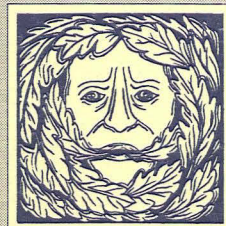


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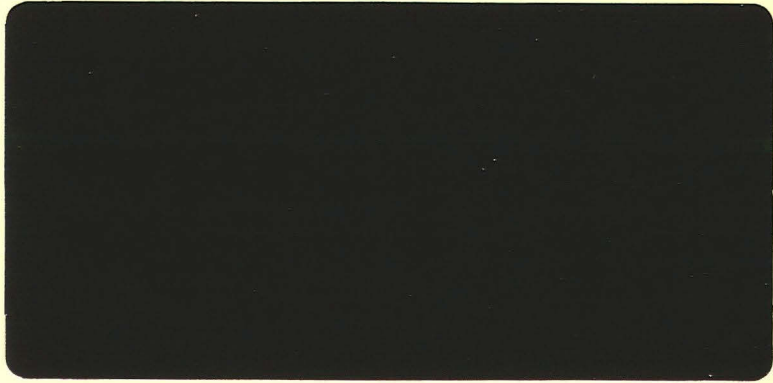
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT MAIN ROAD,  
STIXWOULD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SMR96)**



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT MAIN ROAD,  
STIXWOULD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SMR96)**

Work Undertaken For  
Mr N.B. Fisher

Report Compiled By  
Fiona Walker

December 1996

A.P.S. Report No. 60/96

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a single dwelling and garage on land north of Main Road, Stixwould, Lincolnshire. The site is located close to the centre of the medieval village.*

*Several large pits or ditches of probable 19th century date were identified cutting into the natural sands. These features, which were perhaps small sand quarries, were damaged by modern dumps, pits and services relating to construction of the house to the east of the development. Pieces of 13th-15th century pottery recovered during the investigation may suggest otherwise unrecognised medieval activity on the site.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

On the 25th and 26th November 1996, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of the foundations for a single dwelling and garage on land north of Main Road and between 'Folly' and 'Fir Trees' at Stixwould, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF 1782 6601). Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application S/170/1417/96. The work was carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with the conditions set by the Planning Department of East Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Stixwould is located approximately 20km southeast of Lincoln in the administrative district of East Lindsey, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The development lies c. 150m northeast

of the centre of the village, as defined by the parish church of St. Peter.

The village lies at approximately 10m OD at the foot of a west facing slope that constitutes the dip slope of the Wolds foothills. Soils in the vicinity of the site range from Beccles 2 Association typical stagnogley soils and Ragdale Association pelo-stagnogley soils, developed on chalky till. Both series contain quartzite pebbles or flints (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 119 and 293). Underlying these deposits is a solid geology of Upper Cretaceous chalks. At the site an organic, dark grey-black sandy clayey silt topsoil was recorded. This overlay a subsoil of grey-brown sandy silt which was in turn developed on a natural deposit of yellow sand.

*The ground surface on the site was 12.00m OD.*

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

The proposed development site lies in the core of the medieval village, c. 150m northeast of the medieval church of St. Peter and c. 500m southeast of Stixwould Priory (Fig. 2).

Prehistoric artifacts recovered during the 18th and 19th centuries have been found west of the development site, towards the banks of the river Witham, possibly suggesting a focus for early settlement. These include a bone spear-head, a bone skate and a wooden canoe all of which have since been lost.

Romano-British activity may be expected in the near vicinity of the village as a significant road, recorded by aerial photography, runs from Saltfleetby and has been traced as far as Stixwould; this may continue further southwest to Sleaford, though this remains unproven (Platts 1985, 134).

Sherds of Middle Saxon pottery have been recovered approximately 1km west of the



development, possibly suggesting a focus for settlement during this period on the banks of the river Witham (O.S.).

Stixwold is first referred to in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as '*Stigeswalde*' and derives its name from the Old Norwegian meaning '*Stig's wold* or wood. It is mentioned in the Lincolnshire Survey of c. 1115 as '*Sticheswald*', and again as part of a Fees of 1212 as '*Stikeswald*' (Ekwall 1974, 443). In the Domesday Book it is recorded as belonging to three manors, those of Ivo Tallebois, Alfred of Lincoln and Waldin the Breton (Foster and Longley 1976). The latter owned two fisheries, possibly those recorded by aerial photography southwest of the modern village.

The Cistercian priory of Stixwold was founded in the first half of the 12th century by Lucy, Countess of Chester. The revenue from this house shows that from the first it was not intended to contain a large number of nuns; in the 15th century there were usually from twelve to sixteen, but at the foundation there may have been perhaps twenty or thirty. An Act of Suppression of 1536 dissolved the priory, though it was ordered to remain standing for the use of the Benedictine nuns of Stainfield. King Henry VIII re-founded the priory under Praemonstratensian rule during 1537, this was short-lived and the priory was surrendered with all its possessions by 1539 (Page 1988, 146, 147).

St. Peter's church was founded during the medieval period and contains fragments of moulded stonework and coffin lids that are likely to have come from the priory at Stixwold (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 719). Halstead Hall c. 900m east of the area of investigation incorporates the remains of a moated manor house that has been dated by excavation to the 13th century. Traces of an earlier timber hall, likely to represent

the original manor, were also located by this archaeological investigation. The present building and gatehouse are believed to date to the 16th century (*ibid* 358).

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and record archaeological deposits disturbed during groundwork.

### 4. METHODS

Foundation trenches for the main walls were opened by machine, using a toothed 0.5m wide bucket with a 0.4m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket used for the internal divisions (Fig. 3). Each trench was excavated to a standard depth of 0.6m below ground surface, except where disturbed or soft soils were encountered. Where such soils were discovered these were excavated down until natural sand was reached, in one case 2.4m below ground level.

Where possible the footings sections and base were cleaned and examined by hand. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description (Appendix 1). As spoil was removed from the footings any finds recovered were allocated to a context where possible and retained for further analysis (Appendix 2). A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10, or 1:20 for larger sections, and plans at a scale of 1:20. Not all sections have been illustrated in this report.

### 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. Three phases were identified:

- Phase 1 Natural deposits
- Phase 2 Possible 19th century deposits
- Phase 3 Modern deposits

### **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

Deposit (03). Firm, mid yellow-orange sand located at the base of the excavated trenches. No depth was established. Natural geological layer.

Overlying 03 were deposits of light-mid grey/grey-brown sand to sandy silt (06, 07, 010, 018). These deposits were *c.* 0.3m thick and were considered to have been naturally formed subsoils. A fragment of pantile or flowerpot of probable 19th century date was recovered from a disturbed deposit thought to be (06). However, the designation is not secure and, moreover, the artefact is almost certainly contamination from later deposits on site.

### **Phase 2 Possible 19th century deposits**

Cut into 03 were three features (012, 011, 026).

012 was a deep, gradual sided feature which was not exposed to its full extent (Fig. 4). The cut was at least 2.4m north-south by 3m east-west, 1.2m deep and filled with a mid-dark grey sandy silt with a high organic content (05). A fragment of a stoneware jar of 19th-20th century date was recovered from (05). Feature 012 was interpreted as a ditch.

Similarly, cut 026 was a gradual sided deep feature, with maximum dimensions of 3m

north-south, 2.25m east-west by 1.8-2m deep (Fig. 3). The cut was filled by a mid-dark grey sandy silt with a high organic inclusion (025). Cut 026 was either a pit or part of a ditch.

011 was a steep sided V-shaped ?linear cut measuring 3m north-south, 4m east-west by 2m deep and filled with mid brown sandy silt (02). Several pieces of pantile and brown-glazed earthenware, all of 19th century date, together with fragments of cattle bone, were recovered from the deposit. Additionally, a residual sherd of medieval pottery was retrieved (Appendix 2). This feature was interpreted as a ditch (Fig. 5).

Two further features, (021) and (024), were cut into the subsoil deposit (018).

Feature 021 was a stepped, steep sided linear cut that was 1.5m wide, visible for *c.* 0.5m of its length and 0.6m deep (Fig. 6). The cut was orientated north-south and was filled by a dark grey-black organic silt (017). 021 was interpreted as a ditch.

Feature 024 was a large, gradual sided cut with a flat base (Fig. 7). The cut was not fully exposed but was at least 3.4m east-west. Only 0.5m north-south was visible but the base of the feature was found to be 0.7m deep. Filled by a mix of mid-dark grey/brown and orange sandy silt, feature 024 was either part of a pit or ditch.

### **Phase 3 Modern deposits**

Cut into subsoil 018 was an apparently square/rectangular feature (022) with near vertical sides, a flat base and measuring 1.3m wide by 0.6m deep. It was filled with a mixed material (019) consisting of a mid-dark grey lenses of sand, silt, ash and charcoal. This material contained several fragments of white china pottery and a bird bone and is explained as a dumped deposit. In consequence, feature 022 was interpreted



as a refuse pit.

Cutting subsoils 07 and 06, and 06 and 010, were two small features (013) and (014). Both were about 0.25m wide by 0.4m deep with near vertical sides and were filled by a dark brown-black organic silt with inclusions of clay and charcoal/coal lumps (08) and (09). These features were considered to have been postholes.

Sealing ditches 021 and 012 were deposits of dark grey-black sandy silt with occasional tile and stones (015) and (04). These deposits were 0.3m deep and were interpreted as a subsoil or buried soil. A residual fragment of medieval pottery (Appendix 2) was recovered from deposit (04).

Cutting deposit 015 was a roughly U-shaped linear feature (020). The cut was 1.5m wide and 0.58m deep (Fig. 6). 020 was filled with a light-mid yellow-brown sandy silt with occasional stones and lenses of 015-type material (016). The feature was considered to have been a ditch.

Ditch 011 was cut by a vertical sided square or rectangular feature (028) some 2.5m north-south by 1.6m deep. The cut was filled by a mid-dark brown/black sand with silt and clay along with building rubbish (027). This deposit indicated that the cut was a refuse pit.

Sealing and overlying all cuts and deposits was a dark grey to blackish grey sandy clayey silt (01) which was highly organic with occasional stones. Fragments of 19th-20th century ceramics were recovered from the deposit, together with a residual piece of medieval pottery (Appendix 2). The deposit overlaid the site to a depth of 0.4m and formed the topsoil.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural (Phase 1) deposits are represented by yellow-orange and light-mid grey sand exposed across the base of the excavated trenches. These are likely to have formed as a result of glacial deposition.

Possible 19th century deposits and features (Phase 2) formed half of the contexts revealed by excavation of the foundation trenches. They were uniformly filled by a similar deposit which could indicate that the features are contemporary. The features may have formed a network of ditches and pits. No clear purpose for the features was established though they may have originated as small sand quarries.

The Phase 2 activity was truncated or sealed by a series of modern features and deposits. Most of the Phase 3 activities were identified as dumps of refuse and/or building material associated with construction of the property to the east of the development. The remaining ditch cut 020 was probably a run off ditch for the septic tank, located just to the south of the garage of the foundations being excavated.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at The Willows, Main Street, Stixwold, were undertaken at the request of the county archaeologist, to fulfil the obligations laid down by the local planning authority. The investigations were deemed necessary because of the likelihood that *in situ* archaeological deposits would be disturbed, in particular possible features related to the medieval and later village.

A number of features were recorded, notably several undated and probable 19th century pits or ditches. These features had similar fills and were probably contemporary, but

not enough of the area was exposed to enable accurate interpretation of their functions. However, it is suggested that they may have been small quarry pits for the extraction of the natural sand.

Modern features encountered were the dumps, services and overburden soil from the construction of the house to the east of the present development.

The development area was affected by modern activity to a greater degree than expected. Fragments of medieval pottery recovered during the investigation perhaps suggest otherwise unrecognised medieval activity on the site or its proximity. The potential for the survival of archaeological deposits in the surrounding area is still good.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr N.B. Fisher who commissioned the fieldwork and report. Dale Trimble coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble  
Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker  
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley  
Research: Neil Herbert  
Post-excavation Analyst: Fiona Walker

## 10. SOURCES

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Platts, G., 1985 *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire. Volume IV

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

Bracketed references using O.S. relate to records of the Ordnance Survey.



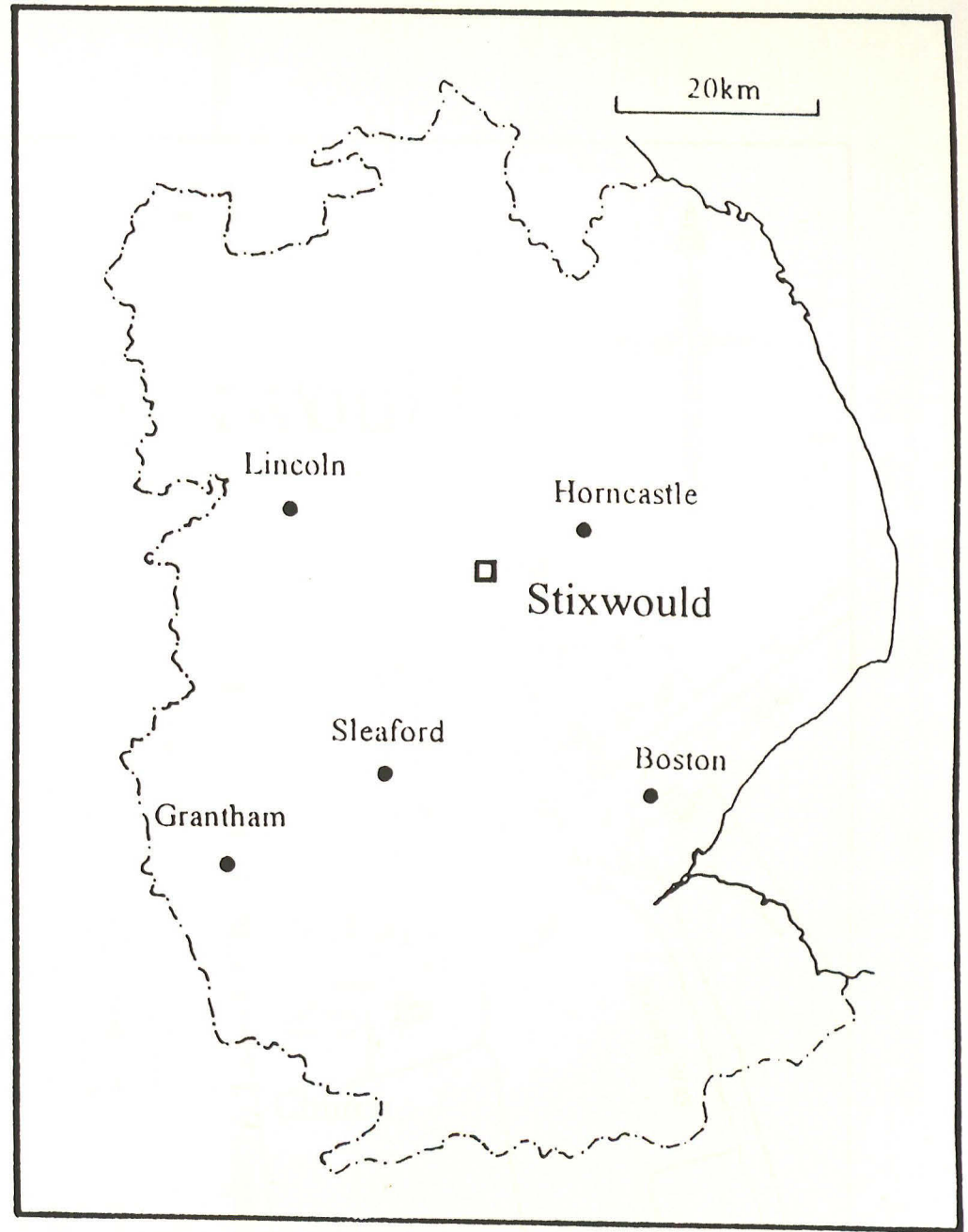
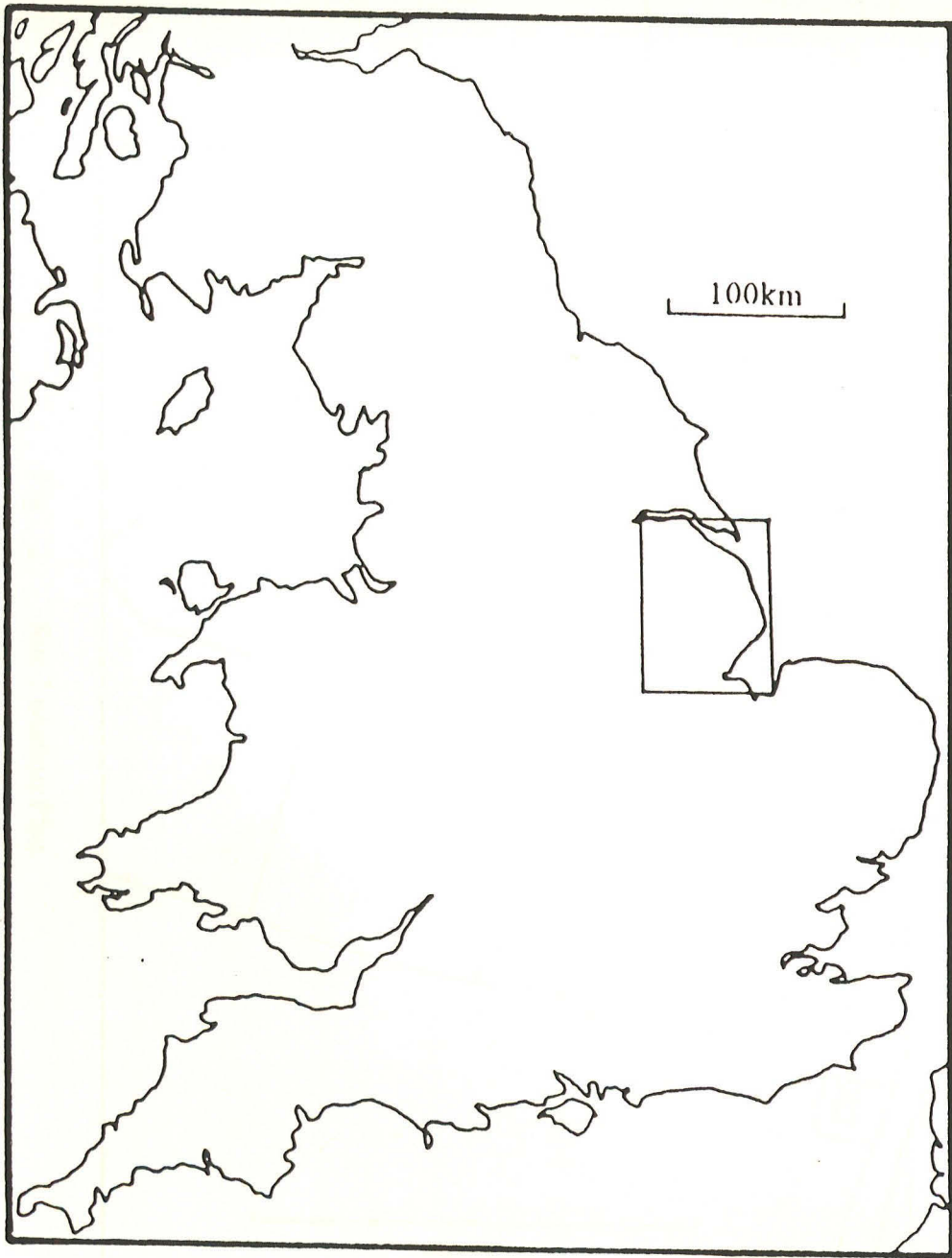


Figure 1 - General Location Plan

# Stixwould

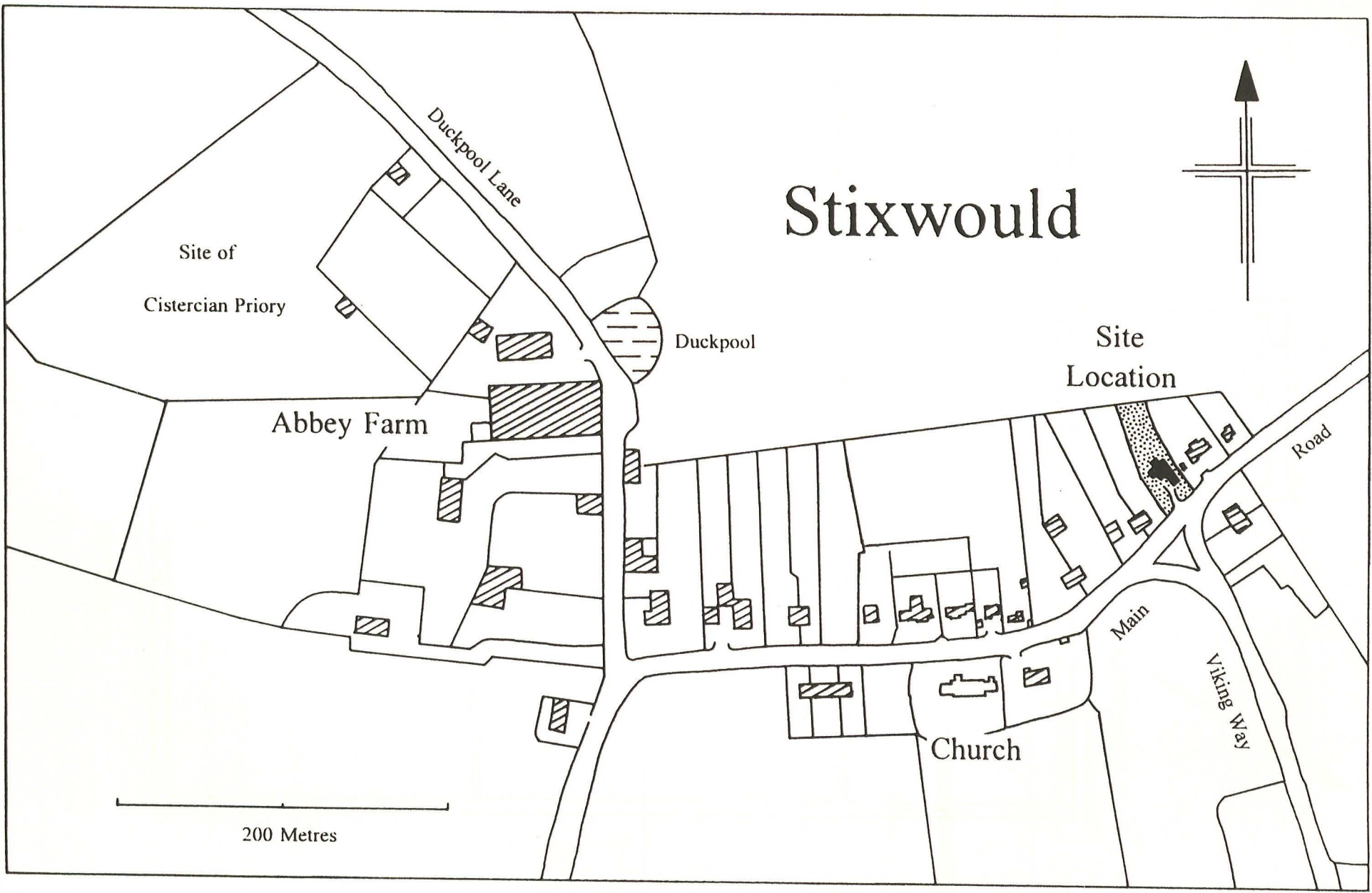


Fig . 2 Site Location Plan



# Section Locations

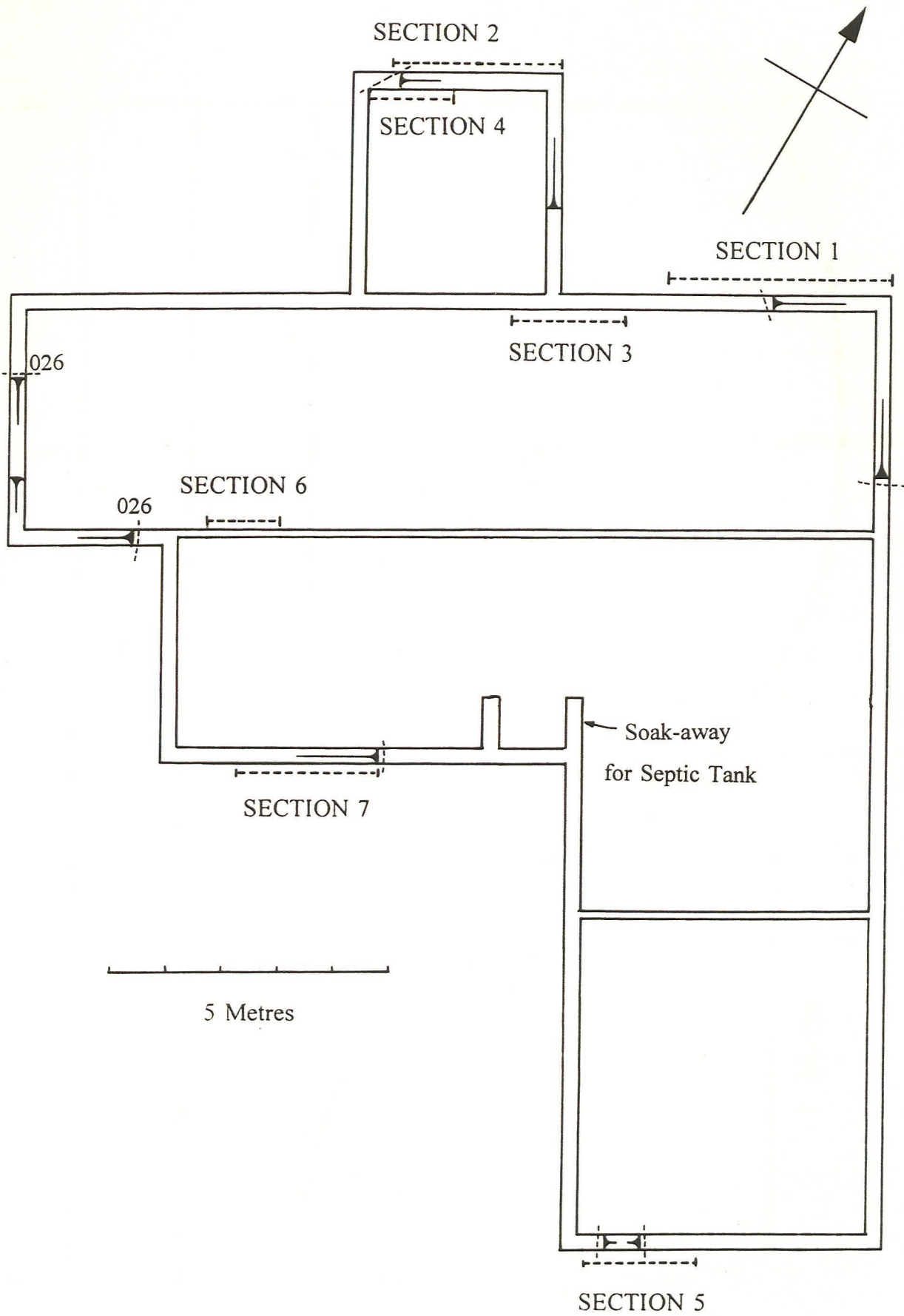


Fig. 3 Section Locations

# SECTION 2

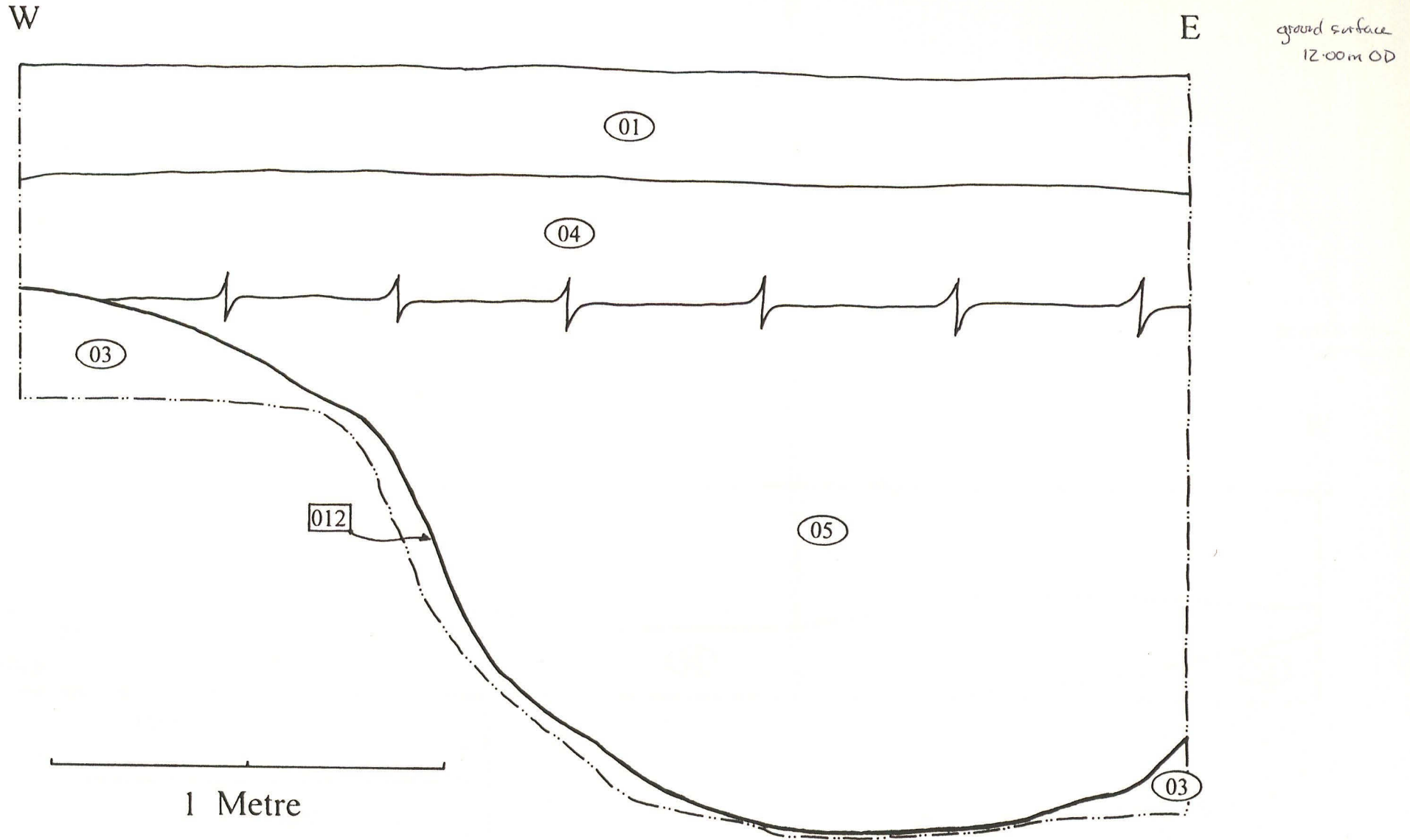


Fig. 4 SECTION 2



# SECTION 1

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12.00 m OD

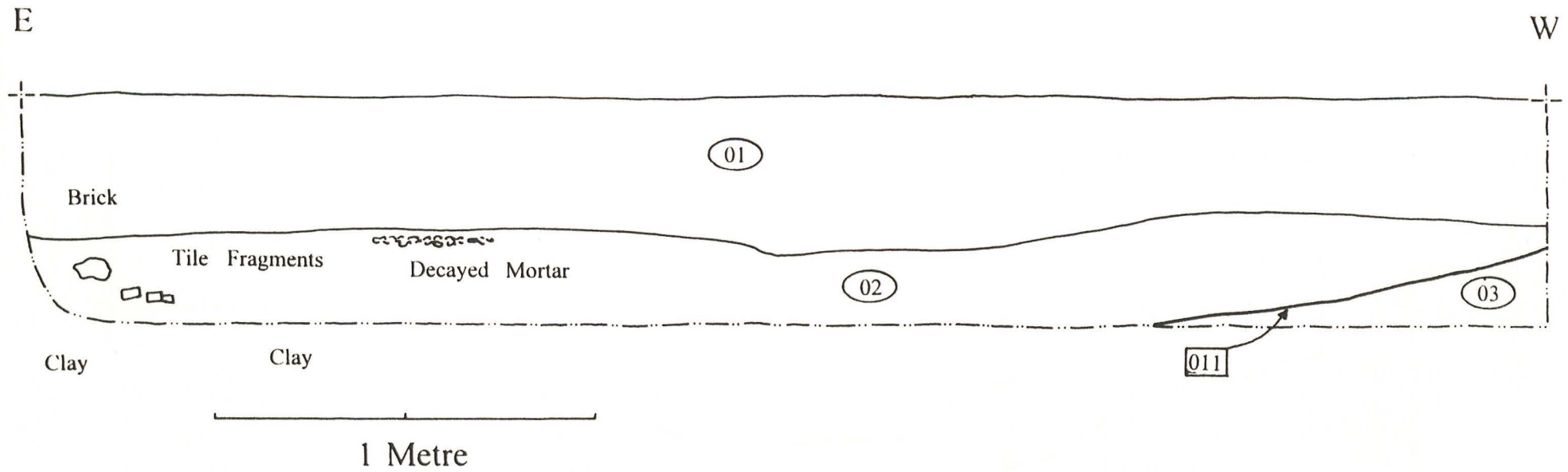


Fig. 5 SECTION 1

# SECTION 5

ground surface  
12.00m OD

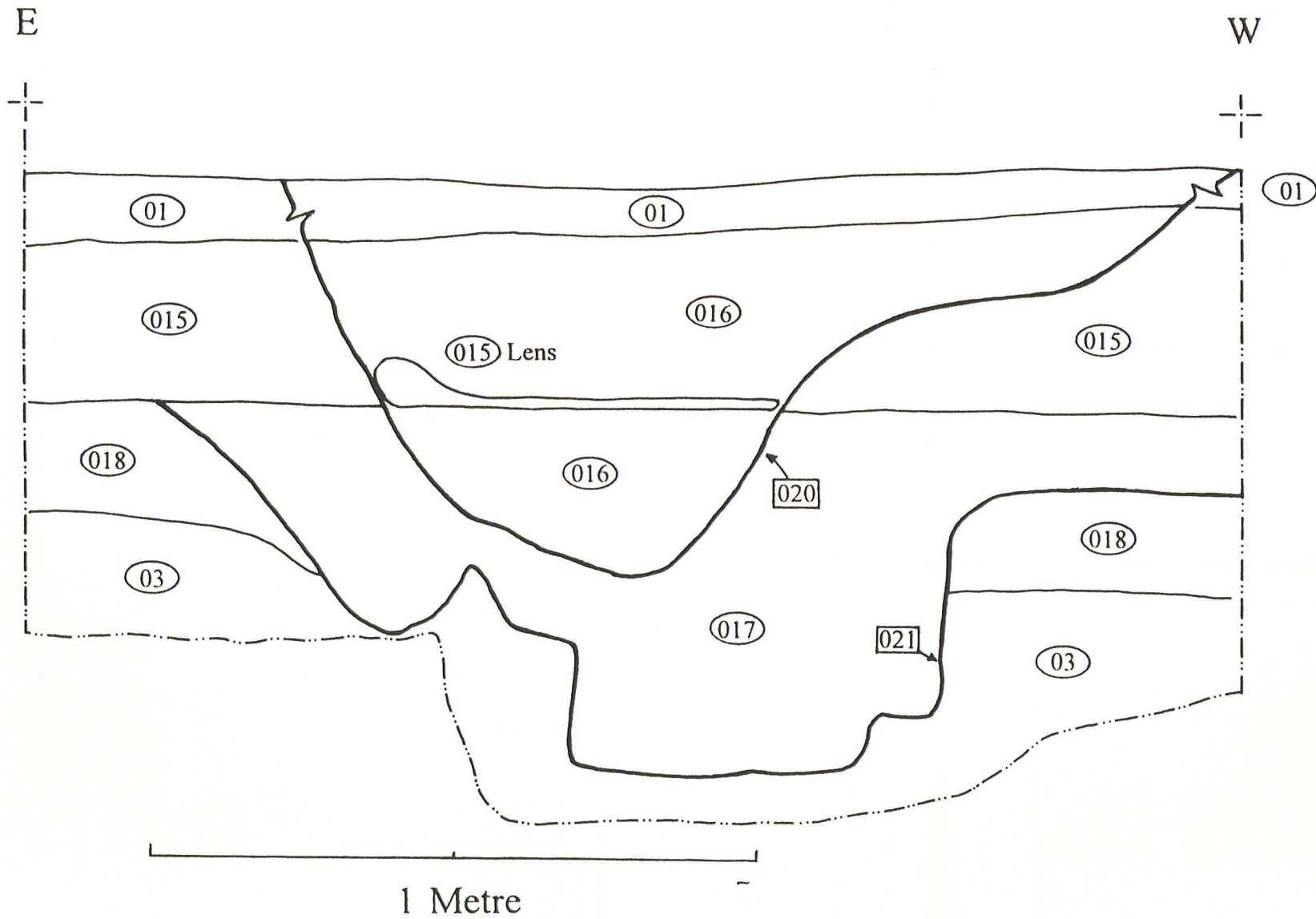


Fig. 6 SECTION 5



# SECTION 7

Groundsurface  
12.00 m OD

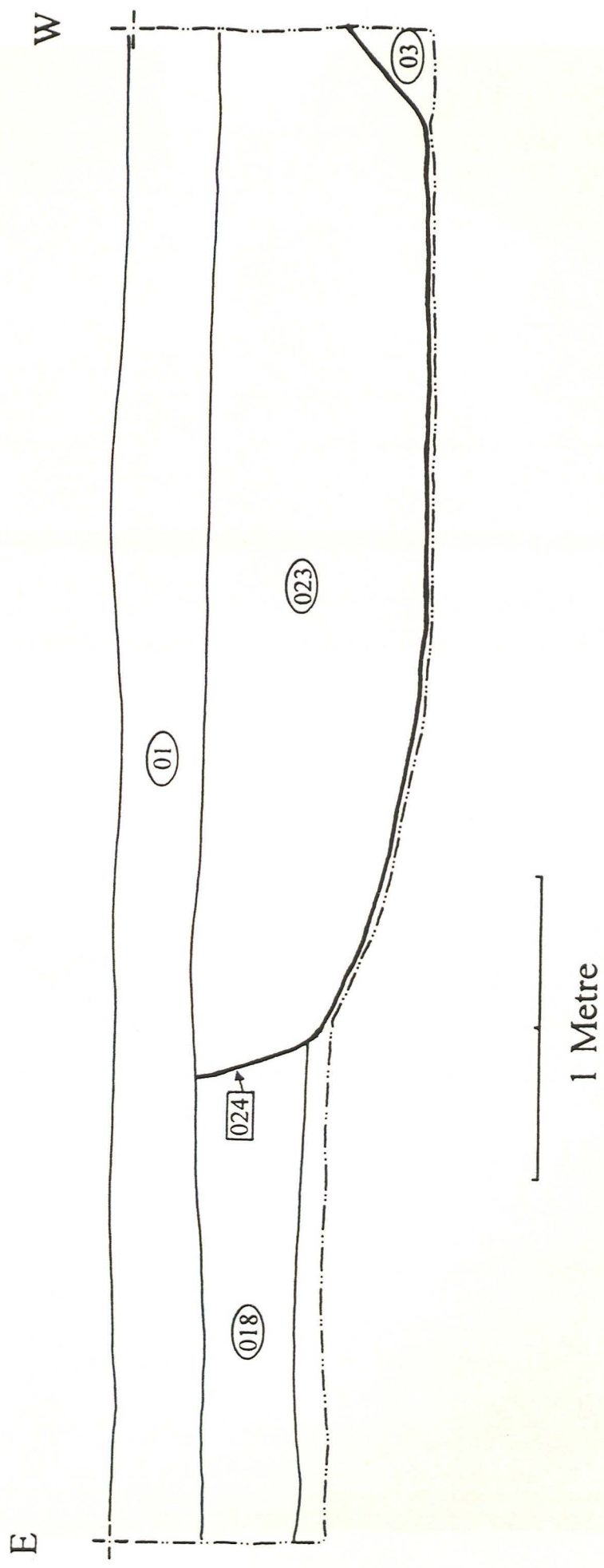


Fig. 7 SECTION 7





Plate 1: General Site View



Plate 2: Section 2, showing ditch (012)



## APPENDIX 1

### Context Summary

Context No.	Description	Interpretation
01	Moderately firm dark grey to blackish grey sandy clayey silt with a high organic content and occasional stones	Topsoil
02	Loose-moderately firm mid brown sandy silt with occasional-moderate clay patches	Fill of cut 011
03	Firm yellow-orange sand with a silty texture. Occurred <i>c.</i> 0.35m below ground level	Natural
04	Moderately firm mid-dark brownish grey silt with sand and clay plus patches of yellowish clay and sand. 0.3m thick and seen for 3.75m E-W	Levelling subsoil and tertiary silting of cut 012
05	Loose-moderately firm mid-dark grey sandy silt with an high organic content and occasional clay. E-W <i>c.</i> 3m, N-S 2.4m seen, depth <i>c.</i> 1.2m	Fill of ditch/pit 012
06	Loose-moderately firm mid grey-brown sandy silt. E-W 0.85m by <i>c.</i> 0.3m thick, the deposit did not extend into the opposite section. Cut by 014 and 013. Similar/same as 07	Subsoil/buried topsoil
07	Loose-moderately firm mid grey-brown sandy silt. E-W 10m by <i>c.</i> 0.3m thick, the deposit did not extend into the opposite section. Cut by 013. Similar/same as 06	Subsoil/buried topsoil
08	Pliable and moderately firm dark brown-black organic silt with some clay and occasional lumps of charcoal/coal. E-W 0.2m by 0.35m deep	Fill of ?posthole 013
09	Pliable and moderately firm dark brown-black organic silt with some clay and occasional lumps of charcoal/coal. E-W 0.3m by 0.45m deep	Fill of ?posthole 014

010	Moderately firm mid-dark brown/black sandy silt with patches of yellow sand and occasional patches of yellowish clay. E-W seen for 1m, depth 0.15m. Similar to 06 and 07	Subsoil
011	Possible V-shaped ?linear cut seen 3m N-S, 4m E-W by 2m deep. Filled by 02. Appeared to have been orientated NW-SE and may have joined with 012	Ditch/pit. From form and fills most likely ditch
012	Linear cut, possibly U-shaped, N-S 2.4m, E-W 3m by 1.2m deep. Filled by 05 and possibly 04. Appeared to have been orientated NW-SE and may have joined with 011	Ditch
013	Cut only seen in section. Near vertical sides was 0.25m E-W by 0.35m deep. Filled by 08	Posthole
014	Cut only seen in section. Near vertical sides was 0.3m E-W by 0.45m deep. Filled by 09	Posthole
015	Moderate-firm dark grey-black sandy silt with occasional-moderate stones and bits of tile. Seen along much of the trench to a depth of 0.3m	Subsoil
016	Moderately firm light-mid yellow brown sandy silt with very occasional stones and lenses of (015) type material. N-S 0.5m+, E-W 1.5m by 0.58m deep	Fill of cut 020
017	Soft dark grey-black silt, highly organic. E-W 1.7m, N-S 0.5m+ by 0.6m deep. Very smooth soil in comparison to (015)	Fill of cut 021
018	Moderately firm light-mid grey lenses of sand. 0.2m thick stretching across much of the trench	Subsoil/natural lenses
019	Loose-moderately firm mid-dark grey lenses of sand, silt, ash and charcoal. E-W 0.6m, N-S 0.4m+, by 0.6m deep	Dump of bonfire type material in cut 022
020	Possible N-S orientated linear cut, N-S 0.5m+, E-W 1.5m by 0.58m deep. Filled by 016	Ditch/pit for unclear purpose



021	? N-S aligned linear cut 0.8-1.5m E-W with 0.5m seen N-S, depth 0.6m. Filled by 020	Possible ditch
022	?Square/rectangular cut, E-W 1.3m, N-S 0.4m+ by 0.6m deep. With near vertical sides and flat base. Filled by 019	Refuse pit
023	Moderately firm mix of mid-dark grey/black and orange sand and silt. Seen E-W 3.4m, N-S 0.5m+ by 0.7m deep	Fill of cut 024
024	Large cut seen E-W 3.4m, N-S 0.5m+ by 0.7m deep. With gradual sloping sides and fairly flat base. Filled by 023	Cut of pit/ditch with unknown function
025	Mid brown sandy silt with occasional patches of clay and a high organic content. Became darker towards bottom. Was seen E-W 2.25m+, N-S 3m+ by 1.8-2m deep	Fill of cut 026
026	Large gradual to fairly steep sided cut seen E-W 2.25m (cont W), N-S 3m (cont S) by c. 1.8-2m deep. Filled by 025. Similar in fill and form to cut (011) but not likely to be related	Cut of pit/ditch with unknown function
027	Loose mid-dark brown/black sand with silt and clay. Frequent inclusions of brick, tile, breeze blocks, asbestos tiles and concrete/cement lumps. Deposit was 1.6m thick, was seen in both sections east-west and 2.5m north-south. Filled pit 028	Refuse filling pit 028
028	Square/rectangular cut 2.5m north-south and seen in both east and west sections to a depth of 1.6m. Vertical sides and flat base. Filled by 027 and cut ditch 011	Refuse pit

## APPENDIX 2

Finds Summary  
by Hilary Healey and Paul Cope-Faulkner

Context Number	Artefact Description	Date
01	1 sherd of Toynton All Saints ware 1 sherd of blue and white transfer-printed pottery 1 sherd of stoneware jar	13th-15th century 19th-20th century 19th-20th century
02	3 sherds of pantile 1 sherd of Toynton All Saints ware 1 sherd of brown earthenware 3 fragments of cow limb bone	19th century 13th-15th century 19th century
04	1 sherd of ?Lincoln ware	13th-15th century
05	1 sherd of stoneware jar	19th-20th century
06	1 sherd of pantile/flowerpot	19th-20th century
019	3 sherds of white china earthenware, probably more than one item from the same service 1 bird bone (leg)	19th century
unstratified	2 sherds of pantile	19th century



## APPENDIX 3

### Glossary

<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are generally identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Dumped deposits</b>	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to elevate the ground surface for drainage or other purposes.
<b>Fill</b>	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The sediment(s) and soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Middle Saxon</b>	The middle part of the Saxon period, dating from approximately AD 650-850.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

## APPENDIX 4

### The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 28 . . Context Records
- 27 . . Photographs
- 8 . . . Scale Drawings
- 1 . . . Stratigraphic Matrix
- 7 . . . Bags of finds (in one box)

All primary records are currently kept at:

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

City and County Museum Accession number	168.96
Archaeological Project Services project code	SMR 96