ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SHODFRIARS LANE, BOSTON, LINCS.

FOR

CASTLE SQUARE DEVELOPMENTS PLC

BY

HERITAGE LINCOLNSHIRE.

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#### Introduction

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1991 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Heritage Lincolnshire on behalf of Castle Square Developments PLC on the site of the former Ridlingtons Brewery shop on the south side of Shodfriars Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire. National Grid Reference: TF 53290 33985.

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The site lay over the known location of the Dominican friary, one of the four Friary's located within Boston. The Dominican Friary was built in the mid 1200's and was occupied until 1539 when under the orders of Henry VIII, the Friary closed. The land and buildings were then passed into the hands of the Duke of Suffolk.

Parts of the friary are still visible today. The most well known remains being the "Blackfriars" Arts Centre on Spain Lane, thought to be the remains of the friary's 'Frater' or refectory, and the remains of a large stone building with a series of pointed arches visible within 10, South Street.

The archaeoloical objectives of the evaluation were: to establish the nature of early pre-monastic occupation, the nature, extent of monastic occupation, including the location of any structural remains and the nature of occupation after 1539.

#### Methodology

The evaluation trench was situated in the yard to the East of the former Ridlington's Brewery shop (Fig 1). It extended from just outside of the covered loading bay of the building and ran northeast at an angle across the site for 23.00m, with a width of 5.00m, stopping to the north of the yard gates. It was decided to situate the trench at an angle to Shodfriars lane to allow a cross section of archaeology within the area of the the proposed development to be recorded, with only the excavation of a single trench.

The tarmac and reinforced concrete of the yard surface was broken out by machine during the week-end prior to the commencement of the evaluation. A mechanical excavator was then employed to remove the accumulation of late material from the site exposing the stratified archaeological deposits below. Approximately 1m of overburden was removed from the whole length of the trench. Once this was completed the area was cleaned, planned and photographed.

The next stage of the evaluation was to excavate by hand three smaller trenches,  $3m \times 3m \times 1m$  deep, within the area of the main excavation ( Fig 2 ). These were situated in areas which would answer specific questions about the archaeological deposits exposed. Area A was sited at the eastern end of the main trench, area B roughly in the centre of the trench and area C at the west end of the main trench.

Throughout the excavation, records of each soil layer was made, comprising a written description, 1:20 scale plans and, where appropriate, photographs. Each archaeological layer or feature was allocated a unique record number.

The final stage of the evaluation was to take a number of auger samples across the trench, to assess the depth of stratigraphy over the site.

#### Evaluation Results

### Main Trench

The deposits removed by machine during the initial stages of the evaluation revealed a series of dump/levelling deposits. Cut into these deposits at the east end of the main trench were a series of brick lined cess pits possibly contemporary with a row of 19th century tenements which lay on the south side of Shodfriars Lane. The walls of these buildings did not appear within the limits of excavation but their tile floors did appear in section. Sealing these was a layer of hardcore onto which was laid the tarmac surface which represents the modern ground surface today (5.23m O.D.).

#### Area A:

The earliest deposit recorded at a height of 4.18m O.D., consisted of a burnt sand/clay mixed with frequent tile fragments [OO2], This can be interpreted as either: - destruction debris of an early structure, or the debris from a hearth or kiln; the latter being the most likely as the debris contained only tile with no other visible inclusions which could suggest the destruction of a building. This deposit was not removed and was recorded in situ.

Sealing and cutting [002], at 3.90m O.D., were the remains of stone foundations [160], a section, 3.42m in length and 0.60m in width was exposed. [160], was Orientated east - west, and consisted of a single course of large Barnack limestone blocks, laid randomly with no bonding material apparent ( Fig 3 ). These foundations could represent either a building within the confines of the precinct or, more probably, the precinct wall of the Friary. The wall which once stood on these foundations had been entirely robbed away leaving only the robber trench cut visible from the surface of the excavation trench.

From the surface possibly contemporary with this robber trench, another linear feature was excavated [094], this ran parallel to the robber trench and slightly to its south. [094], had no apparent function and was possibly an earlier attempt to rob the friary walls but was placed in an unsuitable location and realigned. Both

trenches were sealed by what appeared to be the same upper fill [007].

Another small feature [046], was excavated on the east side of area A. in plan [046], was oval and contained a single roughly rectangular limestone block with what appeared to be packing of smaller limestones lying on its eastern side. The function for [046] is unclear as the majority of the feature lay outside the area of excavation. In turn [046] and [007] were sealed by the insertion of an 19th century brick lined cess pit, contemporary with a row of tenements which once lay on the south side of Shodfriars Lane

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#### Area B:

The earliest deposit excavated in this area was recorded at a height of 3.72m O.D., and was a fibrous organic deposit [186], thought to be dumping associated with the reclaimation of marshy ground. This deposit contained moderate quantities of limestone fragments, tile and bone. other finds recovered include leather off-cuts possibly from the manufacturing of shoes and a piece of worked animal bone.

sealing [186], at 4.09m O.D., in the south-eastern corner of Area B, was a feature constructed of medium limestone fragments [176]. This was initially thought to be some form of ground stabilisation, but further investigation revealed that it was probably the collapsed remains of a structure which lay just outside the limit of Area B. This, unfortunately, does not allow for an interpretation of the feature (Fig 4).

Another contemporary limestone feature [177], lay to the north of [176]. Again this was constructed using limestone fragments although in this case they were laid flat and appeared to have slightly worn upper surfaces. As with [176], interpretation is impossible as the majority lies outside of the area excavated, but the wear on the stone suggests some sort of surface (Fig 4).

Slightly to the west of [177], was a small pit [164], the fill of which [162], consisted of a clean sand. To the north of [164], were a series of small wooden stakes [166] ( Fig 4 ), these formed a

channel into the pit, the function of the pit and stake feature is unknown but further excavation to the north should clarify this.

Sealing these features were a series of thin dump layers sloping towards the south. Cut into the latest of these deposits [122], at a height of 3.89m O.D., in the south- west corner of Area B was a single wooden upright stake. This stake appears to have been driven into [122], and could be part of a linear structure running east - west (see Area C and Conclusions). This feature was sealed by a further semi-organic deposit [095], containing pottery, bone and tile fragments. Cutting [095], was a linear feature [082], orientated east - west, and like most of the linear features present on the site, respected the alignment of Shodfriars Lane. No finds were recovered from this feature and its function remains unclear. The latest deposits excavated in area B were the lower portions of late features removed during machine excavation of the main trench.

#### Area C

The earliest level was recorded at 3.84m O.D., and was a blue-grey organic silt deposit [184], containing moderate amounts of limestone and tile fragments, this was sealed, in part, by [183], a deposit of tile fragments. These tiles overlapped each other and suggest that they might be the lining of a ditch feature running east - west across the site. A series of fills accumulated within the ditch, which was later recut [178], and a new steeper and narrower profile formed. This again silted up and was itself eventually recut [056] ( Fig 5 ).

The remains of a wattle fence [132], were recorded on the north side of this latest recut [056]. Three upright stakes were recorded all with cut pointed ends. These uprights were interwoven with thinner 'twigs'. The function of the wattle was probably to stop the ditch silting up or to stop the slumping of the sides, bearing in mind the loose nature of the soil. This suggests that the ditch was in frequent use or alternatively a considerable flow of water passed along it. A single, large, roughly square limestone block was recorded at the top of the south edge of the ditch [171], and might suggest the remains of a wall?, Running along the southern edge of the ditch. A further series of layers finally filling up the ditch were then deposited, the latest of these fills, [055], was cut by a late pit [077], which once contained the remains of a railway sleeper or similar sized timber. Any relationship for [077] to other

features present on the site was unfortunatly destroyed during the machine excavation of the main trench.

Possibly contemporary with [077], were two wells [096] and [051]. Well [051], lay just to the north of Area C, only part of the construction cut and fill appeared within area B. The second [096], lay at the south end of Area C. No construction cut was visible but a large possibly rectangular cut [158], surrounding the well was partially excavated (Fig 5). This cut was only 0.20m deep and its fill was 19th Century in date. It is possible that there was once a free standing structure positioned over the well, although no evidence was recovered in support of this theory. Both wells are of 19th century construction and could be contemporary with the tenements that survived upon the site until the mid 20th century.

#### Auger Survey

The final stage of the evaluation involved the taking of a series of auger samples along the length of the main trench to establish the depth to which archaeological stratigraphy survived.

The auger columns taken on site revealed that, below the metre of overburden sealing the top of the surviving archaeology, there is at least another metre of stratified archaeological remains. Beneath these there exists a sequence of silts and clays.

Figure 6 (note that the scale on figure 6 applies to the vertical plane only) illustrates the range of complexity and diversity of these deposits as they occur within the confines of the evaluation. One difficulty in their interpretation lies in the fact that both the archaeological and the natural stratigraphy are comprised mainly of silts. To an extent it is possible to distinguish between the two, however, there exists an area of uncertainty ( denoted between the dashed lines on fig. 6 ) which may well represent dumped deposits laid down to reclaim land.

The importance of the surviving archaeology has been discussed elsewhere in the text. However, it should also be noted that further investigation of the silts and clays beneath the archaeology would allow valuable information to be collected which could be used to determine the processes employed to convert the area from marshland into land suitable for human settlement. This information would also

clarify the origin of the materials used to reclaim the land and the climatic and environmental conditions which prevailed immediately before land reclamation began.

The results of the auger survey were as follows;

Column I

Grid Ref; 3.20/4.70

Height O.D.: 3.96m

Deposit A - Dark orange/red 'lumpy' Friable silt [002].

B - Light brown silt with frequent dull orange lenses, occasional shell flecks.

C - Mid grey/brown silt.

D - Light brown silt.

E - Light red/orange coarse silt and brown/grey fine silt.

F - Brown clay.

G - Moist sandy silt.

H - Light brown fine sand.

J - Dark grey fine silt.

K - Light brown fine sand.

L - Dark fine grey silt.

Column II

Grid Ref: 3.40/1.94

Height O.D.: 3.49m

- Deposit A Mid brown sandy silt, moderate mortar flecks, occasional ceramic building material (CBM) flecks, occasional moderate charcoal flecks.
  - B Mid grey clayey silt, occasional light brown sandy silt lenses
  - C Dark grey fine silt.
  - D Grey silt.
  - E Bluey/grey clay silt.

Column III

Grid Ref: 13.00/3.00

Height O.D.: 3.90m

Deposit A - Dark grey gritty silt, moderate wood fragments.

B - Red/grey fine sand.

C - Brown grey silt.

D - Dark blue/grey gritty silt, occasional wood fragments.

E - Dark green/grey silt, occasional wood fragments.

F - Dark brown/grey silt, occasional shell flecks.

G - Blue/grey fine silt, pockets of fine light grey sand.

H - Brown/grey silt.

J - Dark grey silt, rich in organic material.

K - Very dark grey silt, rich in organic material.

L - Light grey fine sand, frequent black lenses.

M - Mid brown/grey stiff silt.

N - Light grey silty clay.

P - Dark green/grey fine silt.

Q - Very dark grey silt, 10% clay.

R - Dark grey silt, rich in organic material.

S - Soft blue/grey clay.

T - Light brown clay.

U - Dark brown/grey silty clay, very occasional wood flecks.

V - Light brown fine silt.

W - Light brown/grey silty clay.

X - Mid brown silty clay.

Y - Brown clay, dark grey lenses.

Z - Blue clay.

Column IV

Grid Ref: 15.50/3.00

Height D.D.: 4.23m

Deposit A - Light brown silt.

B - Grey/brown fine silt.

C - Blue/grey sandy silt, occasional shell fragments.

D - Soft blue/grey silt.

E - Dark grey silt, rich in organic material.

F - Light grey fine silt.

- G Dark grey silt.
- H Light grey fine sand.
- J Very dark grey silt, rich in organic material.
  - K Mid grey fine sand silt.
- L Dark green/grey silt, occasional patches of light brown fine sand/silt
  - M Dark green/grey silt, rich in organic material.
  - N Light brown clay/silt.
  - P Blue /grey clay.

Column V

Grid Ref: 17.00/3.00

Height O.D.: 4.26m

Deposit A - Light yellow sand, occasional dark green silt lenses.

- B Light grey brown silt, occasional charcoal flecks.
- C Dark grey silt, 10% sand, occasional wood flecks.
- D Fine green/grey fine sand/silt.
- E Dark grey silt, rich in organic material.
- F Dry green clay.
- G Dark grey silt, rich in organic material.

Column VI

Grid Ref: 19.30/3.33

Height O.D.: 3.68m

Deposit A - Dark brown/green/grey silt, occasional charcoal.

- B Dark grey silt, occasional wood fleeks.
- C Light grey fine silt, occasional organic material.
- D Dark grey silt, occasional wood flecks.
- E Very dark grey silt, rich in organic material, occasional wood and shell flecks.
- F Bluey clay.
- G Brown clay.

Column VII

Grid Ref: 20.49/4.09

Height O.D.: 3.80m

- Deposit A Dark grey sandy silt, moderate wood flecks and fragments, occasional shell flecks.
  - B Mid grey sandy silt, 10% sand, occasional shell, wood fragments, frequent organic material.
  - C Dark blue/grey coarse sandy silt, moderate wood and limestone fragments.
  - D Dark green grey silt.
  - E Very dark grey silt, rich in organic material, occasional shell and wood flecks.
  - F Sandstone.

#### Conclusions

From the evidence gathered during the evaluation it can be assumed that this area of Boston was, in part, marshy and waterlogged with natural river silts and organic deposits present prior to the first occupation of the area. Area B probably indicates the first phase of occupation which consist of dump deposits associated with land stabilisation and reclamation. These reclamation deposits appear rich in occupation material and therefore could have been brought in from elsewhere.

The accumulation of hearth/kiln debris in Area A is the first indication of occupation on the site. This deposit spreads across the whole 5m of the evaluation trench. At some point, possibly after 1288, when it is known that the Friary was destroyed by fire, a wall was constructed aligned east - West across the site at its eastern end. No return for this wall was recorded within the limits of the excavation and its function remains unclear.

The wall could represent the outer wall of a building separate from the main Friary complex or be the remains of the precinct wall of the Friary, the later being the most likely suggestion.

The ditch recorded in Area C and suggested within Area B, appears to have been in use throughout the majority of the Friary's life with at least two, possibly three re-cuts, taking place during this time. The need for a ditch within the confines of the Friary suggest that

the source of the ditch was from an established building within the friary complex.

Only further excavation will establish exactly from where, but it is likely that it is either; the washrooms, the kitchens or the reredorter (toilets). The latter is probably the least likely as it appears that the ditch was open to the air and not covered. A more likely position for the reredorter to be situated would be nearer to the Barditch where it could discharge directly into the main drain, although this might not be the case. The purpose of the ditch was very probably to drain waste of some description into the Barditch which lies to the east of the site. The main monastic drain is by simile to other sites normally constructed of stone and not a simple ditch.

The sections of the main trench offer little insight into what occurred on the site after the dissolution of the friary in 1539, with no archaeological surfaces apparent.

Levelling of the site appears to have taken place until the 1800's when a row of tenements were erected along the southern side of Shodfriars Lane. The brick lined cess-pits of these tenements have unfortunately destroyed the majority of earlier archaeological occupation present within a narrow section towards the north — east of the site. The two wells recorded at the western end of the main trench are it is thought contemporary with the tenements, though they could have been constructed using re-used brick from the Friary

itself. These tenements were eventually pulled down in the 1960's and the area tarmaced over and used as a yard/carpark.

#### Recommendations

The evaluation has revealed that structural remains of the Dominican Friary do survive on the site. The evidence recorded so far poses certain questions concerning the layout of the Friary complex which need to be answered. Previous attempts to plot the layout of the Friary without excavation have proved to be unreliable and although buildings such as 'Blackfriars' and the remains within 10 South Street may suggest a layout similar to others, it must be remembered that Friary's such as the Dominicans, located within already established towns developed by occupying vacant areas within these towns, therefore only further excavation can fill in all of the up to now, conjectured remains.

Features such as the wall recorded in Area A, suggest either the remains of a separate building within the Friary complex or the precinct wall for the Friary. If the latter is true it may be that at some point after the dissolution, Shodfriars Lane changed alignment. This is one question that will need to be answered. The ditch recorded in Area C and possibly area B, also needs further investigation. The theory that it empties into the Barditch, though

probable, must be clarified along with the need to know the location for the source of the ditch.

Further examination along with a comprehensive programme of sampling is required. The services of specialists should be sought to deal with, and advise upon the collection and processing of any environmental samples taken during any further excavation upon the site.

The initial aims of any future excavation should be the total excavation and recording of the archaeological deposits lying within the area of any proposed development. Any strategy might need to be revised during excavation with the use of machines to remove some areas of the site, enabling the following to be achieved:

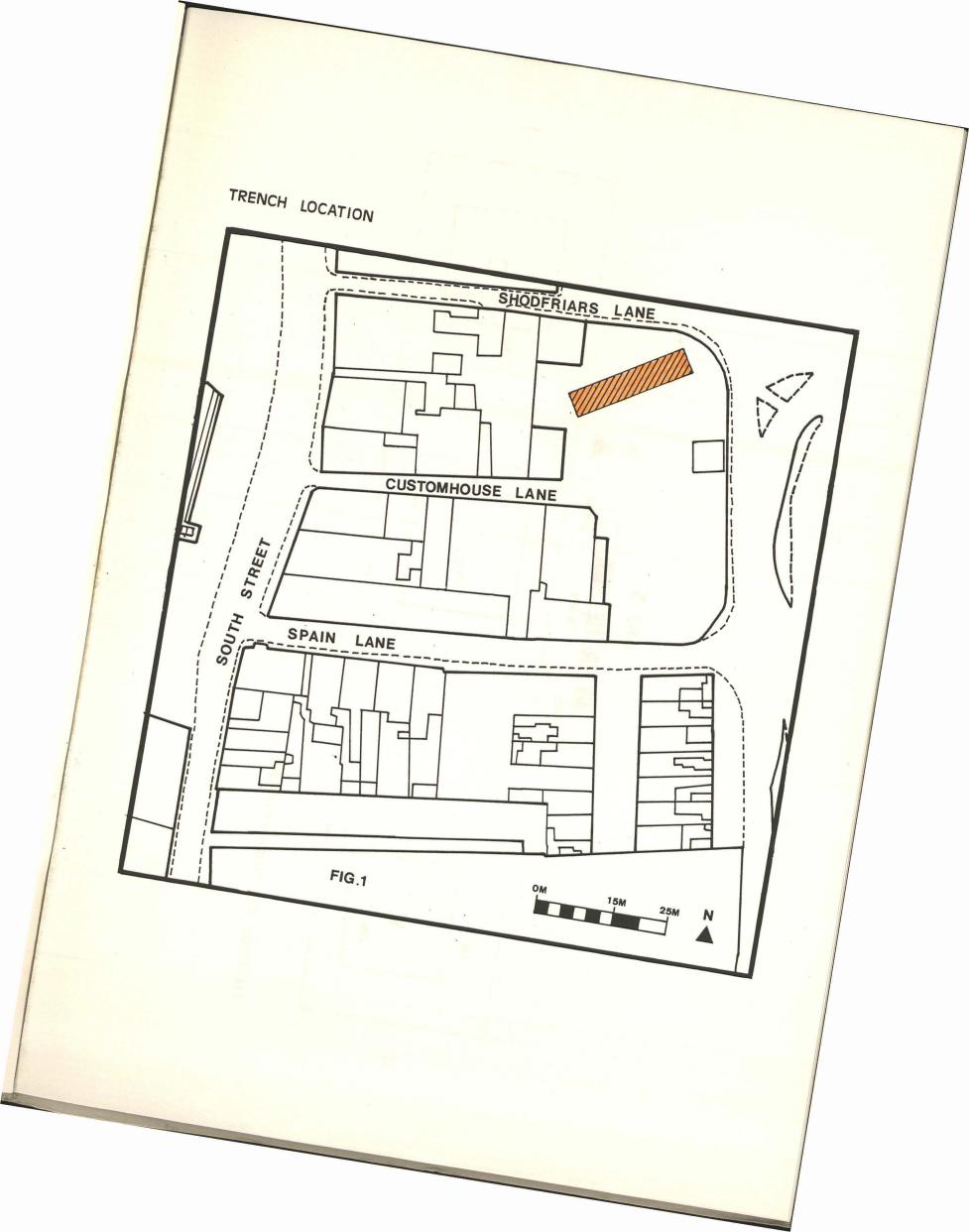
- i) The recording and dating of the complete stratigraphic sequence within the area of excavation.
- ii) The recovery of ground plans and structural details of any monastic structures present within the area of excavation.
- iii) The collection of well stratified and dated groups of artifacts, animal bone and environmental samples, preferably the whole stratigraphic sequence but especially the monastic deposits.

The services of specialists should be sought to deal with, and advise upon the collection and processing of environmental samples taken during any excavation.

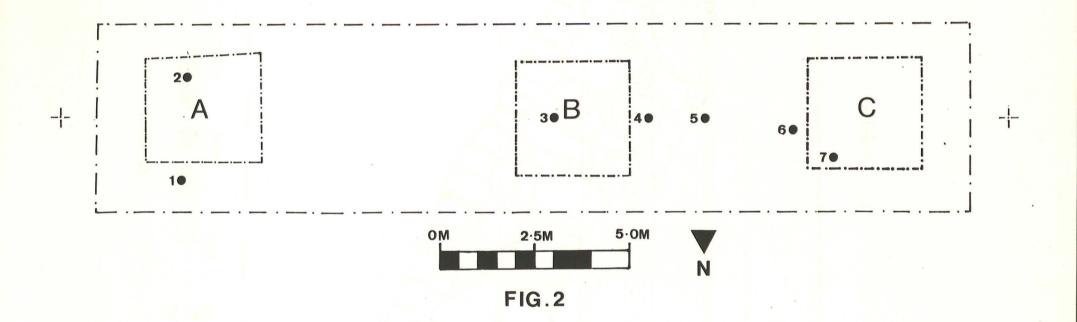
Pottery specialists should also be consulted from time to time during the course of the excavation.

The following other Post-Excavation staff would need to be funded;

- i) Medieval and post-medieval pottery specialist. This person would need to be consulted for part of the excavation time and into the post-excavation time.
- ii) Small find researcher. Again he/she would need to be consulted for part of the excavation time and into the post-excavation time.
- iii) Other specialists, environmental archaeologists and a wood specialist.



## LOCATION OF AUGER COLUMNS 1-7



AREA A

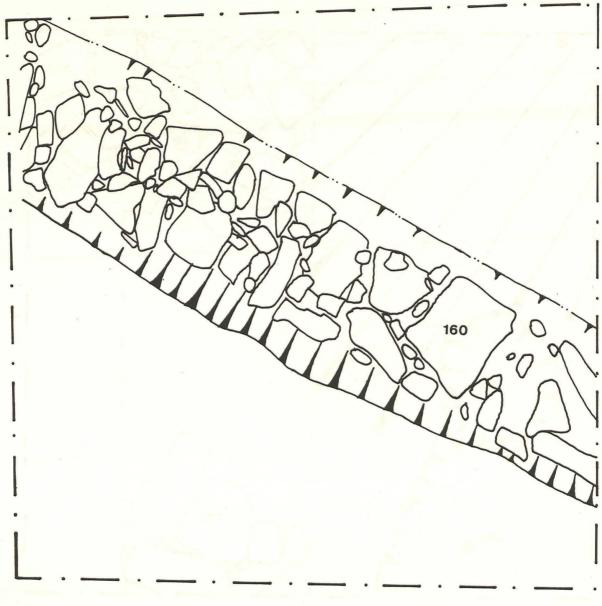




FIG.3

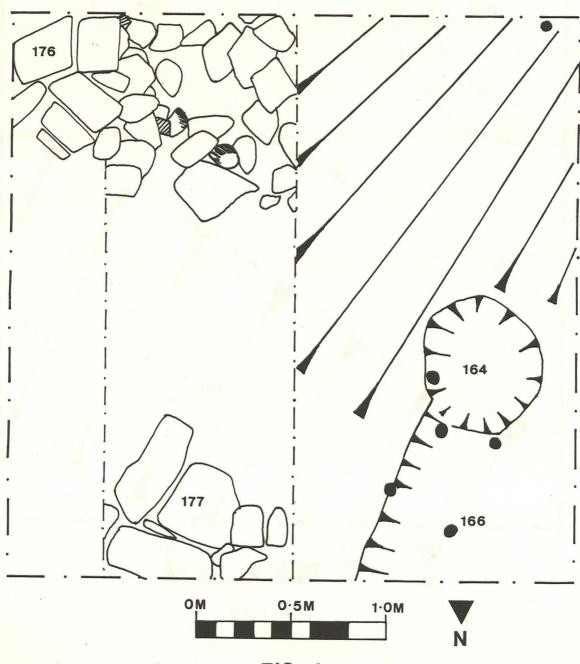


FIG.4

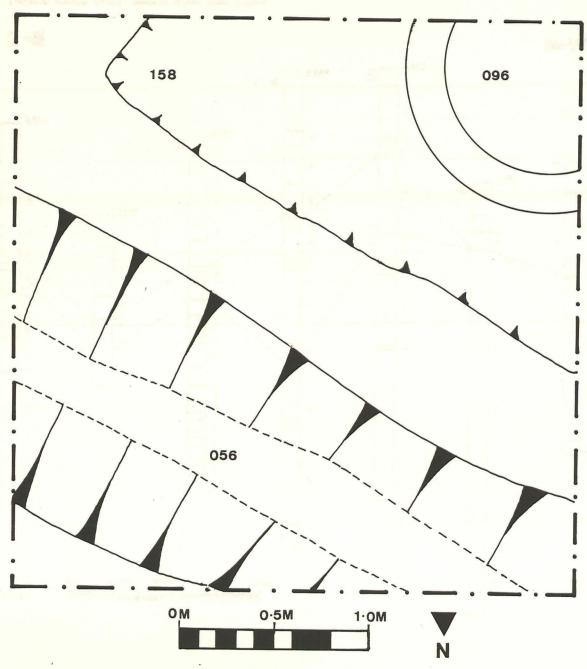


FIG.5

