

negative
95/15

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF A SINGLE TRENCH AT
TUPHOLME ABBEY,
NEAR BARDNEY,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(TUP95)**



A P S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF A SINGLE TRENCH AT
TUPHOLME ABBEY,
NEAR BARDNEY,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(TUP95)**

Work Undertaken For
Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

September 1995

CONTENTS

List of Figures

1.	Summary	1
2.	Introduction	1
2.1	Background	1
2.2	Topography and Geology	1
2.3	Archaeological Setting	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methods	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Discussion	2
7.	Conclusions	3
8.	Acknowledgements	3
9.	Personnel	3
10.	Bibliography	3

Appendices

1	Context Summary
2	The Archive

List of Figures

Figure 1 . . . General Location Plan

Figure 2 . . . Site Location Plan

Figure 3 . . . Location of Trench

Figure 4 . . . Section 1

1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a trench at Topholme Abbey, near Bardney, Lincolnshire. This was in response to necessary works by Anglian Water to repair a burst water pipe.

Topholme Abbey was founded in 1170 AD and was one of several abbey complexes along the Witham Valley. Built for canons of the Premonstratensian order, the Abbey was never particularly rich. Following the dissolution of the monastery in 1536, the abbey passed to Sir Charles Heneage before being converted to a farm.

Archaeological investigation at Topholme Abbey revealed deposits of natural and modern date.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Topholme Abbey, Topholme, near Bardney, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF144682). This archaeological investigation was in response to necessary repairs to a burst water pipe at the site. The work was carried by Archaeological Project Services on the 17th February 1995.

2.2 Topography and Geology

The site is located 18km east of Lincoln and 11km west of Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Situated along the Bardney to Bucknall Road, the remains of Topholme Abbey are spread across a number of fields in the civil parish of Topholme, East Lindsey District (Fig. 2).

Local soil type is of the Ragdale

Association, typically pelo-stagnogley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 293). This overlies a solid geology of Corallian limestones of the Upper Jurassic (Wilson 1958).

Topholme abbey precincts occupy a slight rise above extensive fens to the south that are associated with the River Witham. The site lies at approximately 7m O.D.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

The Premonstratensian Abbey of Topholme was founded around 1170 by Gilbert and Alan de Neville. The Premonstratensians (or Norbertines after the founder of the order, St Norbert) were an order that adopted the Rule of St Augustine, but were akin to the Cistercians in internal affairs (Lawrence 1984). The Premonstratensian order was established in this country about 1143 AD when Peter of Goxhill endowed the abbey of Newhouse in northern Lincolnshire.

Topholme Abbey was endowed with at least two manors and other smaller parcels of land. A number of churches were also controlled by the abbey including the church at Burreth, a now deserted medieval village, 1.5km to the north of the abbey. The abbey was never particularly wealthy and at its height had only about twenty four canons (Page 1988).

Following the dissolution in 1536 the land was given (in 1538) to Sir Charles Heneage. However, it was soon passed on to his son-in-law, Sir Christopher Willoughby, who is recorded as living here around 1570. It is likely, therefore, that parts of the abbey were converted to a house. However, this soon became uninhabitable and later owners moved to Topholme Hall (Keighley 1990).

All that survives of Topholme Abbey is a portion of the south wall of the refectory

and a number of earthworks. The earthworks to the north correspond to the presumed site of the church with associated buildings (eg Chapter House). Located to the south are fishponds and a moated enclosure (a similar moated enclosure at Louth Park Abbey was interpreted as a burial ground). A watercourse, first mentioned in a charter of Henry III (1216-1272), once connected the abbey to the River Witham, 2km away.

The Abbey site was scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882 (County number 10.) on the 27th January 1927. Recently the ruins passed into the control of Heritage Lincolnshire who are committed to the protection of the monument and to provide facilities and interpretation for the visitor. This has resulted in a number of archaeological investigations including excavations at the base of the refectory wall (Heritage Lincs 1995 a,b), geophysical survey and excavation in the northwest of the site (Brown and Hope 1991) and monitoring of the excavation of postholes for new sheep fencing (Heritage Lincolnshire 1992)

3. AIMS

The aims of the excavation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

A single trench was excavated with a small mechanical digger to a depth of 1.3m. The trench was 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. A photographic record

was compiled and elevations of recently exposed wall 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 excavation were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the date of finds, the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A stratigraphic matrix of all identified deposits was produced. Thereafter, to assist analysis, a context group matrix was created and phased. Three phases were identified during the excavation:

Phase 1 - Natural deposits

Phase 2 - Recent deposits

Phase 1 Natural deposits

Situated in the base of the trench was a deposit of reddish yellow clayey sand (Context 2). Identified as natural alluvium only 0.2m of this deposit was examined.

Phase 2 Recent deposits

Overlying natural deposits was a layer of black sandy silt (Context 1). This was 1.10m thick and was identified as the topsoil. Within the soil was a fragment of tile and a sheep's bone.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits (phase 1) of reddish yellow clayey sand represent alluvial activity. Also identified in previous examination at Topholme Abbey this deposit is typical of the underlying drift geology of the site.

Recent deposits (Phase 2) constitute the modern topsoil. The lack of a subsoil indicates that disturbance has taken place, possibly at the time of the insertion of the water pipe.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This investigation revealed that natural deposits occur within 1.1m of the present ground surface and are likely to be alluvial in origin. Overlying this is the recent topsoil. Though containing tile, it is likely that this was not in the area of any monastic buildings as these lie further to the east.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavation and post-fieldwork analysis was carried out by Archaeological Project Services on behalf of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire. Steve Haynes coordinated the work and this report was edited by Dave Start and Gary Taylor.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes
Supervisors: Kate Hughes
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

All of the following sources were consulted, however, as some references duplicated information available in others, not all of them have been specifically referred to in the text.

Brown, A. and Hope, A., 1991 *Archaeological Excavation at Tūpholme*

Abbey Heritage Lincolnshire and Nottingham Polytechnic Unpublished report

Clapham, A.W., 1923 *The Architecture of the Premonstratensians, with special reference to their Buildings in England* Archaeologia XXIII

Heritage Lincolnshire 1989 *Tūpholme Abbey* Information leaflet

Heritage Lincolnshire 1992 *An Archaeological Watching Brief of the Excavation of Postholes at Tūpholme Abbey, Lincolnshire* Unpublished report

Heritage Lincolnshire 1995(a) *An Archaeological Excavation at Tūpholme Abbey, Lincolnshire, 1990* Unpublished report

Heritage Lincolnshire 1995(b) *Archaeological Excavation at Tūpholme Abbey, Lincolnshire 1993* Unpublished report

Hodge, C.A.H, Burton, R.G.O, Corbett, W.M, Evans, and Seale, R.S, 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales 13

Keighley, A., *Tūpholme Abbey, from its foundation to the present day* Unpublished essay

Lawrence, C.H., 1984 *Medieval Monasticism*

Page, W., (ed) 1988 *The Victoria History of the County of Lincoln* Vol.2. (Reprint)

Pevsner, N. and Harris, J., 1989 *Lincolnshire The Buildings of England* (2nd ed. Revised Antram, N.)

White, A., 1979 *Tūpholme Abbey*

Lincolnshire Museums Information Sheet
(Archaeology) **10**

Wilson, V., 1958 *East Yorkshire and
Lincolnshire*, British Regional Geology

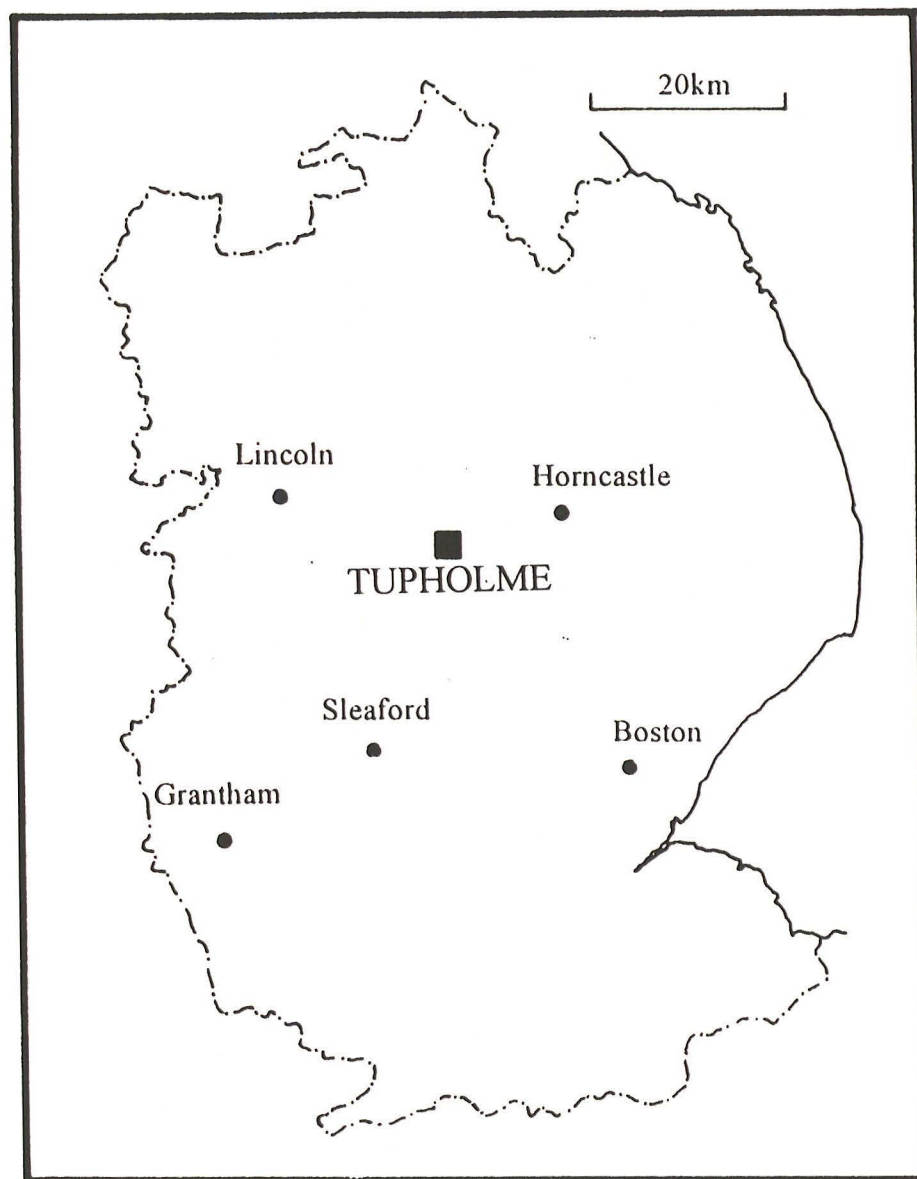
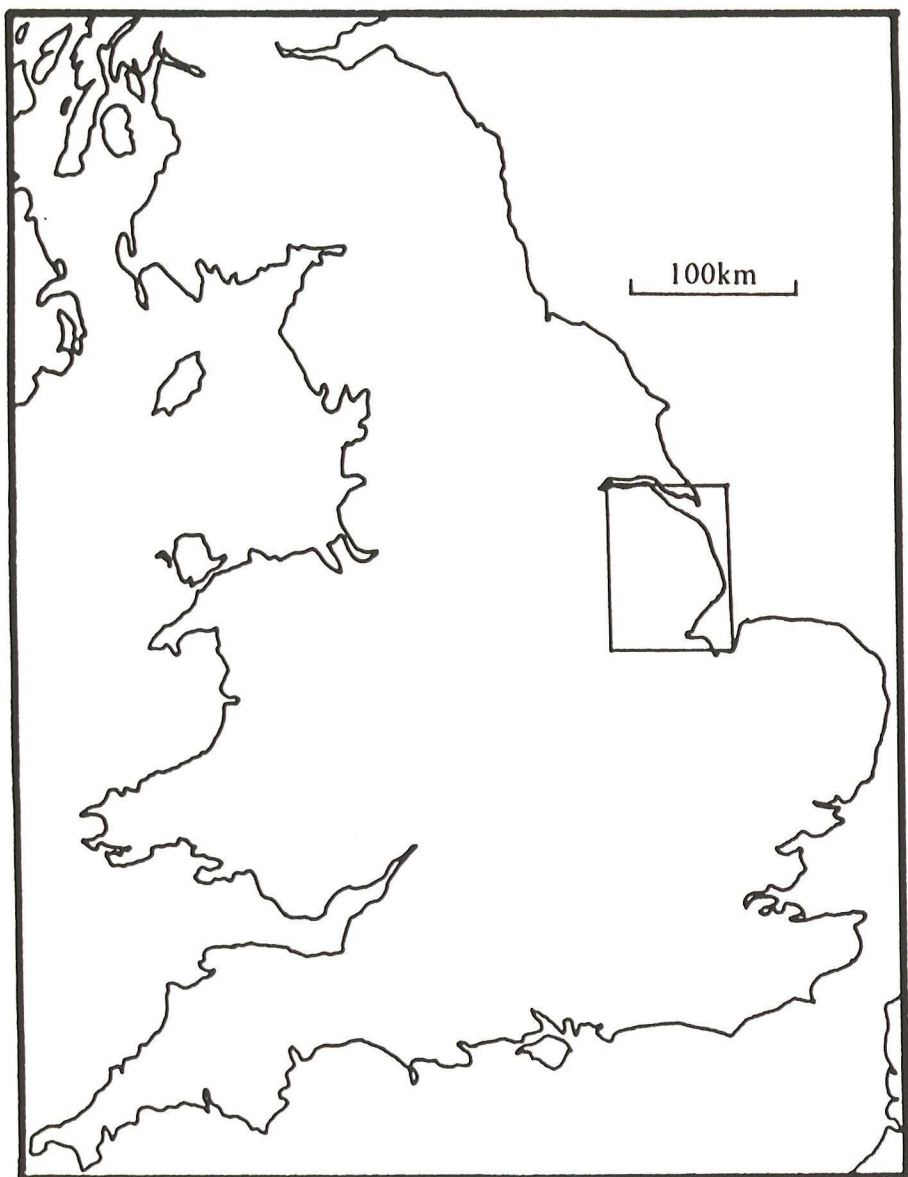
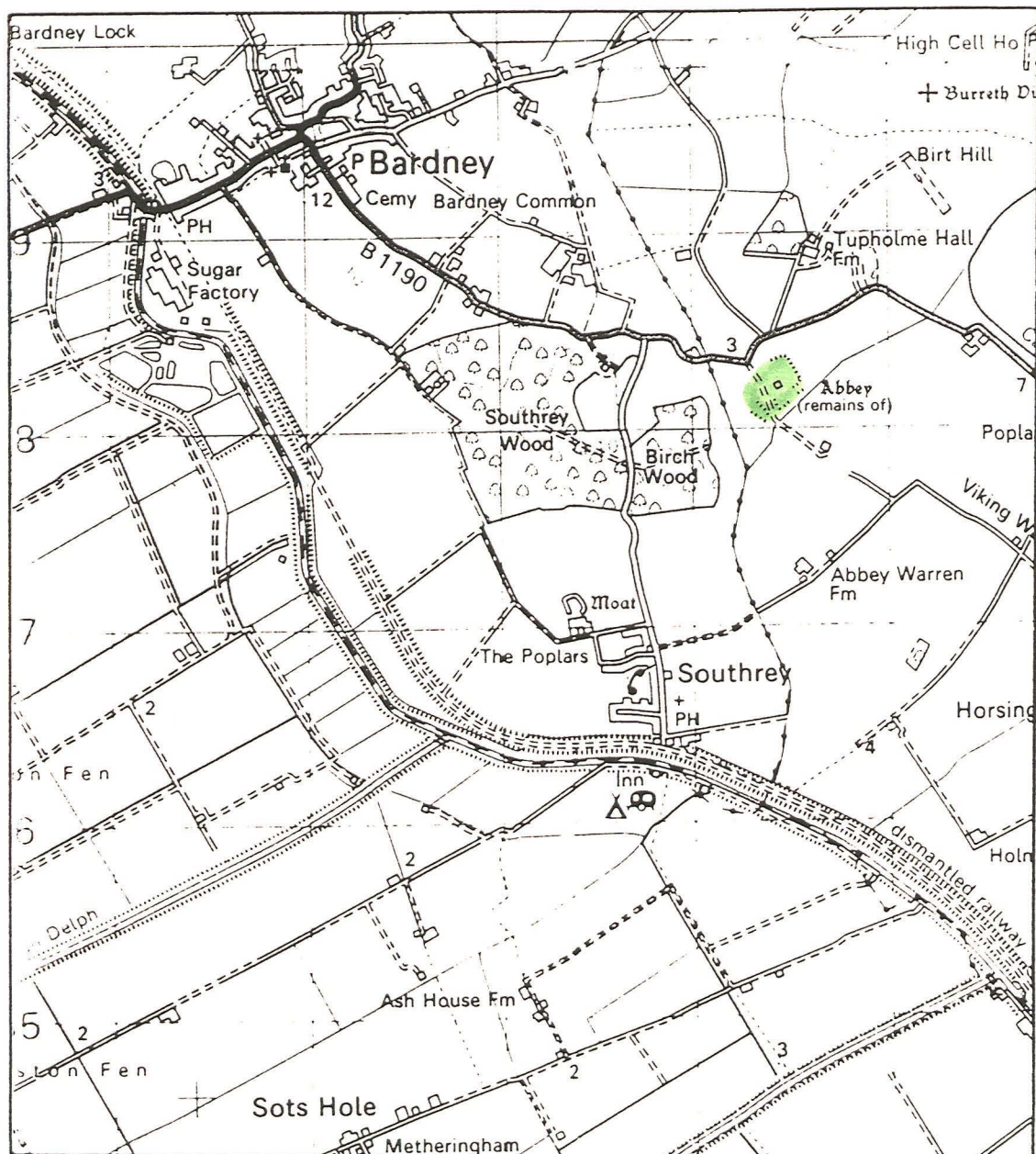


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



0 2km



Area of Investigation

Fig. 3 Location of Trench

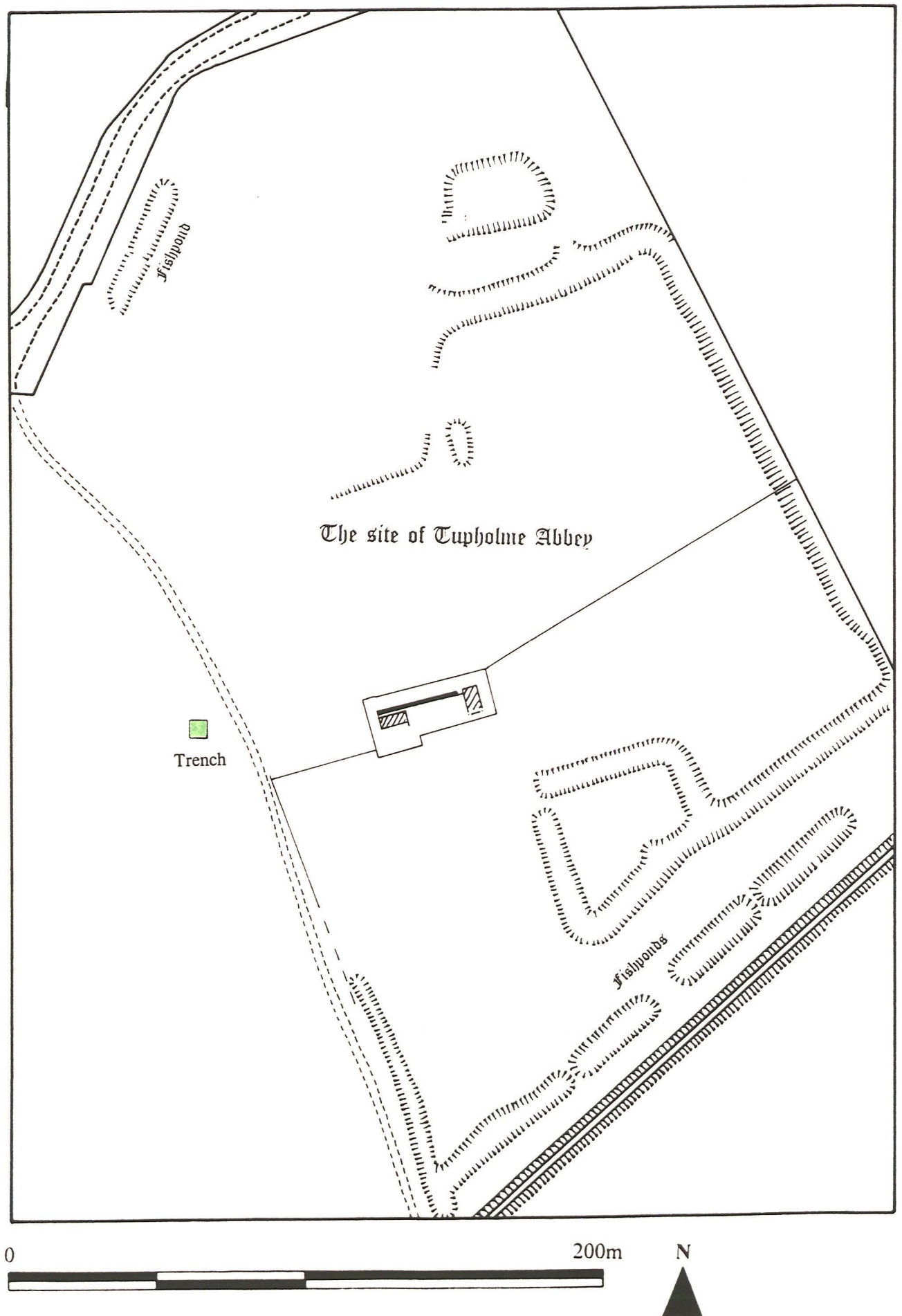
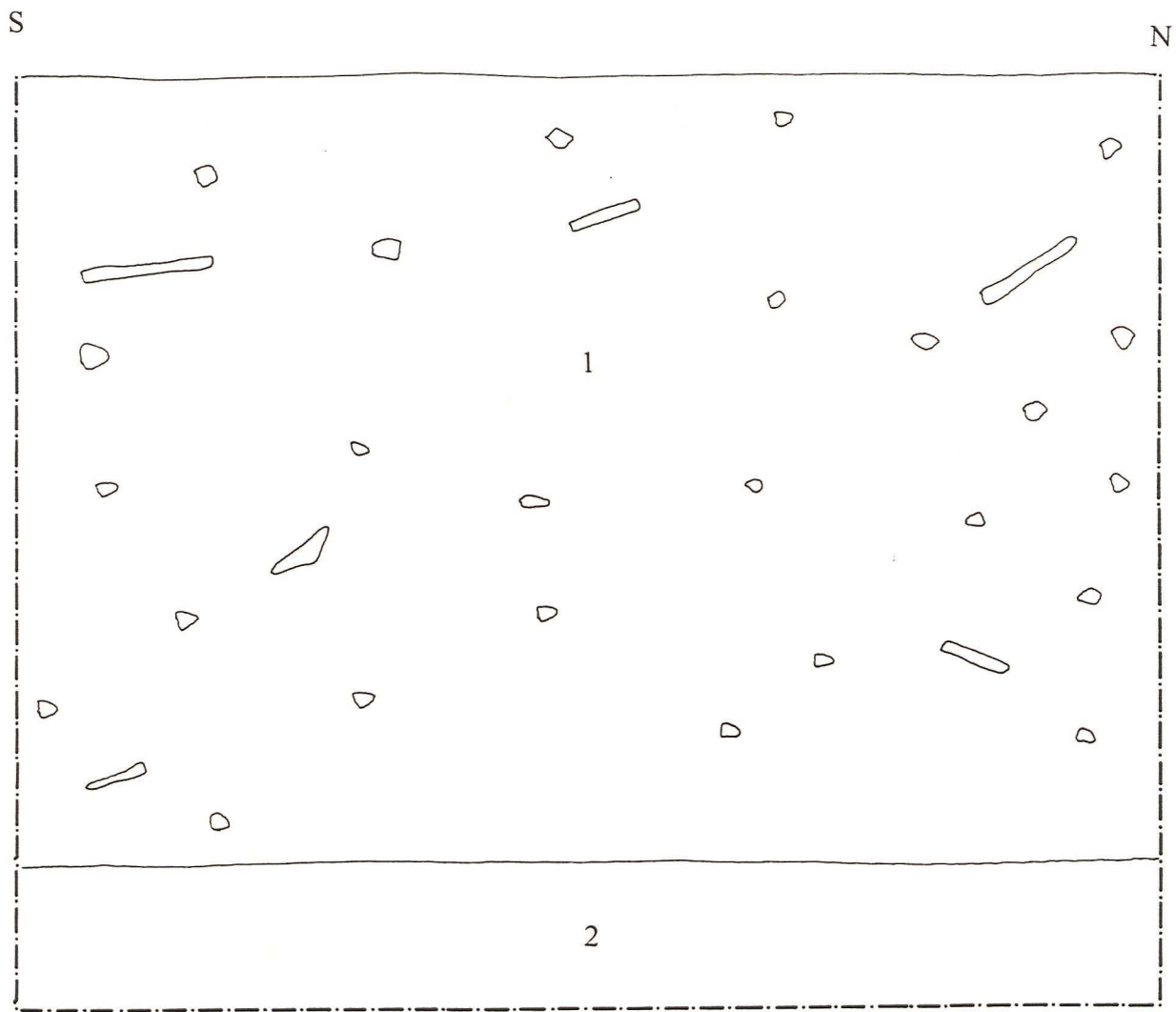


Fig. 4 Section 1



Section 1



APPENDIX 1

Context Summary

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Black sandy silt	Topsoil
2	Reddish yellow clayey sand	Natural deposit

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 2 . . . Context Records
- 1 . . . Photographic Record
- 1 . . . Scale Drawings
- 1 . . . Site Matrix
- 1 . . . Bag 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	160.95
Archaeological Project Services project code	TUP95