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# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

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**Land Beside The Anchor Inn, Church Street  
Alford**

**NGR: TF 4555 7618**

**Site Code: AAI 96**

**LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 176.96**

## **Archaeological Evaluation**

**Report prepared for**

**Sherwood Vale Developments Ltd**

**JANUARY 1997**

Lincolnshire County Council

Advisory Committee

1. GENERAL SAL

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14.1.97

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**Land Beside The Anchor Inn  
Alford  
Archaeological Evaluation**

**NGR: TF 4555 7618  
Site Code: AAI 96  
LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 176.96**

**Summary**

*Archaeological evaluation of land west of the Anchor Inn failed to locate significant evidence for medieval or earlier habitation on the site. Only seven sherds of medieval pottery were found during the excavations of which two 12th century sherds were found in a ditch in Trench 4. The remainder were found in a second ditch in Trench 1 which was 14-15th century, or later, in date. A post medieval yard surface and associated walls, 18th century or later, were recorded in Trenches 3 and 4. 18th century landscaping was also noted. The edge of a pond appeared in Trench 3 whilst Trench 2 contained material, dating from the 16th-17th century, which may represent the partial infilling of a pond.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in December 1996 by Sherwood Vale Developments Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land west of the Anchor Inn, which lies north east of Alford's town centre (Figs.1 and 2, Pl.1), in accordance with the requirements of the Archaeology section of Lincolnshire County Council. The evaluation followed a desk-top study carried out by LAS in November of this year, also commissioned by Sherwood Vale Developments Ltd, in advance of a planning application for proposed residential development, comprising the construction of eleven dwellings (Tann 1996).

**Archaeological and Historical Background**

The highest land in Alford, at slightly below 9m OD, is a gravel ridge occupied by the parish church and it has been suggested that this was the site of the earliest Anglian settlement at Alford (Beckwith 1972). No artefacts or building remains have been found to support this premise, although the church dedication to St. Wilfrid is early and unusual.

The fabric of the existing church dates from the 14th century but the church is thought to occupy the site of an earlier building. No church is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey but in 1195 a dispute occurred concerning the church. At that date it apparently stood on land owned by Robert, son of William (lord of the manor of Well), and he claimed the building and its advowson from Gilbert of Rigsby. This claim was unsuccessful, as was a second attempt in 1220. It has been assumed that this interest in the church site reflected a growth in the economy of Alford as a market town, with the



local lord of the manor seeking control over the entire area of the town (Dudding 1930, 82). The land controlled together with the church seems to have been to the north and west of the present church and this may explain the distorted street pattern at this end of High Street and Church Street.

The present Anchor Hotel, on the west side of Church Street, was apparently built in 1865 and enlarged in the early 20th century (Cooke and Crome 1988, 22). There had been a tinsmith's workshop in the grounds which was demolished to create a car park for the hotel. This workshop may have been located in the buildings shown at the southern limit of the proposed development site on the 1906 O.S. map (Fig. 3).

### **Method**

The evaluation trenches were positioned in order to evaluate all parts of the site whilst avoiding disturbance to areas where footings are proposed, in accordance with the developer's request (Fig. 3). The locations for Trenches 3 and 4 were altered to avoid an active east-west drain running from the Anchor Inn. Trench 3 was placed north of the drain as south of the drain was the proposed foundation trench for flats, whilst further east lay a building platform, probably the remains of the tinsmith's workshop (Pl.2). Trench 4 was relocated south of the drain.

Each trench was opened by machine using a standard 1.5m wide dyking bucket. Lengths of the trenches varied from 6.80m to 7.80m. Once opened all further investigations were carried out by hand.

An Ordnance Survey bench mark (8.79m OD), located on the SW corner of St Wilfrid's church tower, was used to set up a temporary bench mark (6.64m OD) within the site.

All archaeological features were recorded and photographed. Deposits were allocated context numbers for the purpose of recording. These are referred to in the text, figures and context list (Appendix 1).

### **Trench 1 (Fig. 5)**

Trench 1 situated c.6m from the NE corner of the site (Pl. 3). The topsoil 1 was c.0.26m deep, and at the SE end of the trench was an area of brown humic soil 52, possibly the remains of an earlier topsoil horizon.

Crossing the middle of the trench was a broad ditch 4 which was dug into the subsoil 2, a light brown loam clay (Pl. 4). The uppermost fill of the ditch was 51 (Pl. 4), 0.06m deep with a width of 1.20m, comprising chalk fragments up to 0.10m in size within a brown loam clay matrix. It was not possible within a small trench to determine whether this formed a metalled path which coincidentally crossed the top of the ditch or if the material was used to consolidate the soft ditch fill below. There were no finds found to enable dating. The main fill of the ditch beneath 51 was 53 which closely resembled 2 but contained a few chalk fragments. 53 was not recognised during the machining phase to be separate from 2 but finds retrieved from 2 can be attributed to 53 as they came from the centre of the trench which was later



recognised as being part of the ditch **4**. These included sheep bones and a sherd of 14th-15th century pottery.

Ditch **4** was 2.80m wide and 1.00m deep with a v-shaped profile. Its upper fill **53** was approximately 0.44m deep whilst its primary fill **3** (Pl. 4), a grey brown loam clay with chalk inclusions, measured 0.56m in depth. Finds from **3** were contemporary in date with those from **53**.

Ditch **4** cut through feature **30** (Pls 5 and 6) which ran east-west along the length and width of the trench. This feature contained a pure orange-blue clay with a few chalk inclusions **31**, and yielded no finds. Although a well defined edge and base were evident it is likely that this feature was natural in origin. It was cut through the natural brown clay **5/21**.

Below subsoil **2** and dug into the natural clay **5/21**, projecting c.0.40m into SE corner of the trench, was a posthole/small pit **28** (Pl.7), filled with a grey loam clay **29** and four clay tobacco pipe stems.

#### **Trench 2** (Fig. 6)

After removal of the topsoil **1** a 0.45m wide trench was dug along the south facing section of the trench. This revealed a land drain **40** crossing the trench diagonally, whose fill **41**, a dark brown grey loam, was derived from layer **16/24** (Pl. 8). This deposit, which contained pottery of late 16th - mid 17th century date, spanned the width and length of the trench, with a maximum depth of 0.28m. It sealed **42**, a mid/dark grey silt clay lying above **43**, a grey brown silt clay with occasional charcoal flecks, 0.08m deep. Below **43** was **25** and **44**, similar material to that of **43** but with less charcoal content. It is likely that these layers were broadly contemporary, although no finds were retrieved.

Layer **45**, a dark grey silt clay with chalk inclusions, sealed **26/46**, an orange brown clay, which produced one clay tobacco pipe stem, a fragment of brick and seven pieces of animal bone. Towards the east of the trench **45** became indistinguishable from **16/24**. **45** is recorded as being approximately 0.38m deep in that area. Deposit **26/46** lay above natural **5/21**, which was seen to dip towards the west.

#### **Trench 3** (Fig. 7)

Beneath the topsoil at the west end of the trench was levelling deposit **15/39**, an orange brown clay loam which overlay **14** a dark grey loam (Pl. 10, foreground). Finds included a storage jar rim and a bowl sherd of 19th century date.

**14** sealed the edge of a distinctive metalled surface, **17**, 0.12m thick and comprising chalk fragments, extended across all but the westernmost part of the trench and may represent a yard surface (Pl.11). This deposit butted both sides of the remains of a wall, **19**, aligned north - south (Pl.11, right of vertical scale). It was 0.42m wide and there was one surviving course of bricks 223 x 120 x 71mm, bonded with white mortar. The wall lay within a shallow foundation cut, **18**, no deeper than the remaining brick course. The size of the



bricks suggests the wall is 18th - 19th century in date. Below the wall lay a spread of dark grey loam clay with frequent charcoal flecks **6** (Pl.11). Two clay pipe bowls were retrieved from this deposit together with pottery sherds of 18th century Bolingbroke ware. **6** appeared to infill the undulating surface of an extensive spread of a mid-brown loam clay with occasional chalk inclusions, **7** (Pl. 11). It contained two pieces of bone, two tile fragments and three sherds of pottery late 16th-18th century in date. Its maximum recorded depth was 0.44m, rising to the west. This layer gradually changed consistency towards the east, becoming a mixed brown orange clay with variable quantities of charcoal flecks, chalk pieces and charcoal fragments, **27**.

A shallow oval feature **36** filled with a mid grey loam clay with chalk, **35**, at the west end of the trench, and sealed by layer **14** probably represents another episode of levelling (Pl. 12).

At its western limit metalled surface **17** appeared to seal a filled in posthole **12** (Pl.13), which contained rubble **13**. It is not clear whether removal of the post was contemporary with the creation of the yard surface; there were no datable finds in the posthole fill.

Once the above deposits had been investigated the machine was called back to remove **7**, a relatively modern layer, which may have masked earlier archaeological deposits. After the removal of c.0.10m it became apparent that **7** lay within a depression whose western edge was beginning to be defined. Machining was stopped and a trench, 0.50m wide, was hand-dug along the south facing section.

Immediately west of **7** (and cut into by posthole **12**) was the eastern edge of a pond **8/10** (Pl. 13), of which, only 1.60m was exposed within the trench. It had a vertical side (**10**) which gave way to a 0.20m wide ledge before dropping 45° to a flat base (**8**). It was initially believed that **10** was dug into natural clay **5/21**, but the area of **5** immediately east of the pond was 0.40m higher than the level of **5/21** recorded at the east end of the trench (4.81m OD) could be the remains of the pond's retaining bank, comprising upcast natural clay dug out when creating the pond. Evidence for a buried soil horizon would be expected immediately above **5** and below the clay bank but no such deposit was recorded. The original depth of the pond would have been roughly the depth of the existing ledge. The pond was filled by **9/11**, a grey silt with chalk inclusions containing four pieces of pottery, 16th-17th century in date, and a piece of brick.

Layer **7** would seem to represent the landscaping and levelling of the site when the pond was filled in.

One small feature was noted within the narrow trench dug through **7**. Posthole **38** (Pl.14) was below **7** and cut into **5/21**. It measured 0.44m in width and was 0.10m deep. Its fill **37** was identical to that of **7**. No dating evidence was obtained from this feature but it may be associated with the pond.



#### **Trench 4 (Fig. 8 )**

Trench 4 was positioned against the eastern boundary of the proposed development (Pl. 15). Beneath the broken concrete and tarmac of the Anchor Inn car park was a levelling/hardcore deposit **33**, comprising brick fragments, broken tile, large pieces of weathered chalk within a grey brown silty clay matrix (Pl.16).

Sealed by **33** was posthole **50** c.0.18m wide x c.0.40m deep, which contained a rotted wooden post surrounded by brown grey silty clay, **49** (Pl.16, in the section, right). A brick fragment, presumably used as a support for the post, was noted in the base. A second posthole **48**, 0.20m x 0.20m, unexcavated, also sealed by **33**, could have been contemporary with **50** and part of a fence. It contained a dark brown silt fill **47**.

Beneath **33** was **56**, another levelling layer similar to that of **33** but with less rubble. Below this layer was **34** (Pl.16), a grey brown silty clay, with an undulating surface and thickest at the south end of the trench. It sealed yard surface **20** (Pl.17) which terminated c.2m from the northern trench edge. A chalk wall **55**, 0.90m wide, comprising chalk blocks up to 0.20m in size, crossed the trench at this level and was butted on both sides by **20**. The same yard surface appeared in Trench 3 where it was recorded as context **17**.

To the north of the yard surface a NW - SE aligned ditch **23** (Pl.18) crossed the trench. This ditch was approximately 1.50m wide and contained two fills. The upper fill **23**, produced a single sherd of 12th century pottery as did the lower fill **32**. In section it looks as if the top of the ditch has been removed and replaced by layer **34**, making its relationship to surface **20** unclear.

#### **Discussion**

The desk based assessment identified the proposed development site as an area of high potential for Saxon and medieval remains because of its proximity to the church and the market place. However, this potential was not realised and few medieval finds or features were made. There are several possible reasons for the lack of medieval (or earlier) activity.

The plot is thought to be part of the land belonging to the parish church in the 12th and 13th centuries, later held by St Katherine's Priory, Lincoln. This may account for the lack of any evidence for medieval settlement remains on the site.

The western boundary of the site follows a sinuous line and some of the trees along it are weeping willows (Pl. 2). This suggests that the boundary may have been a former water course. Early maps mark the presence of a long narrow pond in the north west corner of the site aligned along the boundary (this area of the site was covered by a topsoil spoil heap, created prior to the evaluation, and could not be examined). The edge of a (presumably earlier) pond was found in Trench 3 which, according to the pottery found in the backfill, was filled in some time after the 17th century. The natural feature **30**,



recorded in Trench 1 may also have been a little creek or water-filled gully. The western portion of the site may therefore have been too wet to build on.

Evidence for landscaping was found in Trenches 2 and 3 and any minor features may have been destroyed when the ground was levelled at some time during the 18th century.

In conclusion there is no evidence to suggest that this plot of land was inhabited at any period, there being no surviving evidence for buildings or even rubbish pits. The potential for the presence of significant archaeological remains over the rest of the site is considered to be low.

Mick McDaid and Naomi Field  
January 7th 1996

#### **Acknowledgements**

LAS would like to thank Dean Cox (Sherwood Vale Developments) for his assistance and co-operation and Chris the JCB driver. The evaluation was carried out by Kate Lister, Mick McDaid and Ray North. Thanks also go to Naomi Field and Geoff Tann for their help and comments on this report which was collated by Jane Frost.

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Land to the Rear of the Anchor Inn Alford  
 Site Code:AAI 96 Accession No.: 176.96  
 Context List

Context	Trench	Type	Relationship	Same As	Description
1	1-4	Layer	above 15/39,41,51		topsoil
2	1	Layer	above 3,29		brown loam clay
3	1	Fill	above 4		fill of ditch 4
4	1	Cut	above 31		possible ditch
5	1-4	Layer	below 8/10 23,27,28,30,38,46		natural brown clay
6	3	Layer	above 7		grey loam clay
7	3	Layer	above 37,27		brown loam clay
8	3	Cut	above 5	10	pond?
9	3	Fill	above 8	11	fill of pond
10	3	Cut	above 5	8	pond?
11	3	Fill	above 10	9	fill of pond
12	3	Cut	above 9/11		posthole
13	3	Fill	above 12		rubble fill of 12
14	3	Layer	above 17		grey clay loam
15	3	Layer	above 14	39	orange brown clay loam
16	3	Layer	above 42	24	as 24
17	3	Layer	above 6,13,35	20	yard surface
18	3	Cut	above 6		wall foundation trench
19	3	Fill	above 18		wall
20	4	Layer	above 5	17	yard surface
21	4	Layer	see 5	5	as 5
22	4	Fill	above 32		fill of ditch 23
23	4	Cut	above 5		ditch
24	2	Layer	see 16	16	brown loam clay
25	2	Layer	above 26/45		grey brown loam clay
26	2	Layer	above 46	45	grey loam clay
27	3	Layer	above 5		brown orange clay
28	1	Cut	above 5		posthole
29	1	Fill	above 28		posthole fill
30	1	Cut	above 5		natural" feature?
31	1	Fill	above 30		fill of feature 30
32	4	Fill	above 23		fill of ditch 23
33	4	Layer	above 1,47,49		car park area
34	4	Layer	above 20,22		grey brown loam clay
35	3	Fill	above 36		pit fill
36	3	Cut	above 7		pit
37	3	Fill	above 38		posthole fill
38	3	Cut	above 5		posthole
39	3	Layer	see 15	15	brown loam clay
40	2	Cut	above 16/24		land drain
41	2	Fill	above 40		land drain fill
42	2	Layer	above 43		grey loam clay
43	2	Layer	above 44,25		grey brown loam clay
44	2	Layer	above 26/45		brown loam clay
45	2	Layer	above 46		grey loam clay
46	2	Layer	above 5		orange brown clay
47	4	Fill	above 48		posthole fill
48	4	Cut	above 34		posthole
49	4	Fill	above 50		posthole fill
50	4	Cut	above 56		posthole
51	1	Layer	above 2		path
52	1	Layer	above 2		old topsoil
53	1	Fill	above 3		ditch fill
54	4	Cut	below 55		wall
55	4	Fill	above 54		foundation trench
56	4	Layer	below 50		



## APPENDIX 2

Land to the Rear of the Anchor Inn Alford  
 Site Code:AAI 96 Accession No.: 176.96  
 Medieval Pottery Archive

CONTEXT	WARE	SHERDS	FORM	COMMENTS	DATE
1	LPM	1	?		14TH-15TH
2	MEDLOC	1	JAR	SPOT GLAZE	14TH-15TH
3	TOY	1	JUG		14TH-15TH
3	MEDLOC	1	?	BOURNE, INT GLAZE	14TH-15TH
3	MEDLOC	1	JUG	BASE GLAZE	14TH-15TH
6	STMO	1	MUG	BASE	M17TH-M18TH
6	BS	1	MUG	BASE	M17TH-M18TH
6	PGE	1	BOWL	RIM	E18TH
6	PGE	1	BOWL	RIM	E18TH
6	PGE	1	BOWL	BASE	E18TH
6	PGE	1	JAR	BASE	E18TH
6	RGRE	1	JAR	BASE	E18TH
6	RGRE	1	JAR	BASE	E18TH
6	RGRE	1	JAR,SMALL	RIM	E18TH
6	RGRE	1	BOWL	BASE	E18TH
6	RGRE	1	BOWL	BASE	E18TH
6	GRG	2	BOWL	BASE	E18TH
6	GRG	2	BOWL	BASE	E18TH
7	TB	1	BOWL	RIM, BOL	L16TH-E18TH
7	RGRE	1	JAR	BASE, ?BOL	L16TH-E18TH
7	MEDLOC	1	BOWL	BASE	L16TH-E18TH
9	BL	1	MUG	BASE	L16TH-M17TH
9	RGRE	1	BOWL	RIM	L16TH-M17TH
9	MEDLOC	1	JUG	SPLASH GLAZE	L16TH-M17TH
9	TB	1	?	?COUNTER	L16TH-M17TH
14	LPM	5	?	2 VESSELS	19TH
14	BERTH	1	BOWL		19TH
14	BERTH	1	JAR	RIM,STORAGE	19TH
16	BL	1	MUG		16TH-17TH
16	BL	1	MUG		16TH-17TH
16	PMED	1	?	TB, UNGLAZED	E16TH-M17TH
16	BERTH	2	?	HOLLOW	E16TH-M17TH
22	ST	1	JUG	PITTED GLAZE	L11TH-12
32	MISC	1	?	ROMAN OR LOCAL MED	L11TH-12



**Land to the Rear of the Anchor Inn Alford**  
**Site Code:AAI 96 Accession No.: 176.96**  
**Contents of Site Archive**

56 Context sheets  
1 Trench location plan scale 1:200  
5 Trench plans. Scale 1:20  
7 Sections. Scale 1:20  
1 Survey plan  
Levels  
Hand written pottery report  
Draft report  
correspondence  
Photographs  
Film no. 96/75 negs. 15 - 36  
Film no. 96/76 negs. 27 - 37

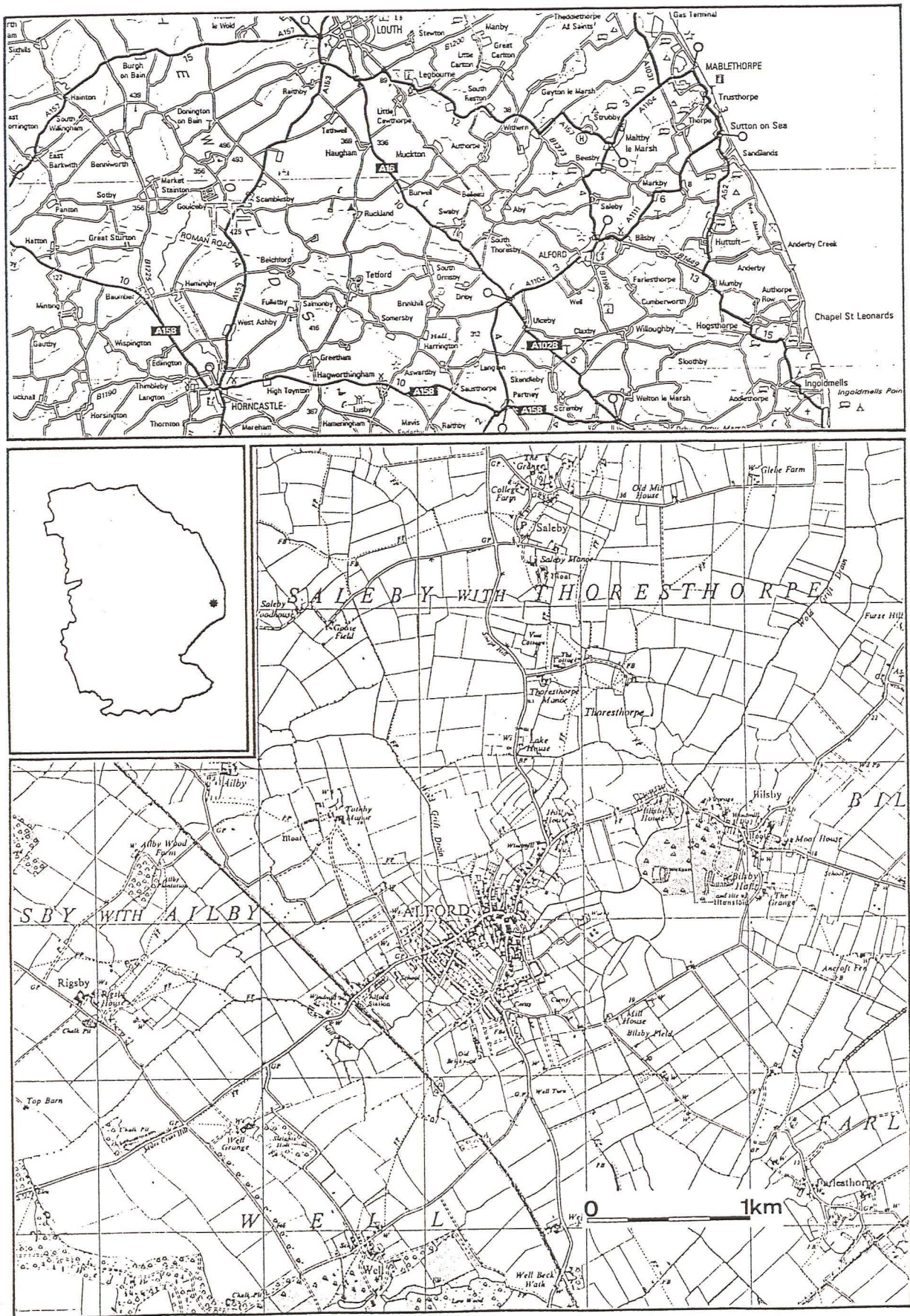


Fig. 1 Land to the rear of the Anchor Inn Alford. Site location. Reproduced from the 1953 OS 1:25000 map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO © Crown copyright. (LAS Licence No. AL 50424 A)



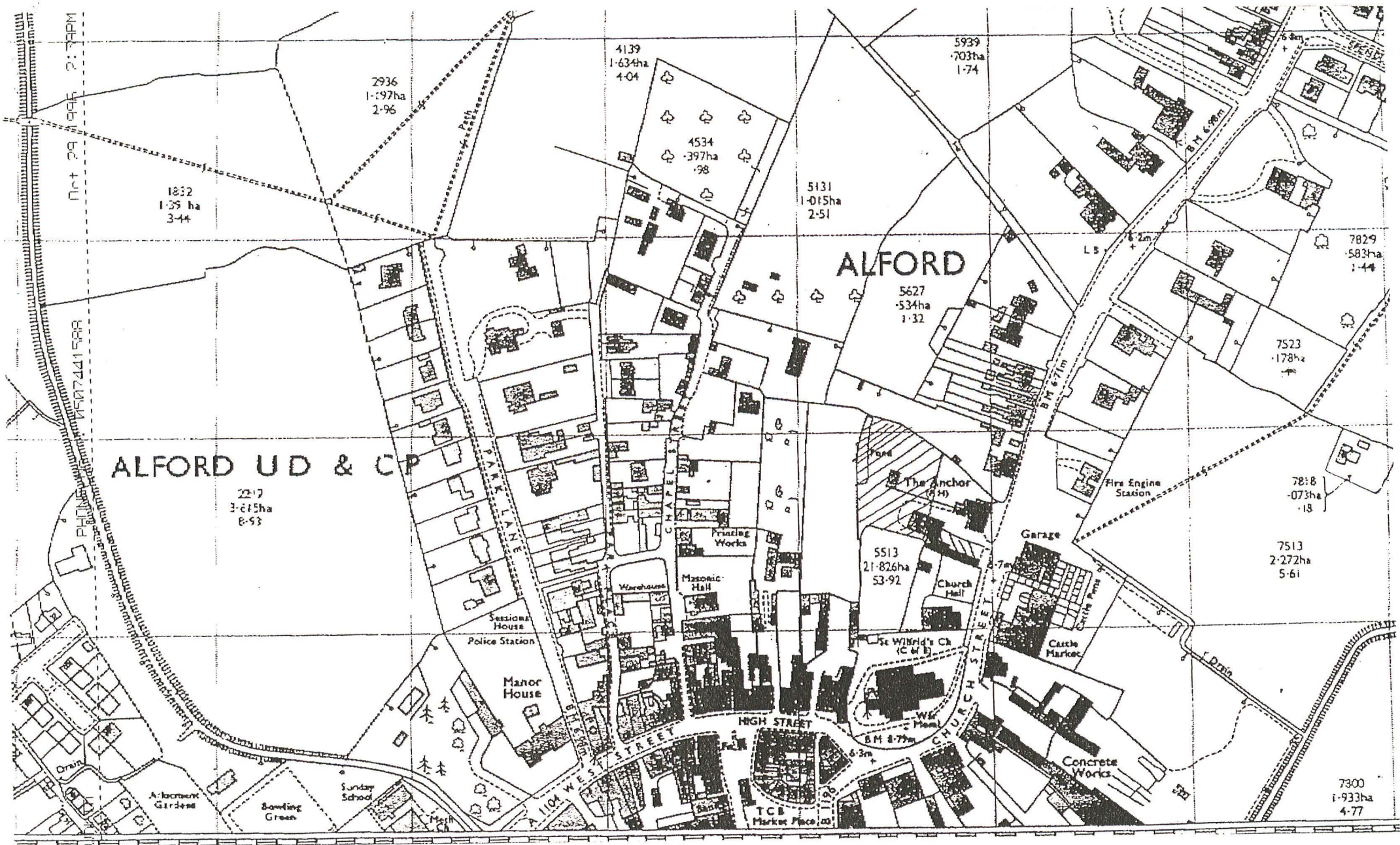


Fig. 2 Location of the Proposed Development (based on the 1972 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map supplied by the client; © Crown Copyright, reproduced by permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



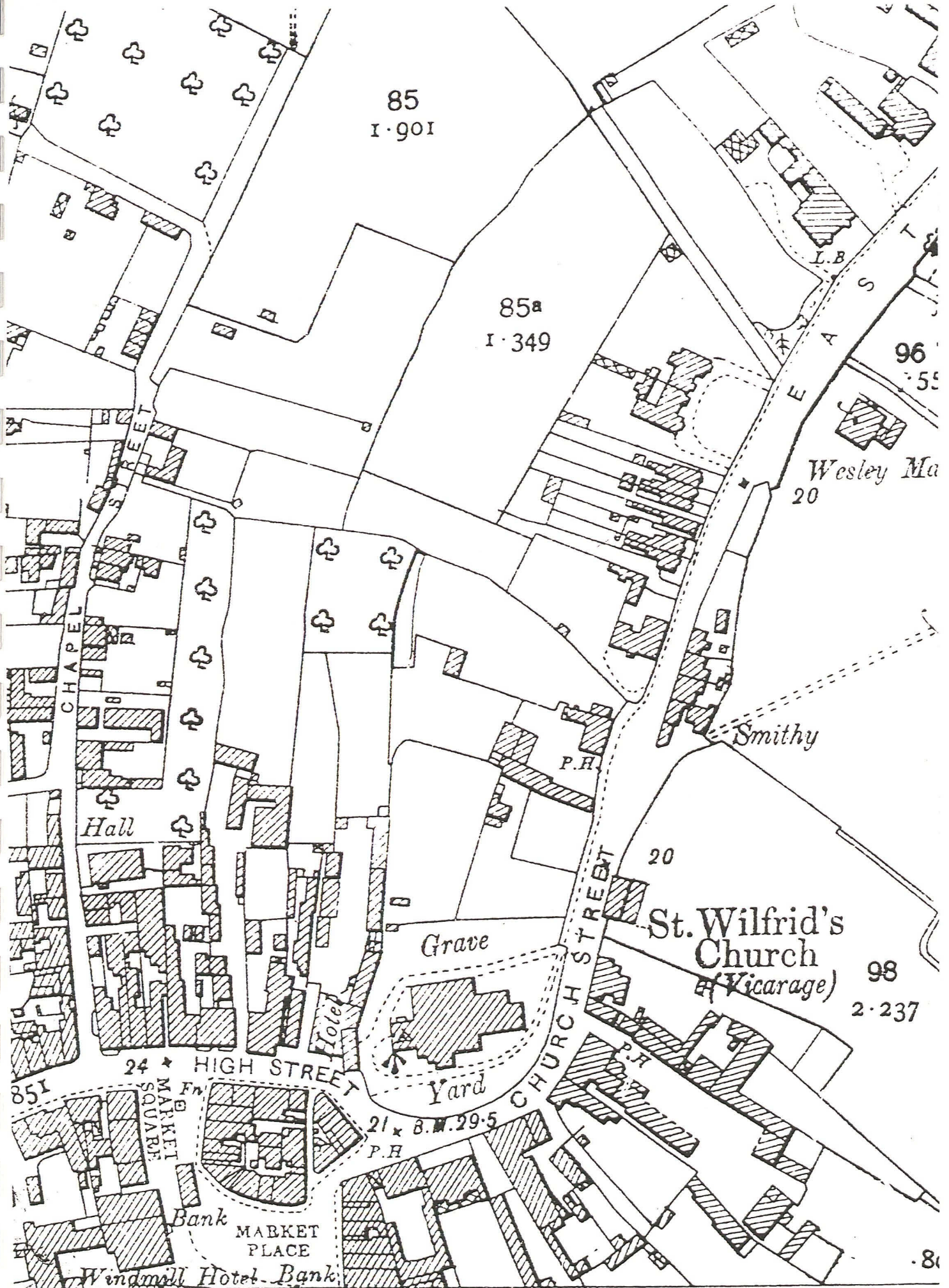


Fig. 3 Extract from the 1906 Ordnance Survey Second Edition 1:2,500  
 map, Lincs. Sheet 66/11 (surveyed 1887, revised 1905).  
 Reproduced at enlarged scale.

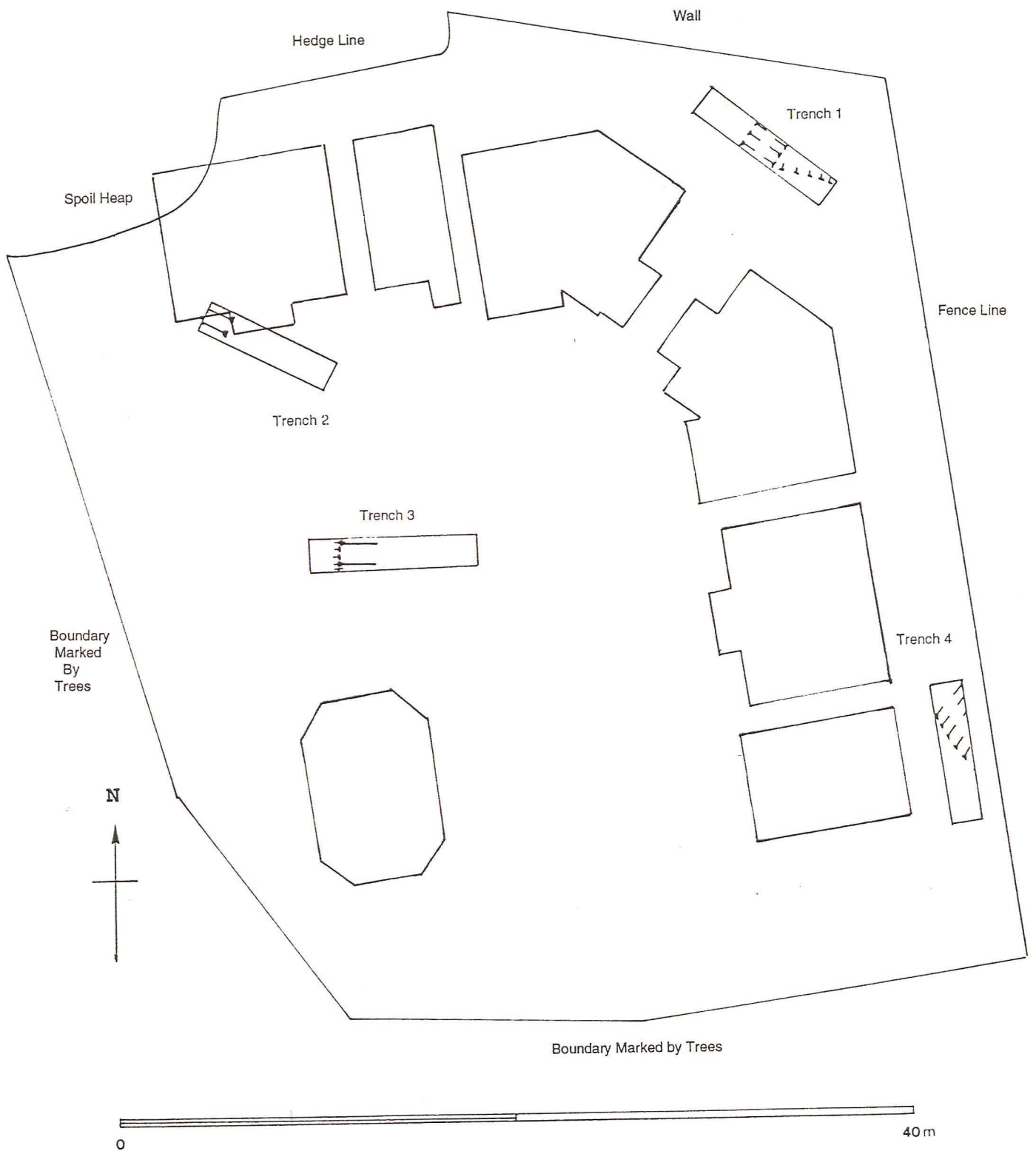


Fig. 4 Anchor Inn Alford. Trench location plan.



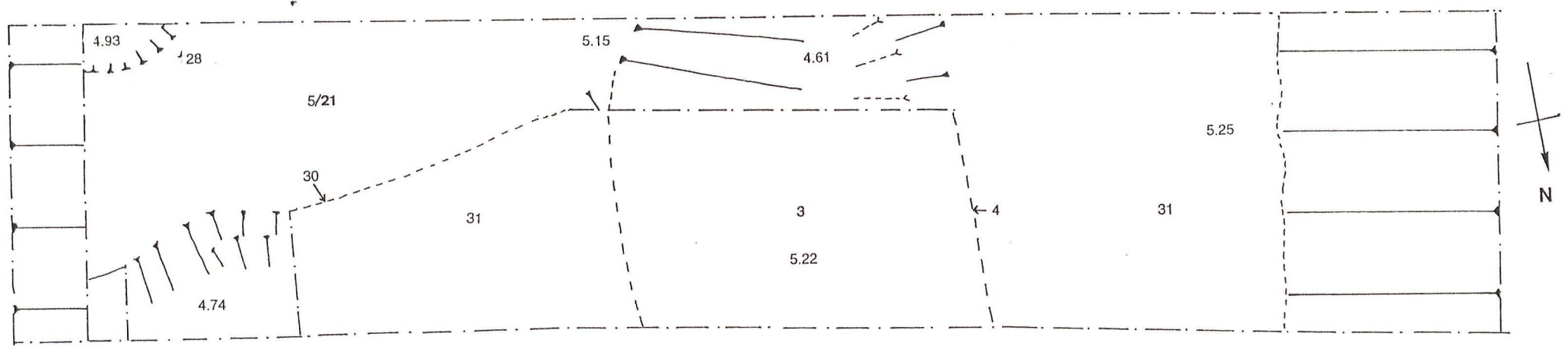
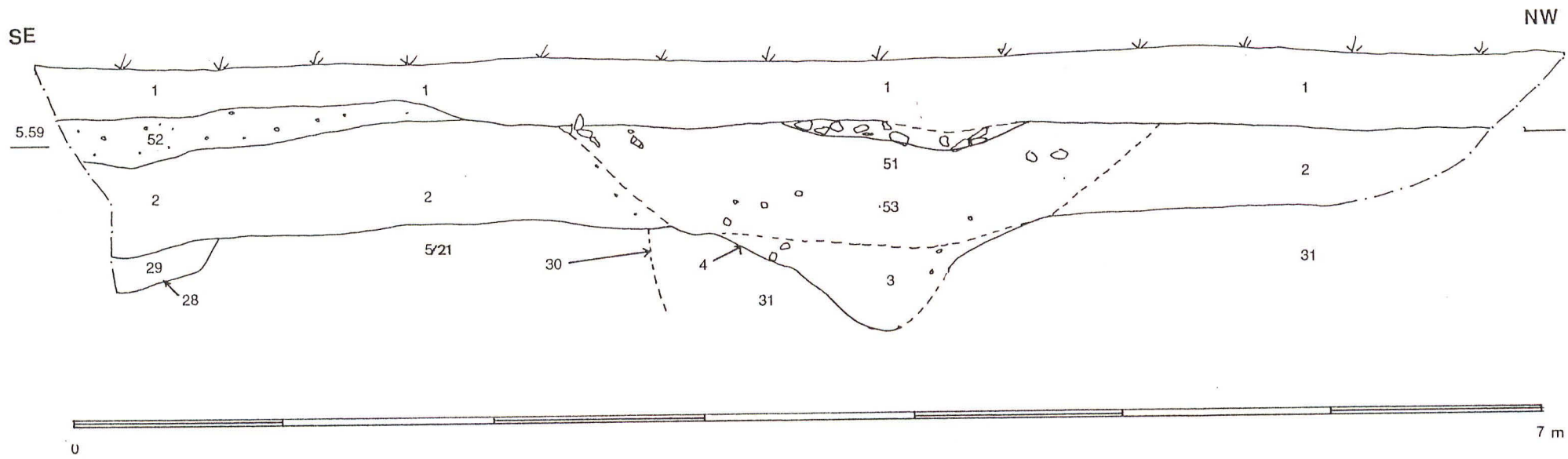


Fig. 5 Anchor Inn Alford. Trench 1 section and plan.

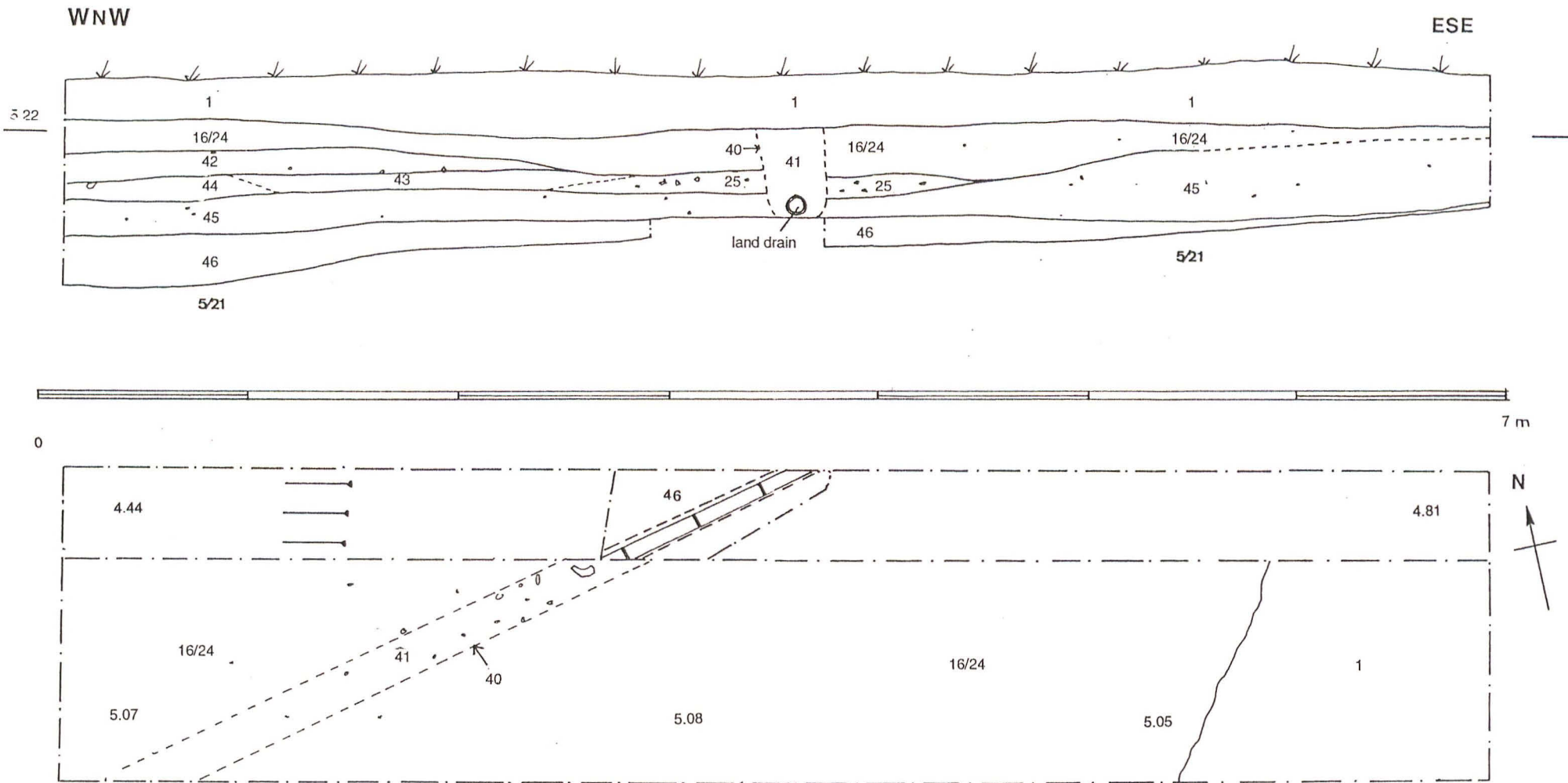


Fig. 6 Anchor Inn Alford. Trench 2 section and plan.



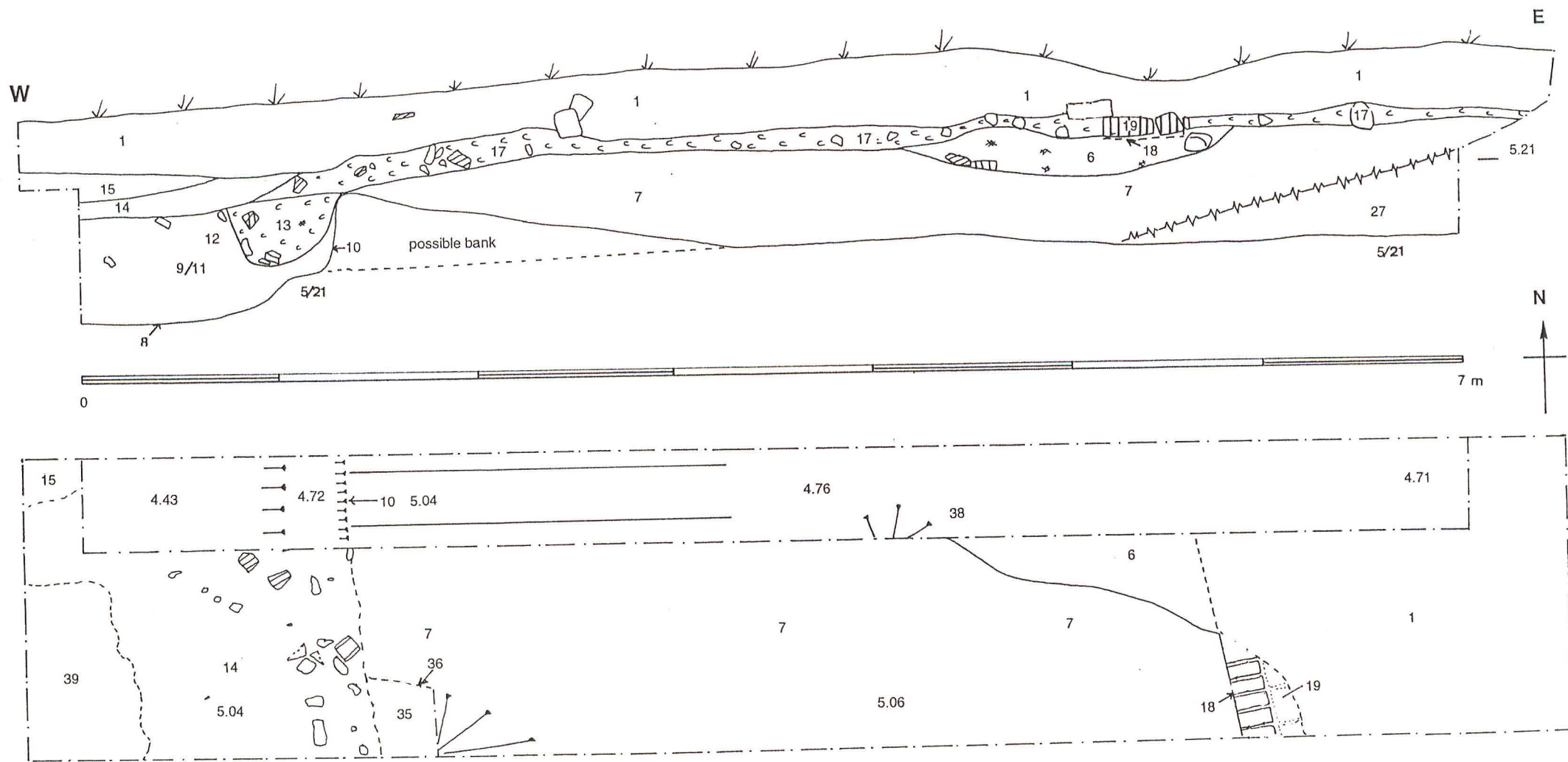


Fig. 7 Anchor Inn Alford. Trench 3 section and plan.

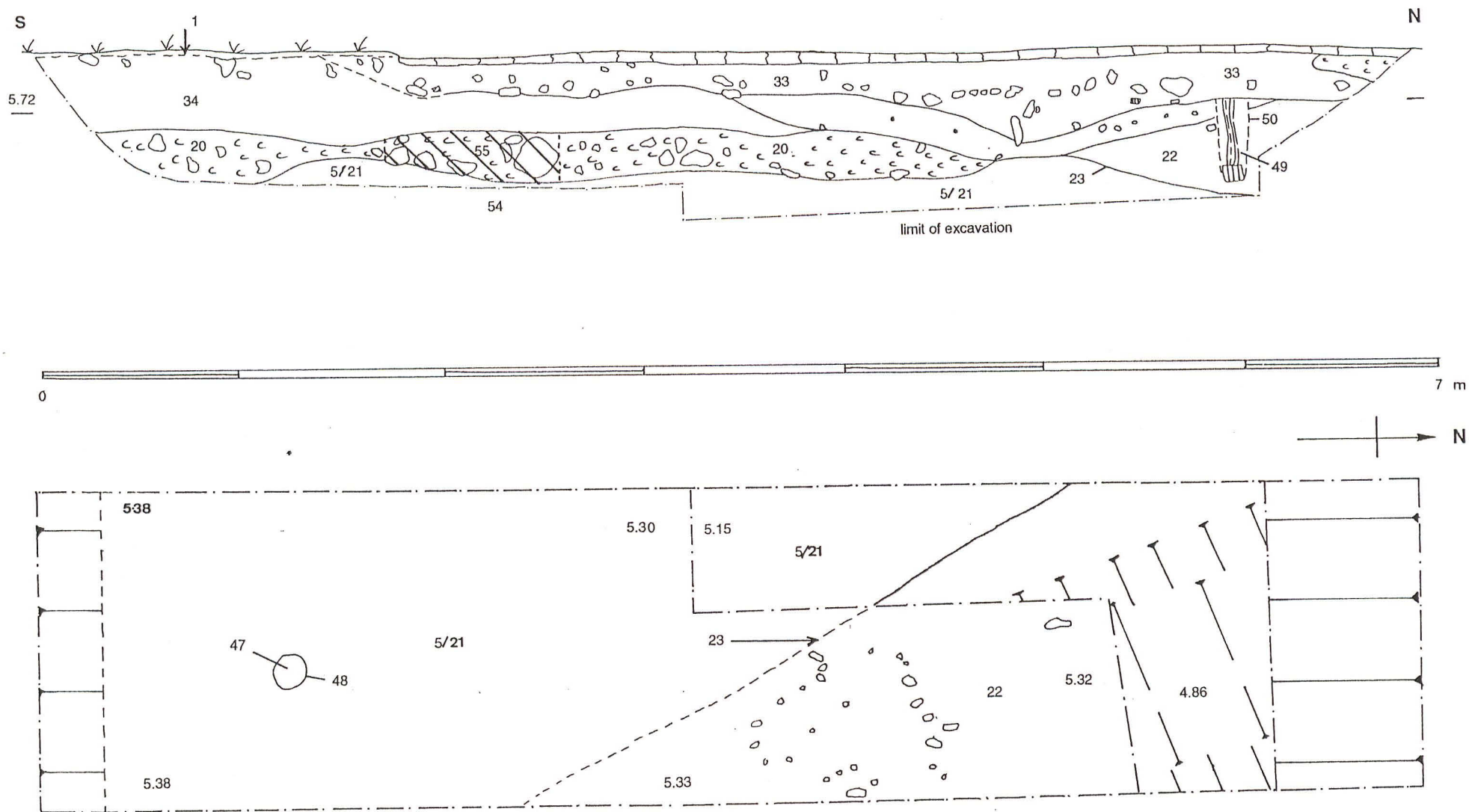


Fig. 8 Anchor Inn Alford. Trench 4 section and plan.





Pl. 1 General view of development site west of the Anchor Inn. Looking NW.

Pl. 2 General view of development site showing modern building platform (light area, left hand side). looking west.







Pl. 3 Trench 1, machining. Looking NW.

Pl. 4 Trench 1, ditch 4 sealed by chalk layer 51. NE facing section. Scales 1m.







Pl. 5 Trench 1, ditch 4 in background, feature 30 in foreground. Looking NW. Scales 1m.

Pl. 6 Trench 1, natural feature 30, partially excavated. View SW. Scales 1m and 0.50m.







Pl. 7 Trench 1, small pit 28, looking South. Vertical scale 0.25m, horizontal scale 0.50m.

Pl. 8 Trench 2, with narrow trench along south side showing modern field drain. View west. Scales 1m.







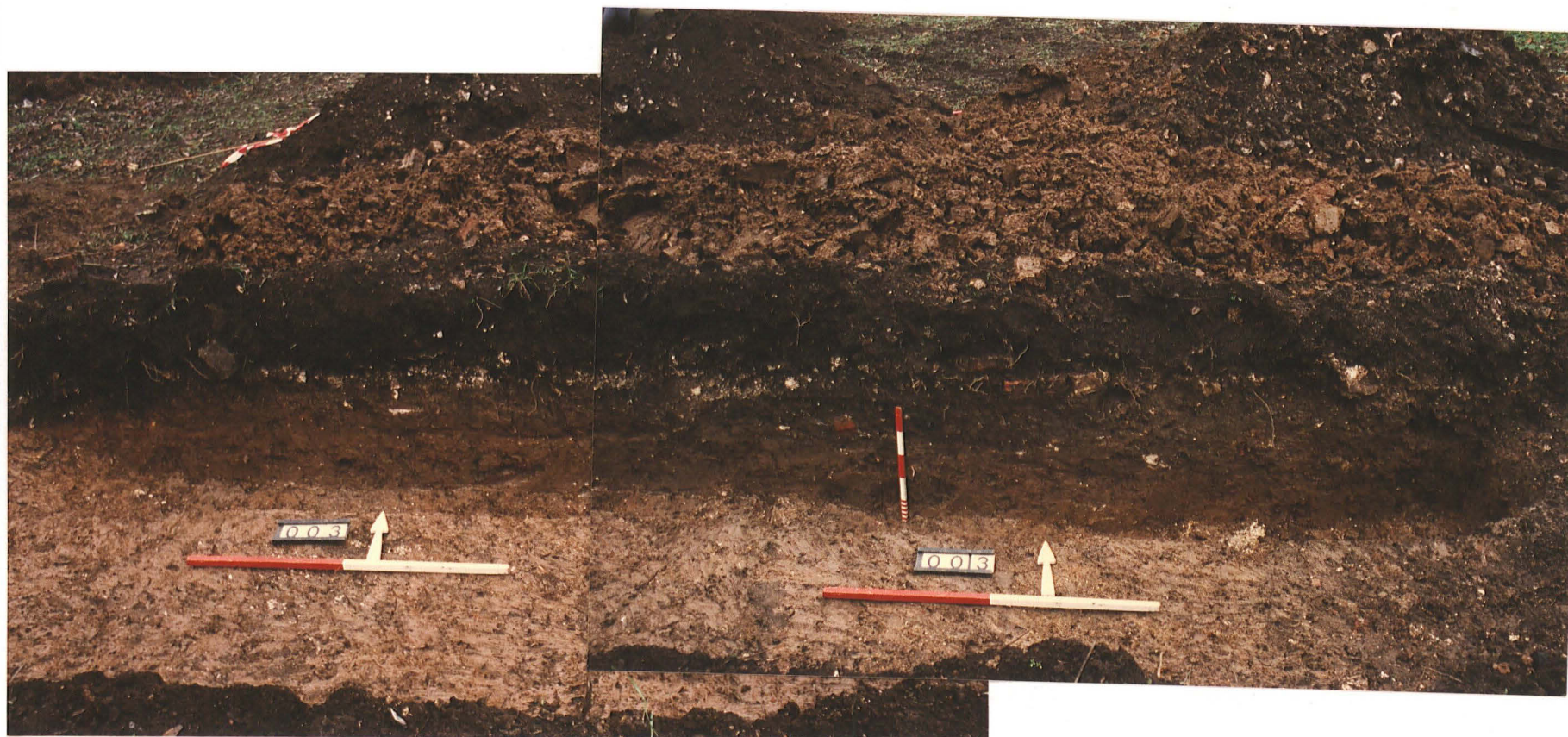
Pl. 9 Trench 2, south facing section of . Scales 1m.





Pl. 10 Trench 3, looking east. Scales 1m.





Pl. 11 Trench 3, south facing section. Wall 19 and associated chalk yard surface 17 lie below topsoil 1 and seal earlier levelling deposits 6 and 7. Scales 1m.





Pl. 12 Trench 3, pit 36, looking west. Scales 0.25m and 0.50m.

Pl. 13 Trench 3, possible pond 8, cut by rubble-filled posthole 12 with possible bank edge 10 visible (left). Looking north. Scales 1m.





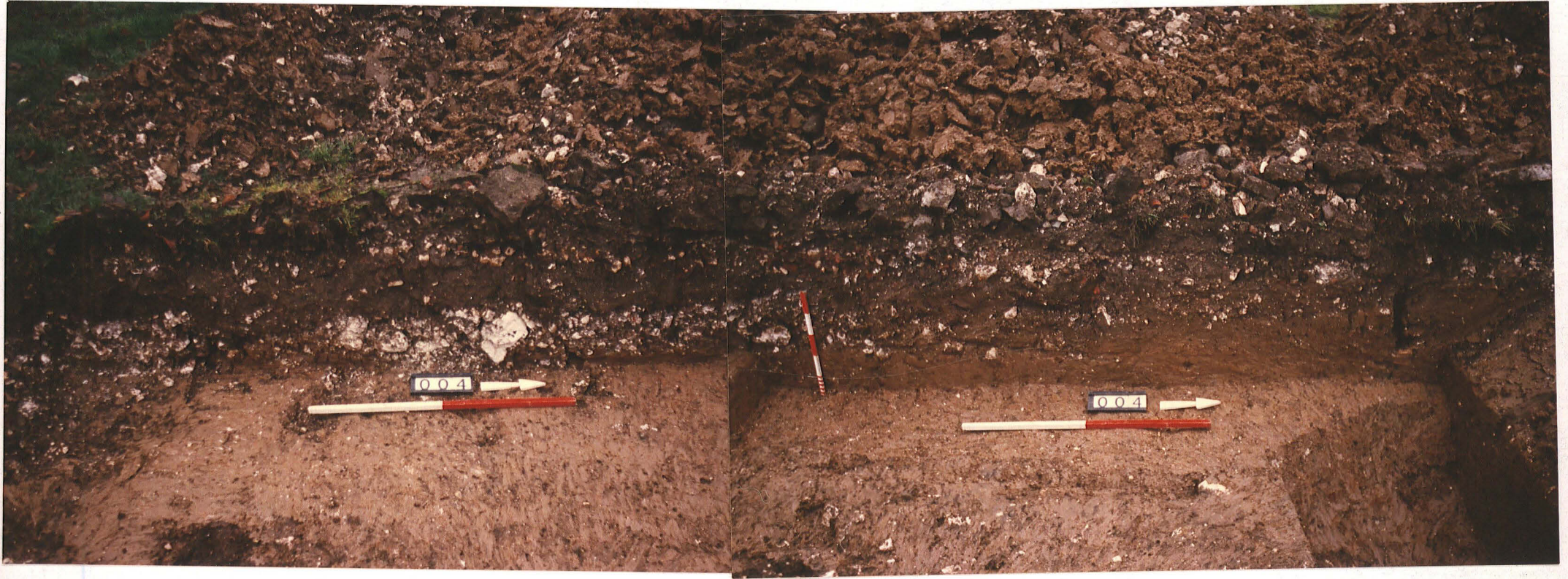


Pl. 14 Trench 3, posthole 38, sectioned, looking from above. Scales 0.25m and 0.50m.

Pl. 15 Trench 4, looking NNE. Vertical scale 0.50m, horizontal scales 1m.

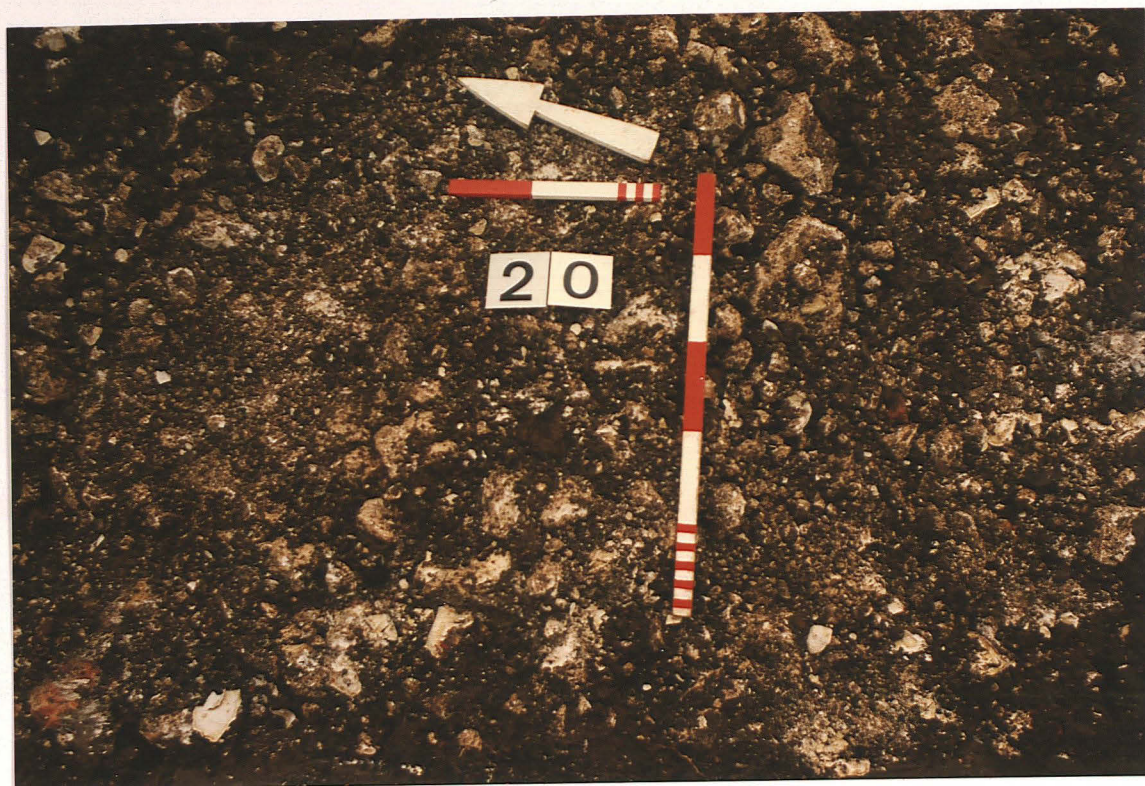






Pl. 16 Trench 4. East facing section showing camber of surface 20.  
Vertical scale 0.50m, horizontal scale 1m.





Pl. 17 Trench 4, yard surface 20, detail. Scales 0.25m and 0.50m.

Pl. 18 Trench 4. Ditch 23. South facing section. Scales 0.50m and 1m.

