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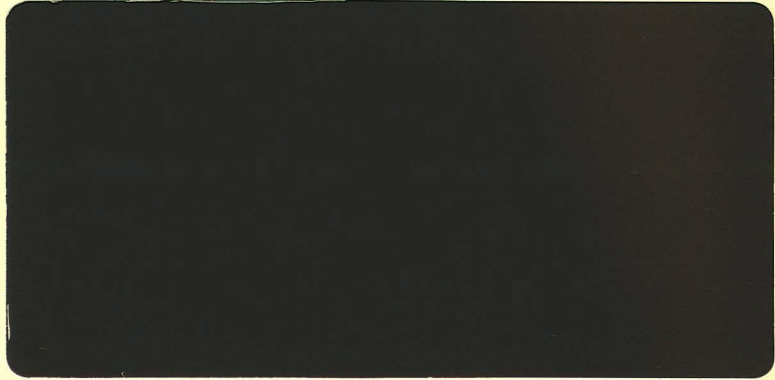
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT PLOT 3,  
CHURCH LANE, SWINESHEAD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SCL 95)**



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section  
12 Friars Lane  
LINCOLN LN2 5AL  
TEL. 0522 575292 FAX: 0522 530724  
22.7.96



ELI 6901

SLI 5270 1688

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT PLOT 3,  
CHURCH LANE, SWINESHEAD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SCL 95)**

Work Undertaken For  
Mr P. Martin

October 1995

A.P.S. Report No. 26/96

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a single dwelling adjacent to Church Lane, Swineshead. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the foundations for this structure.*

*There have been no finds of prehistoric or Roman material in the immediate vicinity, but remains of these periods are common in the surrounding landscape. In the fields around the village there is evidence for a series of enclosures (possibly farms or small settlements) tentatively dated to the Romano-British period (c. A.D. 50-400).*

*Artifacts from the medieval period (c. A.D. 1066-1500) are frequently recovered in the village and surrounding parish. The countryside around the village incorporates a series of archaeological monuments from this period. The site is within 150m of the 14th century church of St. Mary, close to the heart of the medieval settlement.*

*Excavation of the foundation trenches revealed, beneath the modern topsoil, a ditch cutting through subsoil. Pottery indicated that the ditch was of 18th century date. Other finds recovered during the watching brief included an iron nail and several pieces of animal bone.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

On the 6th September 1995, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a single dwelling house at Plot 3, Church Lane, Swineshead. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application B19/0219/95. Permission was granted

subject to a standard negative condition for archaeological recording. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr P. Martin, and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a brief set by the Boston Borough Community Archaeologist.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Swineshead is situated 7km from the northwest coast of The Wash, amongst the fens of south Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Approximately 40km southeast of Lincoln and 10km southwest of Boston, the town lies in the civil parish of Swineshead, Boston District. The investigation site is c. 120m west of the village centre, as defined by the parish church of St. Mary (Fig. 2). Located at grid reference TF235401, the development area is approximately 80 square metres in extent.

The site and immediate surroundings form an area of relatively flat ground in close proximity to the Lincolnshire coastline. Ground surface lies at c. 5m O.D. Local soils are the Agney Association calcareous alluvial gley soils, developed on marine alluvium on flat reclaimed land (Hodge *et al.*, 1984, 87).

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

Although no prehistoric or Romano-British finds have been recovered in the immediate vicinity of the development, fieldwalking has produced a significant quantity of material from this period within a 5km radius of the site. Aerial reconnaissance has located a series of enclosures, probably farms or settlements, that are typical of the late prehistoric - Romano-British period (B19/001; 002; 004; 012).

Archaeological evidence for occupation during the periods of Anglo-Scandinavian migration and conquest (c. A.D. 400-1066)

is restricted to a single late Saxon strap-end (B19/018), found within 400m of the development site. The earliest historical reference to Swineshead, indicating the presence of a monastery, occurs shortly after A.D. 650. A passage from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions *Swineshaefed* in 675 A.D. (Ekwall 1974, 457), suggesting that occupation during the 7th century is to be expected.

Medieval finds are common in the vicinity of the development, and the surrounding landscape contains several standing monuments from this period. Pottery of medieval date (B19/026, B19/039) has been found just to the east and southwest of the present investigation area. Stenning or Estovening (B19/014), a village mentioned in the Domesday survey of A.D. 1086 but deserted in the 14th century, was located about 0.5km west of the development area. A church of the 14th century, St. Mary the Virgin (B19/006), lies to the immediate east of the site. Estevening Hall (B19/015) and Manwar Ings Castle (B19/025), relics of the feudal economy, are situated respectively 1 km to the southwest and northeast of the development (Fig. 2). A Cistercian abbey of the 12th century lies *c.* 1.6 km to the east of Church Lane.

Swineshead was a market town during the medieval period and had charters for two annual fairs (Platts 1985, appendix 1). Within *c.* 200m of the site is the Butter Cross (B19/005). Located at the centre of the village, this stone market cross provided a focus for trading activities during the medieval period and later.

### 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

Trenches were opened to a depth of *c.* 0.6m using a mechanical excavator (Fig. 4). The sides of the trenches were then cleaned and examined to identify any archaeological features. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description. Natural geological deposits were also recorded where exposed. A photographic record was compiled, and sketch sections and plans were noted where appropriate.

### 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. Two phases were identified:

- Phase 1 Post-medieval deposits
- Phase 2 Modern deposits

#### Phase 1 Post-medieval Deposits

Exposed across the development was a layer of orange brown sandy silt (002). This deposit was not excavated to its lowest extent, but formed a subsoil that was at least 0.35m thick. Fragments of pottery of 18th century date, tile and animal bone were recovered from this deposit.

A significant cut had been made into this deposit, forming a linear feature with a smooth regular and concave base (004; 008; 006). This was observed running from south to north across the area of development, and has been interpreted as a ditch of unknown function. Filling this ditch was a dark brown silty clay (003; 005; 007) that included occasional flecks of charcoal and other burnt materials. This fill contained animal bone,

pottery of probable 18th century date, tile and a single iron nail.

### **Phase 2 Modern Deposits**

Immediately overlying and sealing the post-medieval deposits was a single layer of light grey brown sandy silt (001). This context contained frequent small roots that had caused a certain amount of disturbance within the deposit. Extending across the whole of the site, this formed a layer of topsoil and turf. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

The orange brown sandy silt (002) exposed across the whole of the site was probably formed as a natural flood deposit. However, this layer contained pottery of 18th century date, suggesting that the deposit was transformed in the post-medieval period (Phase 1), perhaps by agricultural activity.

Subsequent activity within this period is evidenced by the cutting of a ditch (004; 006; 008). Almost 1.2m wide and 0.5m in depth, this feature perhaps functioned as a boundary. Artefacts from the fill of the ditch provide a secure post-medieval date for its use and redundancy. The nature of the fill (003; 005; 007) suggests that it was formed as a result of weathering and erosion processes, in close proximity to human activity.

The latest activity (001) suggests that the area remained undeveloped for the duration of the most recent period (phase 2). Although no finds were recovered from this layer, it provides the only evidence for any activity after the post-medieval stratigraphy.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Archaeological investigations at Church Lane, Swineshead, were undertaken as a requirement of planning permission. This was because the site lay in an area of medieval remains and there was the likelihood of the development disturbing archaeological deposits.

A limited number of archaeological remains were encountered. These remains, represented by a probable boundary ditch and agricultural soil, were of post-medieval date. The absence of earlier deposits may be due to their destruction by agricultural use of the area in the post-medieval period. As a result, it is probable that other archaeological deposits of post-medieval date survive in good condition in the area, though earlier remains may only exist below the level of agricultural disturbance.

Site conditions suggest that environmental evidence is unlikely to survive other than through charring.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Mr P. Martin for funding the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and David Start edited this report. Background information was provided by Jim Bonnor the Boston District Community Archaeologist and parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## **9. PERSONNEL**

Project Manager: Steve Haynes  
Site Supervisor: Mark Sansom  
Illustration: Neil Herbert  
Post-Excavation analyst: Neil Herbert



## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ekwall, E., 1974 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*

Hodge, C.A.H., Burton, R.G.O., Corbett, W.M., Evans, R. and Seal, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. 13 (Harpenden)

Platts, G., 1985 *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire IV

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

Numbers prefixed 'B' are the reference codes used by the Boston Borough Community Archaeologist.

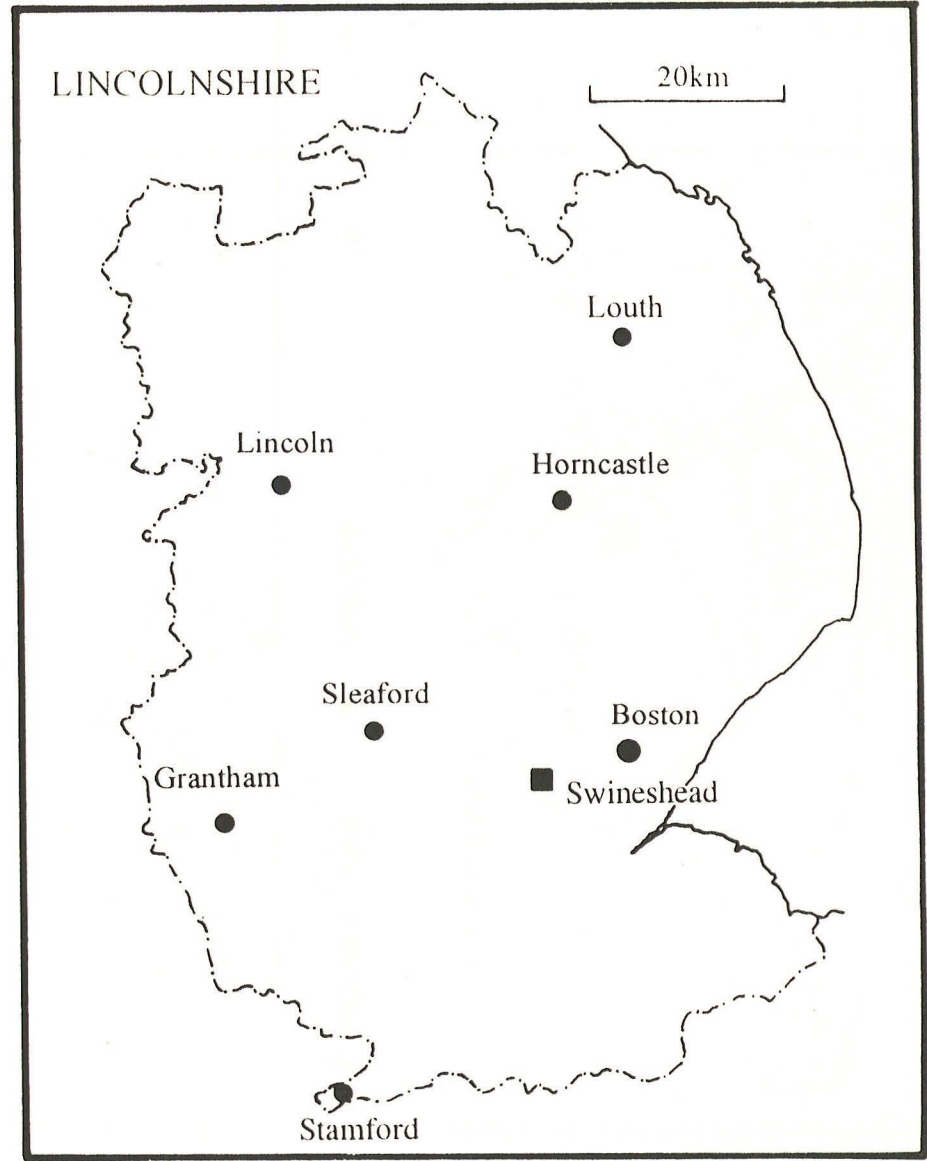
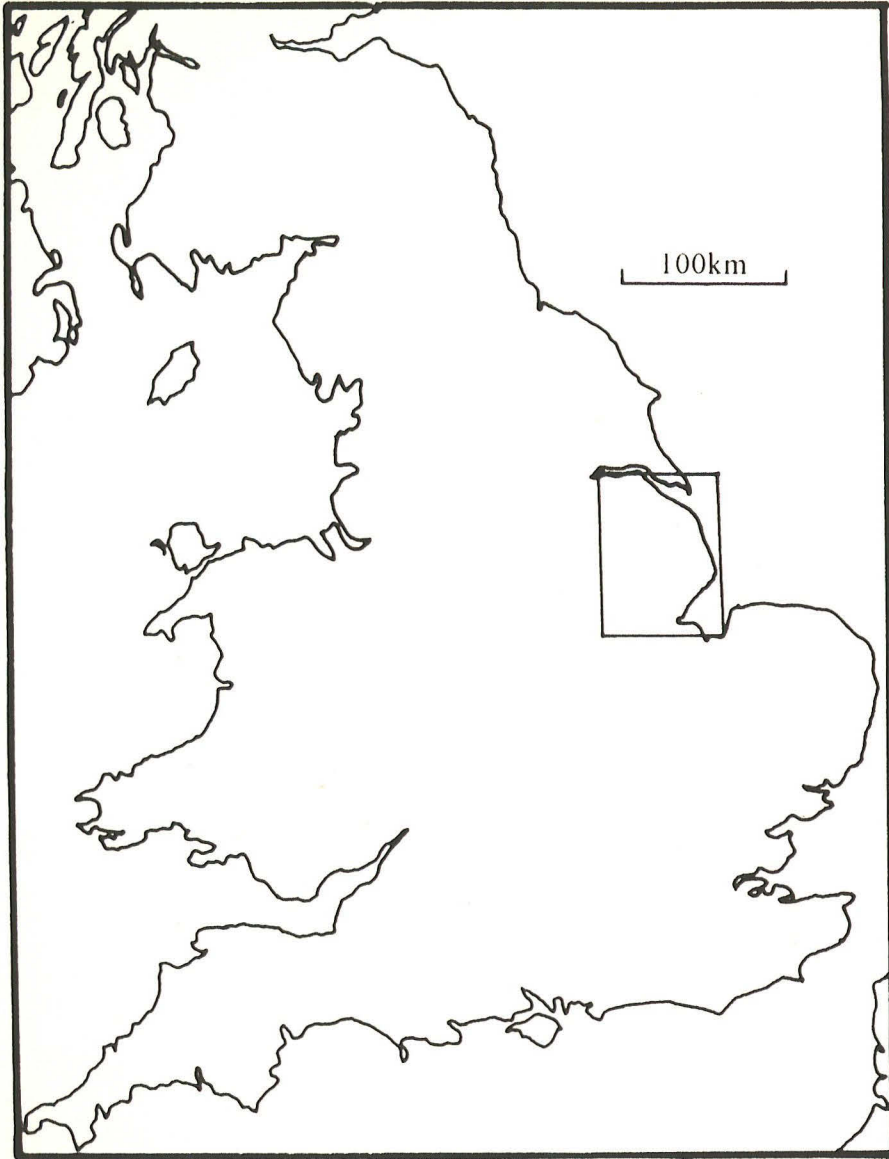
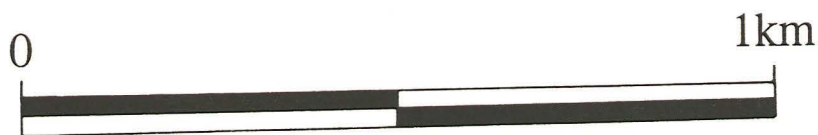
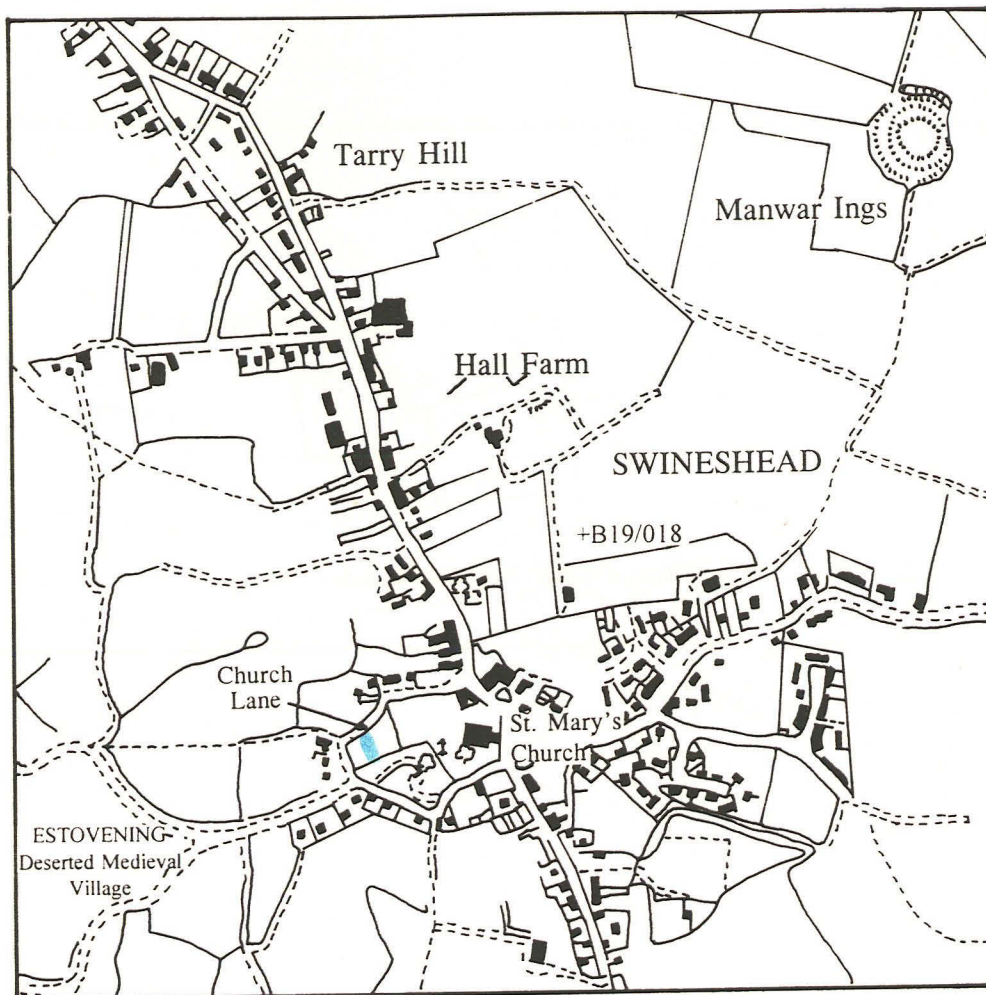


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Figure. 2 Site Location Plan

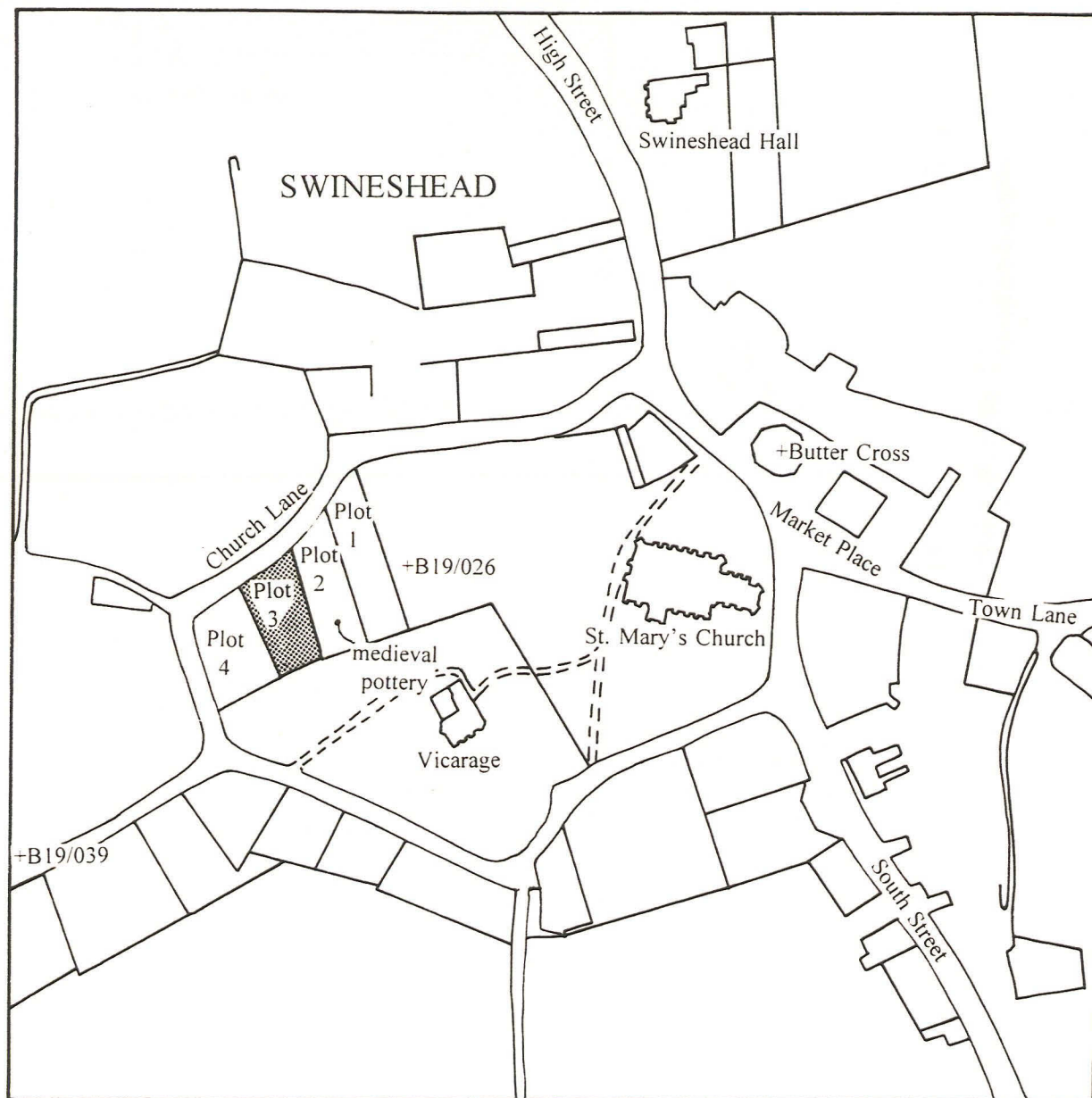


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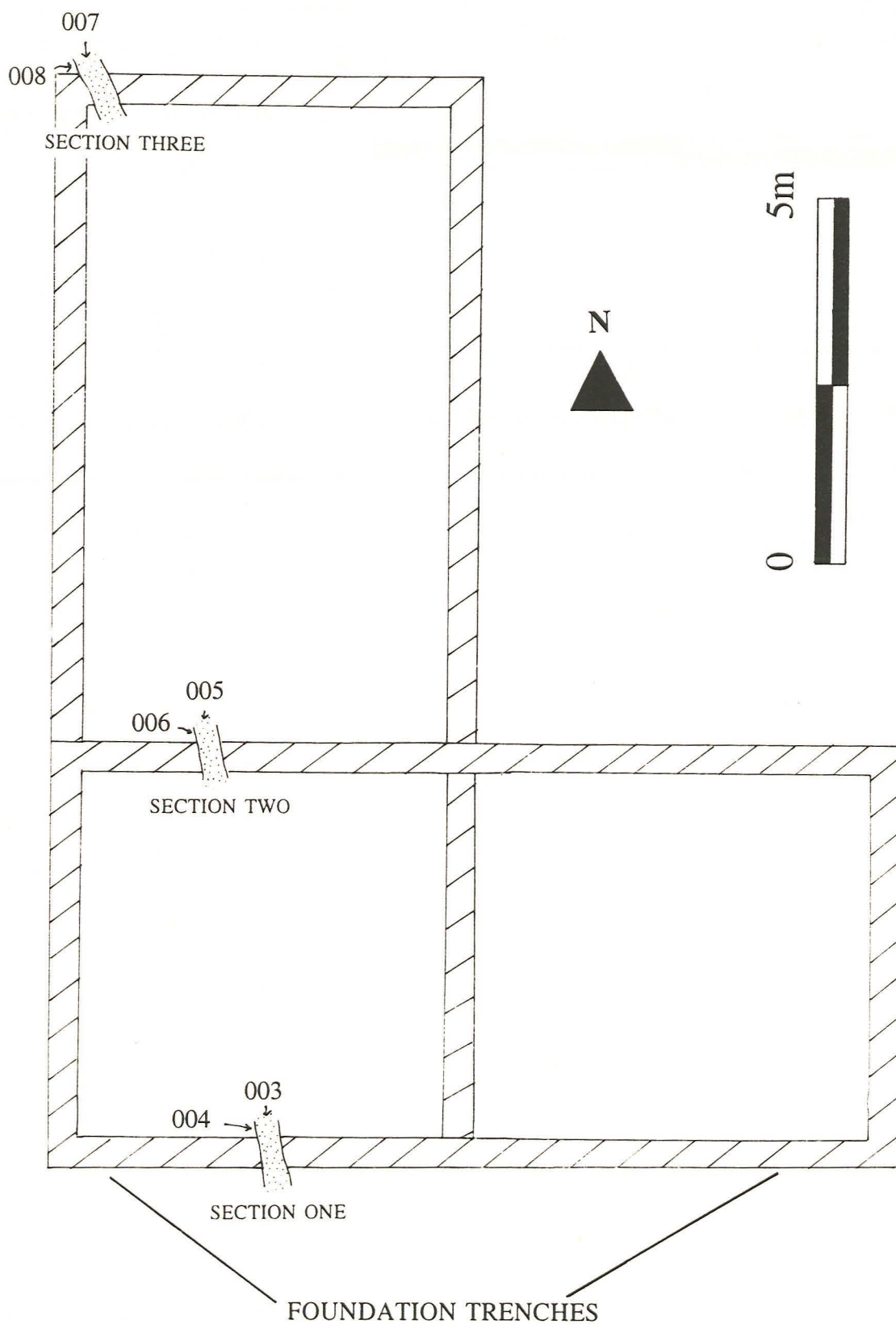
Area of Development

Fig. 3 Detailed Plan of Development Area and Surrounds



AREA OF DEVELOPMENT

Figure 4 Schematic Plan of Foundation Trenches, showing location of sections and archaeological features



(note: plan is schematic as no architect's plan was provided)

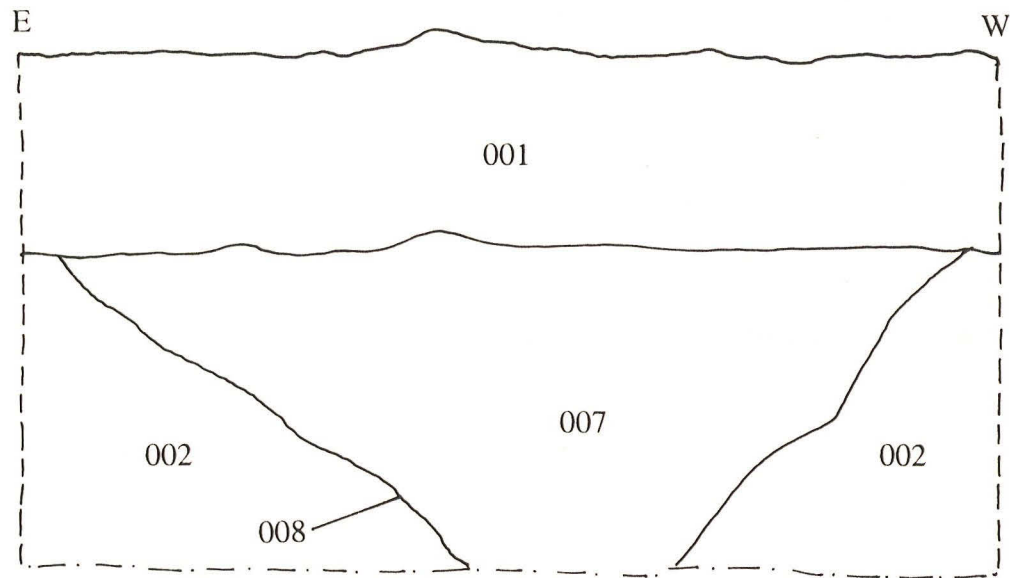
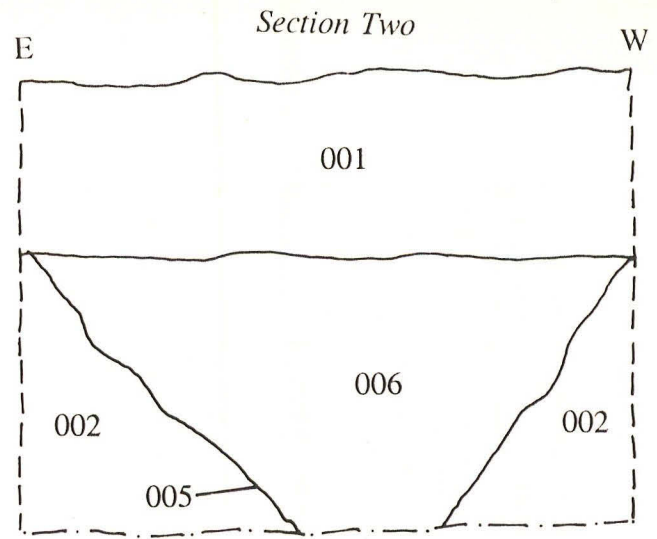
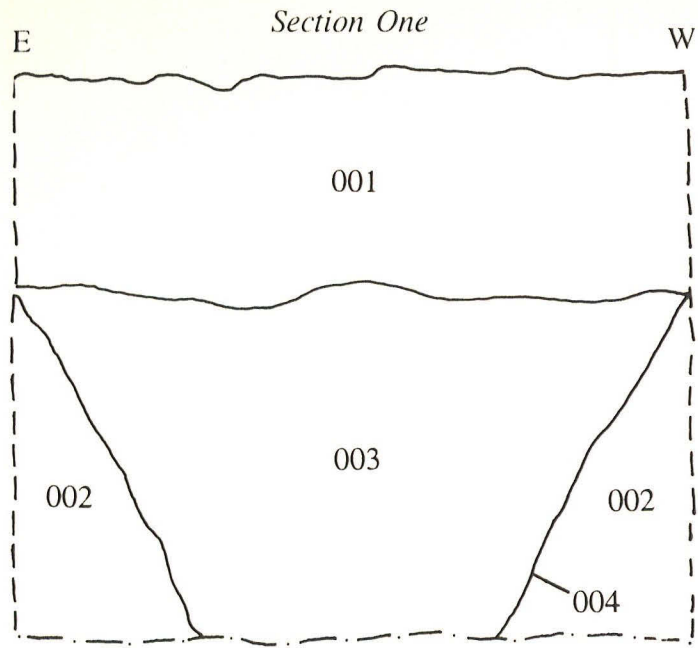


Figure. 5 Sections 1,2 and 3

## APPENDIX 1

### Context Summary

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
001	Light grey brown sandy silt	Topsoil
002	Orange brown sandy silt	Subsoil
003	Dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of 004
004	Linear cut with concave regular sides	Ditch cut
005	Dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of 006
006	Linear cut with concave regular sides	Ditch cut
007	Dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of 008
008	Linear cut with concave regular sides	Ditch cut

## APPENDIX 2

### The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 8 . . . Context Records
- 24 . . Photographs
- 2 . . . Scale Drawings
- 1 . . . Site Matrix
- 4 . . . Bags 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	146.95
Archaeological Project Services project code	SCL 95