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70100 - Early med
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A Report to Lincolnshire County Council

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LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1991: Preliminary Report

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LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1991

1 INTRODUCTION

In advance of the re-development of the Central Library in Lincoln the CLAU was commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.

This was carried out from Oct. to Dec. 1991, in three sample areas which were accessible (Fig 1). These areas were:

- 1) Trench 1 - the Library garden;
- 2) Trench 2 - rear (north) of Greyfriars Museum building;
- 3) Trench 3 - the Library depot off Broadgate

The team were unable to work on a fourth location at the entrance to the Library depot, which proved impracticable owing to Health and Safety restrictions.

The brief was to identify the depth and condition of any archaeological deposits, especially those relating to the Franciscan Friary which occupied the site in the 13th-16th centuries. The information thereby recorded was to be taken into account in the design of the new structure and its foundations. A further objective was an assessment of the cost of any further archaeological work in advance of or during the construction programme.

2 HISTORY OF THE SITE

Further to the north, excavations in 1973 in the Silver Street Car Park and observations during development of the Duke of Wellington pub in 1932, revealed remains of the Roman City wall and earthen rampart which ran parallel to the present line of Broadgate (Figs.2-3). Later development had also levelled parts of the Roman fortifications as well as the area to the west.

There was no previous information on the earlier periods within the actual site; the only known element of the friary is the Greyfriars Museum building. This has recently been reinterpreted as the infirmary of the Franciscan friary, which extended in its developed form as far as Silver Street. Excavations in 1906 had revealed associated walls and in 1913 a 14th century tiled floor was uncovered. 19th century maps show occupation of both domestic and industrial nature within the boundaries of the development area (Figs 4-5).

3 THE EXCAVATIONS

(a) TRENCH 1 - Library Garden

At 2.4m from the modern surface a pebble surface dating to the late 10th century was uncovered (8.09m O.D.). It showed evidence of later occupation, having been cut by a 1m deep pit and a gully-like feature. These had been sealed by a deposit of soil (L10th) and a mid 11th century ash spread. Lying above this was a thick layer of 'garden soil' (top 9.05m O.D.) with no evidence of any structural disturbance. Sealing the 'garden soil' were a number of deposits containing rubble and demolition material dating between the late 15th century and the 19th century. The dumps were subsequently overlain by a hard-packed surface enclosed by two brick walls which represent part of one of the Fives Courts built during the latter days of the Grammar School. Sealing this was a mixture of rubble and modern garden soil (Fig.6).

Four main phases of activity were uncovered in the garden area. The earliest (8.14m O.D.), the pebble surface, is likely to indicate nearby occupation, though the area investigated was far too small to identify any associated structures. The second (9.05m O.D.), the large build-up of garden soil, may be indicative of the friary cloister, an area that would remain structureless during the life of the monastic establishment. Pottery and tile from the 14th century certainly place the deposit well within the period of the friary's existence. There was no evidence that the third phase, the demolition material specifically came from a friary context. The range of pottery, however, dates does encompass the period of the Dissolution. The fourth phase, the Fives Court and modern garden, are well dated to the 19th and 20th centuries.

(b) TRENCH 2 - rear of Greyfriars Museum

The earliest feature identified was a stone wall, 3.6m. long x 1m. wide x 0.85m. high, lying on two sets of footings one above the other (Fig.7). It ran roughly north to south. Sealing the footings and lying on both sides of the wall were several layers of demolition debris, 1m. deep, dating to the 17th and 18th centuries (Fig.8). This debris had been cut in the 18th century by a 'robber' trench which had removed several courses of stone. The robber trench had subsequently been backfilled and a rough north-south wall constructed over it. Sealing this was a stone and brick east-west wall which was in turn sealed by dump material dated by pottery to the 19th century (Fig.9).

The early N-S wall had not only been robbed to the north but had also been cut and robbed out to the south approximately

2m. from the Greyfriars Museum building (thought to represent the monastic infirmary). From the odd angle of alignment, it did not appear to be associated with the standing building. It is more likely that it represents a building earlier than the 13th century friary structure. The absence of datable surfaces associated with the wall makes it difficult to interpret, and it would, therefore, be desirable to follow the line to the standing building in order to determine their interrelationship. The constraints of the evaluation programme did not, at the time, allow scope for further, deeper investigation.

Two main questions remain to be answered in this area:

- 1) the relationship of the N-S wall to the standing building and its date;
- 2) the identification of the later E-W wall and its relationship to both the standing building and those walls seen in 1906.

(c) TRENCH 3 - depot yard

This was the only trench taken through the full accumulation of archaeological deposits in order to establish their depth and the nature of the subsoil.

The natural sand was identified at a depth of 3.4m (6.82m O.D.) below the present surface. There appeared to be animal and tree disturbance but no evidence of human activity directly cutting the natural. It was overlain by layers of redeposited natural which showed activity during the mid and late 2nd century AD. These were sealed by a series of 3rd century dump layers used to construct the rampart bank of the Roman city fortifications (Fig.10).

During the late 9th to late 10th centuries material was deposited, possibly as rubbish or levelling, to the west of the rampart. Sealing those layers was a thin layer of compact clay which may have formed either a surface associated with the occupation of the friary or with its subsequent demolition. The clay surface was overlain by rubble and demolition debris dating to the 16th century. The debris and the remnants of three stone walls probably represent the demolition of buildings of the friary. Although wall remnants survived, they had not only been disturbed by early demolition - probably for re-use of the stone elsewhere - but by later disruption of the area by 19th and 20th century industrial activity. Two large brick lined wells or sumps associated with White and Arnolds Soda Water Factory had cut into the earlier layers approximately to 2m in depth (9.58m O.D. - 7.6m O.D.). Subsequently drain pipes had been inserted running eastwards to Broadgate.

Although a great deal of information was culled from the period of demolition of the friary, little was discovered about the actual plan of the buildings occupying the area during the period from c. 1230 to the Dissolution. The section through the Roman rampart echoed that cut in the 1973 excavation at Silver Street, although it did not contain the same extent of either earlier or later occupation in that trench (Fig.11).

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discoveries made during the excavation and the nature of the archaeological deposits encountered - especially those relating to the Roman fortifications, Late Saxon occupation, and the Friary - confirm the significance of the site and the generally good state of preservation. Moreover, remains of the friary start to occur at only 0.80m beneath the modern surface (Fig 12).

Plans for development of the site should accordingly take note of the following:

- 1) allowance should be made for early identification of the line of the Roman city wall after demolition of the standing buildings along Broadgate, to help achieve a foundation design along the eastern wall of the new structure that would create minimal disturbance to any standing remains of the wall;
- 2) a foundation design should be avoided which would damage archaeological remains dating to the friary period and earlier to the west of the Roman wall;
- 3) provision should be made for the identification and recording of any remaining walls from friary/medieval structures, preferably in advance of construction work. The layout of the friary could possibly be incorporated into the new building by differential surface treatments;
- 4) there is in any case need for a general watching brief during building works to identify and record any other archaeological deposits.

Study of the data and finds from the evaluation is still proceeding. A more detailed report will be prepared and presented in due course. It will then also be possible to estimate the costs both of producing a full archaeological report on the evaluation, and of any further investigations which are required at the site.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The unit would like to register its thanks to Lincs County Council for access to the site and funding of the work. We are grateful to Mr. R. Hundleby and his staff 'on site' at the Library. The excavations were carried out by members of the CLAU staff, and reports and dating material were provided by post excavation staff, both working tight schedules and not always in favourable conditions.

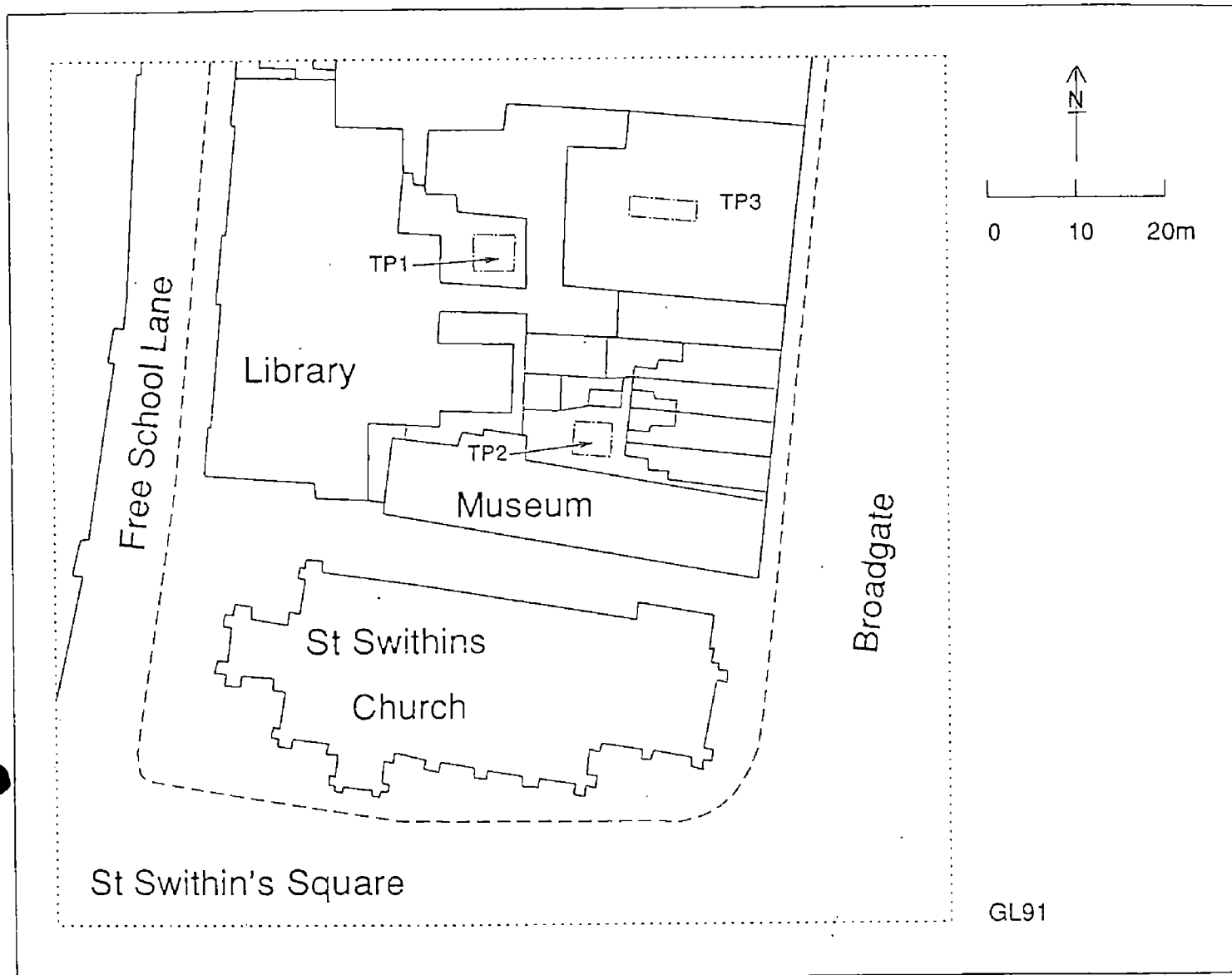


Fig.1 - Location of trial holes

- i & ii)
- Roman roads
- iii)
- Approx
- line of Roman
- city wall

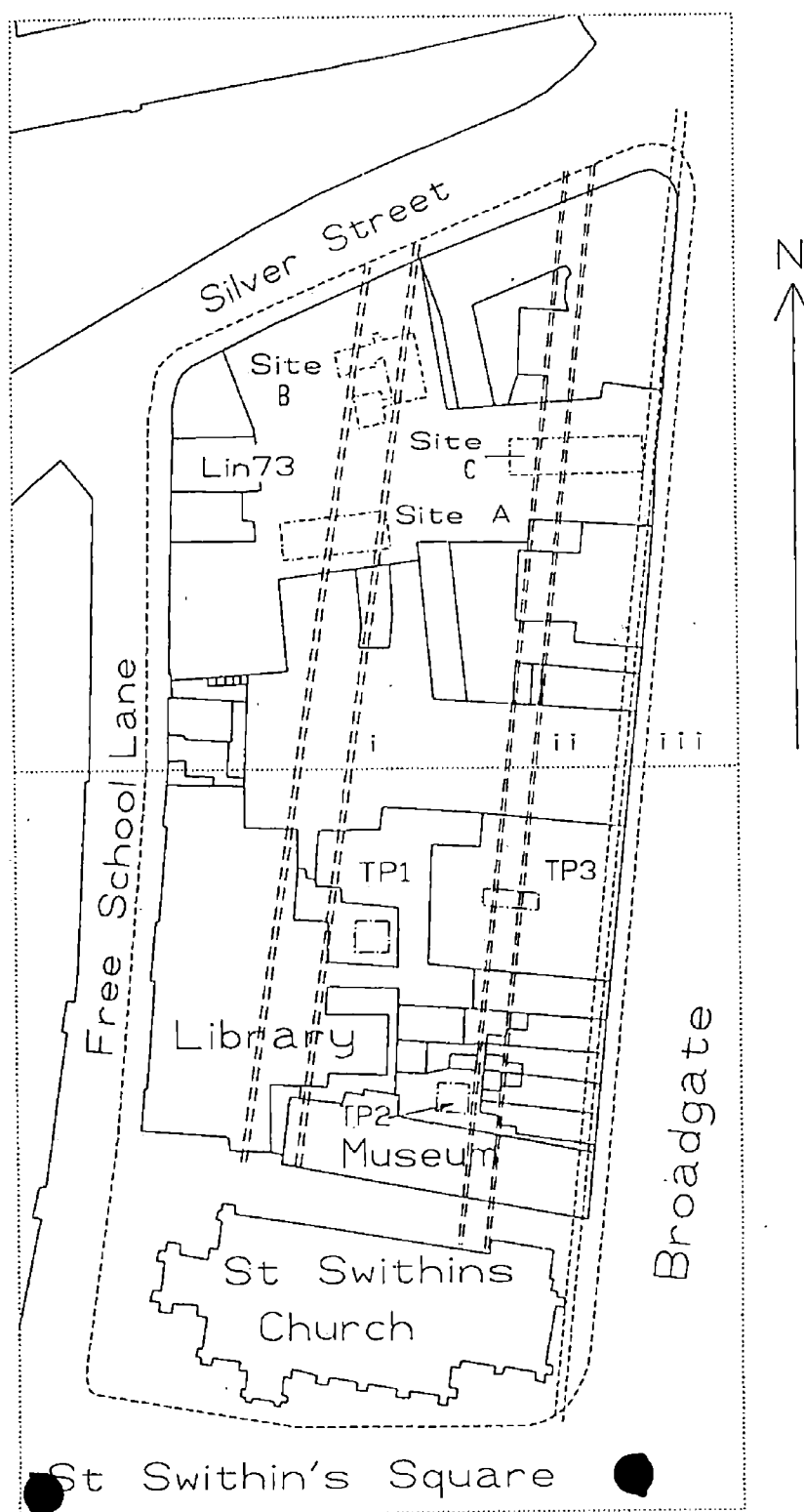


Fig.2

i) Saxon
reforti-
fication

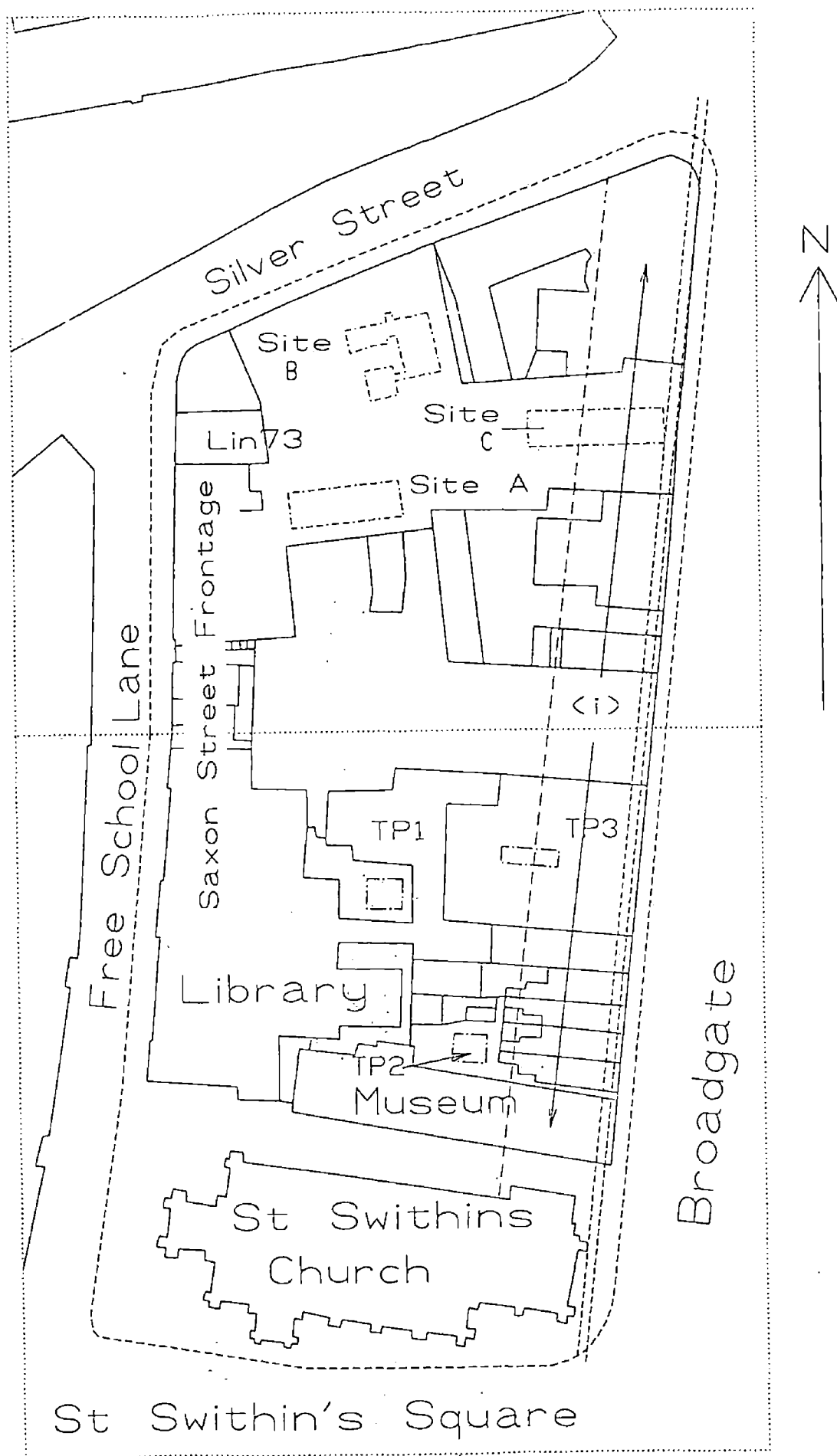


Fig.3

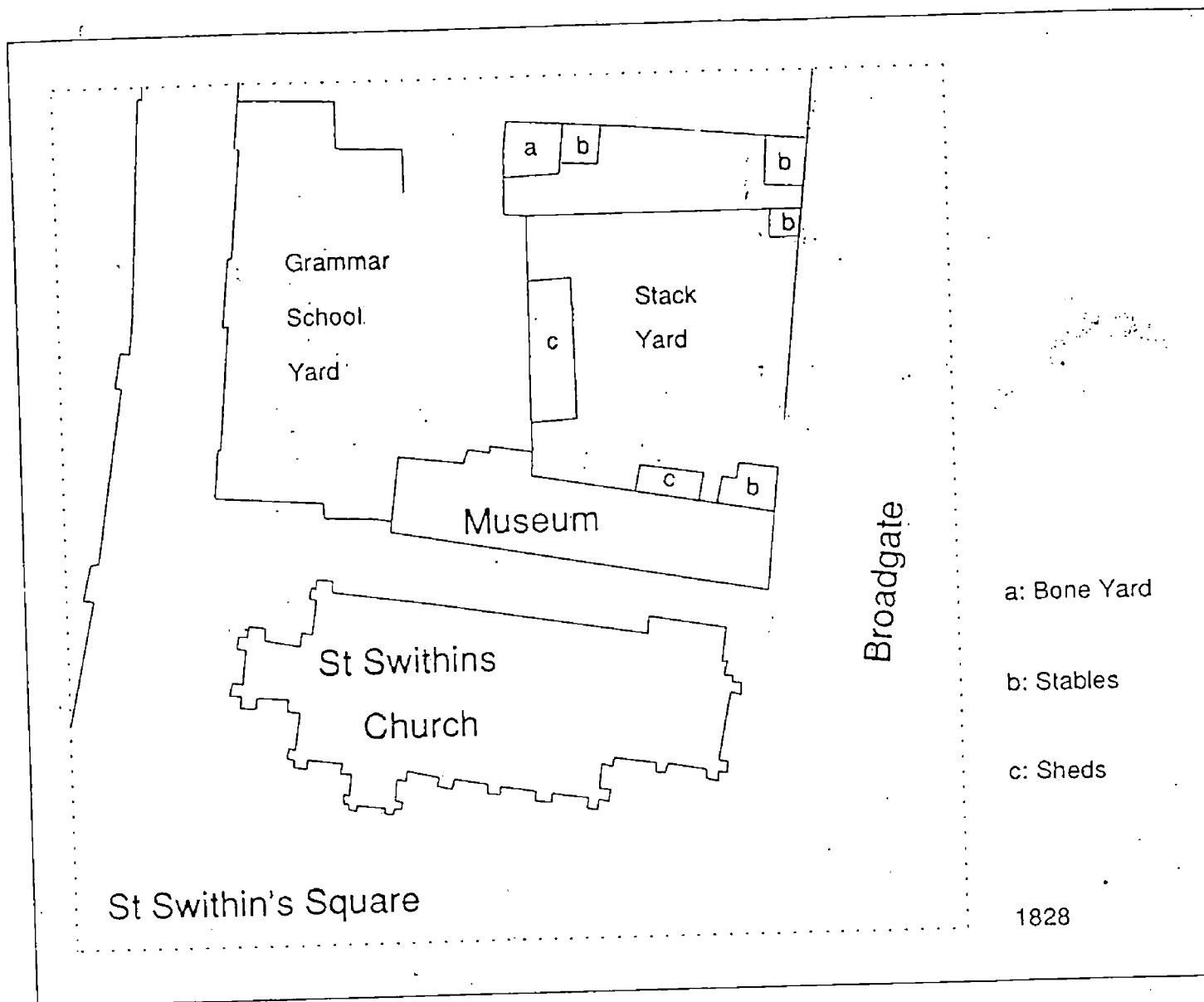


Fig.4 - Lincoln (1828)

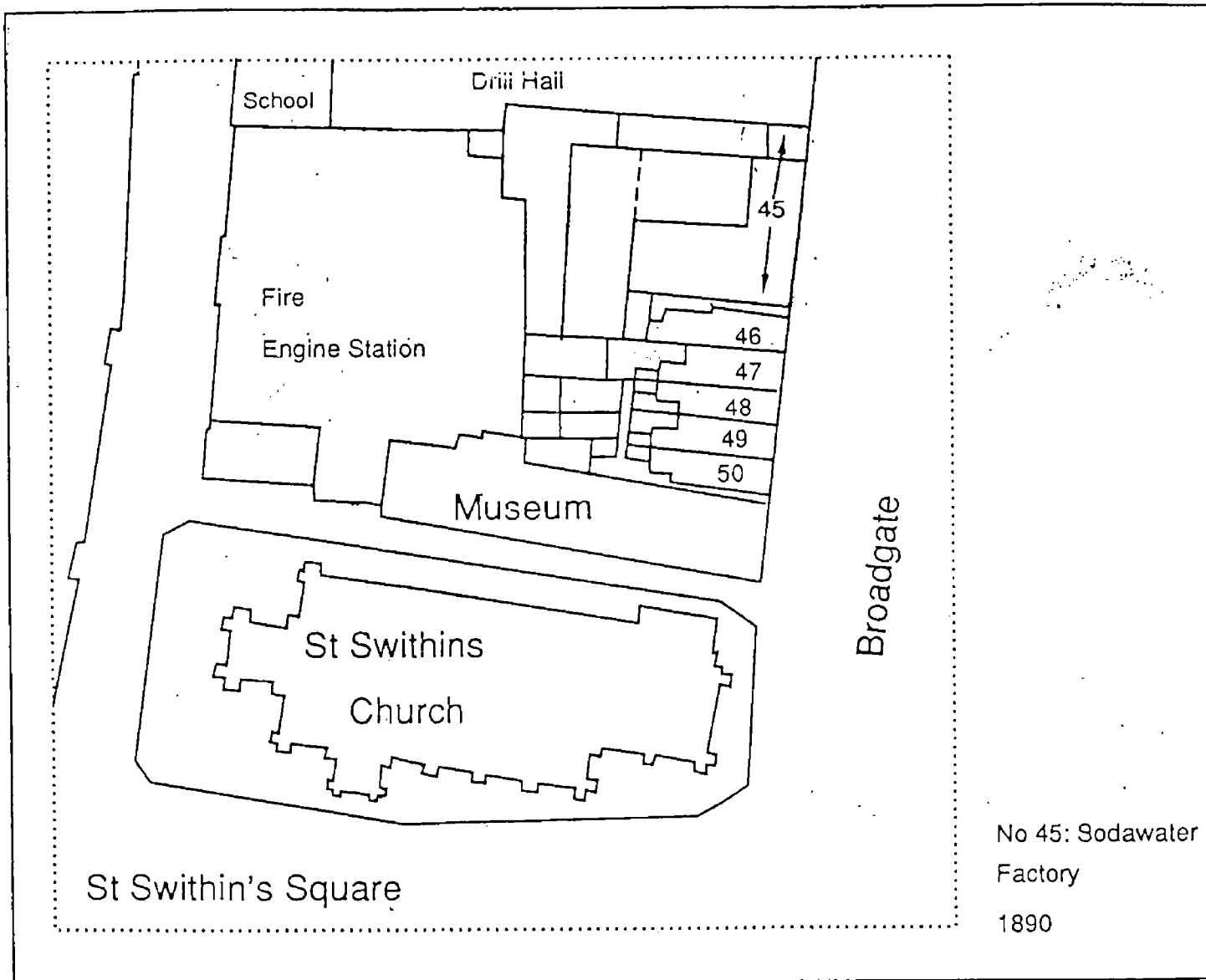


Fig.5 - Lincoln (1890)

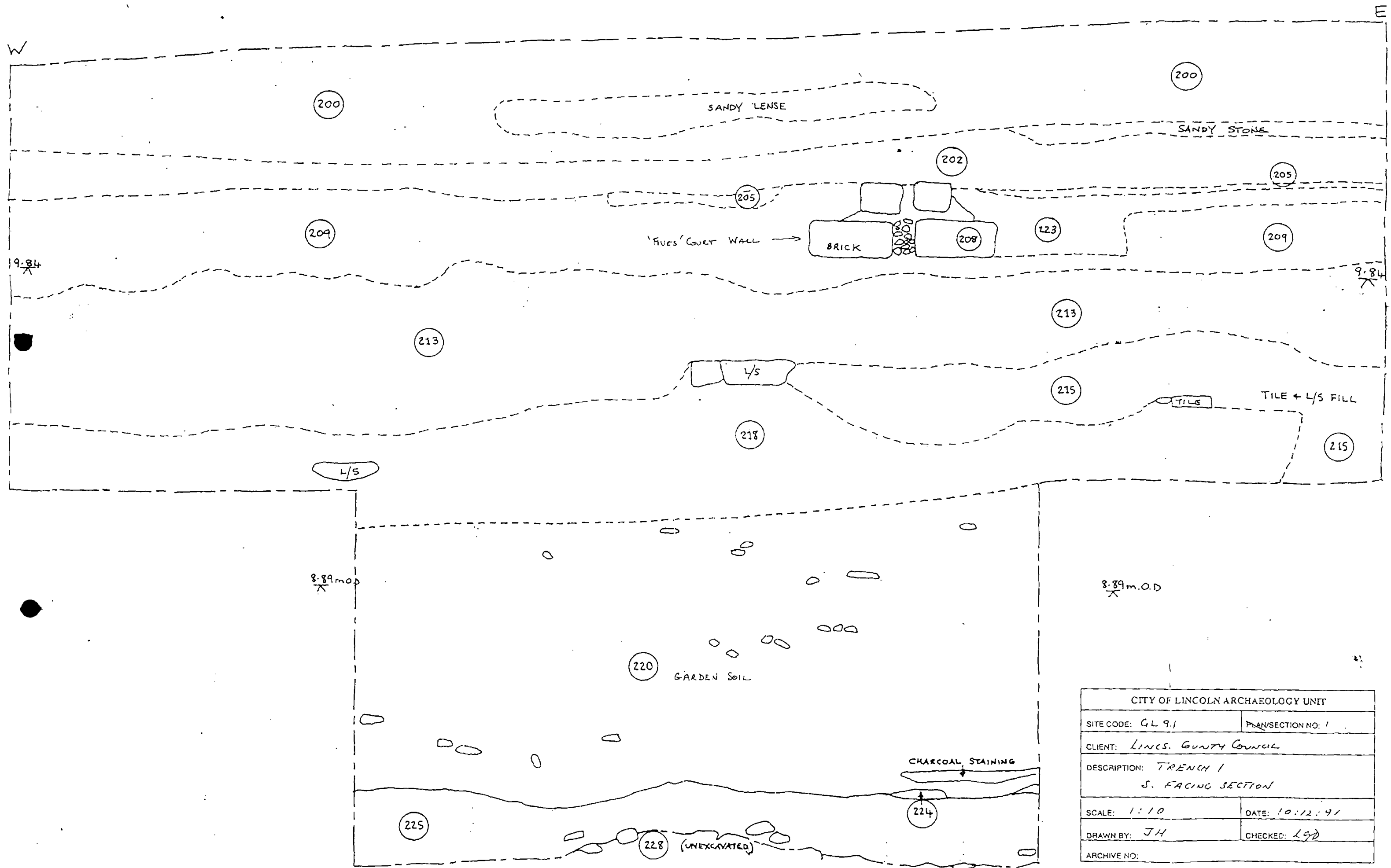


Fig.6

N. WALL OF GREYFRARS

DESCRIPTION: TRENCH 2 PLAN OF N-S WALL		INCLUDING PLAN
SCALE: 1:20	DATE: 12:12:91	
DRAWN BY: ADMAN BAYSAL		CHECKED:
ARCHIVE NO:		

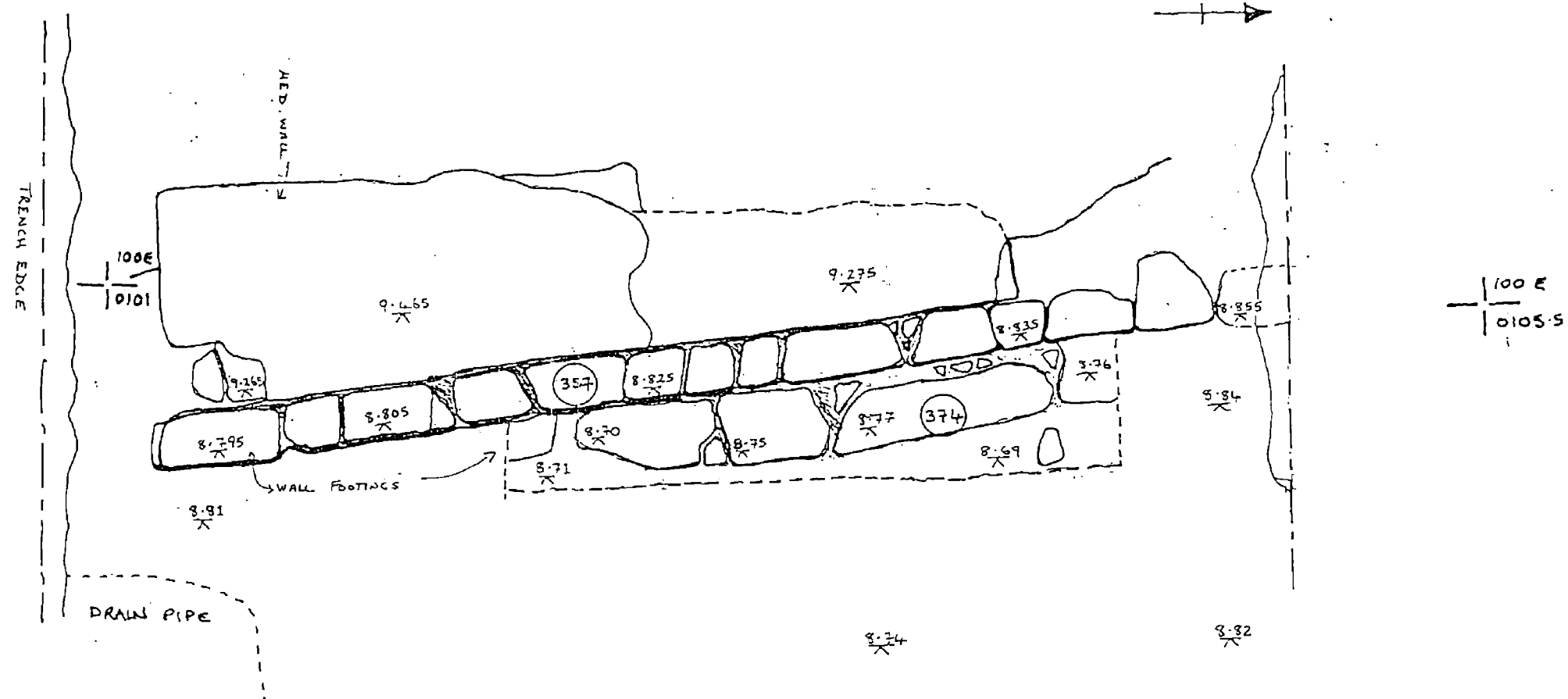


Fig.7

CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT	
SITE CODE: CL91	PLAN/SECTION NO: 2
CLIENT: <i>Lincoln County Council</i>	
DESCRIPTION: <i>TRENCH 2</i> <i>S. FACIAL SECTION</i>	
SCALE: <i>1:10</i>	DATE: <i>18.12.91</i>
DRAWN BY: <i>J.H.</i>	CHECKED: <i>LGD</i>
ARCHIVE NO:	

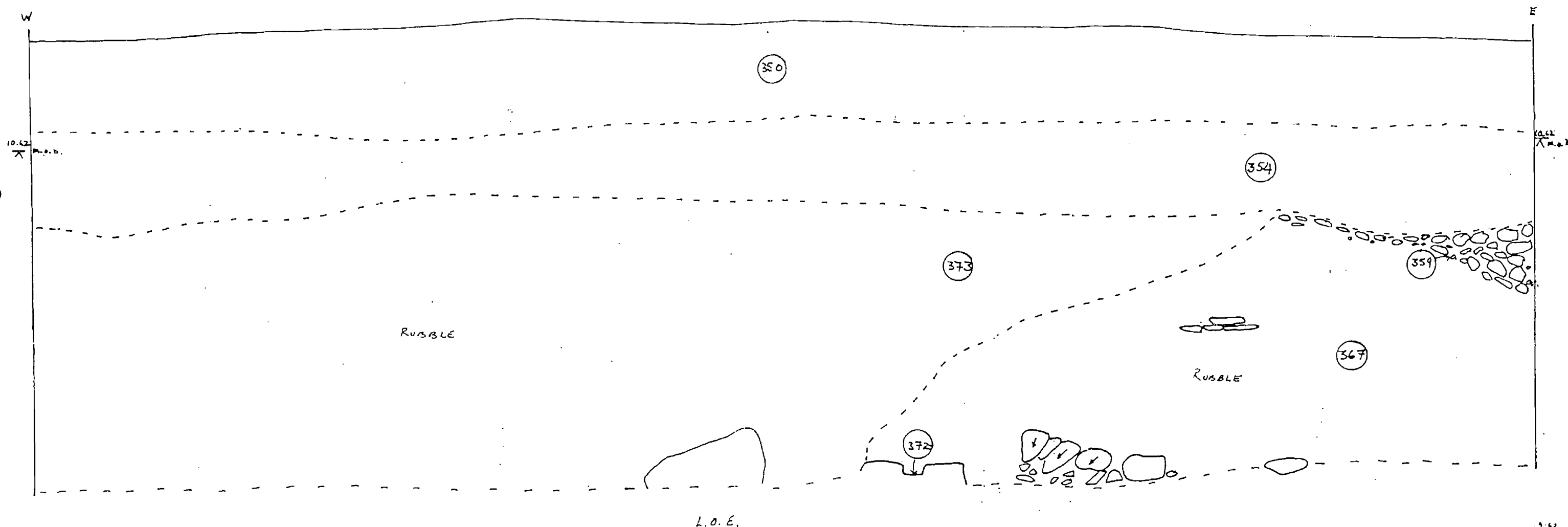


Fig.8

SITE CODE: CL 91		PLAN/SECTION NO: (353)
DESCRIPTION: PLAN OF E-W WALL (353) AND N-S WALL (357) TRENCH (2).		
SCALE: 1:20	DATE: 10.12.91	
DRAWN BY: A.B.	CHECKED:	
ARCHIVE NO:		

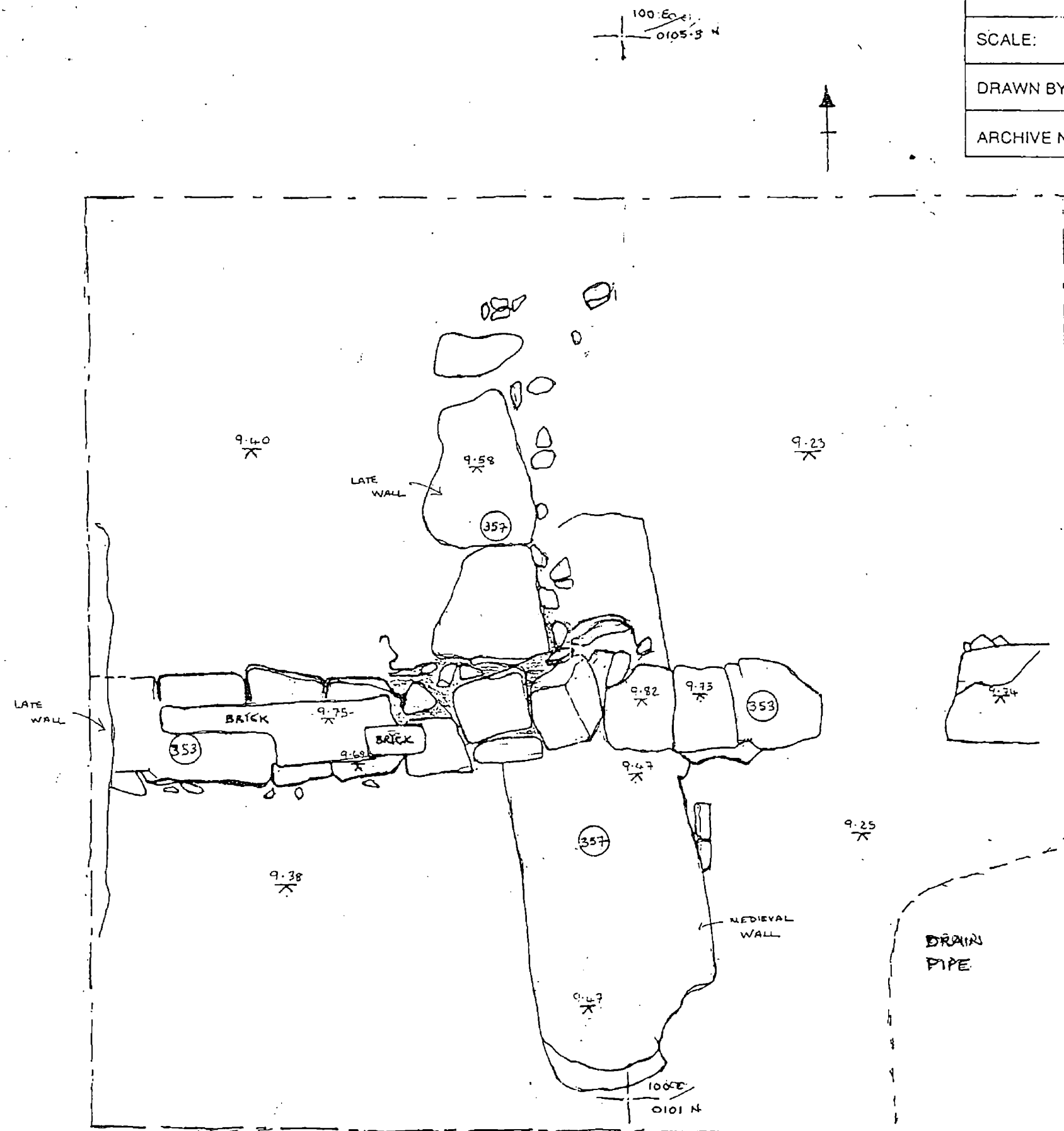
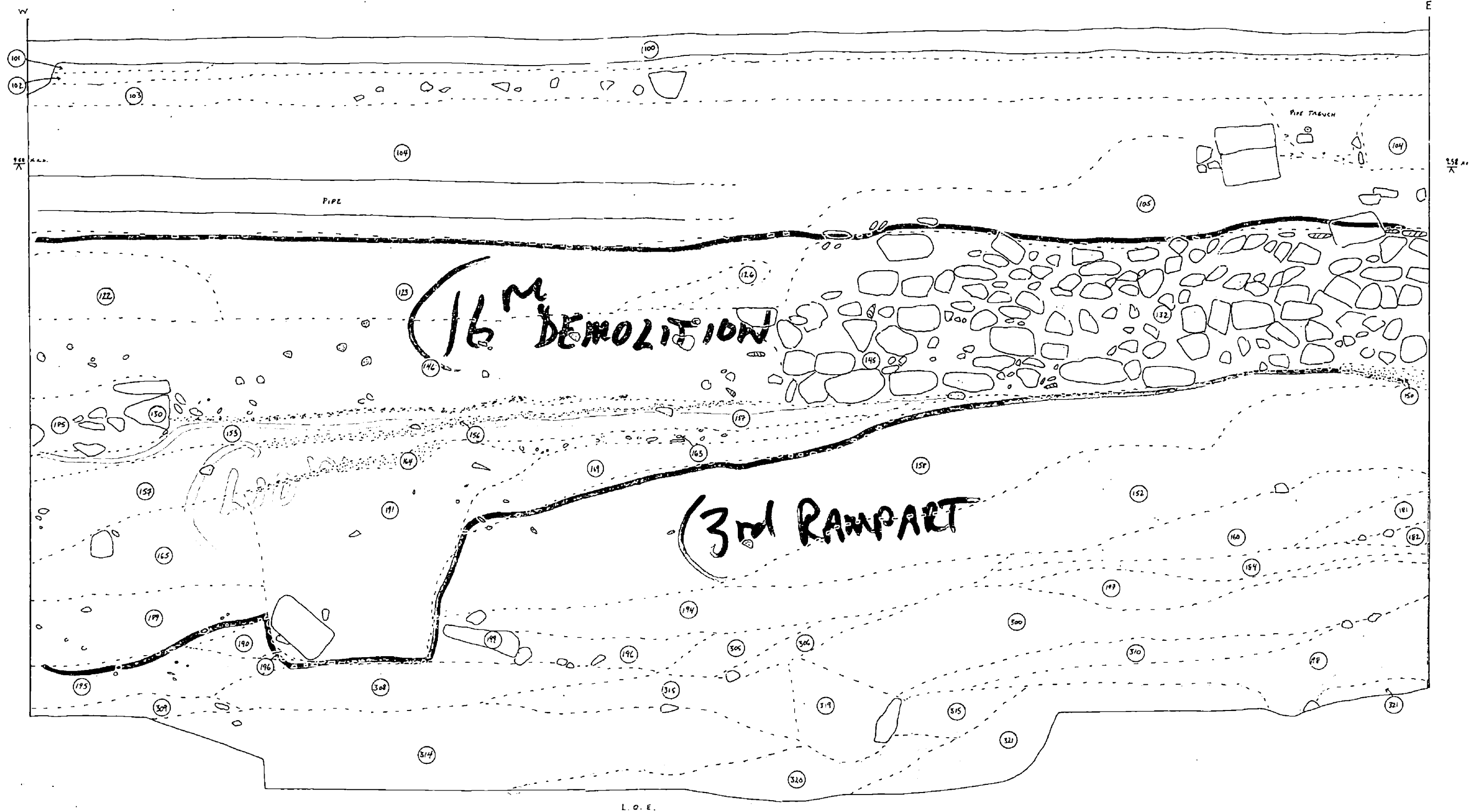


Fig.9



LINCOLN SILVER STREET 1973, CI;

NORTH SECTION FACING SOUTH

Line of N-S section
- 40-41/136
projected into section

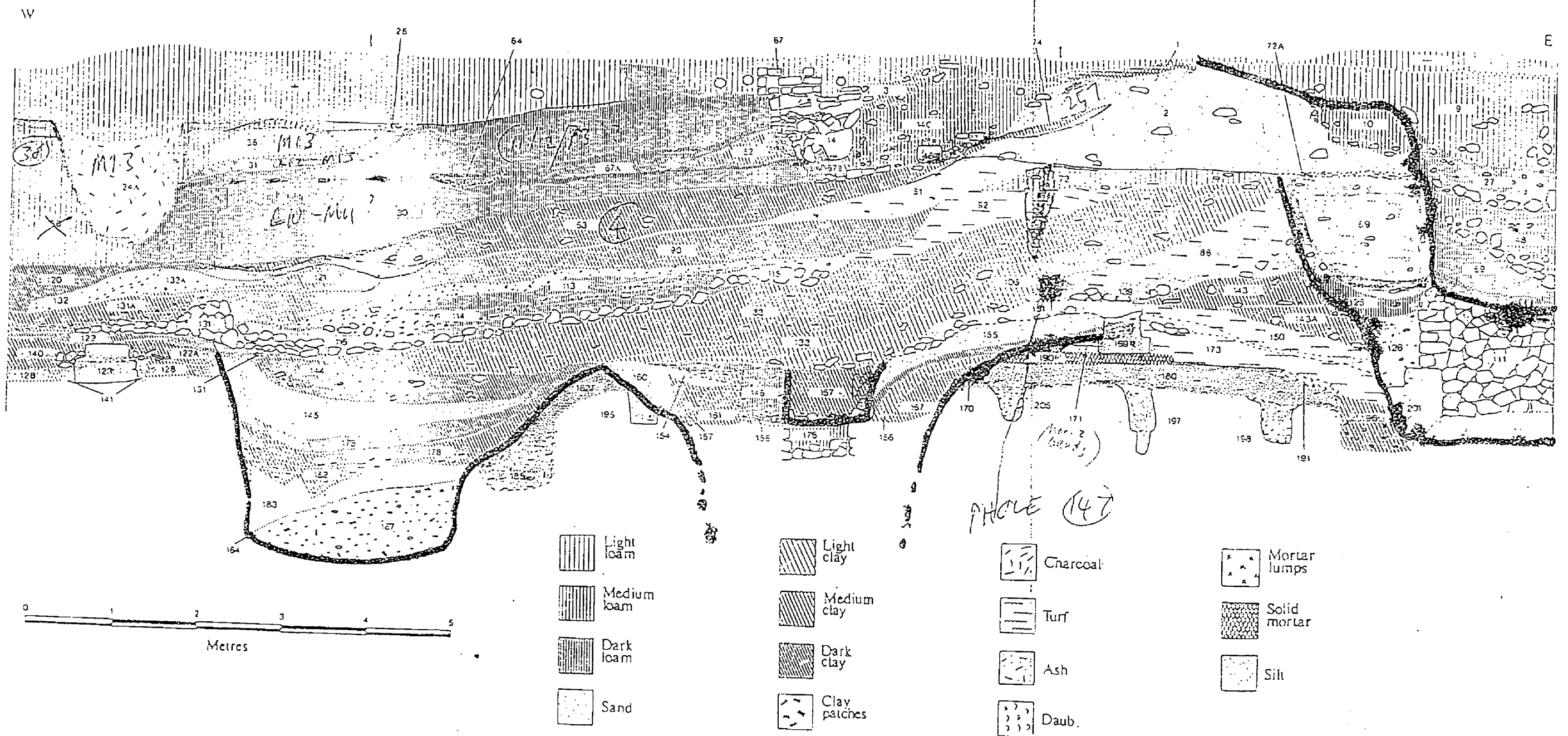


Fig. 11

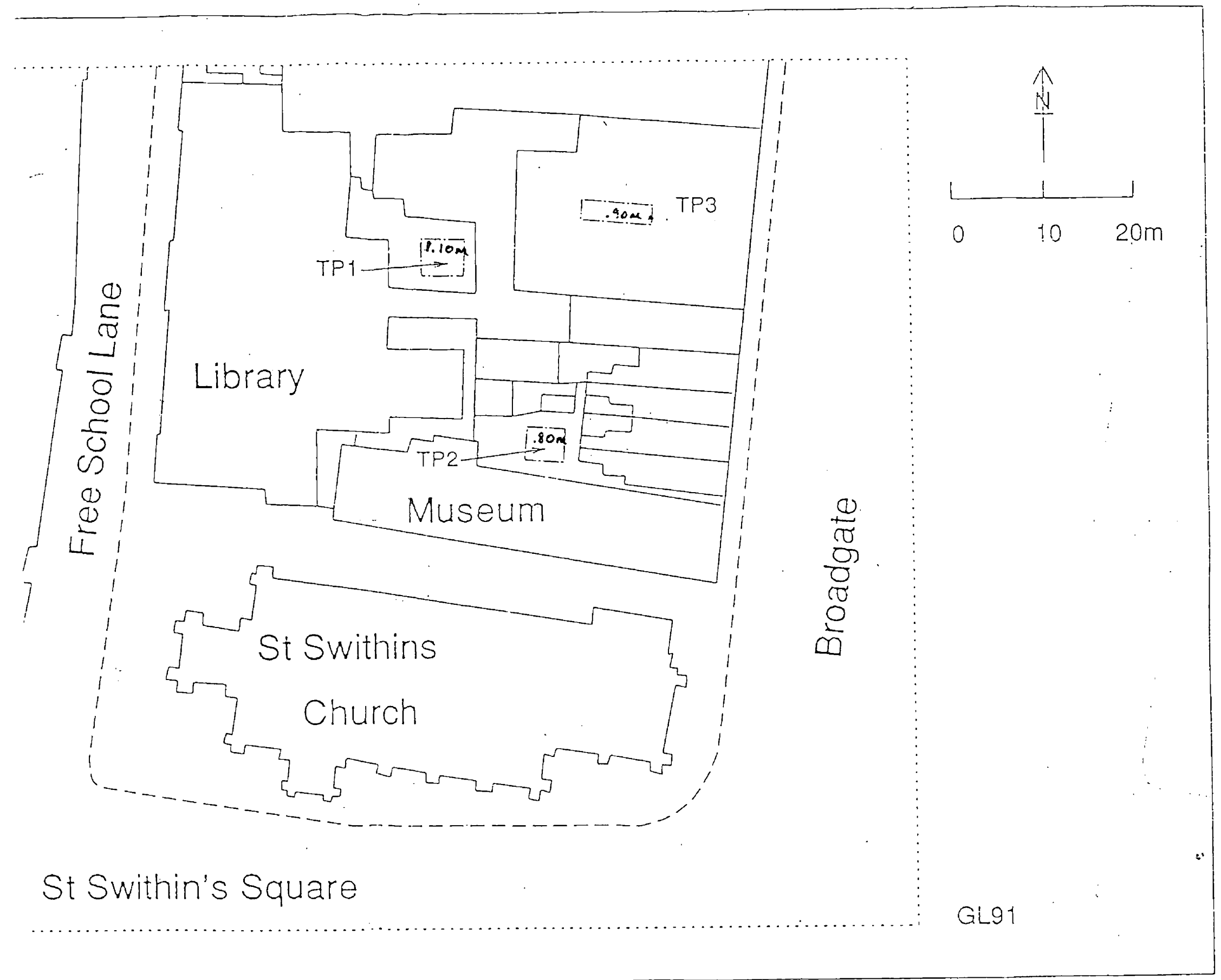


Fig.12 - Depth from surface to top of friary remains