ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF OF WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT AT MARSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (MVP96)

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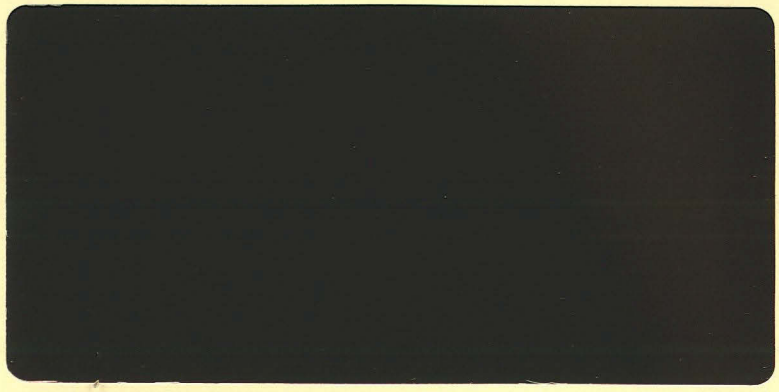

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF OF WATER MAINS REPLACEMENT AT MARSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE (MVP96)

Work Undertaken For
Anglian Water Services Ltd

SK 8915 4366.

November 1996

Report
compiled by
Chris Moulis

A.P.S. Report No. 53.96

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the replacement of a water main at Marston, Lincolnshire.

Sand deposits overlying natural layers were interpreted as deriving from the longstanding use of the site as a roadway. One possible cut archaeological feature was identified below these sand deposits, and may indicate an earlier, although undated, period or activity. No artefacts were recovered during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Between 21st and 24th October 1996, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during water main replacement at Marston, Lincolnshire (NGR SK 8930 4360 centre) (fig. 2). The village is located in the civil parish of Marston, South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire. Commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd., this work was carried out by Archaeological Project Services.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Marston is situated 9km north of Grantham and 17km west of Sleaford (Fig. 1) on the south bank of the River Witham. The area is on relatively level land at about 31m O.D. Archaeological monitoring of the pipe trench was carried out on the east side of the village from the junction of Barkston Road and Mill Lane (SK 8933 4350), northwards to the entrance of Marston Hall, then west to the junction of School Lane and High Street (SK 8915 4366).

Local soils are of the Blackwood Association, slightly stony typically sandy gley soils developed in glaciofluvial drift (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 127). These drift deposits in turn overlie a solid geology of Jurassic and Cretaceous clays.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Marston lies in an area of known archaeological activity dating from the prehistoric period onwards. A single fragment of a stone axe of probable Neolithic date (4500-2250 B.C.) was retrieved from the north of the village (SK57.02). Romano-British activity is represented by a single coin (SK57.17) of Septimus Severus (A.D. 193-211), found at the northwest corner of the village.

Marston is first mentioned in the Domesday survey of A.D. 1086 when it contained a total of four watermills (Foster and Longley 1976). The place-name is derived from the Old English *'Mersc-tûn'*, meaning homestead by the marsh (Ekwall 1974, 316).

Medieval activity is represented by the present church of St. Mary which dates largely from the 12th century but contains reused Norman masonry (SMR 30399, Pevsner and Harris 1989, 557). The present land boundaries of the village also indicate that the medieval tofts may have survived, in part, to the present day.

Post-medieval activity is highlighted by Marston Hall (SK57.18, SMR 30401). Dating from the late 16th century, the house was begun by the Thorold family in whose possession it remains at present (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 558). A map of the village in 1614 (Fig. 3) shows Marston Hall as having a gatehouse. Furthermore, the presence of a number of cottages and a possible blacksmith's (SK57.19,20,21) are indicated along the present School Road, which formed part of the pipeline course.

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

A mechanical excavator was used in the construction of the water pipe trench, which measured 0.6m wide and averaged 1m deep. The sides of the trench were cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains prior to recording the sections.

Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at scale 1:10. Additionally, the natural geology was recorded. A total of 4 separate sections were recorded.

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. A total of three phases were identified:

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated archaeological deposits
Phase 3	Modern deposits.

Phase 1 Natural Deposits

Deposits of light yellowish-brown sand (007), (008), (009), (011) were observed at the very base of the trench. These are considered to have been formed as natural alluvial deposits.

Phase 2 Undated Archaeological Deposits

Above the brown natural sands were layers of grey or brownish-grey sand, (010) and (013), up to 0.40m thick. These possibly represent a former ground suface. Cutting the natural sand layers (007) and (008) was a shallow, concave feature (006), 0.8m wide and 0.22m deep. Interpreted as a possible gully or pit, it was filled with grey-brown silty sand (005).

Overlying the grey sands was a layer of mid brown sand (003), (004), (009), and (012), between 0.40m and 0.65m thick. Deposit (012) contained occasional fragments of roughly worked limestone blocks. Together, these layers are thought to be dumped deposits, perhaps laid down as an early road.

Phase 3. Modern deposits.

A cut feature (015) was present throughout most of the course of the pipeline. This was the cut for a large, relatively recent, sewer pipe trench running parallel to the works described in this report. Consequently this had already disturbed the deposits along most of the course of the works.

Overlying the sewer pipe trench backfill and intermittently observed along the length of the pipe trench was a layer of crushed limestone (002). This material was interpreted as a foundation deposit for the overlying tarmac surface (001) of the modern road.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural layers of coarse sand were observed across the area. These were probably deposited as a result of fluvial action, perhaps when the nearby River Witham flooded or was wider than at present.

The undated phase 2 may represent archaeological activity, the mid brown deposits probably relating to the earlier unmetalled state of the road through the village. If (006) is indeed an archaeological feature, then it must pre-date the road, and stem from an earlier, albeit undated period of activity.

Modern deposits (phase 3) comprise a large sewer pipe trench, which had largely removed any possible archaeological remains along much of the course of the present mains relay trench, and the foundation and surface of the modern road.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The possibility that medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains may have been disturbed prompted Anglian Water to commission a watching brief along the route of a water pipeline trench as it passed through the village of Marston, close to Marston Hall.

A limited number of archaeological deposits were encountered. No dating evidence was obtained for these archaeological remains though it is probable that two phases of activity are represented. The earlier phase is represented by a single possible gully while the later remains are provided by possible evidence of road construction.

Much of the course of the pipeline had previously been disturbed by a large sewer trench which would have destroyed any archaeological deposits along its route. However, the archaeological watching brief established that, elsewhere in the immediate vicinity, archaeological deposits were moderately well preserved.

The watching brief did not reveal evidence for the structures apparent on the seventeenth century map of the village, or any residual evidence of the smithy also suggested by the map.

No artefacts nor environmental remains were recognised during the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Matthew Vickers and Paul Redshaw of Anglian Water Services Ltd who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Jenny Stevens, the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist, kindly permitted access to the relevant parish archaeological files.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Chris Moulis
Research: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Illustrations: Paul Cope-Faulkner and David Hopkins
Post-excavation analyst: Chris Moulis

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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

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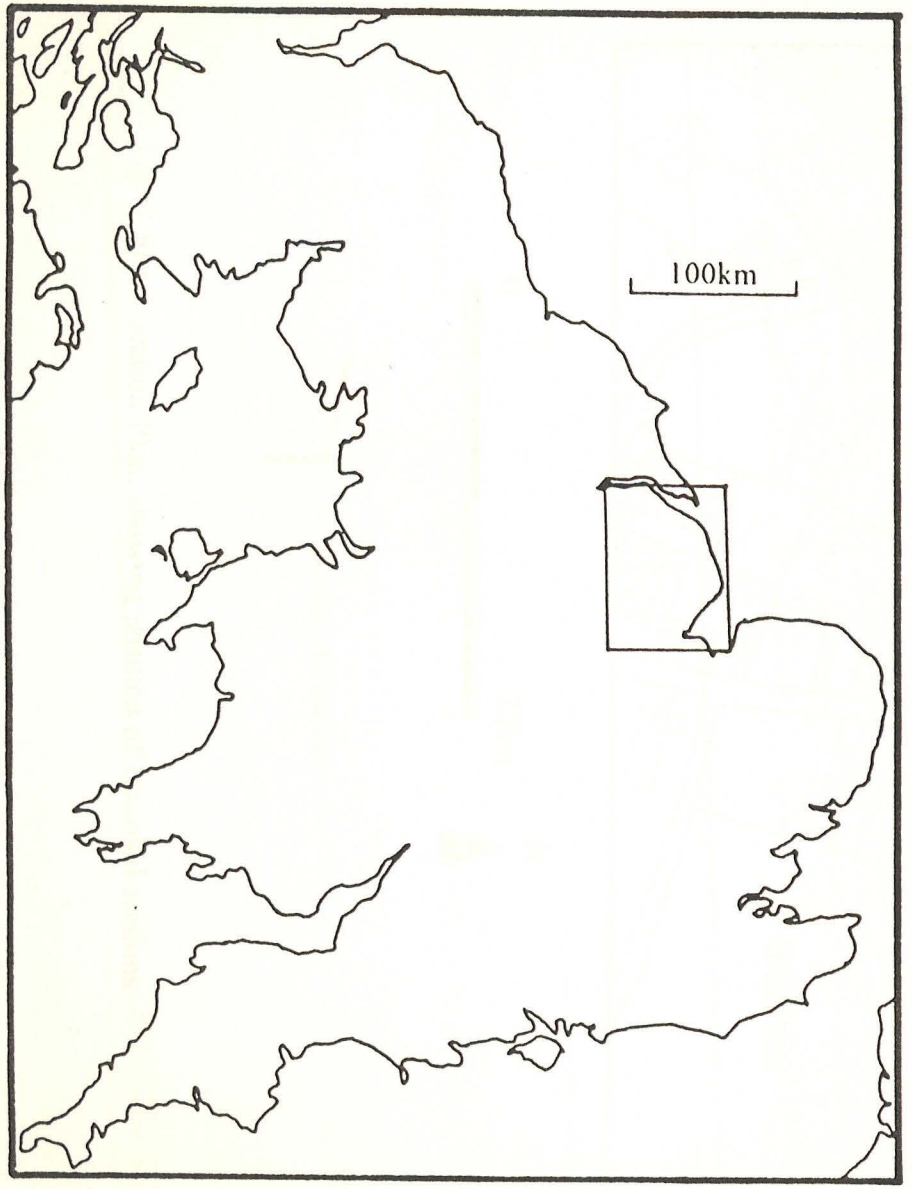
11. ABBREVIATIONS

SK Numbers prefixed with this code relate to the primary reference numbers used by the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist.

SMR Numbers prefixed with this code are the primary reference numbers used by the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.



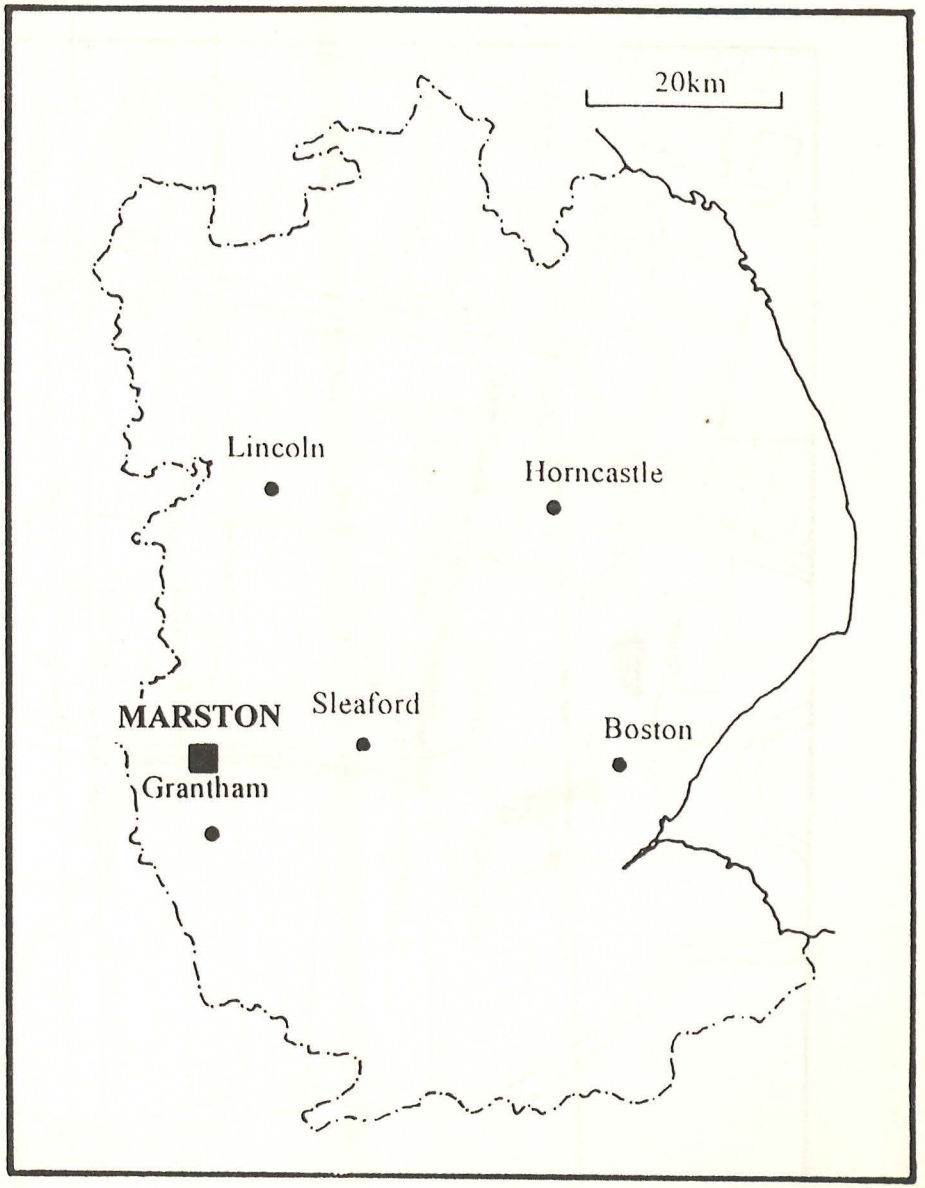


Fig. 1 General Location Plan

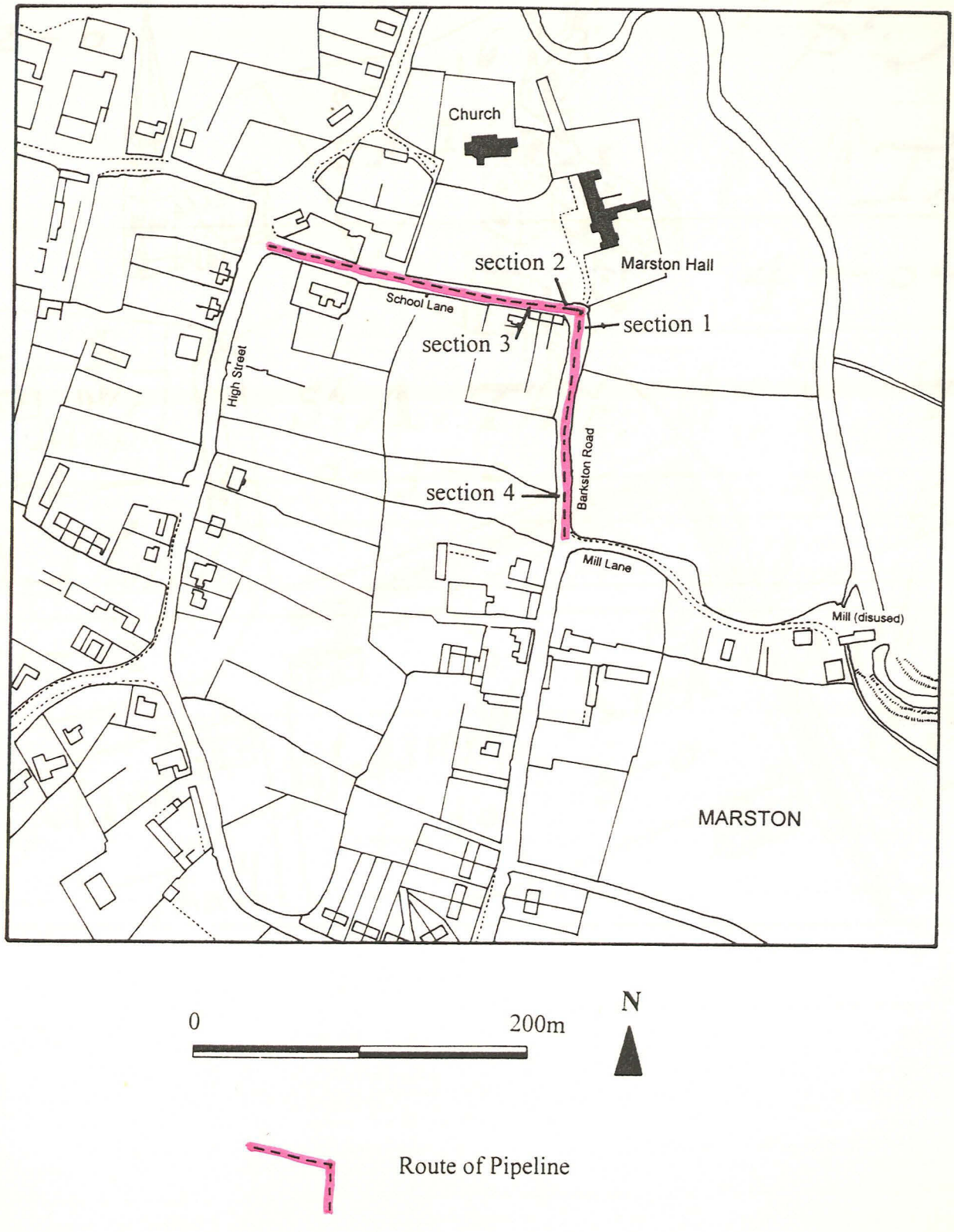
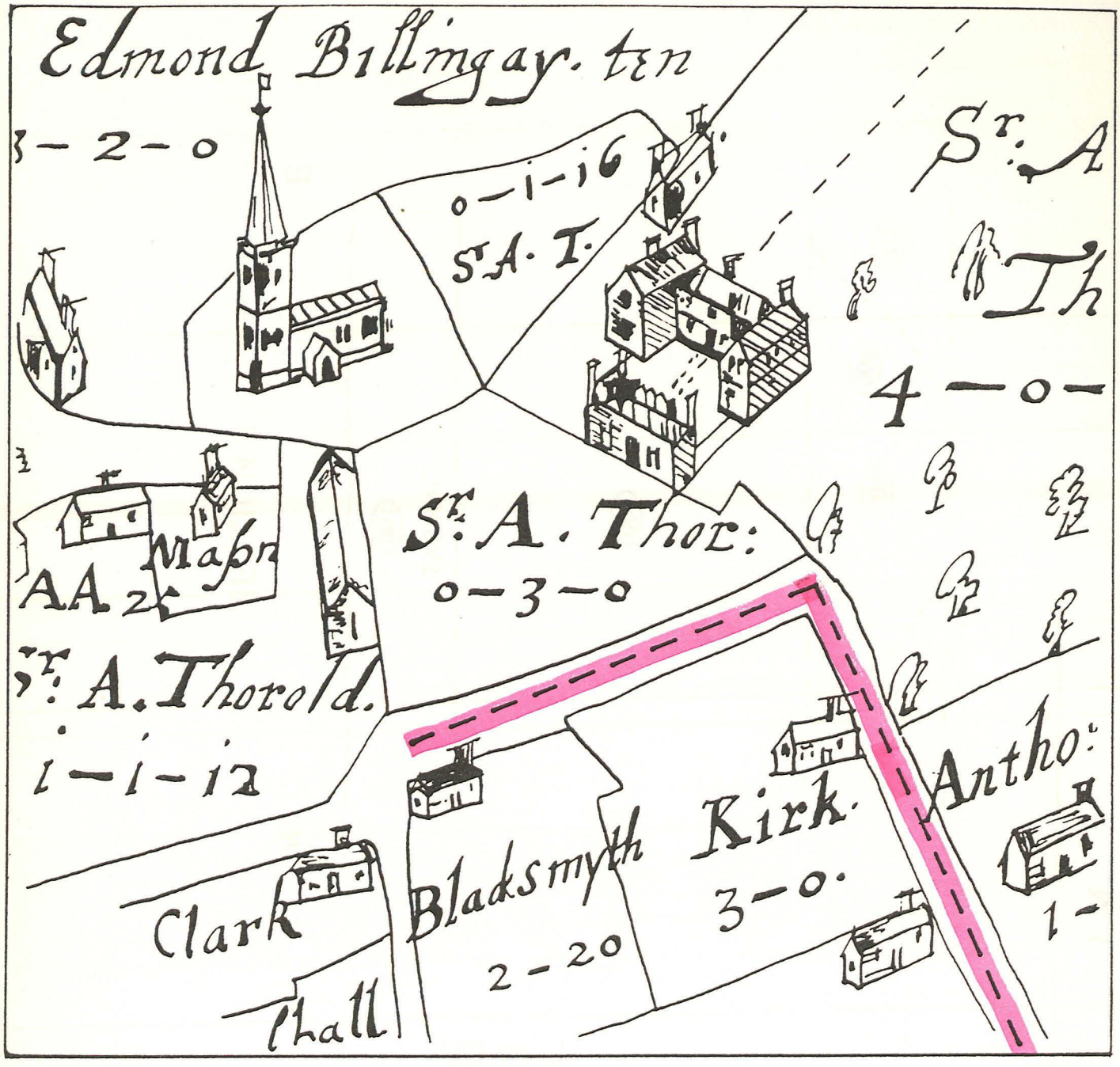


Fig. 2 Site Location Plan, showing position of recorded sections



Route of pipeline

Fig. 3 Part of 1614 Map of Marston, showing pipeline route

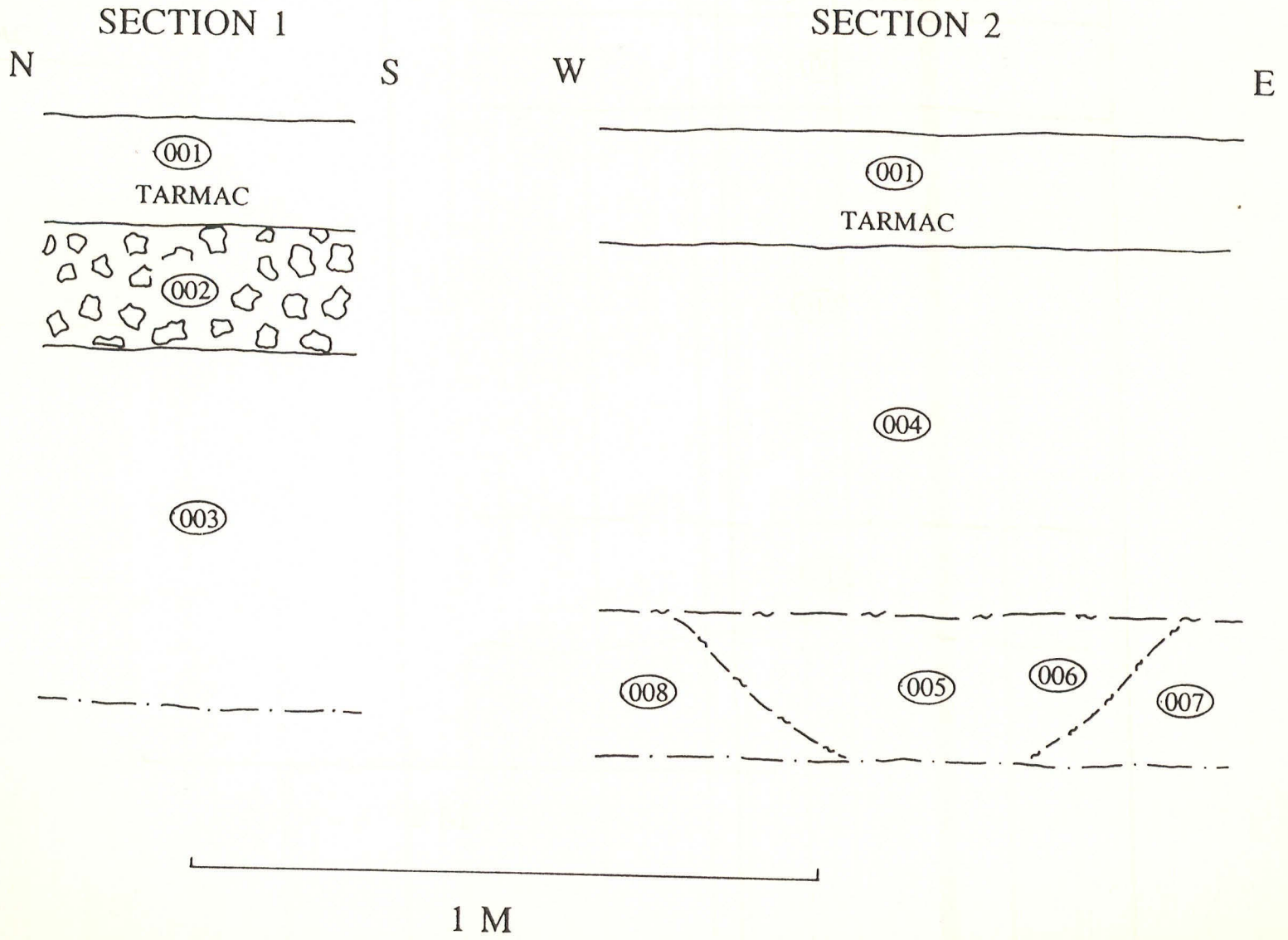


Fig. 4 Sections 1 and 2

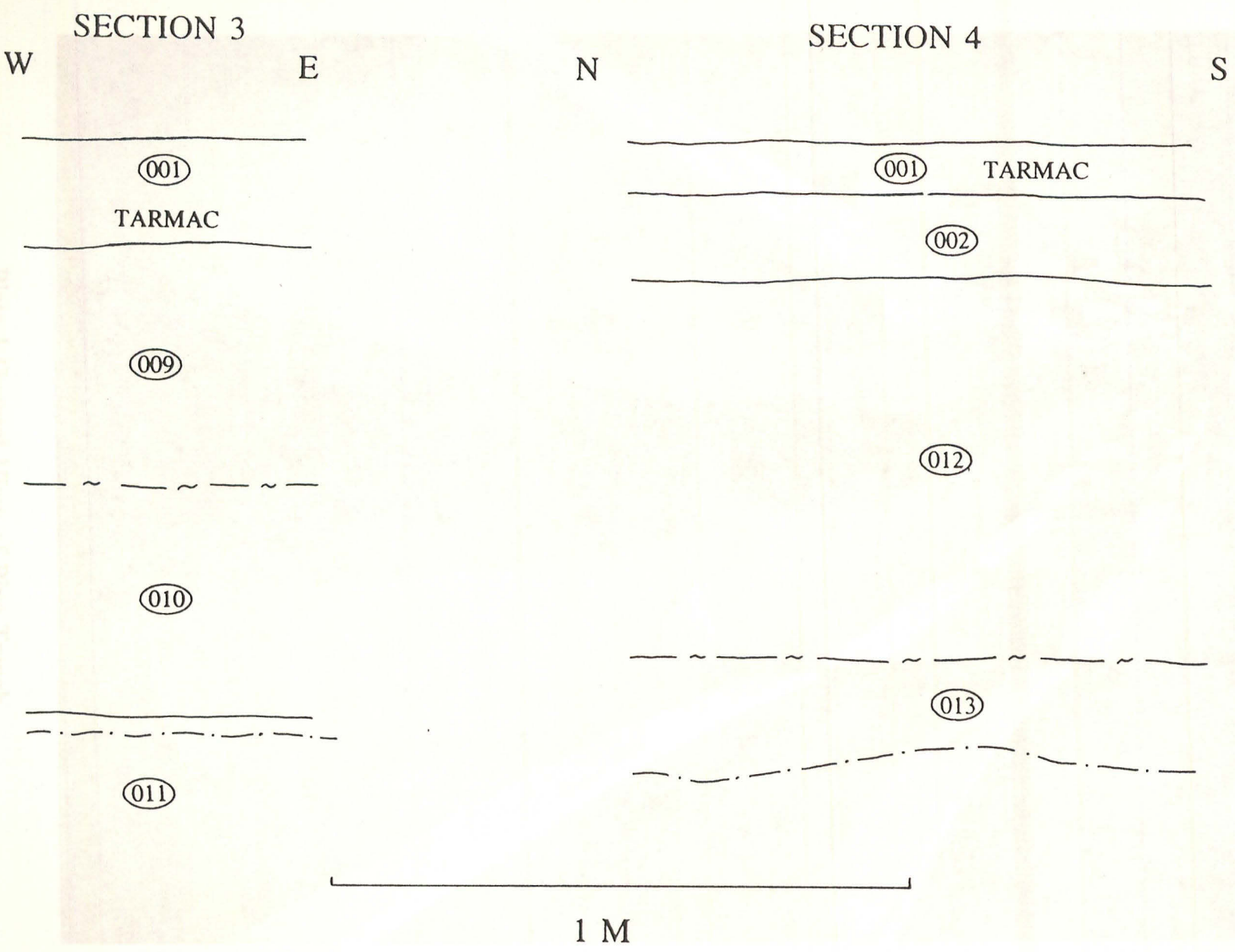


Fig. 5 Sections 3 and 4

Plate 1 General View of Pipe Trench,
looking west alongside wall to grounds of Marston Hall

Plate 2 Marston Village Pipeline, Section 2

APPENDIX 1

Context Summary.

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
001	Tarmac.	Modern road surface.
002	Yellowish-white crushed limestone fragments.	Modern road foundation.
003	Mid brown coarse sand.	Layer.
004	Mid brown coarse sand.	Layer.
005	Mid greyish-brown sand.	Fill in 006.
006	Linear cut, 0.78m wide by 0.22m deep.	Possible archaeological feature.
007	Mottled light reddish and yellowish-brown sand.	Natural sand deposit.
008	Mottled light reddish and yellowish-brown sand.	Natural sand deposit.
009	Light-mid brown sand.	Layer.
010	Dark grey-brown sand.	Layer.
011	Light yellow-brown sand.	Natural sand deposit.
012	Mid brown sand.	Layer.
013	Mid grey sand.	Layer.
014	Mid brown sand, capped with a concrete layer.	Fill of 015.
015	Linear cut.	Substantial modern service trench.

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The archive consists of:

15 . . Context records
1 . . . Photographic record
5 . . . Scale drawings
1 . . . Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 82.96.

Archaeological Project Services, project code: MVP96