dumping confined mostly to the area of the ditch and **1** an overall finishing layer. The surface layer **1** was a compacted mixed green-brown clay with occasional traces of dark soil. It was deeper over the ditch but essentially comprised the same material.

### **Discussion**

Given the surviving height of the priory moat bank and the potential width of the external moat it is reasonably certain that the profile recorded in the house foundation trenches is the north side of the moat. Occasional small brick/tile fragments suggested that when the site was cleared in the 1970's, the soft upper fills of the ditch were compacted and truncated, the adjacent natural clays and more compact material being truncated to a lesser extent, thus retaining the upper profile of the ditch fill. In the lawn south of the adjacent bungalow a more conventional shrunken-fill profile is more evident.

The earthworks plan annotated in 1964 by the Ordnance Survey investigator (Fig. 2) shows the northern arm of the moat to be considerably reduced in width compared to the other sides and infers that this had long been relegated to the status of a much narrower drainage ditch which was re-cut and scoured as the moat became infilled. The position of the northern edge of the moat as recorded in section during the watching brief suggests a total width of up to 14m which, excluding part of the inner bank, would provide a water span of perhaps 10.00m. The original water level is unknown but based on the present water table and the water-logged layer **6** gives a minimum level of 1.38m below existing ground surface.

Mick Clark  
June 11th 1996

### **Acknowledgements**

The author expresses thanks for the full co-operation and assistance of Mr A. Windsor (owner-builder), Mr S. Windsor (machine operator) and Mr K. Seabrooke (assistant ground worker/builder).



## Appendix 1: Context List

Context No	Description
1	Disturbed mixed clay and soil, compacted, over whole site
2	grey-brown mixed clay and soil, over moat and also other parts of site
3	dark brown/black clayey soil, moat fill only, truncated deposit
4	grey brown mixed clay, small chalk frags, charcoal flecks, moat fill
5	grey-green smooth silt, moat fill
6	organic layer, wood, twigs, bark, animal bone, small stones, moat fill
7	grey-green smooth silt, similar to 5, primary silt on edge of moat
8	cut for moat, changes angle three times, cuts 10, possibly cuts 9
9	reddish sandy clay below 1, in pockets, natural
10	buff-orange brown silty clay with occasional large broken flint nodules, natural

## Appendix 2: Contents of Site Archive

1. Site context list
2. site drawings, 1 plan (1:50) and 1 section (1:20)
3. Site photographs and list  
Film no. 96/39 Negatives 11-34 inclusive (24 photos)
4. Correspondence
5. Six plans/drawings for report
6. Three pieces of roof tile, 2 possibly from context 6, one from topsoil

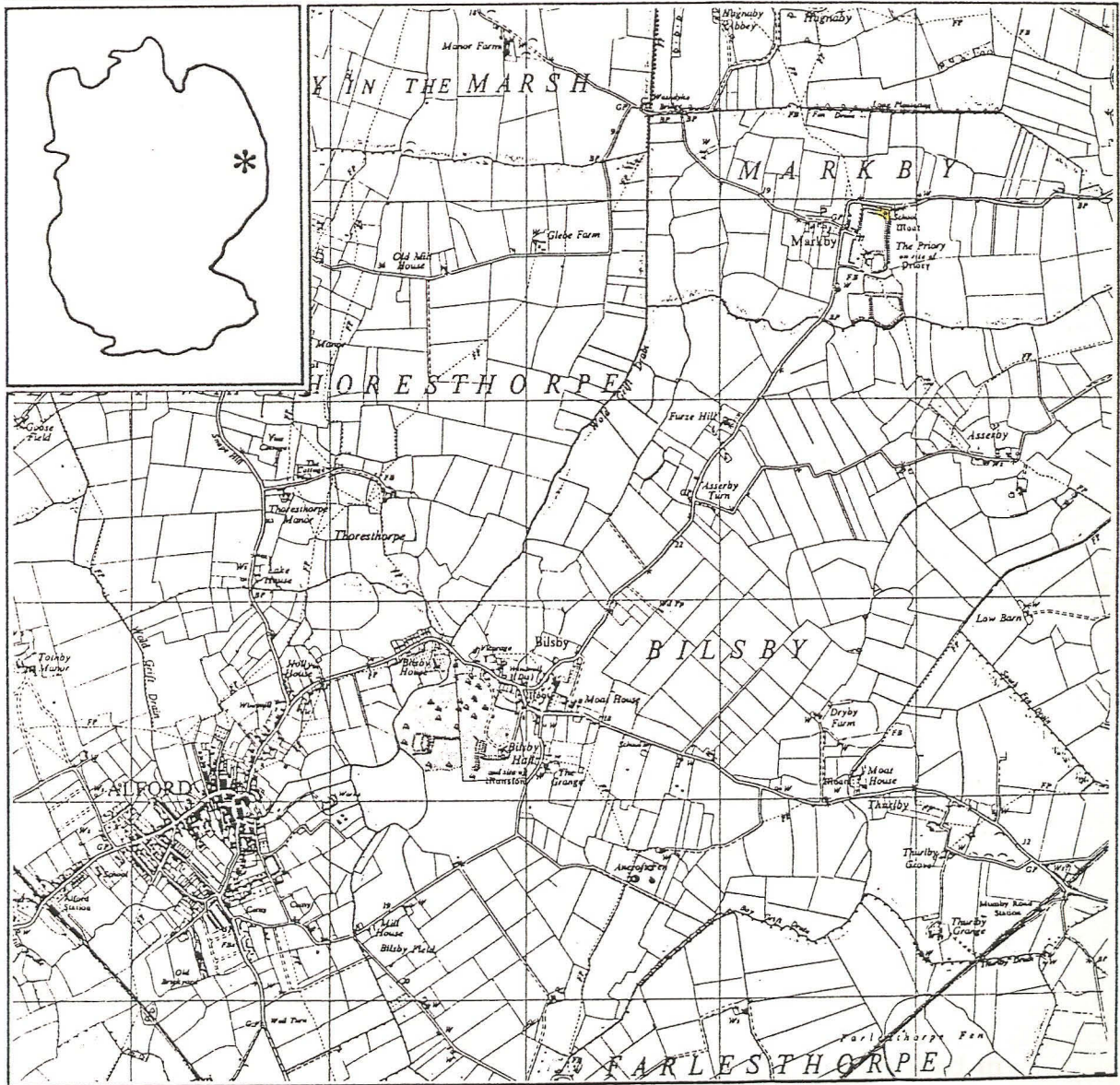
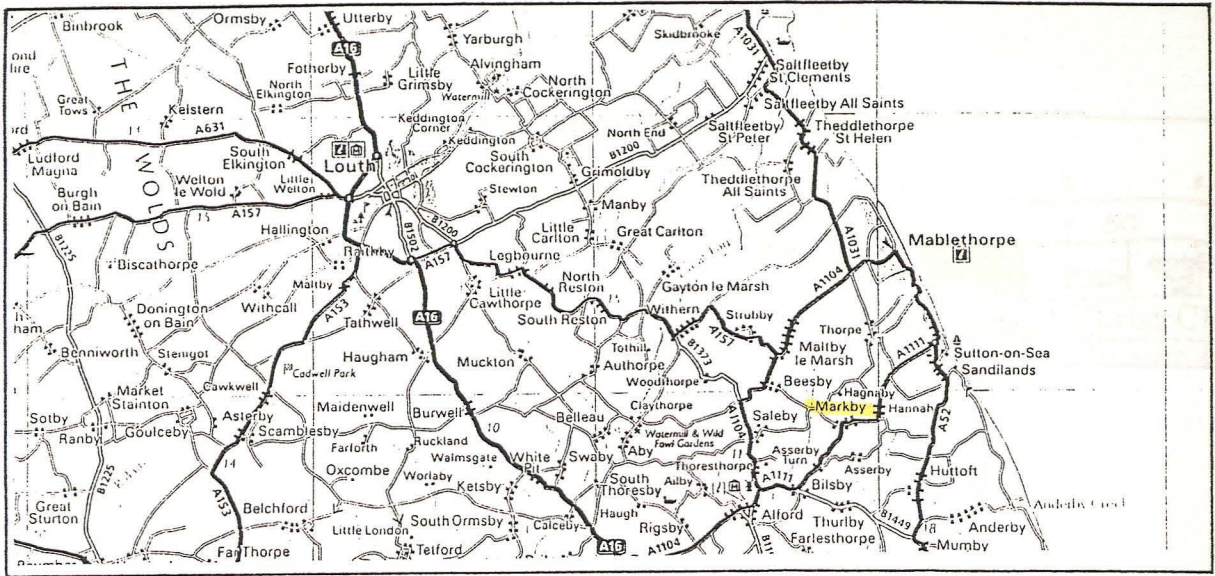


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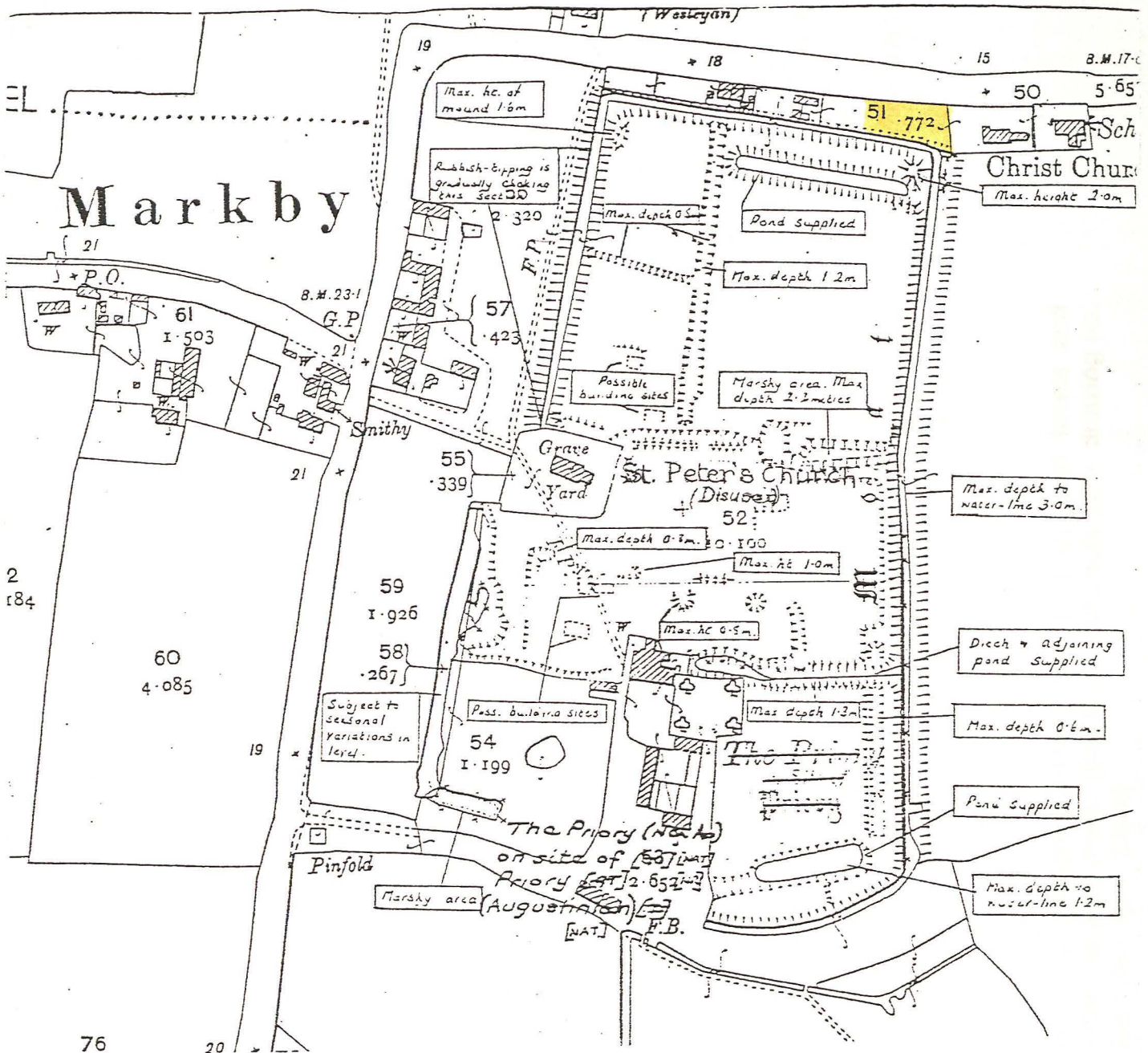


Fig. 2. 1:2500 scale survey of Markby Priory earthworks annotated in 1964 by Ordnance Survey investigator. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. Licence no. AL50424.

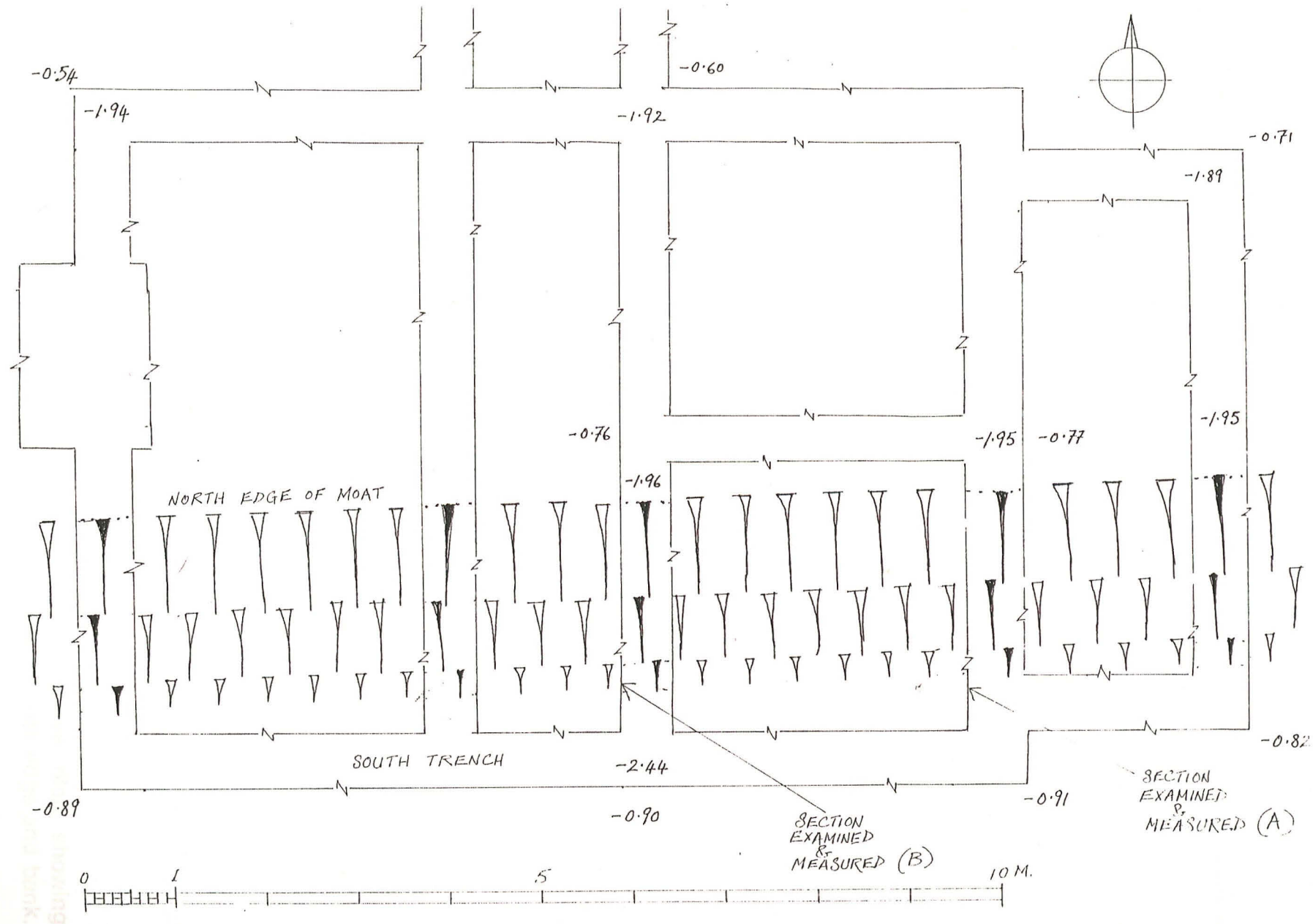


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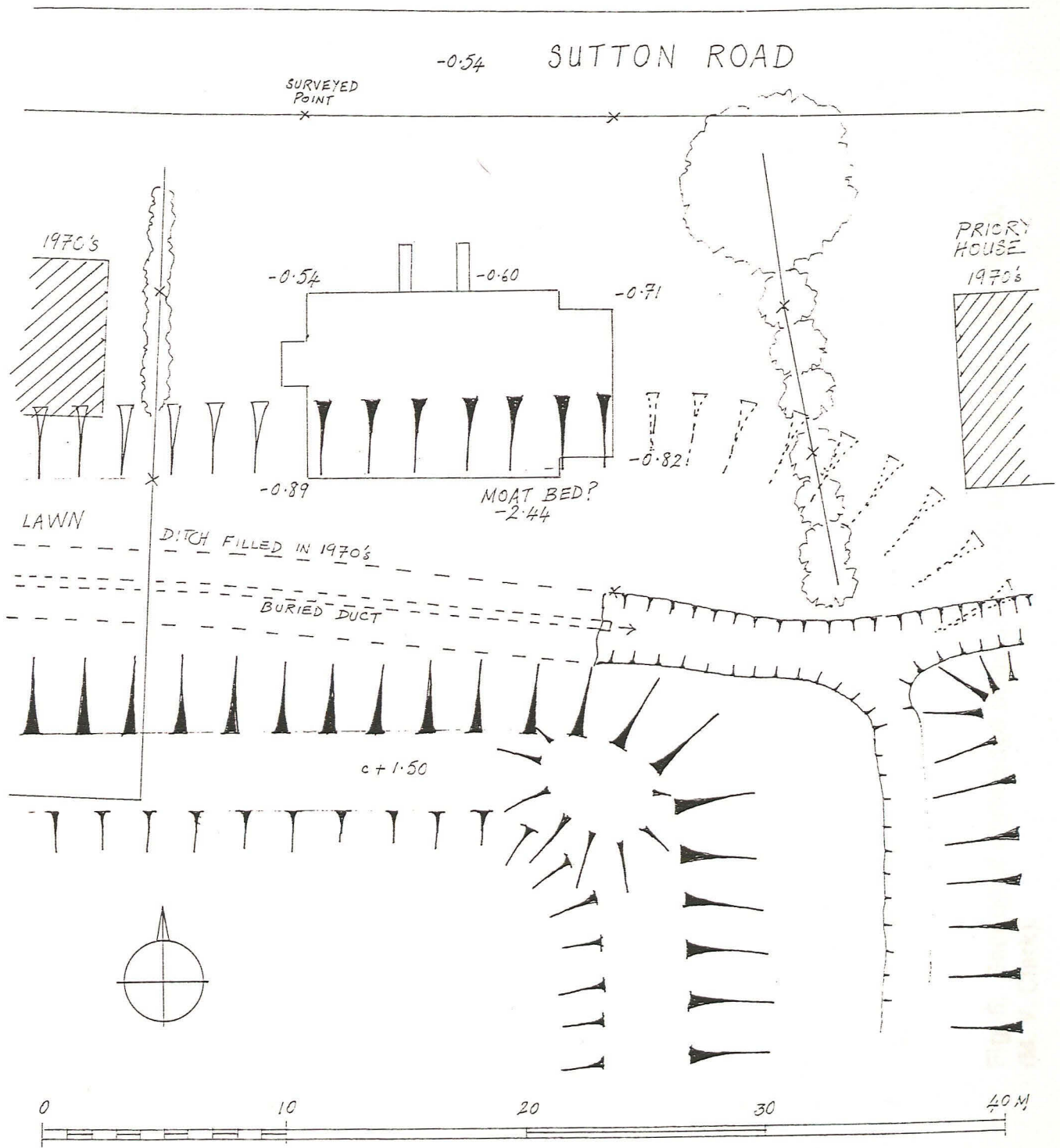


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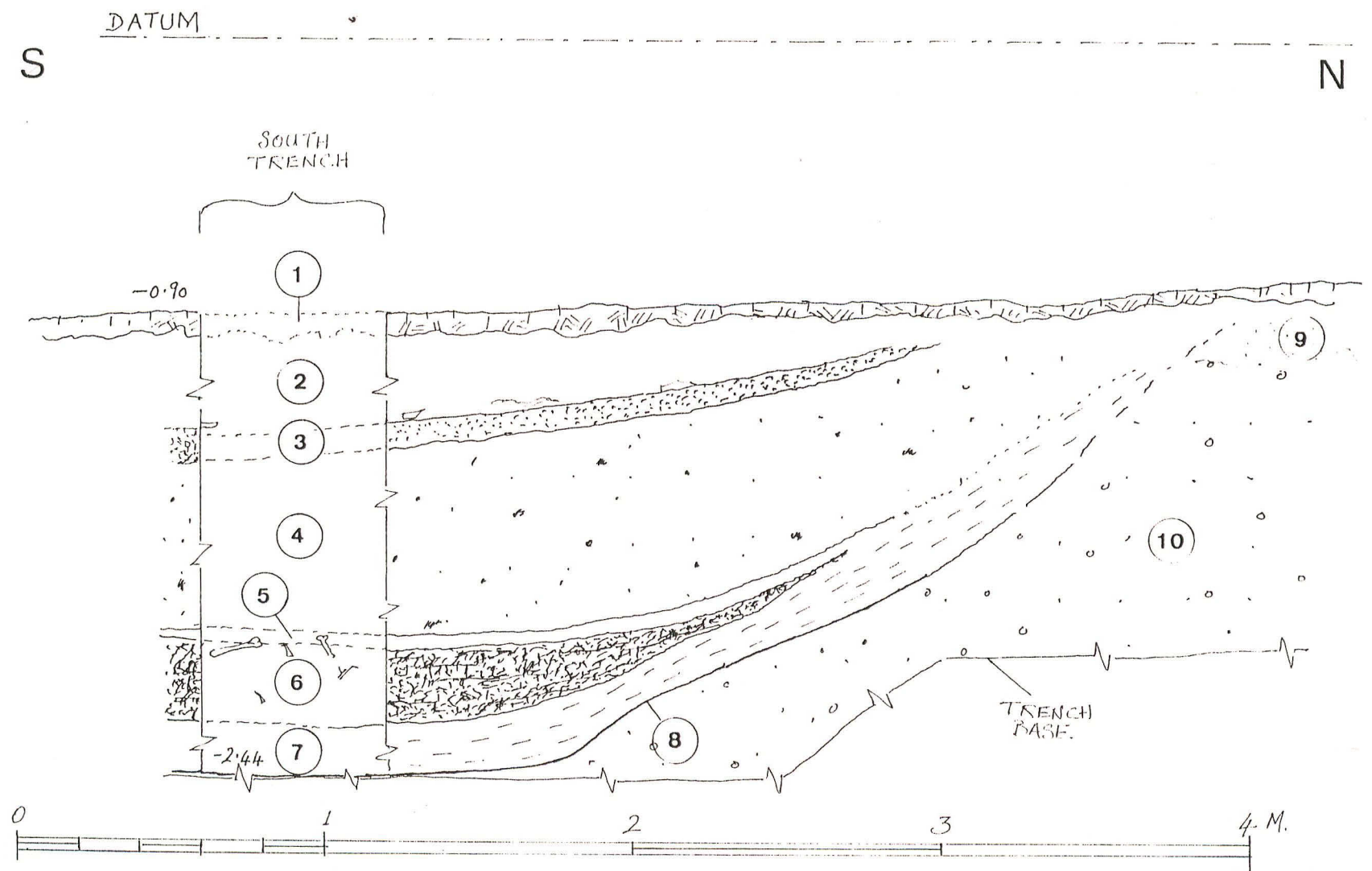


Fig. 5. Section of north edge of moat looking west, marked B on Fig. 3.  
(M. V. Clark).

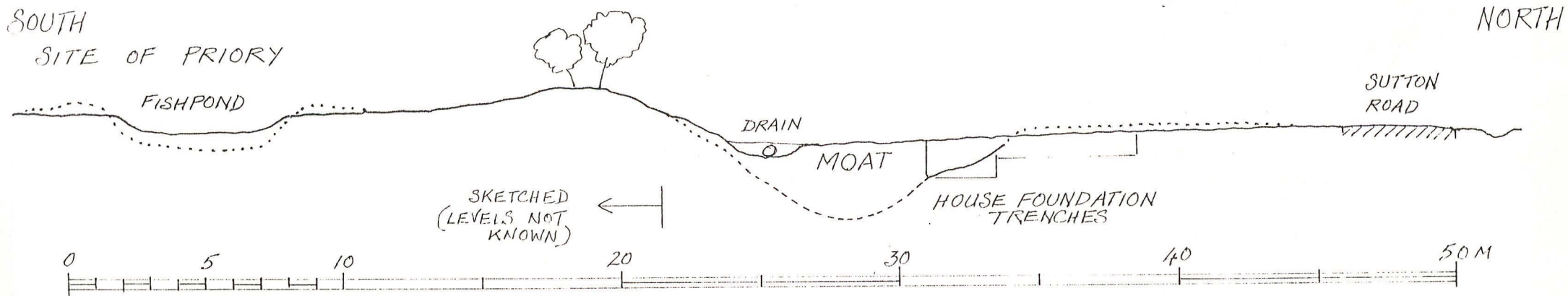


Fig. 6. North-south profile of building plot and site of priory; southern part not levelled or surveyed. (M. V. Clark)



PI .1 General view of site from Sutton Road, Priory House to left.

PI. 2. View south from development site, overlooking site of Priory.







Pl. 3 View east along drain, Priory House to left and moat bank to right.

Pl. 4 NE angle of moat bank from north (house foundation trench, bottom right).





PI. 5 Foundation trenches from SSW (moat bank).

PI. 6 Foundation trenches from south.





Pl. 7 South wall trench looking east, after excavation to base of moat ditch fill.

Pl. 8 Moat section at south-east angel of building trenches.





Pl. 9 Section across moat fill at point A, Fig. 4.

Pl. 10 Section across moat fill at point A, Fig. 4, showing organic layer 6, with animal bone in situ.





Pl. 11 Section across moat fill at point A, Fig. 4, as Pl. 10, after partial removal of layer 6.

Pl. 12 South wall trench showing plastic at junction of layers 2 and 3.

