



ADVANCING LINCOLNSHIRE'S PAST



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PRN 43630

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
AT TUPHOLME ABBEY,  
NEAR BARDNEY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
1990  
(TUP90)**

Work Undertaken For  
Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

September 1995

## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological excavation was undertaken at Tugholme Abbey, near Bardney, Lincolnshire. This was in response to a proposal for the conservation of the monument and remedial repairs to the stonework to be undertaken. The work was carried out by Heritage Lincolnshire and students of Nottingham Polytechnic.*

*Tugholme 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, having only 24 canons at its height. Following the dissolution of the monastery in 1536, by Henry VIII (1509-1547), the abbey passed first to Sir Charles Heneage, and later to his son-in-law, Sir Christopher Willoughby, who appears to have converted all or part of it into a house. Later the abbey became part of a farm complex.*

*Excavation of three trenches, along the base of the refectory wall, took place between May and July, 1990. Four phases of activity were recognised and range from natural to recent deposits. A sequence of topsoil overlying demolition deposits associated with the destruction of post-dissolution buildings were observed. Traces of tile and brick floors were also revealed, probably associated with the change of use of the abbey to a dwelling. Areas of mortar floor were recorded and these are likely to be medieval in date. A number of finds were recovered and include pottery and bone as well as some painted window glass and a bronze bowl.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological investigation was undertaken at Tugholme Abbey, Tugholme, nr Bardney, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF144682). This was in response to ground disturbing remedial work undertaken on the surviving refectory wall. The work was carried out by the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire with help from students of Nottingham Polytechnic.

Located 18km east of Lincoln, the remains of the abbey occupy a slight rise above the fens of the River Witham. Local soils are of the Ragdale Association, typically pelo-stagnogley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 293) that overly Corallian limestones of the Upper Jurassic (Wilson 1958).

The Premonstratensian Abbey of Tugholme was founded around 1170 AD by Gilbert and Alan de Neville. Premonstratensians were an order that followed the Rule of St Augustine but were akin to the Cistercians in internal affairs. Founded in France the order spread to this country about 1143 AD. Never a wealthy monastery, Tugholme was, however, endowed with at least two manors and other pieces of land and had control over several churches.

Following the dissolution in 1536, the land passed on to a local landowner, Sir Charles Heneage, whereupon it was first changed to a house for his son-in-law Sir Christopher Willoughby, before coming part of a farm complex

### **3. DISCUSSION**

Natural deposits (Phase 1) of yellow and reddish yellow sand were observed in most trenches and were possibly alluvial in origin.

Medieval deposits (Phase 2) relate to the construction of the abbey. Cutting into natural sand and parallel to the refectory wall, was an east to west aligned linear feature. This was identified as the foundation trench for the surviving section of the wall. Lying to the north of the wall and in trench 3 was a deposit of mortar identified as a floor surface. Furthermore, excavation revealed the inner facing stones of the refectory wall.

Overlying medieval deposits were contexts associated with the dissolution of the monastery and the subsequent changes of use, first as a house and then as part of a farm complex (Phase 3). Varying sand deposits were encountered that may represent build up of soils, therefore suggesting that this area was not reoccupied. A large pit had also been excavated through the medieval mortar floor, possibly for the extraction of sand. Above these features a brick and tile floor had been constructed, though it is not known whether this is an internal or external surface. During this phase, demolition of the monastery took place, though the surviving refectory wall was probably left to provide a landscape feature for Tupholme Hall (existing in 1729).

Modern deposits (Phase 4) continue with sequences of demolition material and soil formation. Also noticed were four posthole cuts, these indicating the position of upright posts of a fence line that is apparent in photographs dating from the 1930's to 1950's. Aligned with the doorway through the refectory wall was a path constructed mainly of brick and stone but also with tarmac. Overlying this path is a subsoil of brown loam, containing demolition material (indicating the demolition of 19th century cottages on the site).

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Archaeological investigation at Tupholme Abbey revealed that natural deposits occur within 1.2m of the present ground surface and are of alluvial origin. Medieval activity is represented by a foundation trench and a fragmentary mortar floor. Later activity is marked by many demolition episodes intermingled with soil formation and surfaces representing paths or floors associated with the use of this area as a farm complex

The archaeological remains recorded here are supplemented by later investigations carried out at Tupholme Abbey, most notably excavations carried out in 1993. Therefore, this report constitutes a summary statement and thus, interpretations given in this report are provisional and may be subject to amendment.

### **5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The excavation and post-fieldwork analysis was carried out by and on behalf of Heritage Lincolnshire. Students of Nottingham Polytechnic helped in the excavation. This report was edited by Dave Start.

## 6. PERSONNEL

Site staff: Simon Barnet, Garland Grylls, Peter Hayes, Christopher Padley,  
Dave Start  
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Sue Unsworth  
Post-Excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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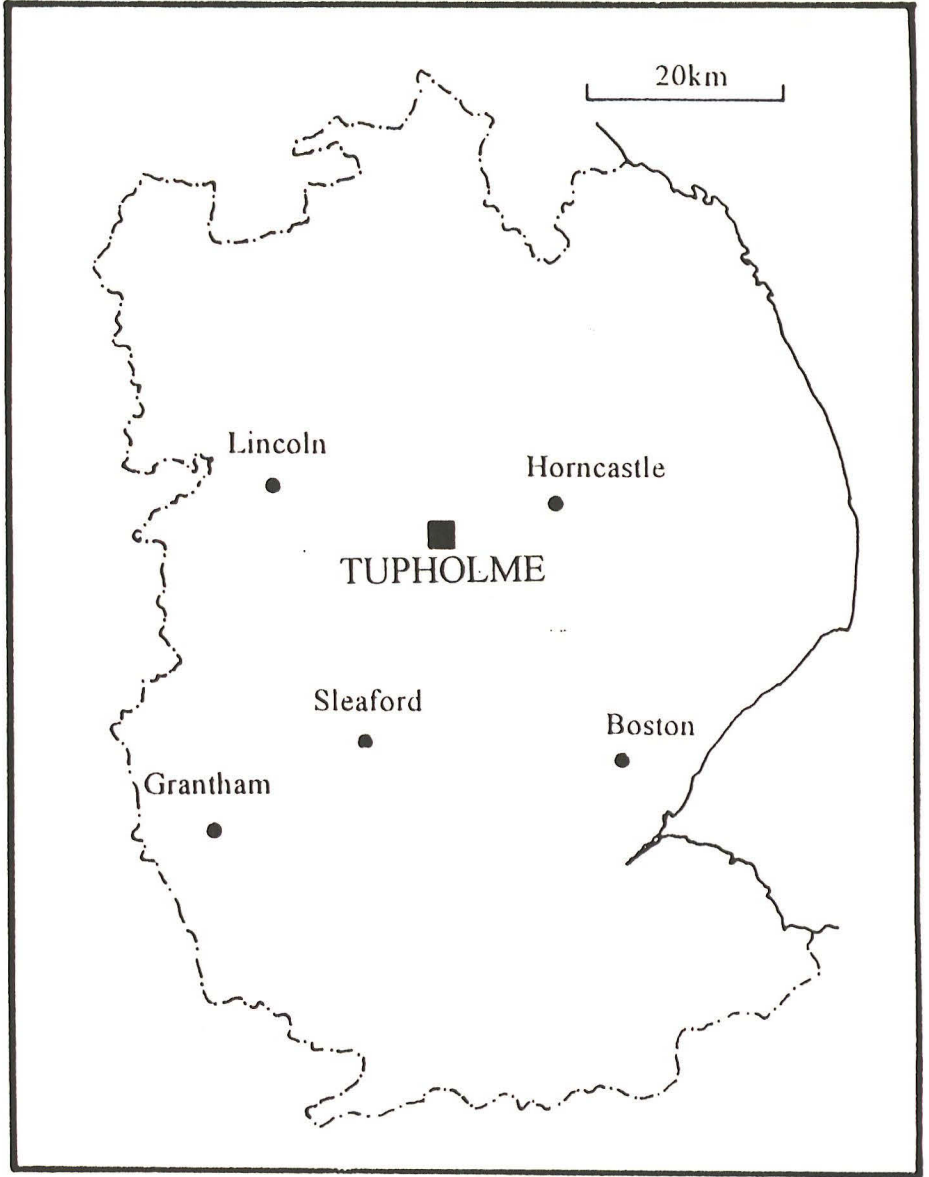
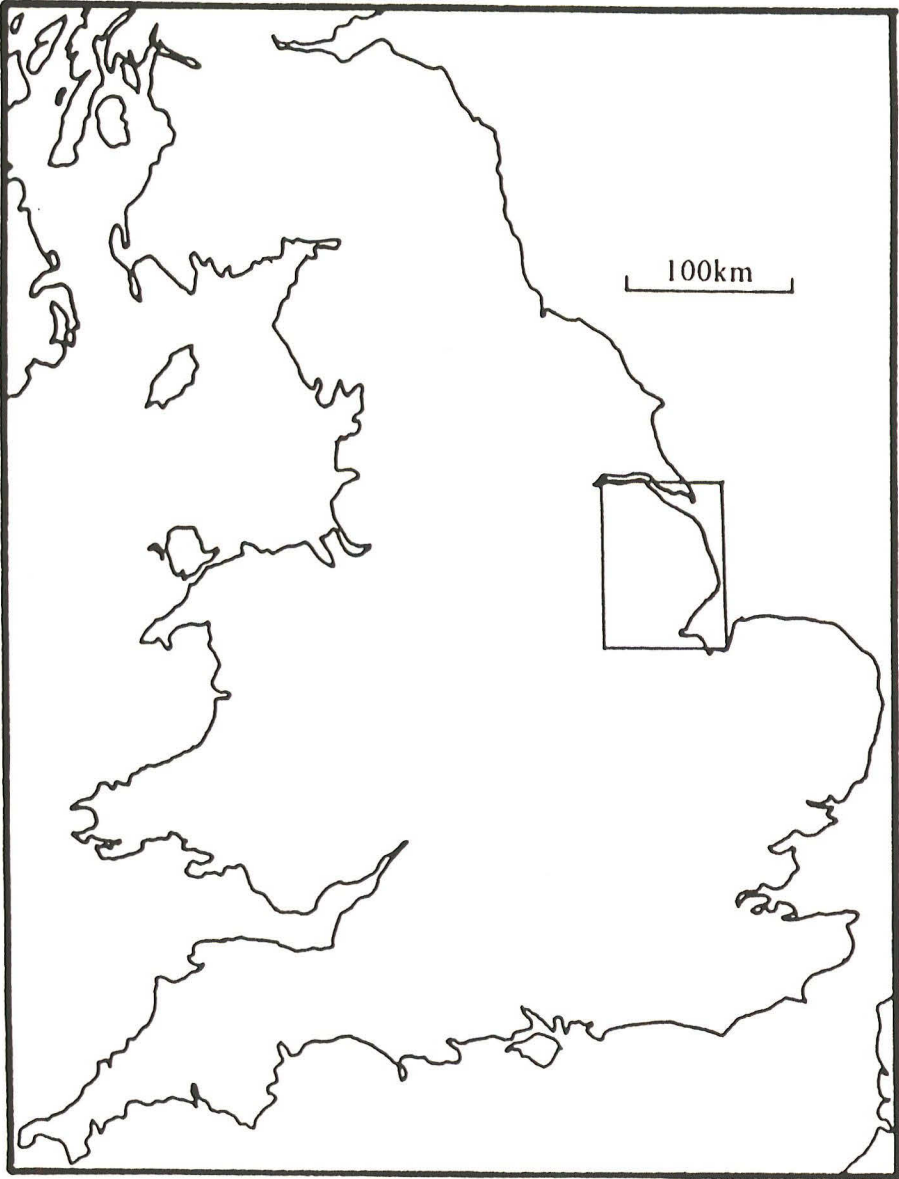
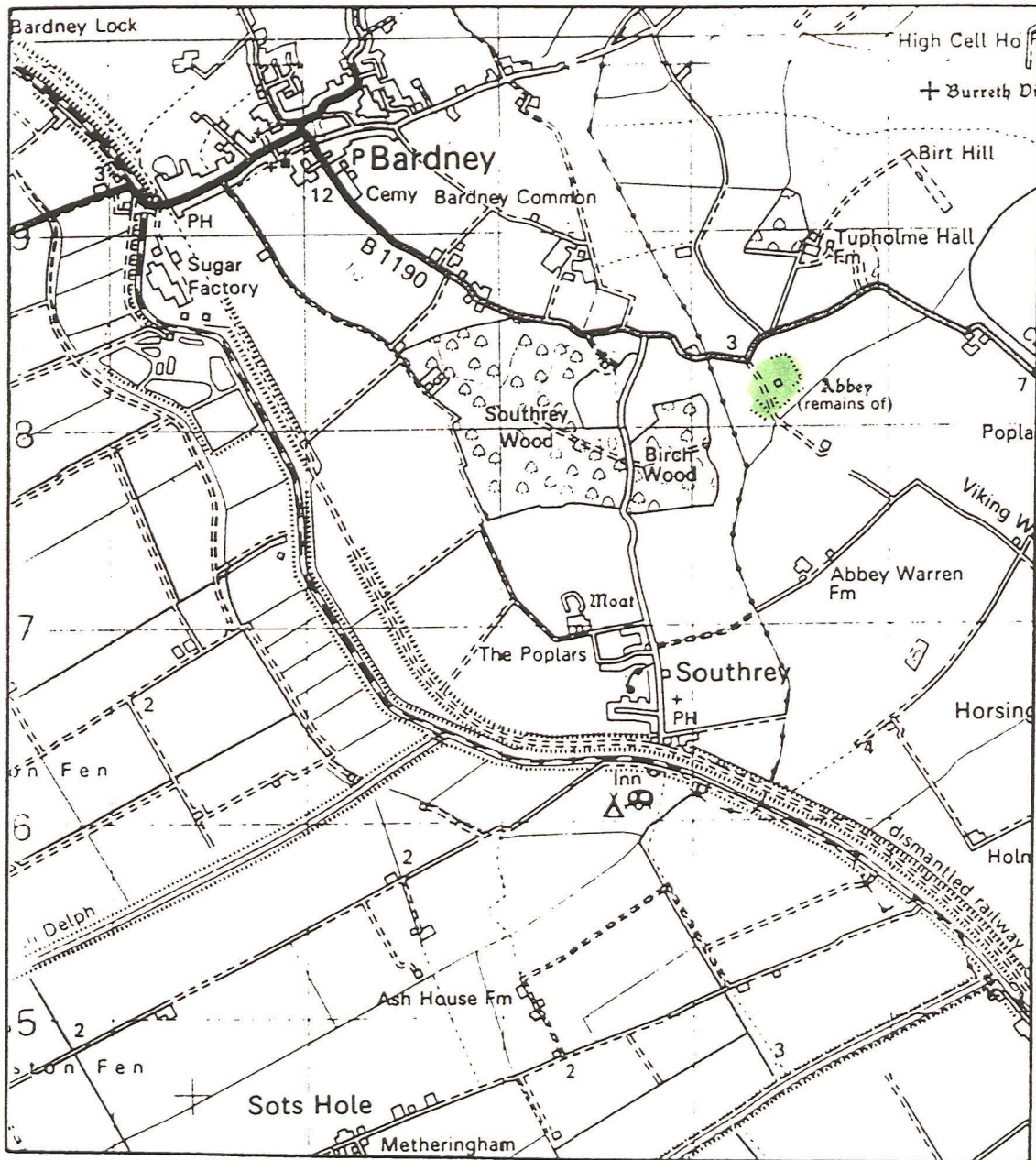


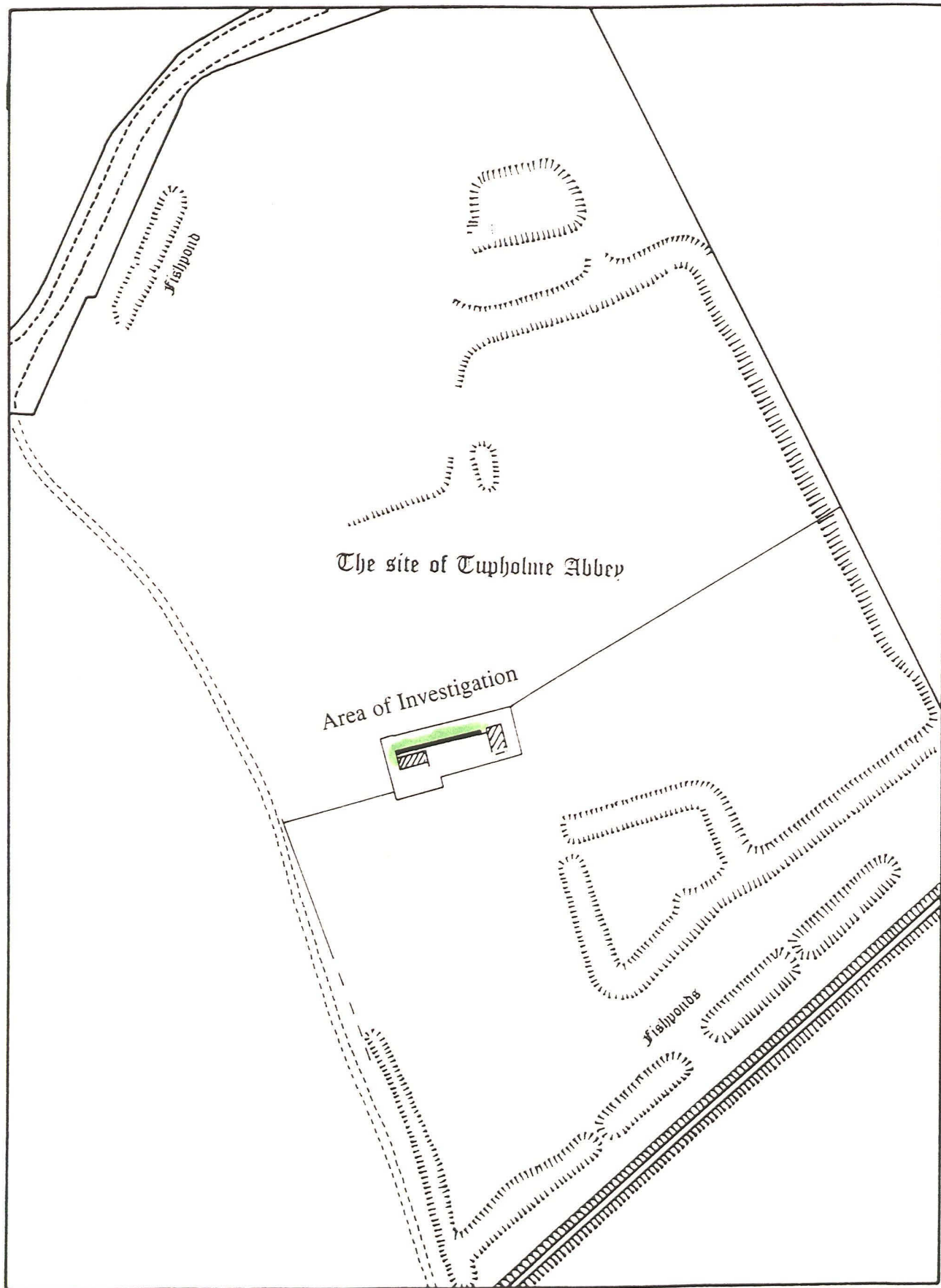
Fig. 1 General Location Plan

Fig. 2 Site Location Plan



Area of Investigation

Fig. 3 Area of Investigation



0

200m

N



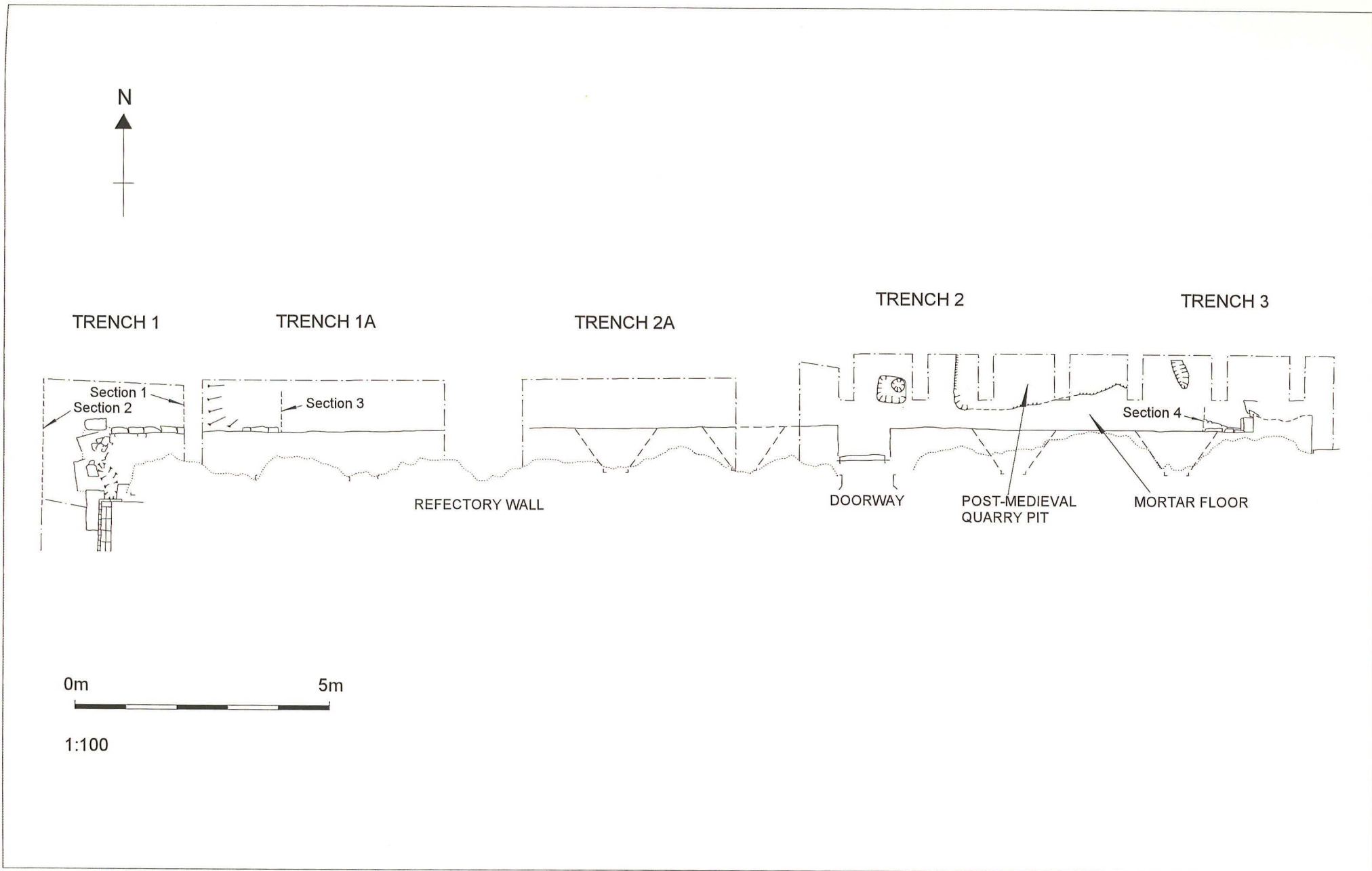
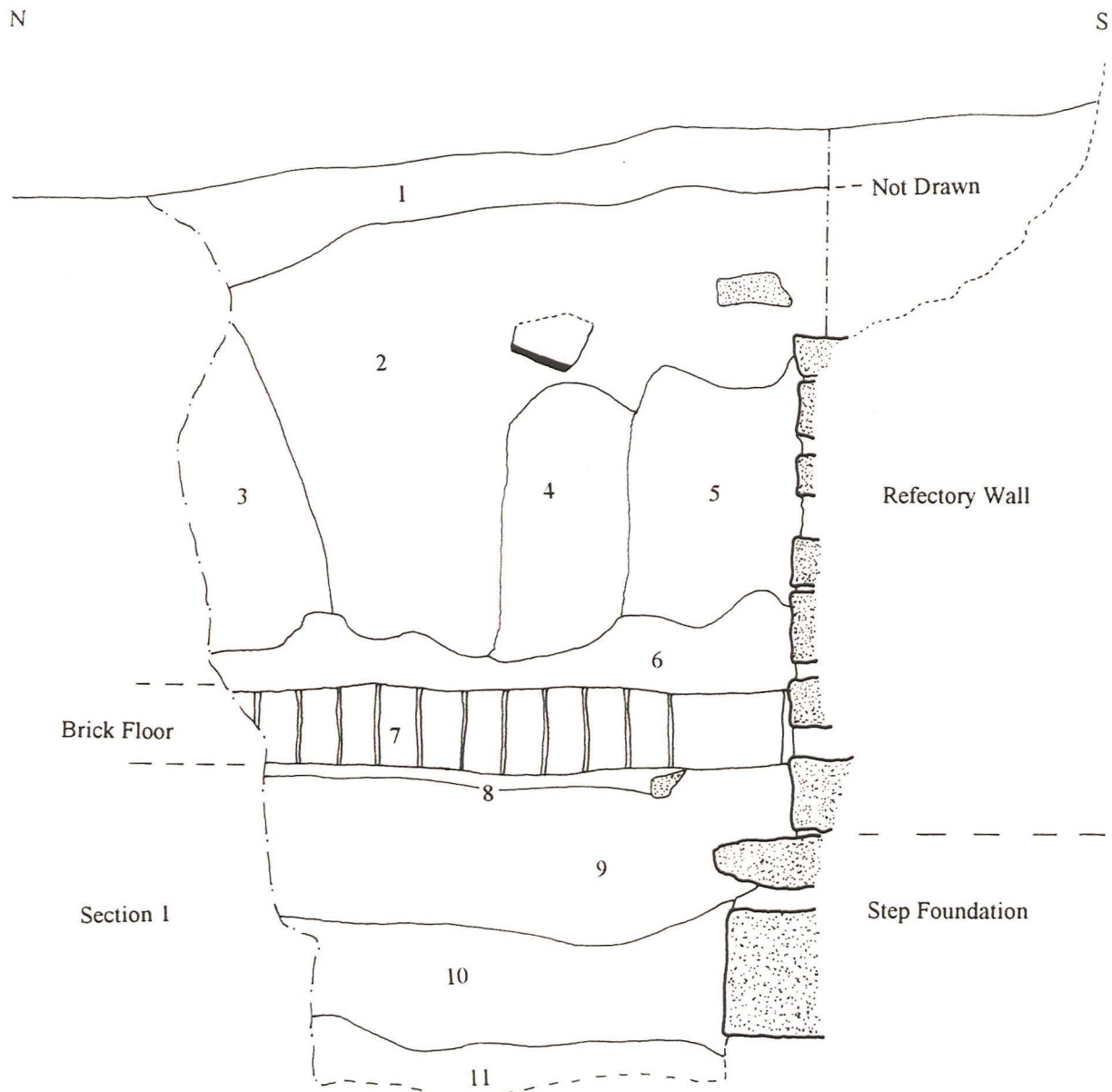


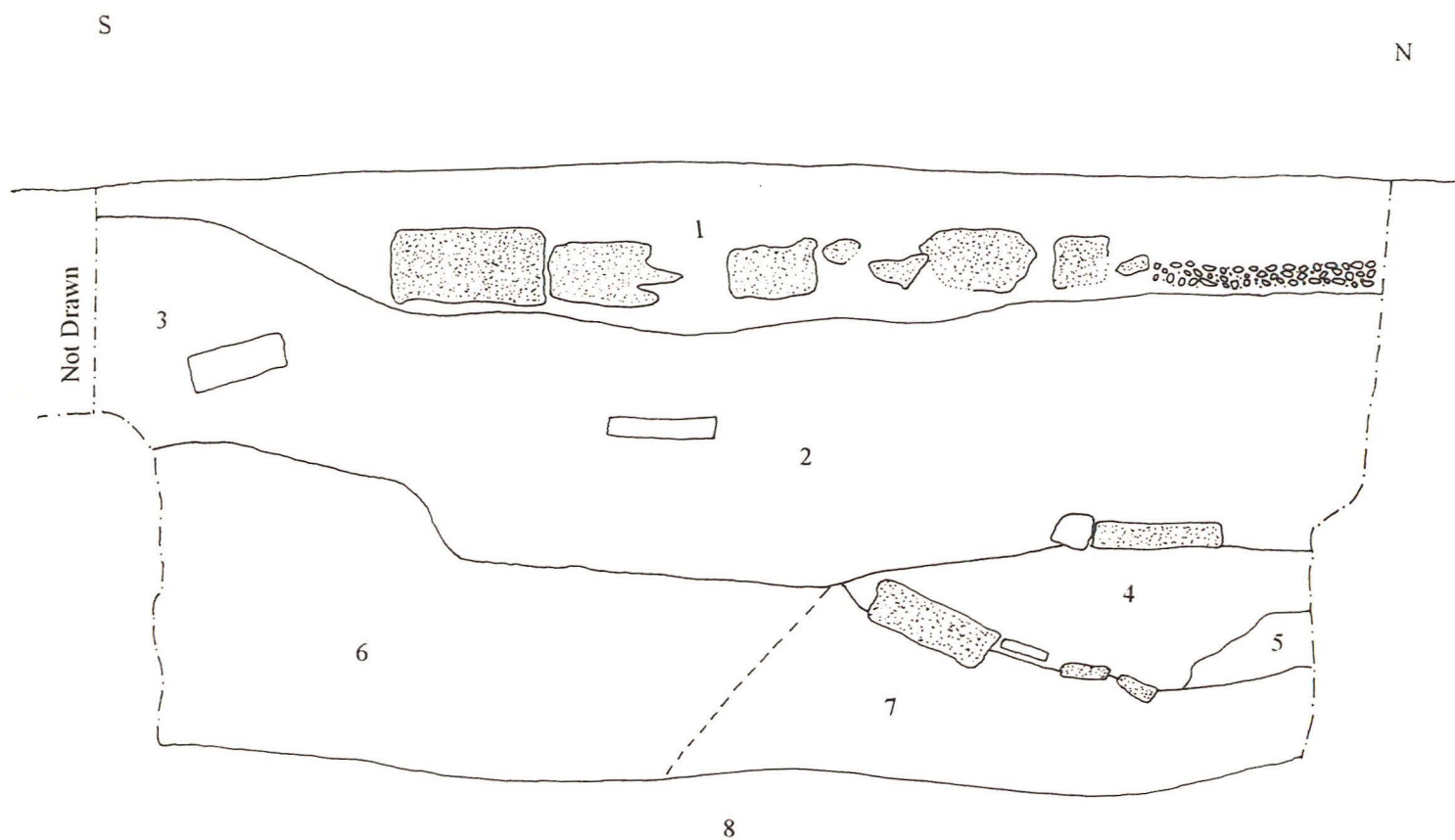
Fig. 4 Trench Location Plan

Fig. 5 Section 1



1. Topsoil
2. Black grey sandy soil with rubble
3. Grey sandy soil with stone rubble
4. Similar to 3
5. Yellow coarse mortar
6. Grey brown sand
7. Brick surface
8. Mortar layer
9. Brown grey coarse sand
10. Clean brown sand
11. Natural

Fig. 6 Section 2

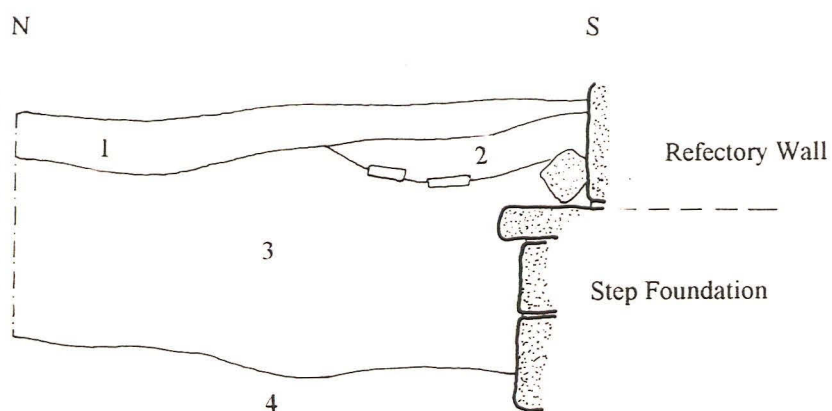


Section 2

0 0.5m

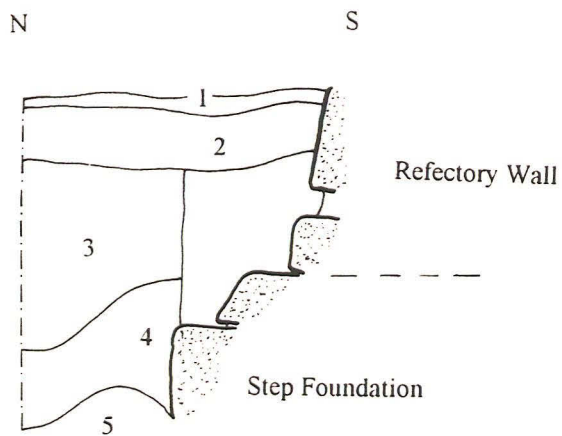
1. Topsoil
2. Brown sandy soil with rubble
3. As 2 but with more rubble
4. Grey brown plaster or mortar
5. Grey blue clay
6. Brown sandy soil with rubble
7. Brown sandy soil
8. Natural

Fig. 7 Sections 3 and 4



Section 3

1. Fine black soil with bone fragments
2. Yellow sandy mortar
3. Brown sand
4. Natural



Section 4

1. Yellow mortar
2. Black sandy layer
3. Yellow brown sand with flints
4. As 3 with no flints
5. Natural

Context No.	Trench	Type	Description	Section	Plan	Photo	Phase	Notes:
1	All	Layer	Black sandy topsoil	1, 2		33.15,16		Same as Group 1000 (TAP93)
2	2 (n & s)	Surface	Rubble layer, forming path	1		33.19,20		Same as Group 1018 (TAP93)
3	1	Layer	Brick and tile rubble					Subsoil/demolition
4	2 (n)	Fill	Fill of 18					
5	2 (n)	Fill	Fill of 19					
6	1	Layer	Stone rubble spread					
7	1	Layer	Yellow sandy mortar rich					
8	3(n)	Layer	Gravel and stone spread					Gravel and stone spread
9	1	Layer	Grey brown loam with stone					
10	1	Layer	Brick and stone rubble					
11	1	Cut	Posthole cut					Relates to fence line, assoc with 18,19, 45, 70
12	1	Fill	Fill of 11					
13	1 (n)	Layer	Rubble within 7					
14	3 (n)	Layer	Brown sand					
15	1	Cut	Pit cut ?					
16	1	Fill	Fill of 15		2			
17	1	Layer	Yellow sand		2			
18	2 (n)	Cut	Posthole			33.24		Relating to fence line, assoc with 10, 19, 45, 70
19	2 (n)	Cut	Posthole			33.23		Relating to fence line, assoc with 10, 18, 45, 70
20	1	Layer	Yellow mortar					
21	1	Cut	Posthole					
22	1	Fill	Fill of 21 and 23					
23	1	Cut	Posthole					
24	1	Cut	Posthole					
25	1	Fill	Fill of 24					
26	3	Cut	Posthole					
27	3	Fill	Fill of 26					
28	3	Layer	Yellow brown sand					Fill of robber trench (Site notebook)
29	1	Cut	Foundation trench					
30	1	Fill	Grey brown sandy loam					
31	2 (s)	Layer	Yellow brown sand					
32	1 (ne)	Layer	Yellow brown sand		1			
33	1A	Layer	Brown loam					Subsoil

Context No	Trench	Type	Description	Section	Plan	Photo	Phase	Notes:
34	1	Fill	Primary fill of 15					
35	1B	Layer	Brown sandy loam					Subsoil
36	1A	Surface	Tile surface					Same as 47? (Group 1007, TAP93)
37	2A	Fill	Same as 43 and 52					
38	2A	Layer	Yellow brown sandy loam					
39	1A	Layer	Yellow brown sandy loam					
40	1A	Fill	Brown clayey fill	2,3				
41	1A	Layer	Dark brown clayey loam					
42	1A	Layer	Yellow sand		3			
43	2A	Layer	Black fill					
44	3	Surface	Mortar spread or floor		4			
45	3/2A	Cut	Posthole					Relating to fence line, assoc with 10, 18, 19, 70
46	3/2A	Fill	Black fill of 45					
47	1	Surface	Tile floor					Same as Group 1007 (TAP93)
48	1	Surface	Brick floor		1			Same as Group 1007 (TAP93)
49	1	Layer	Sand levelling for 48		1			
50	3	Layer	Black layer		4			
51	3	Layer	Sand and stone deposit		4			
52	2	Fill	Same as 43 and 37					
53	1	Surface	Dark consolidated layer		1			
54	1	Layer?	Brown sand	1,3				
55	2A	Cut	Quarry pit?			33.31-34		
56	1A	Cut	Pit					
57	2A	Fill	Fill of 55?					
58	2	Surface	Mortar spread/floor					
59	2A	Cut	Quarry pit? same as 55					
60	2A	Cut	As 59					
61	2	Layer	Grey layer					
62	2A	Layer	Mortar on subsided floor					
63	2A	Surface?	Black floor layer					
64	2 (n)	Layer	Grey compacted layer			33.25		
65	2 (n)	Layer	Compacted gravel layer					
66	2 (n)	Layer	Red yellow sand layer					

Context No.	Trench	Type	Description	Section	Plan	Photo	Phase	Notes:
67	2 (n)	Layer	Rubble and mortar layer					
68	2A	Layer	Brown sand					
69	2 (n)	Layer	Mortar mix					
70	2 (n)	Cut	Post pit of 5					Relating to fence line, assoc with 10, 18, 19, 45
71	2 (n)	Layer	Brown sand					
72	2 (n)	Layer	Brown sand					
73	?	Cut	Foundation trench for wall					Same as Group 1009 (TAP93)

## The Archive

The archive consists of:

73	Context records
6	Scale drawings
3	Photographic records
1	Site diary

All primary records are currently kept at:

Heritage Lincolnshire  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

City and County Museum Accession number: 153.95