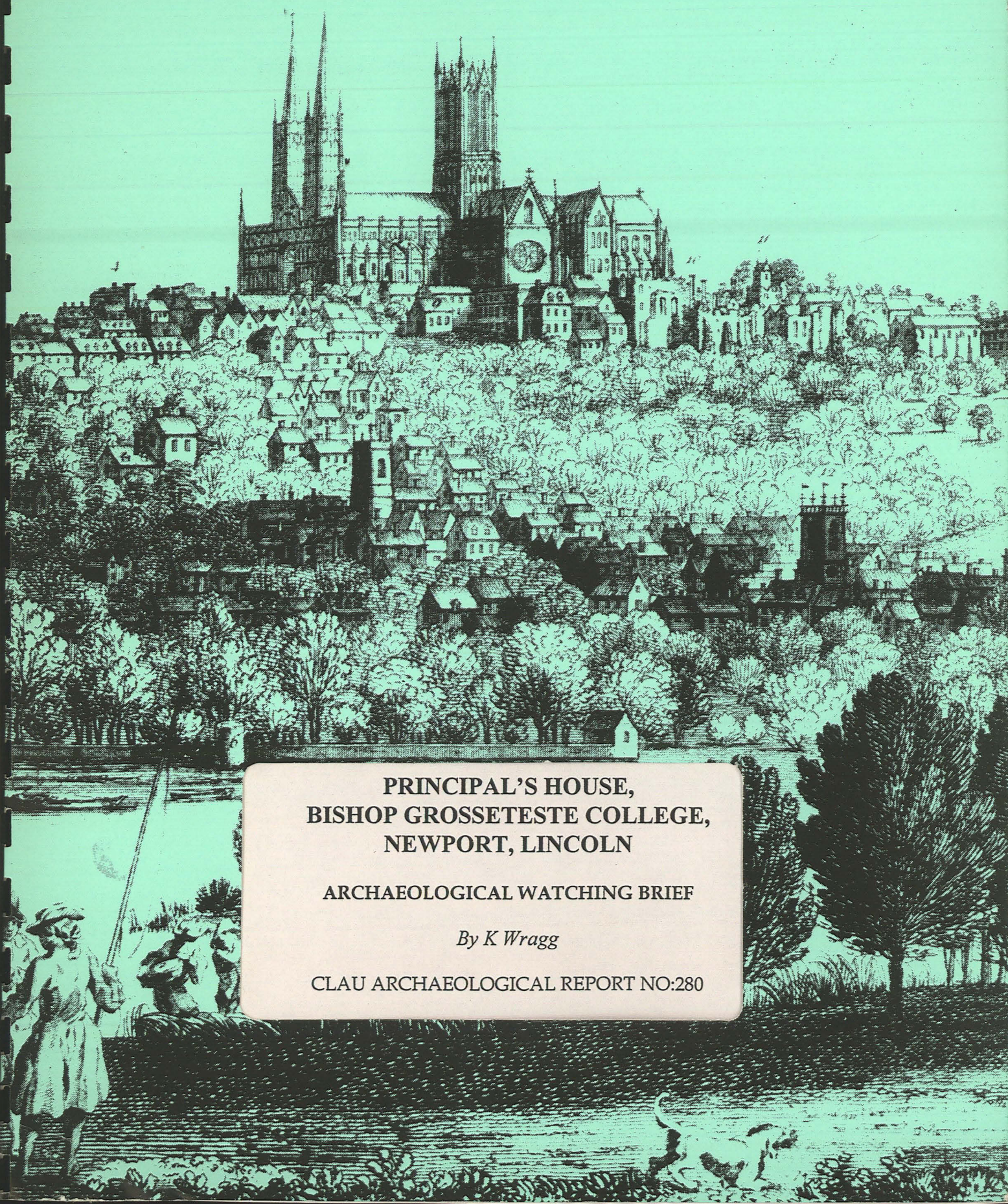


CITY OF
◇ LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY ◇
UNIT



PRINCIPAL'S HOUSE,
BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE,
NEWPORT, LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By K Wragg

CLAU ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT NO:280



Lincolnshire County Council
Arch.
LINCOLN
TEL. 0522 575292 FAX: 0522 530724
13.12.96

A
Report to
Vincent & Associates
on behalf of
Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln

December 1996

Prepared by

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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PRINCIPAL'S HOUSE, BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE, NEWPORT, LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Development proposals involved the construction of a new two storey extension on the southern side of the existing house, which is situated to the south of the main college complex (see Figs.1 & 2), together with some limited landscaping, and service connections.

In view of the known archaeological importance of this area of the city (see 2.0, below), it was decided by the City of Lincoln Planning Committee that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the groundwork phases of the development, and planning permission was conditioned accordingly.

As a result, during September 1996, the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (C.L.A.U.) was commissioned by Vincent & Associates, on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College Lincoln, to carry out that watching brief. Archaeological observation was carried out on the site between the 17th and 24th of September 1996.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. The Unit, its members and employees cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the terms of the Unit's Articles of Association, the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and *The Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage, 1991).

2.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies c.100m to the east of the street of Newport which follows approximately the line of the Roman *Ermine Street*. Development along Ermine Street has been identified by the discovery of the remains of substantial Roman and medieval occupation (the latter apparently associated with the post-Norman conquest suburb of Newport and the so-called "Newport earthwork") during excavations in the grounds of Bishop Grosseteste College in 1937, again in the 1970's, and most recently during 1995 (see below). Elements of the graveyard of the medieval church of St. John the Baptist together with evidence for quarrying activity have also been identified in several locations south and west of the site of the proposed development.

The proposed development is very close to the conjectured line of the eastern side of the medieval suburb and earthwork, and this proximity, together with the results from the areas to the west (see below), made the likelihood of encountering buried archaeological remains quite high. Roman burials have also been revealed further to the south, and their presence on this site could also not be discounted.

During the excavations carried out to the west, in advance of the construction of a new library extension (between June & September 1995), at least seven phases of previous occupation were revealed. These can be summarised as follows:

Phase I - a possible pre-Roman/Roman timber phase. No obvious evidence for structures, but very extensive burning deposits across the site. Possibly represents clearance of scrub/wooded landscape or destruction of existing timber structures prior to construction of stone buildings;

Phase II - the construction of large Roman stone building (measuring c.7-8m N-S (width), and presumed to continue to Newport (Ermine Street), resulting in length c.30m E-W), with possible buttresses on north wall, a covered verandah parallel to south wall, and a metalled yard to the south. The interior was paved with rough stone. An internal N-S dividing wall was revealed at the western end, forming a room roughly 7m square, with two infant burials

present beneath stone floor. A further building possibly associated with this phase was partially visible at the extreme northern end of the trench, with a large metalled area (possible courtyard?) separating the two. This phase appears to date to the 2nd-3rd centuries;

Phase III - Following demolition and robbing of Phase II structures, a possible timber building with walls founded on timber ground beams and white mortar and stone metalled floors (and one further infant burial probably associated with this Phase) was constructed on the site of the large Phase II building, while a stone structure with identical floor surfaces replaced the northerly Phase II building. Possible oven present in centre of timber structure. The possible courtyard was still in use and was resurfaced at least twice. It appears that much of this activity took place in the 3rd century, with the site abandoned fairly soon after;

Phase IV - Possibly early medieval timber structure constructed within "footprint" of Phase III beam-slot building. A large ?cess-pit? was also present to the rear of the building, and is probably associated with this Phase. Only the north and south walls appear to be present, together with a possible central ?roof support?, but no evidence for a surviving end wall to the east. The building was possibly therefore an open ended shed or workshop, rather than living accommodation. The yard/metalled area to north of the building was still in use (after further resurfacing), but structures at the north end of the site do not appear to have been replaced (although evidence could still remain beyond the perimeter of the excavated area);

Phase V - Timber walls of Phase IV structure replaced by stone (following the same alignment), and a possible hearth was constructed above the earlier ?cess-pit?. A further stone structure was built to the north, with a metalled ?lane? dividing the two buildings. The metalled yard was truncated by the construction of the latter building, but the remainder was resurfaced and obviously still in use (several silver pennies from the reign of Henry I were recovered from this surface suggesting a late 11th-early 12th century date for this phase);

Phase VI - Three large, well made stone structures replace Phase V buildings (although one of the earlier buildings possibly continued in use during this Phase), further truncating the

long-lived yard in northern part of the site, and obstructing the Phase V metalled lane. A new access lane was constructed further to the south, again between two structures;

Phase VII - At least one of the Phase VI buildings was demolished and its walls completely robbed away. This probably took place towards the end of the life of the site, and is an indication of the gradual shrinking of the settled area in the 14th/15th centuries, prior to the complete abandonment.

3.0 RESULTS

The foundation trench enclosed three sides of an area measuring approximately 3.2m (N-S) x 8.0m (E-W), and was hand excavated to a maximum depth of c.1.2m (see Figs.2 & 3).

Following removal of an existing concrete slab patio, the trench was initially excavated by the contractor to a depth of c.750mm to 800mm, prior to inspection by the Local Authority Building Control Officer (B.C.O.). At the time of this inspection, parts of a human burial and a linear cut feature were revealed, necessitating further careful excavation.

Additionally, the B.C.O. was not convinced that the limestone brash present at the limit of excavation (L.O.E.) was actually of natural (i.e. geological) origin. It was his opinion that, owing to the vertical orientation of some of the individual stones within the layer, this deposit was "fill" material imported on to site at some point in the past, and he felt that further excavation would be required to reach stable strata.

In view of the presence of archaeological features, it was decided that at least the initial reduction in levels would be carried out as part of the archaeological cleaning. In the event, the excavation of a further c.200mm of the limestone brash deposit was sufficient to convince the B.C.O. of the stability of the ground, although he was still doubtful that such a deposit could be natural.

The sequence of archaeological layers and features discovered during the groundworks was as follows, from earliest to latest:

Natural limestone "brash", [111], was discovered throughout the trench at

approximately 61.74m O.D. (c.850mm below the existing ground level), and with the exception of the two areas cut by later features appeared largely undisturbed.

The only two features revealed during trenching were situated in the southern half of the development area (see Fig.3). The first of these was a burial, located in the south-west corner of the foundation trench, which comprised a very indistinct, roughly rectilinear or oval cut [114]. This grave cut measured approximately 1.7m N-S (length) x 500mm E-W (width), and was at least 200mm deep, although the uneven nature of the underlying limestone brash resulted in very irregular sides and base. Lying within the grave was a largely complete articulated human skeleton [113].

The remains were lying supine with the hands crossed at the pelvis, at a depth of approximately 1.0m below the existing ground level, and were oriented N-S with the head lying to the south. From initial analysis of the pelvis it would appear that the skeleton was that of a male, and the overall size of the remains (c.1.60m in height, around five feet three inches) would indicate that the individual was not fully grown (i.e. probably still a youth/adolescent). In view of the alignment of the grave it was assumed that the burial dated from pre-Christian times (in general, all burials dating from Christian periods (including very late Roman burials) are found to follow an east-west alignment with the head situated to the west. Alignments other than E-W signify burials from pre-Christian times, i.e., pagan Roman or pagan Anglo-Saxon), and the use of inhumation rather than cremation indicated a burial of mid Roman date (cremation was the usual practice in the early Roman period).

The remains were overlain by [112], a moderately compacted mid (slightly orange) brown sandy earth, containing frequent small-medium sized, irregularly shaped limestone pieces and two small fragments of Roman pottery. Analysis of the pottery fragments confirmed a date of mid-late 2nd-3rd century for the burial. This fill was almost identical to the overlying deposit [104] (see below), and as a result the upper boundary of the fill could not be clearly defined.

The second feature seen to cut the surface of the limestone brash comprised a linear feature [117], possibly part of a ditch, found mid way along the south side of the foundation trench network. [117] was oriented approximately N-

S, and was c.300mm deep (the top appeared at approximately 61.74m O.D.). It featured a concave western side, inclined at c.45 degrees to the horizontal, with a slightly stepped eastern side, at between 30 and 45 degrees. Both sides gradually merged into an uneven, though generally level, base (see Fig.5).

This possible ditch feature was filled with a moderate-well compacted mid-light brown slightly clayey earth, [116], which contained occasional small-medium sized, irregularly shaped, limestone pieces, very occasional small pieces of animal bone, and one small fragment of Roman pottery.

Both [116] and the grave fill [112] were overlain by a layer of moderately compacted, friable, mid (slightly orange) brown sandy earth, containing only very occasional small flecks and pieces of limestone, [104]. This layer was c.400mm-500mm thick and was present throughout the trench.

Towards the south-east corner of the trench, layer [104] was itself overlain, by a possible limestone and mortar surface, [110]. This comprised a c.100mm thick layer of small-medium sized pieces of limestone, mixed with a light yellow-brown possible mortar or degraded limestone. [110] was seen in both the north, south and west facing sections, and extended for at least 1.8m E-W.

This possible surface was subsequently sealed by a layer of moderately compacted mid brown sandy earth [103], which contained moderately frequent inclusions of limestone and brick pieces, and roots, and was present throughout the trench. [103] lay beneath a thin layer of friable mid-light grey-brown sandy earth, [106], which was c.50mm thick and was present along the eastern edge of the foundation trench. These two deposits appeared to mark the construction level for the house presently occupying the site.

At the northern ends of the trench, [106] was sealed by a thin mixed lense of limestone, mortar, and concrete [107], which extended approximately 300mm to the south of the existing wall face. This deposit appeared to be debris associated with the construction of the house, and was truncated, along its southern edge, by a linear cut [109], for a surface water drain, and its associated fill [108].

Cut/fill [109]/[108] was seen to run diagonally (approximately NE-SW) across the south-eastern corner of the foundation trench, and

was overlain by [105], a layer of moderately compacted, friable, mid grey-brown sandy earth, containing only very occasional small limestone inclusions.

This latter deposit formed the existing topsoil layer for the garden to the south of the house, and was turfed to form a lawn over much of its surface.

The final activity recorded on the site was centred around the remains of the patio referred to earlier. This had originally covered an area immediately to the south of the house, but was removed as part of the enabling works associated with this contract. The remains comprised a 150mm thick layer of limestone hardcore, [102], which was cut into the aforementioned topsoil layer [105], and was overlain by a thin lense of mid-dark grey ash/tarmac [101], and a 50mm thick bedding of mid-light orange-brown coarse grained sand, [100].

4.0 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the results as outlined above the following stratigraphic sequence can be put forward (from earliest to latest):

- 1) Undisturbed limestone "brash" occurring throughout the area of the investigation at a level of approximately 61.70m O.D.;
- 2) 2nd - 3rd century Roman land-use and possible occupation on, or close to, the site, including a burial, and a cut feature, possibly a drainage ditch or boundary marker;
- 3) Layers of indeterminate date, raising the level of the surrounding area to c. 62.40m O.D., including a possible limestone & mortar surface;
- 4) Various modern layers associated with the construction of the existing house on the site, its landscaping and service arrangements.

Although no evidence for the line of the medieval earthwork, or of any associated site of occupation within the area of the Newport suburb, was positively identified during this project, it is obvious that important archaeological remains dating to the Roman

period (and probably also to later periods) are preserved on this site. In view of this, it should be a priority that any future development, both on the site and in the immediate vicinity, be monitored archaeologically to ensure that important information is not lost.

5.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit would like to thank the following for their assistance during this project: Bishop Grosseteste College, Newport, Lincoln; Mr Kit Vincent, of Vincent & Associates, Designers & Building Consultants, 32 Grange Lane, Cople, Beds., MK44 3TT; Mr K. Stevenson, and on-site staff, of William Wrights Ltd., Park Street, Lincoln.

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7.0 LHA NOTE/ARCHIVE DETAILS

7.1 LHA NOTE DETAILS

CLAU CODE: BGC96

PLANNING APPLICATION NO.:
LC46/0391/96

FIELD OFFICER: K.Wragg

NGR: SK 9780/7275

CIVIL PARISH: Lincoln

SMR No.:

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 17/09/96 -
24/09/96

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Watching Brief

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Vincent & Associates
(Designers & Building Consultants), 32
Grange Lane, Cople, Beds., MK44 3TT on
behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College,
Newport, Lincoln.

7.2 ARCHIVE DETAILS

PRESENT LOCATION: City of Lincoln
Archaeology Unit, Charlotte House, The
Lawn, Union Road, Lincoln, LN1 3BL.

FINAL LOCATION: The City and County
Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln.

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: 124.96

ACCESSION DATE:

PRINCIPAL'S HOUSE, BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE, NEWPORT, LINCOLN

Archaeological Watching Brief

APPENDIX A - ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive consists of:

No.	Description
1	Site diary
1	Report
17	Context records
5	Scale drawings
1 set	Photographic records - Colour slides
1	Stratigraphic matrix

The primary archive material, as detailed above, is currently held by :

**The City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit,
Charlotte House,
The Lawn,
Union Road,
Lincoln,
Lincolnshire,
LN1 3BL.**

It is intended that transfer to the City and County Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln, in accordance with current published requirements, under Museum Accession Number 124.96, will be undertaken following completion of this project.

CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

SITE CODE: **BGC96** PLAN/ELEV/SECTION NO:

CLIENT: Vincent & Associates on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College

DESCRIPTION: **Site Location Plan**

SCALE: **1:1250**

ARCHIVE NO:


DRAWN BY:

CHECKED:

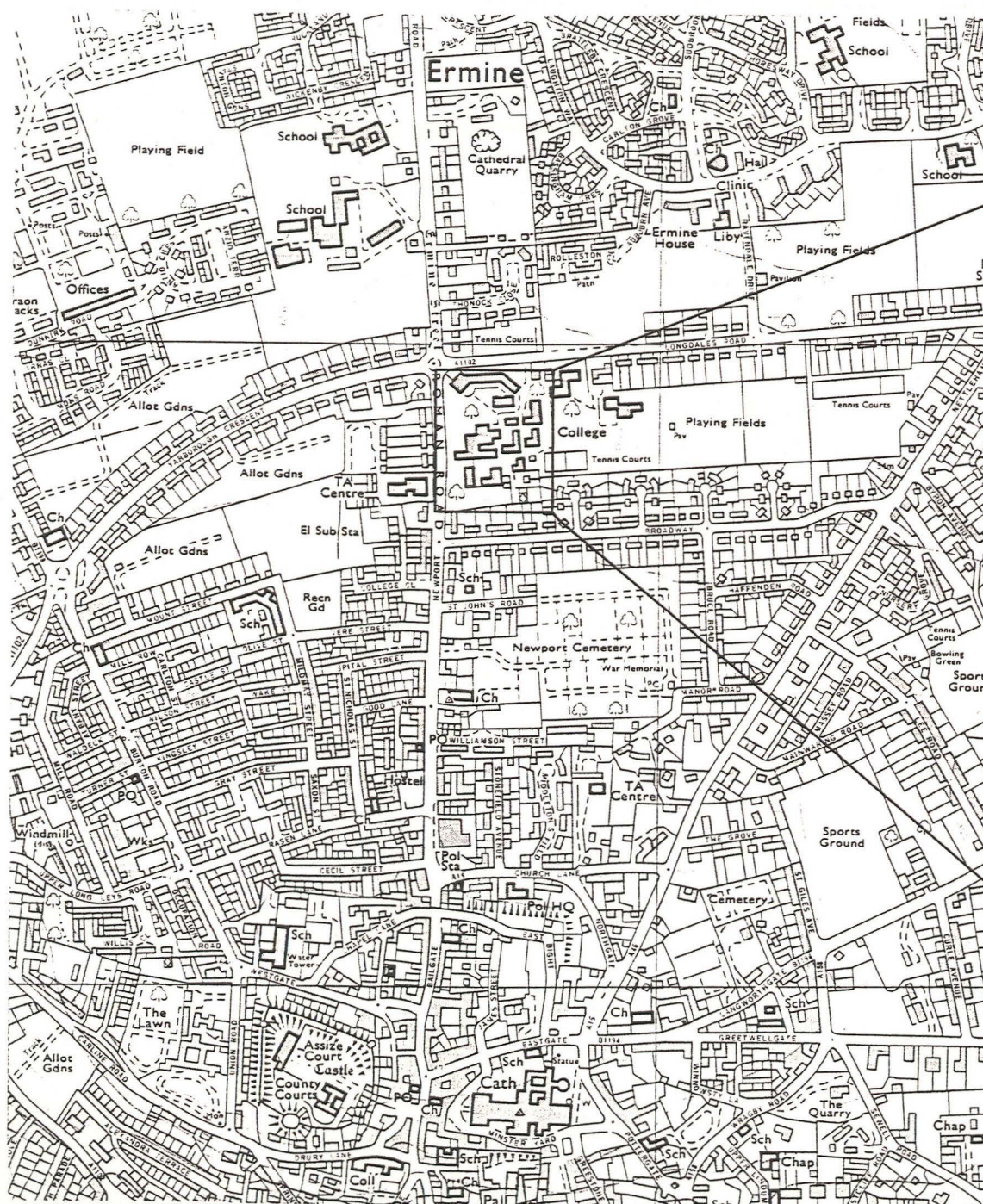
DATE:

MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: **124.96**

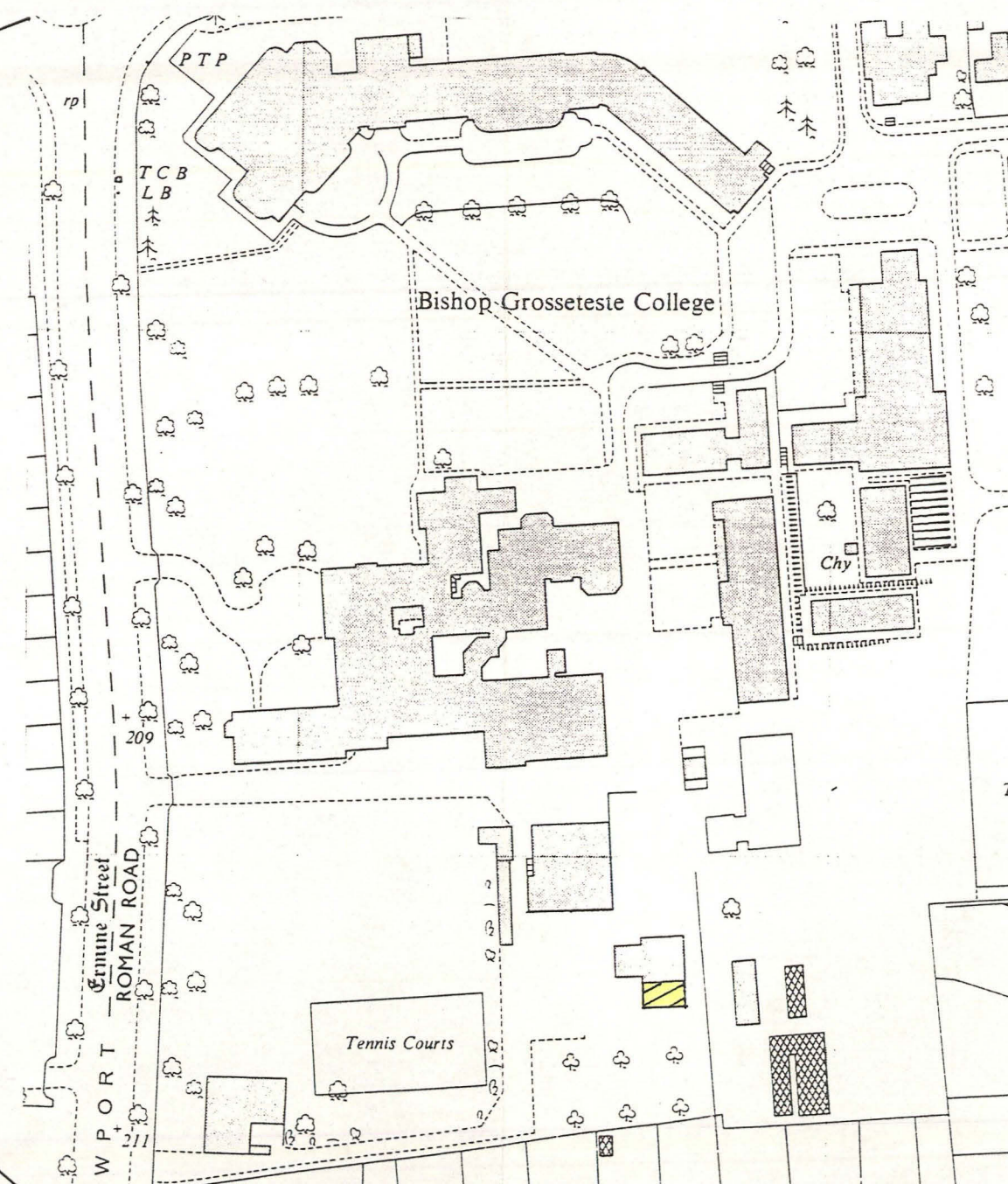
KEY

 Location of Site

1:10 000

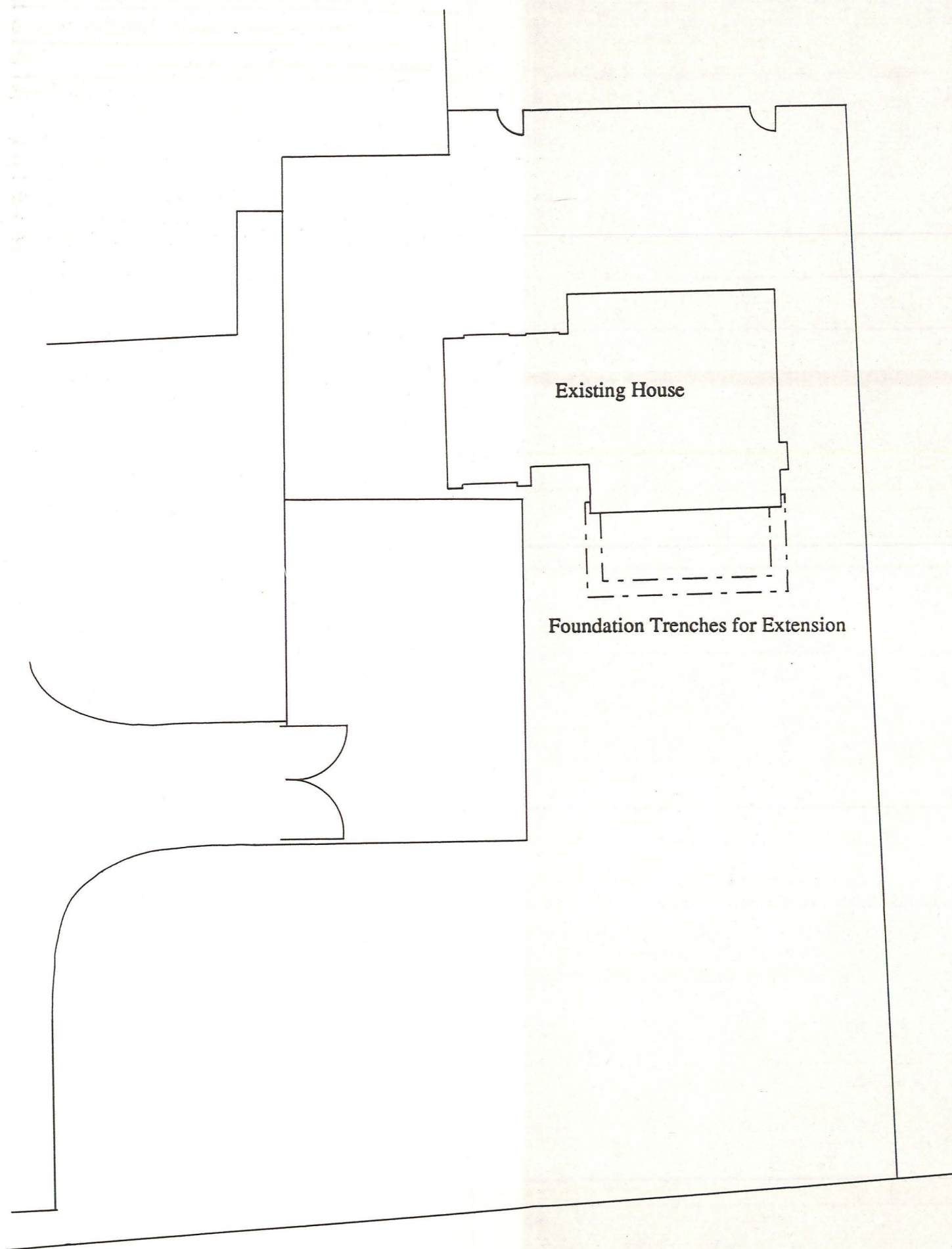
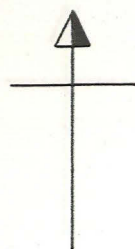


1:1250



Reproduced from the 1976 Ordnance Survey 1:10 000 map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright.

Based upon the 1966 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright.



CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

SITE CODE: BGC96 PLAN/ELEV/SECTION NO:

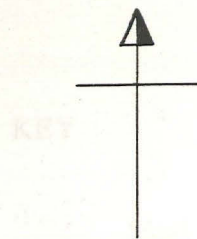
CLIENT: Vincent & Associates on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College

DESCRIPTION: Trench Location Plan

SCALE: 1:200 ARCHIVE NO:

DRAWN BY: CHECKED: DATE:

MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: 124.96



CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT		
SITE CODE: BCG96	PLAN/ELEV/SECTION NO:	
CLIENT:	Vincent & Associates on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College	
DESCRIPTION:	Plan of Features	
SCALE: 1:50	ARCHIVE NO:	
DRAWN BY: KW/YR	CHECKED:	DATE: 23/09/96
MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: 124.96		

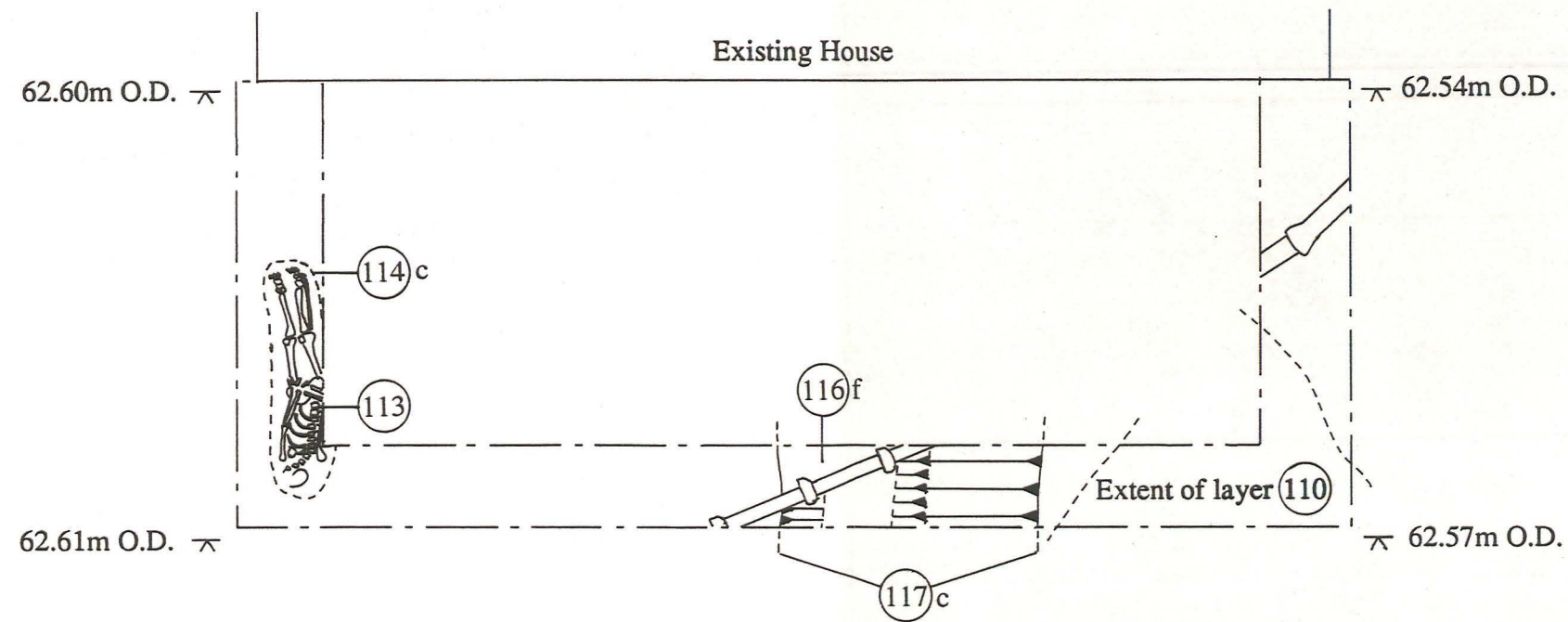



Fig.3

CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT		
SITE CODE: BGC96	PLAN/ELEV/SECTION NO: 1	
CLIENT:	Vincent & Associates on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College	
DESCRIPTION:	West-Facing Section	
SCALE: 1:10	ARCHIVE NO:	
DRAWN BY: KW	CHECKED:	DATE: 17/09/96
MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: 124.96		

KEY

 Sand

 Brick/Tile

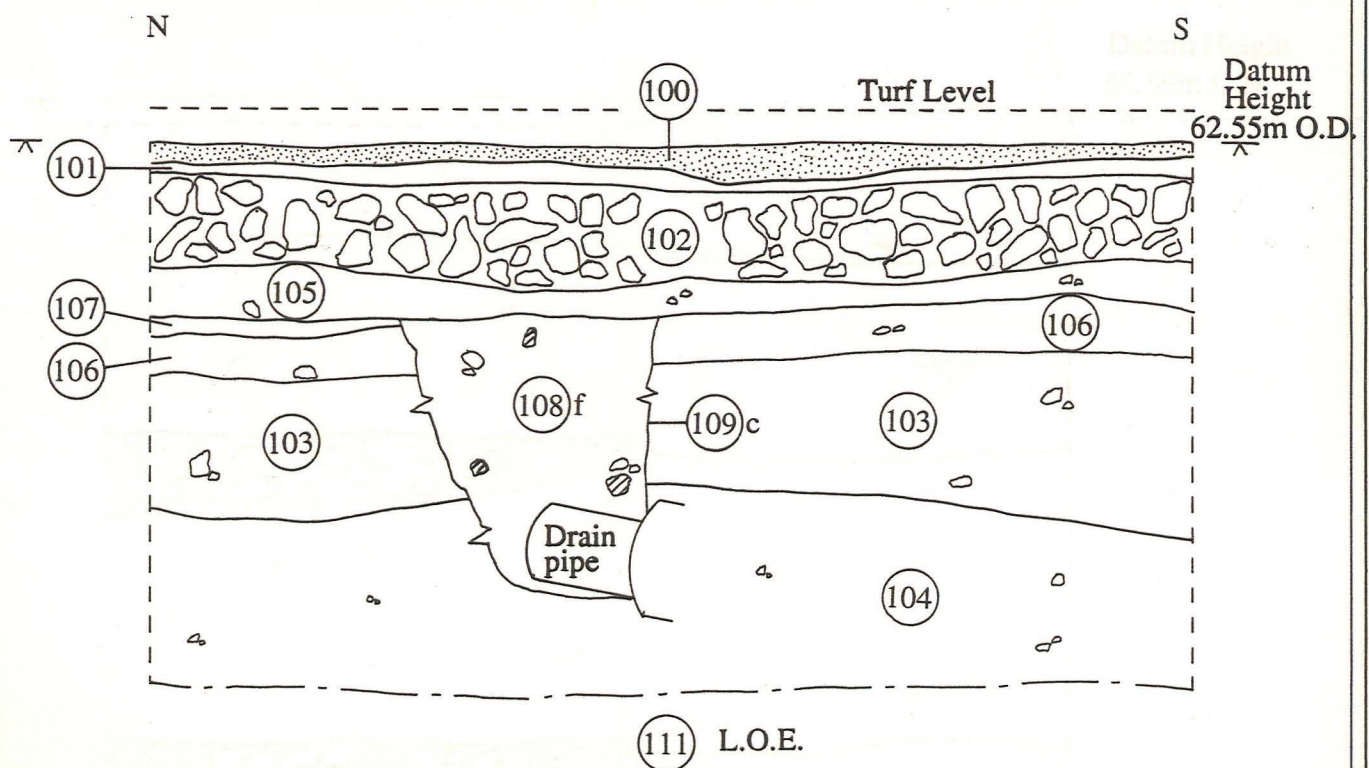


Fig.4

CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

SITE CODE: BGC96 PLAN/ELEV/SECTION NO: 2

CLIENT: Vincent & Associates on behalf of Bishop Grosseteste College


DESCRIPTION: North-Facing Section


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DRAWN BY: KW CHECKED: DATE: 20/09/96

MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: 124.96

KEY

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 Mortar

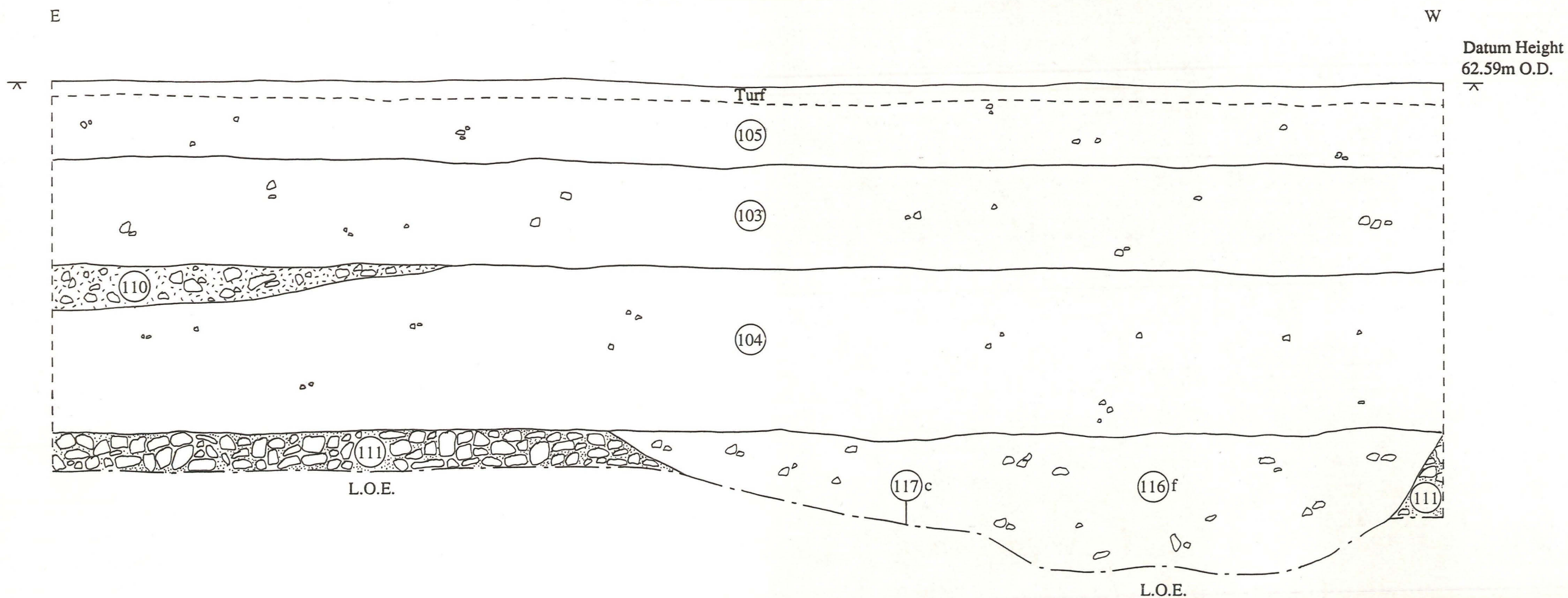


Fig.5