ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND ADJACENT TO ANCASTER ROAD, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE (BAR96)

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PROJECT
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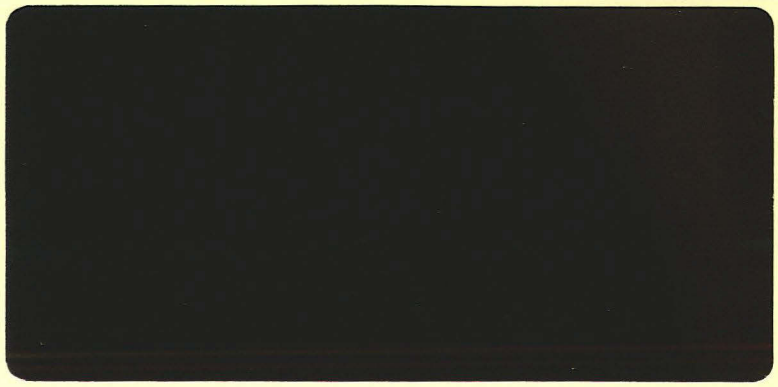

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND ADJACENT TO ANCASTER ROAD, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE (BAR96)

Work Undertaken For
Wm Wright and Son.

April 1997

Report Compiled by
N.A. Herbert

A.P.S. Report No. **57/96**

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundations for twenty three dwellings, on land east of Ancaster Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of six of the plots, the service trenches, and the road.

Prehistoric flint tools have previously been located at the southern end of the site, and a Roman waterway, the Car Dyke, forms the eastern boundary of the area. Occupying the centre of the area of investigation is a disused 19th century railway embankment. Previous archaeological evaluation on the site revealed deposits associated with this feature.

The watching brief recorded a series of deposits overlying the natural limestone geology. A large linear feature, interpreted as the original western edge of the Car Dyke, was the earliest activity identified. Evidence for the existence of an undated small ditch and pond, cut during the same phase, was identified. Modern activity consisted of various dumped deposits and the remains of a 19th century railway bank. Finds retrieved during the investigation included several sherds of unstratified pottery dating to the Romano-British, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. A small flint scraper, probably dating to the prehistoric period, was also retrieved.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Between the 11th October and the 5th December 1996 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land to the east of Ancaster Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire. This archaeological work was carried out during a programme of residential development, as detailed in planning application (SK.93/1123/12/45) submitted by Design Services (South Kesteven District Council). The work was commissioned by Wm Wright and Son and undertaken by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a brief set by the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council (Appendix 1).

2.2 Topography and Geology

Bourne is situated 24km southeast of Grantham and approximately 15km northeast of Stamford, in South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The local topography consists of a gentle slope towards the east and the edge of the Fenland. The town of Bourne developed on the higher ground to the west.

The proposed development is located 700m to the northeast of Bourne town centre as defined by the Town Hall (Fig. 2). Situated at a height of 6.5m OD on land to the east of Ancaster Road (National Grid Reference TF 1025 2050), the development site covers approximately 1.4 hectares (Fig. 3).

Local soils are of the Aswarby Association, gleyic brown calcareous earths, and Badsey 2 Association, brown calcareous earths over calcareous gravels (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 99; 101). Beneath these deposits is a solid geology of Jurassic limestone.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Bourne is situated in an area of concentrated archaeological activity, dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods.

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity is scarce, but is represented by flint tools of Bronze Age

date. Although found on the site, the presence of the disused railway and embankment may indicate that the finds originate from another source and were imported with the embankment material. Although prehistoric artefacts have been recovered elsewhere in Bourne, no settlement of the period has yet been found.

During the Romano-British period, evidence suggests that Bourne was a small town built along the Roman road, King Street. A second Roman highway, Long Hollow, branched from King Street approximately 1km northeast of the Ancaster Road development and headed northwestward. Along the course of both roads, sites and artefacts of Roman date have been found, including a pottery kiln close to Bourne Grammar School, *c.* 1km to the southwest. A second kiln (SKDC Community Archaeology reference SK12.161) is located to the south of the proposed development site (Fig. 3).

The Car Dyke, a Roman waterway, borders the investigation area on the east side. This watercourse connected the River Witham near Lincoln with the River Nene east of Peterborough (Whitwell 1970, 57). A second Roman waterway is located approximately 400m to the east and connected Bourne to a now extinct water channel near Morton (Fig. 3).

During the medieval period (1066 - 1500 A.D.) Bourne grew into a substantial settlement, centred around the Abbey church. Bourne Castle, the earthworks of which still survive, is located to the west of the church (Fig. 2). At one time this would have been a single motte, a defensive mound, possibly surmounted by a stone tower with two enclosures or baileys containing further buildings and a possible stone gatehouse that has since been destroyed (Cathcart-King 1980).

Areas to the east of Bourne have been extensively surveyed by the Fenland Project (Fig. 3). In particular, fields immediately to the northeast of the development area were examined and found to have traces of medieval ridge and furrow (Hayes and Lane 1992, figs. 78, 83).

Formerly occupying the centre of the site, but removed prior to excavation of the foundation trenches, was a disused railway embankment from a branch line of the Spalding and Bourne Railway, opened during 1866, and last used in 1959 (Leleux 1976).

During archaeological evaluation carried out on the site in 1995 two trenches were excavated through the embankment of the former railway, but failed to reach any underlying deposits (Archaeological Project Services 1995b).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief, as set by the brief for archaeological works (Appendix 1), 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 excavation of service trenches, a roadway and the foundations for 23 dwellings. Six plots were selected for archaeological investigation, under watching brief conditions (Fig.4).

Deposits were exposed to a maximum depth of 2m below ground surface level. Health and Safety requirements prevented any of the trenches from being entered at this depth, restricting the recording of

sequences revealed within the trenches.

Each archaeological deposit or feature exposed during the watching brief was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description (context number). Thereafter, to assist analysis, contexts were grouped and a stratigraphic matrix was created. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Additionally, the natural geology was 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 list of all the recorded contexts appears as Appendix 2. Three phases were identified during the evaluation:

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

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

Natural solid geology (005, 024, 027, 030, 038 and 048) was encountered at the base of Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 10 and 12 (Figs. 5-8). This deposit comprised solid yellow limestone fragments within a brown silty sand or sandy matrix.

Overlying the solid geology were deposits of sandy silts, silty clays and clay (011, 036, 042 and 043). Measuring between 0.15 metres and 1 metre thick these represent natural subsoils probably derived from glaciofluvial activity. A single layer of silty sand with gravel (037) may represent localised alluvial activity.

Phase 2 Undated deposits

Overlying natural deposits was a buried soil (003, 010, 023, 026 and 047). Between 0.3m and 0.8m thick this was encountered in Sections 1, 3, 4, 6 and 12, and was predominantly a brown silty clay layer.

Cut through the buried soil and into the underlying natural deposits was a linear cut (001, 009 and 031) recorded in Section 1 and continuing into Sections 2 and 5. Aligned north to south and parallel to the present course of the Car Dyke, only the western edge of this feature was visible. A minimum width of 2.5m and a minimum depth of 1.5m was recorded for this feature. The fills of this cut varied from a dark grey silt (008 and 029) to brown stone rich clayey sand (028). A portion of this cut had been infilled with recent debris (004 and 007) in Sections 1 and 2.

A further cut feature (014), probably a ditch, was identified in Section 7 (Fig. 7). Aligned east to west and measuring 1m wide and a metre deep it contained two fills, the upper of greyish brown sandy silt (012) and the lower of blackish brown silty clay (013).

A series of dumped deposits (015-016, 019-020, 040 and 041) were encountered towards the north end of the development area (Sections 8, 9 and 11). These dumped deposits are typified by a variety of material including sand, grit, clay and silts, usually with fragments of limestone and brick.

A deposit of mid brown silt (021) overlying black organic material (017) is thought to represent the former position of a pond.

Phase 3 Modern Deposits

Modern activity is typified by dumped deposits (002, 006 and 034) and layers associated with the construction of the railway embankment (018, 022, 025, 032, 033, 035, 039, 044, 045 and 046). Comprising of a mixture of silts, sand and clay, these deposits incorporate recent debris.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits of indurated limestones and silty sands were revealed during the investigation (Phase 1). These are likely to have formed as a result of the surface weathering of the underlying Jurassic limestone deposits.

A series of substantial cuts was recognised during the investigation (Phase 2). Although undated, the nature of the features identified means that they can be reasonably separated from the other deposits as being of specific archaeological interest. The identified features are likely to have formed a large ditch, orientated north-south (Fig.5). This alignment is very similar to that of the Car Dyke, and it is likely that the ditch recorded here is the cut of this partially infilled major Roman waterway. Unfortunately, substantial disturbance of these deposits has resulted in modern materials (wire, refuse *etc*) being contained within the fills of these cuts. However, it is unlikely that the cut has been backfilled only recently as earlier maps depict the width of the Car Dyke as being similar to that of today (Archaeological Project Services 1995a); it must therefore be assumed that modern materials are intrusive. A small east-west ditch and the remains of a possible pond were also identified, though no dateable material was recovered from this feature.

Further undated layers had accumulated over the natural and possible archaeological deposits. These consisted of a series of strata, variously interpreted as buried soils and dumped deposits. The buried soil has been suggested as being the remains of a ploughsoil, sealed during the 19th century by the construction of a substantial railway embankment (Figs.5-8).

Modern activity (Phase 3) is represented by a series of dumps and levelling deposits, mainly associated with the development of the land for use as a railway during the 19th century. A large embankment constructed during this period, effectively sealed a number of earlier deposits including a soil. More recent disturbance included the removal of the railway embankment prior to the present development on the site. Activity during this phase is believed to have significantly disturbed what is likely to be the remains of the original Car Dyke.

Finds recovered during the watching brief are unlikely to provide a representative sample of the dating evidence for the site, due to the heavily disturbed nature of the site. Artefacts are likely to be derived from the import of materials on the land surrounding Bourne. However, the recovery of a small prehistoric flint and pottery dating to the Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval periods is typical of the sequence of activity that can be expected in the vicinity of Bourne (Appendix 3).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations on land east of Ancaster Road, Bourne were undertaken because the site fell within an area of suspected archaeological activity. The Car Dyke, a substantial Romano-British waterway, borders the site to the east and

it was therefore probable that activity of this period may have occurred in the vicinity of the site. Scatters of medieval pottery, retrieved from land surrounding the site, may have related to the presence of a settlement during this period.

Limited undated archaeological deposits were recovered during the watching brief. These included the remains of a large cut, that may represent the western edge of the Car Dyke, a ditch and a possible pond. A former soil was observed across most of the site and a series of dumped deposits were noted towards the north end of the area.

Modern deposits had accumulated over these layers, principally deposits relating to the development of the site as part of a railway line during the 19th century. The line continued in use until 1959 when the railway was dismantled and the track removed.

The presence of substantial quantities of modern materials, to a depth of *c.* 1.5m, suggests that archaeological features are likely to have been significantly disturbed within the area of investigation. However, material of prehistoric to recent date was recovered during the investigation and attests to nearby activity during those periods. Organic materials survived in several of the deposits identified during the watching brief, though it is likely that this is due to the relatively recent date of the deposits.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Wm Wright and Son who commissioned the investigation and analysis and provided access to the site facilities. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Jenny Stevens, the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council kindly allowed examination of the relevant parish file.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisors: Christopher Moulis and Fiona Walker
Research: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Illustration: Christopher Moulis
Post-excavation analyst: Neil Herbert

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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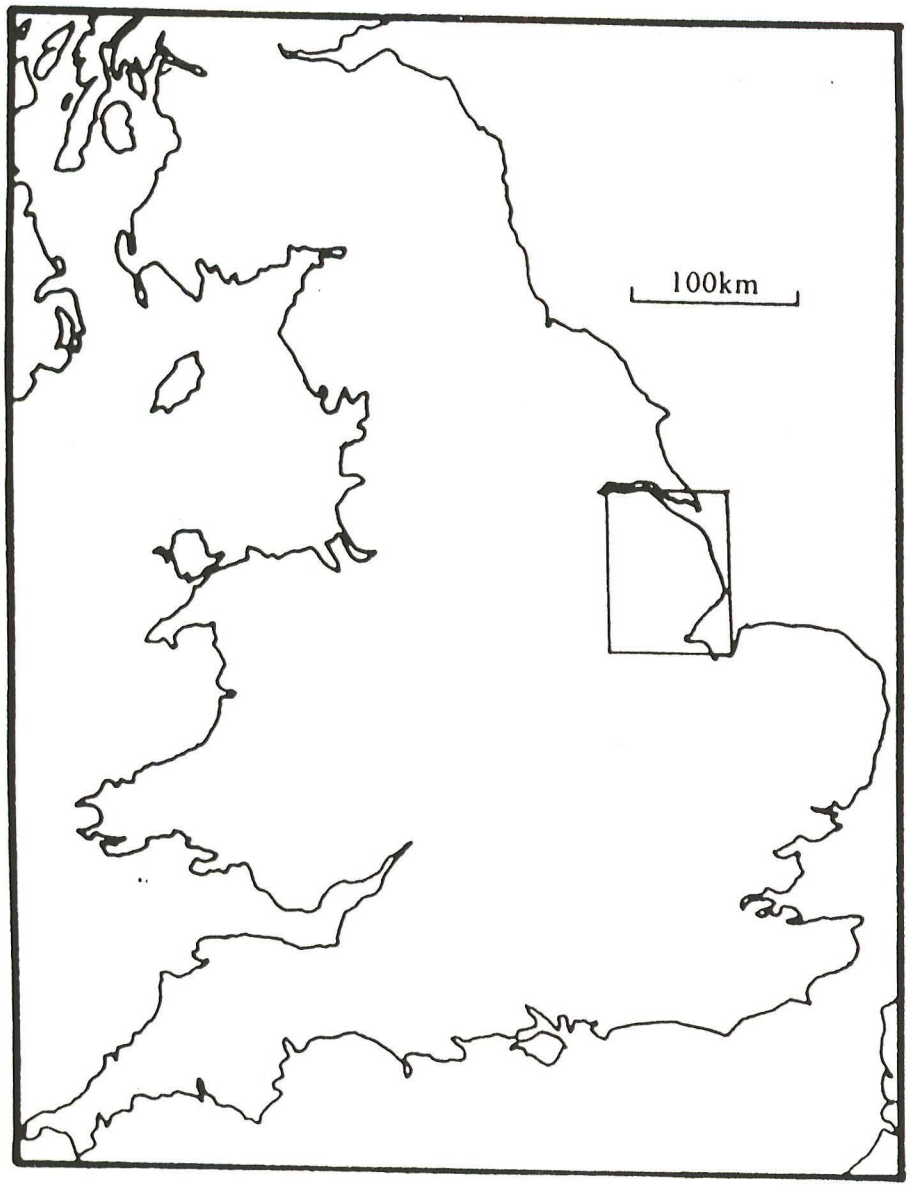
11. ABBREVIATIONS

Department of the Environment publications are abbreviated to the initials 'DoE'.

SK and SKDC are abbreviations of South Kesteven and South Kesteven District Council respectively.



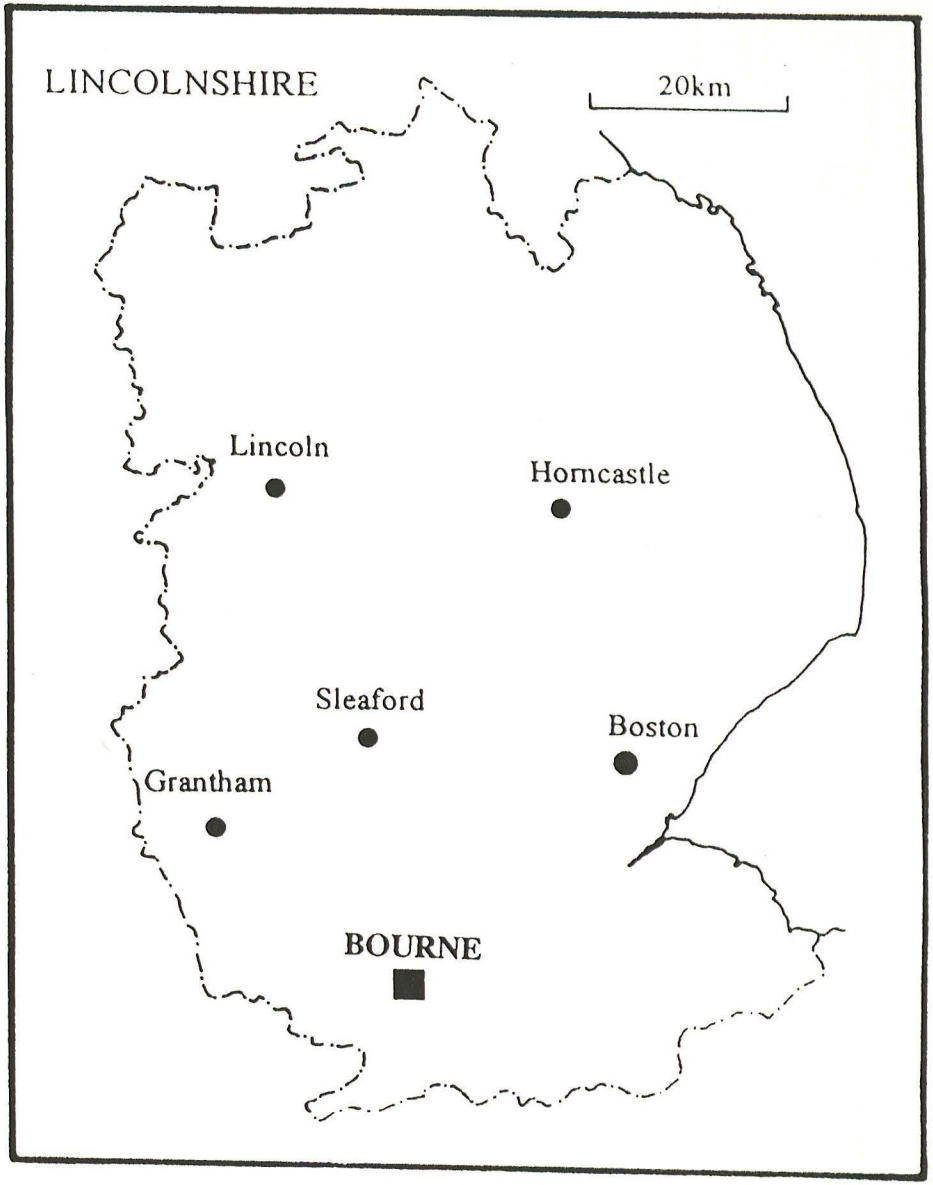


Figure 1: General location plan

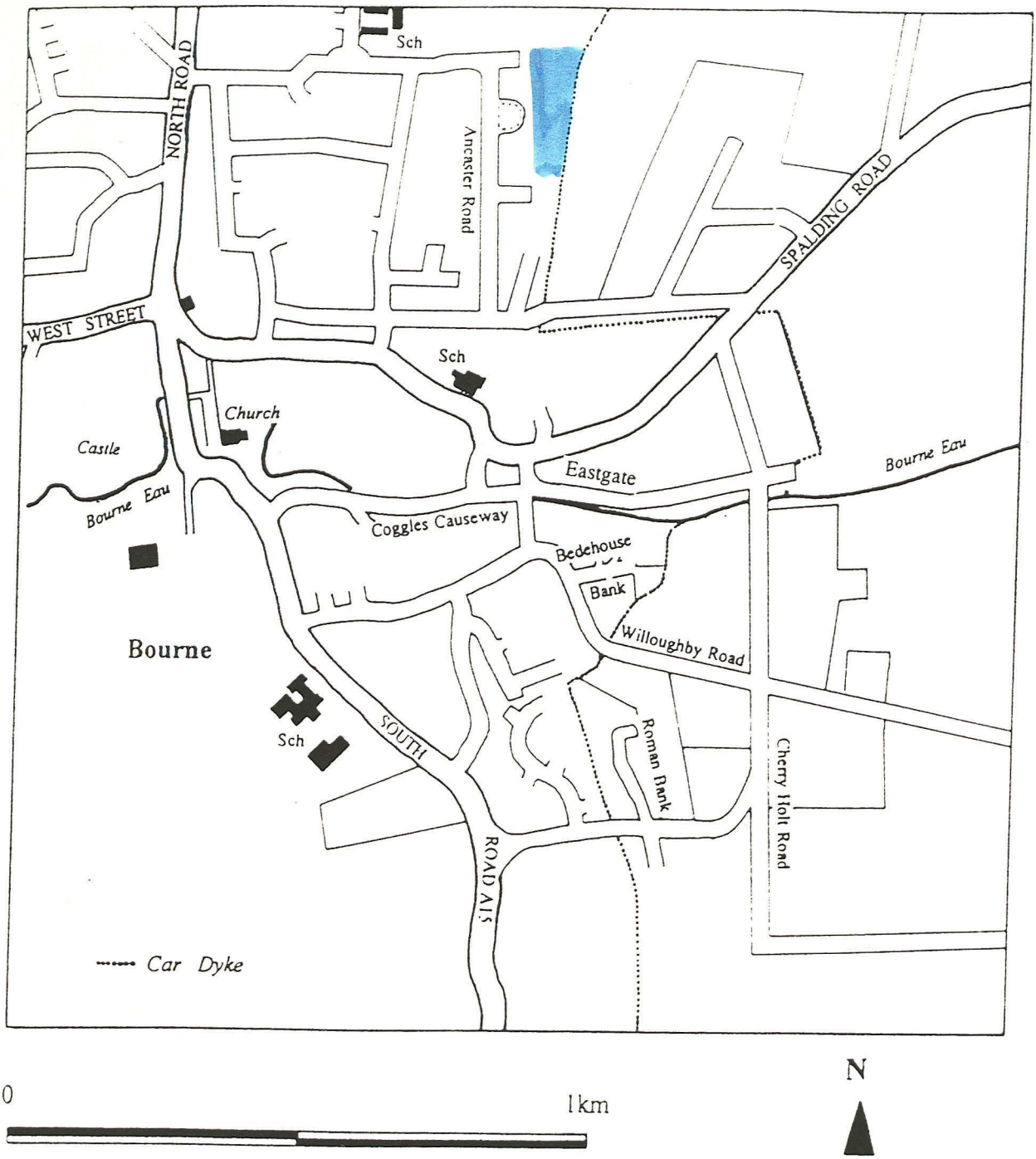


Figure 2: Site location plan

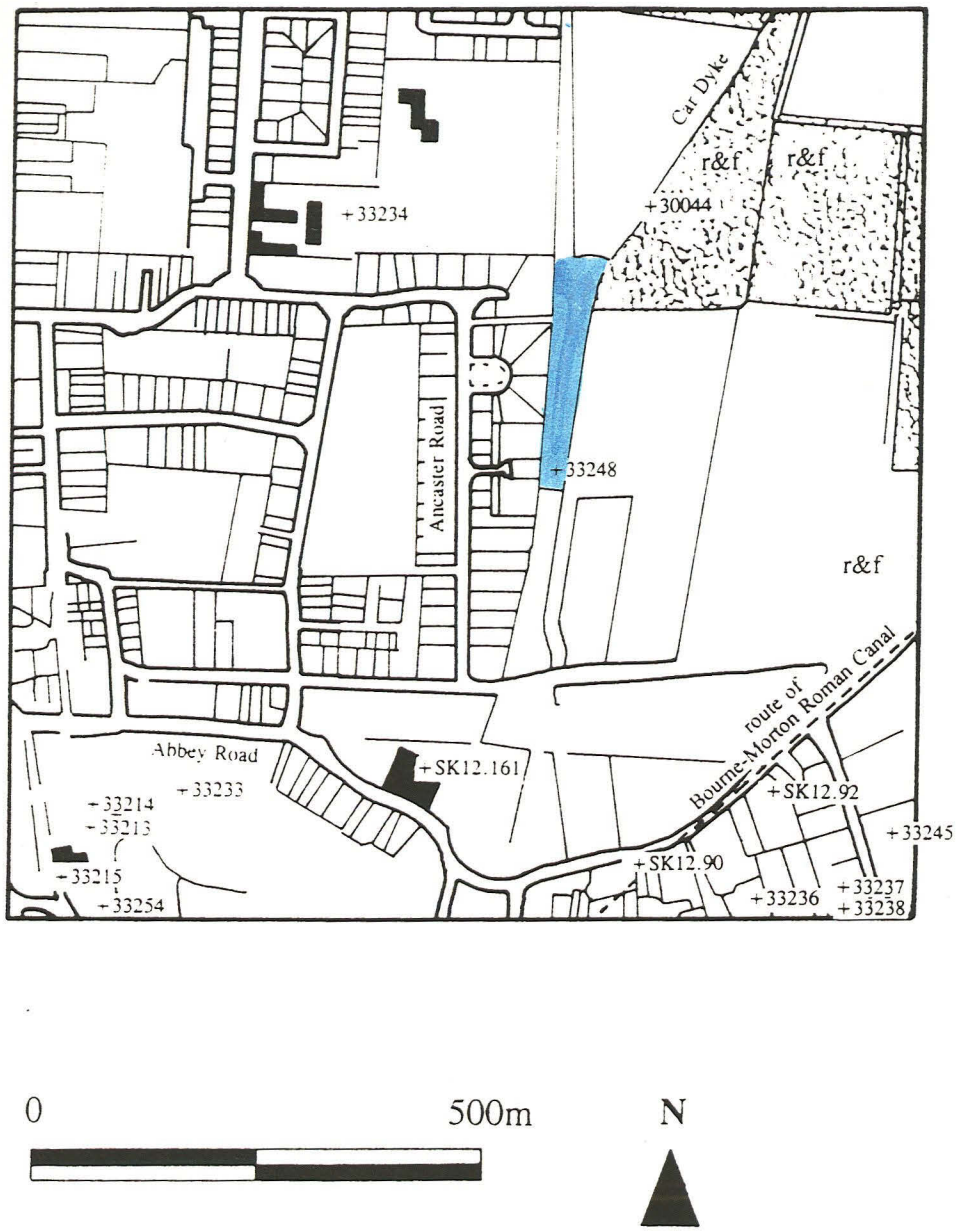


Figure 3: Plan of Archaeological sites in the Vicinity

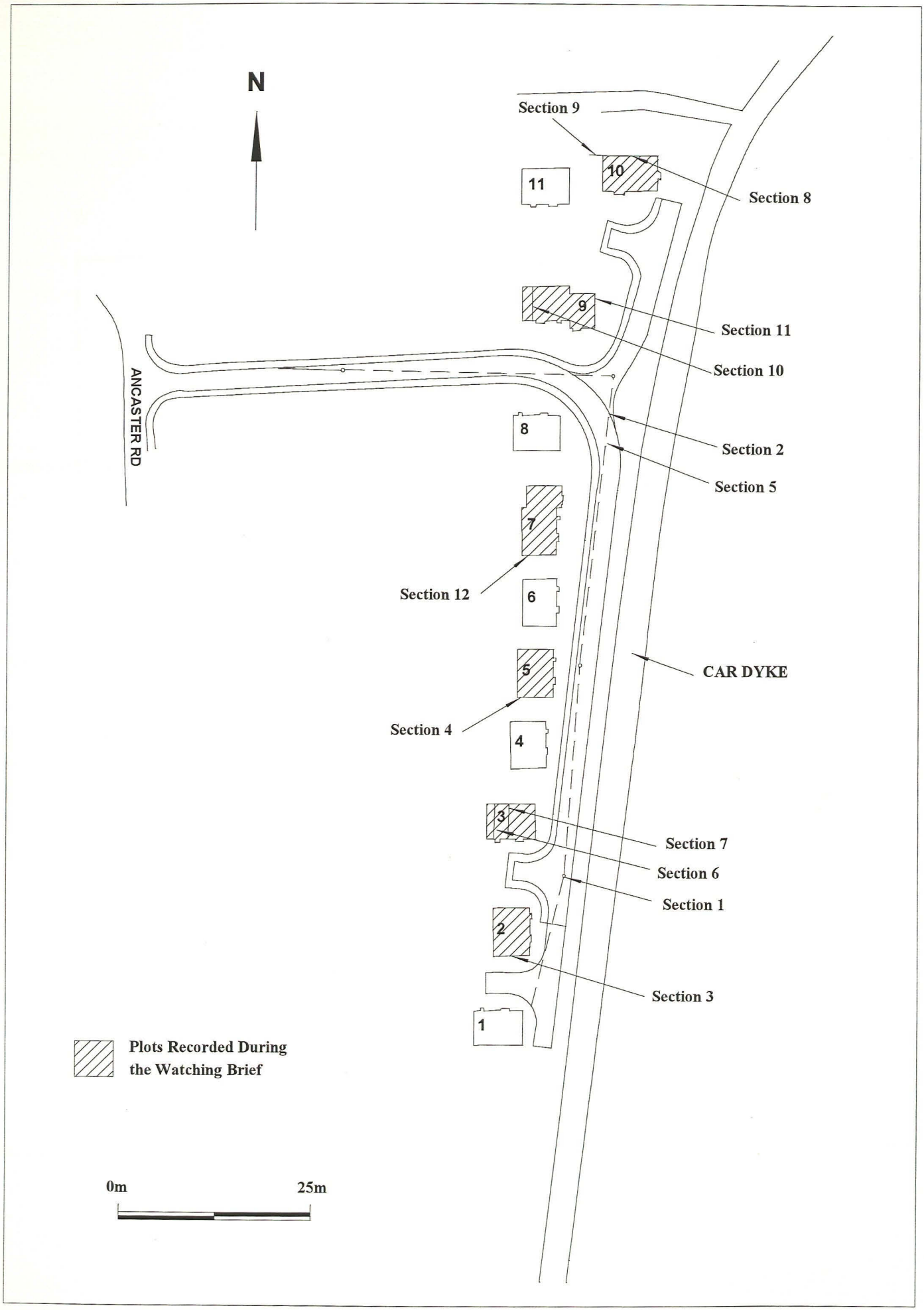


Figure 4 : Bourne-Ancaster Road Site Plan showing location of sections

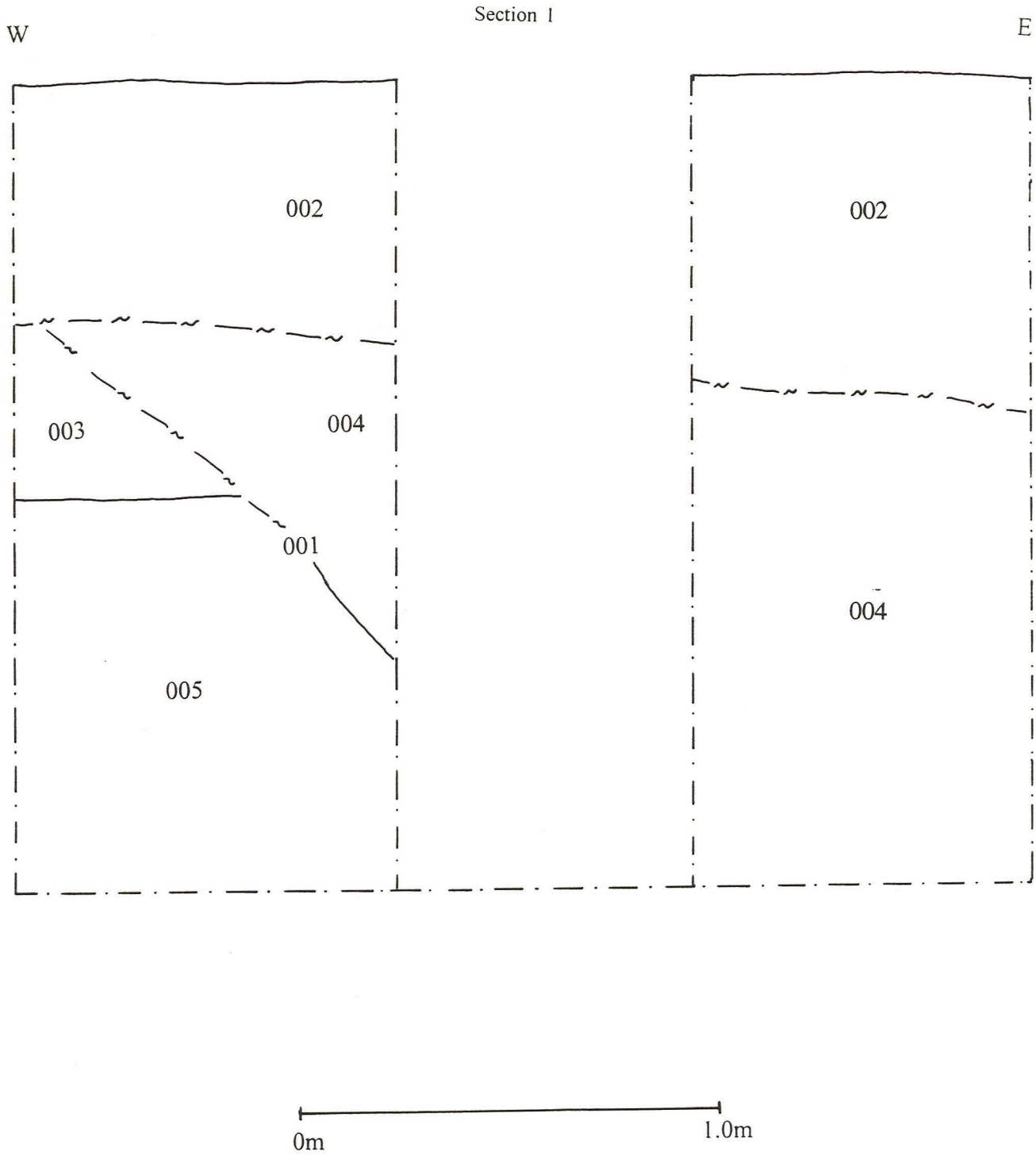


Figure 5: Section 1

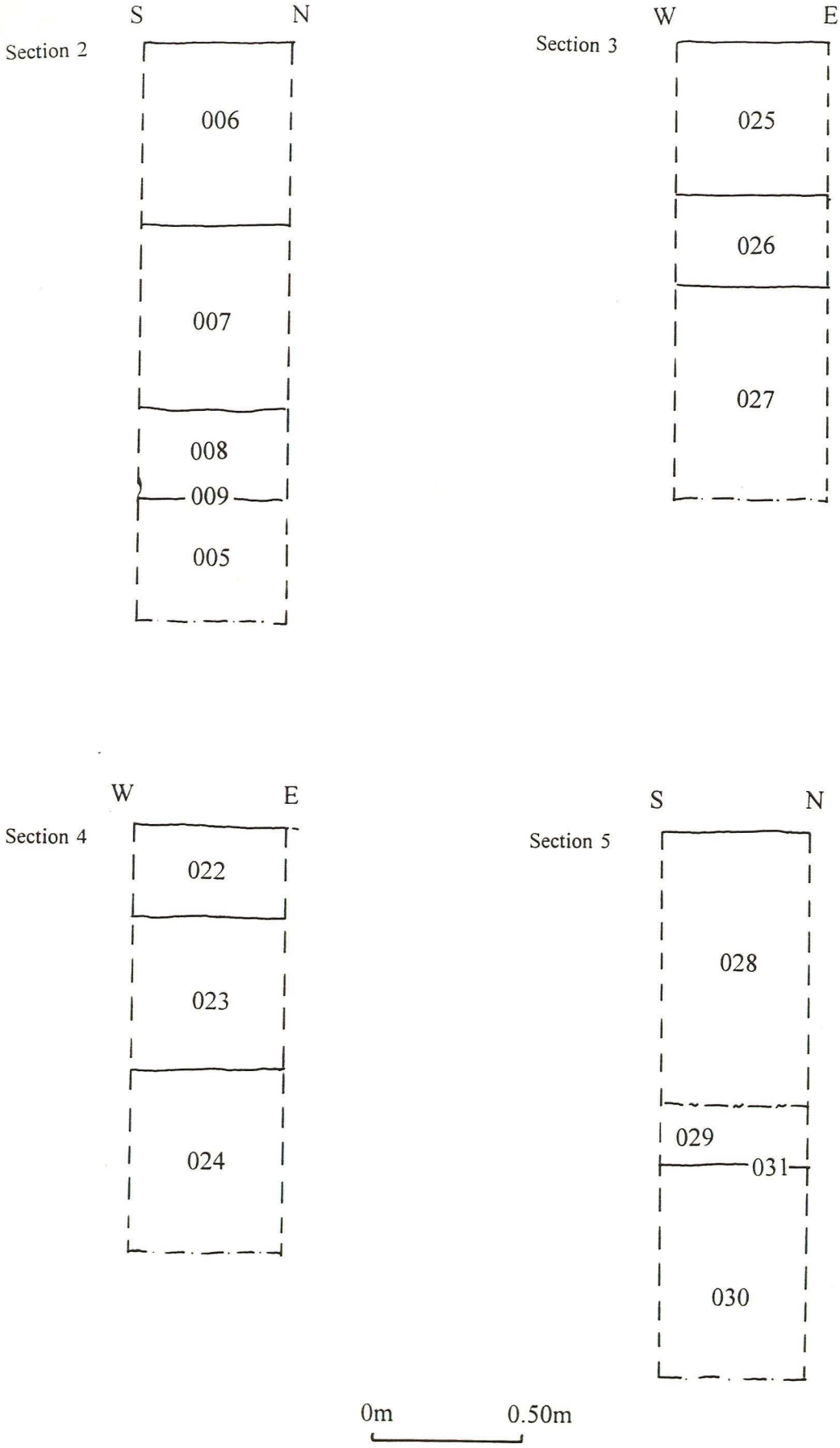


Figure 6: Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5

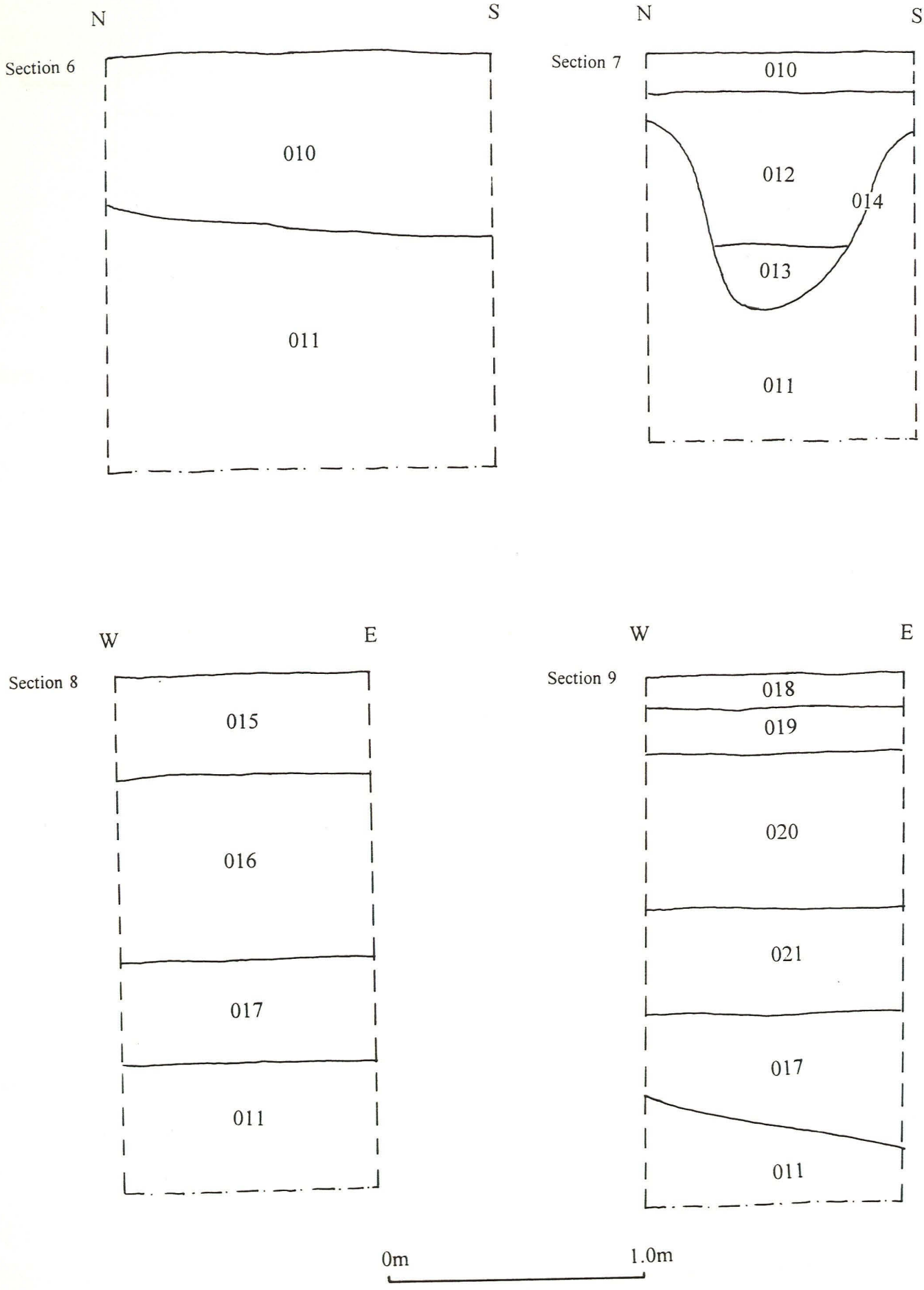
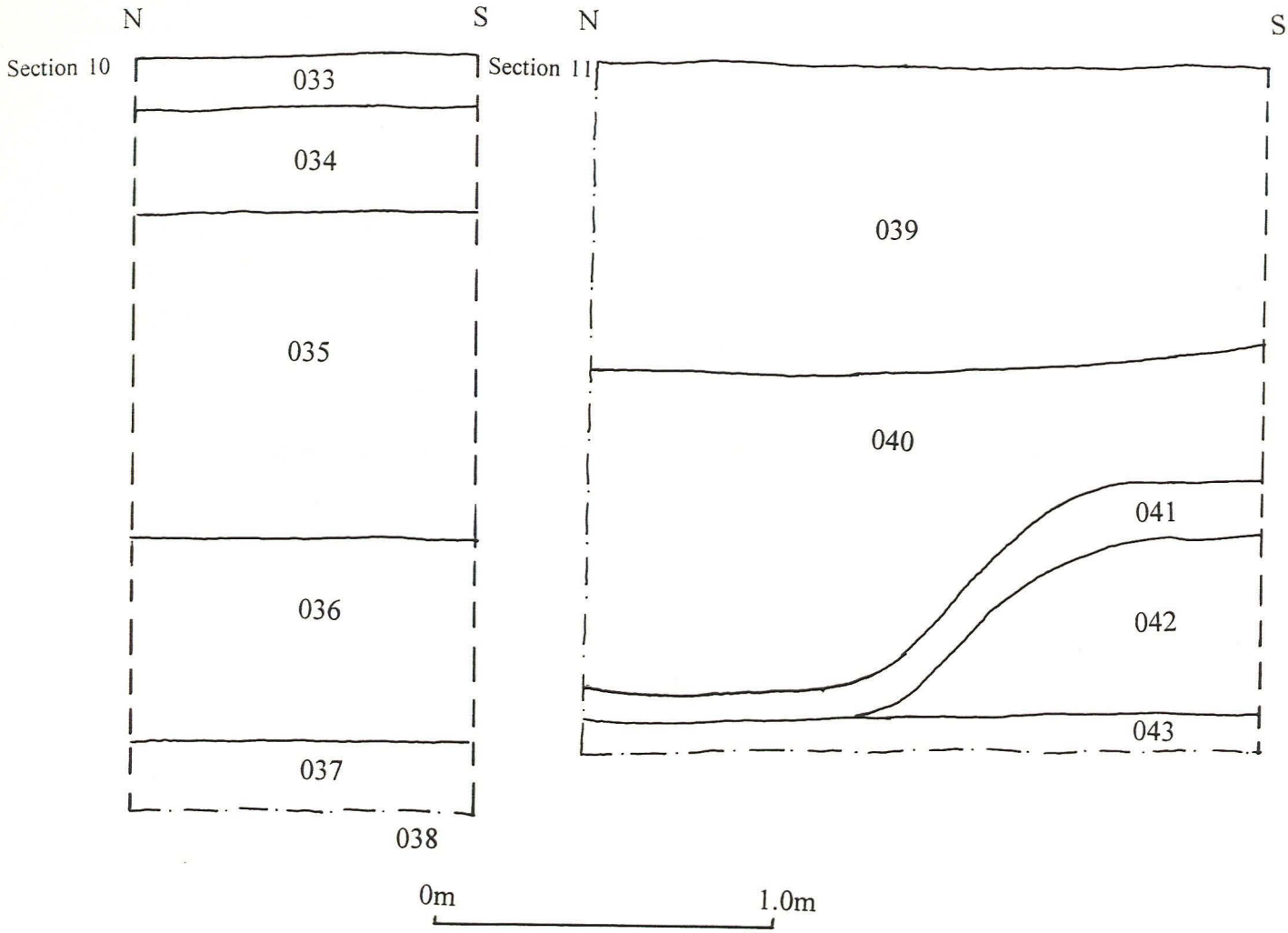


Figure 7: Sections 6, 7, 8, and 9



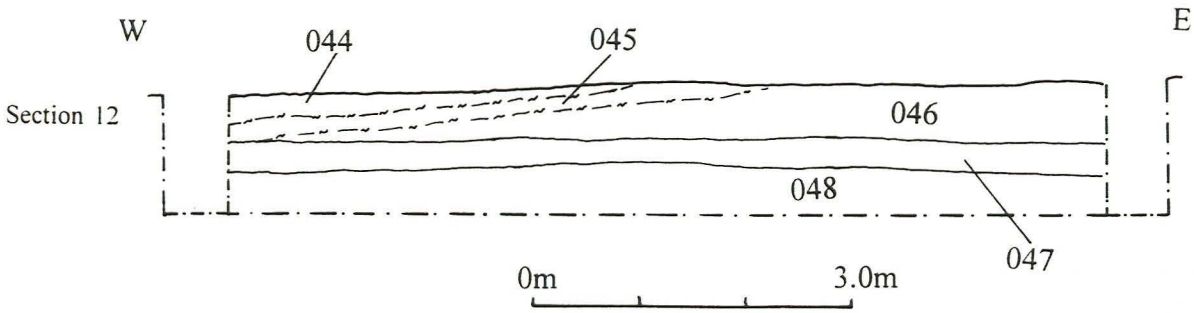


Figure 8: Sections 10, 11 and 12

Plate 1 - General view of the Development area, showing the Car Dyke to the right (east) of the photograph.

Plate 2 - Section 1, showing the cut of the large linear feature, possibly the original Car Dyke

Appendix 1

Archaeological Project Brief

Watching Brief at Ancaster Road, Bourne

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This document is the brief for a programme for an archaeological watching brief and recording to be carried out during the development of land at Ancaster Road, Bourne.

1.2 This brief should be used by archaeological contractors as the basis for the preparation of a detailed archaeological project specification. In response to this brief contractors will be expected to provide details of the proposed scheme of work, to include the anticipated working methods, timescales and staffing levels.

1.3 The detailed specifications will be submitted for approval to the Community Archaeologist of South Kesteven District Council. The client will be free to choose between those specifications which are considered to adequately satisfy this brief.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION.

2.1 The town of Bourne is situated approximately 24km southeast of Grantham and approximately 15km northeast of Stamford in South Kesteven Lincolnshire. The site of the proposed development is located 700m to the north east of Bourne town centre as defined by the town hall and lies a National Grid Reference TF1025 2050, the proposed development site covers an area of approximately 1.4 hectares.

3. PLANNING BACKGROUND.

A predetermination evaluation took place on this site, prior to an application for planning permission. This evaluation was carried out by Archaeological Project Services, and involved a Desk-top assessment and a number of trial trenches.
The development has planning permission from South Kesteven District Council, for a residential development and has an archaeological condition requiring a watching brief to take place during groundwork stages.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

The site lies directly alongside the Car Dyke, a Romano-British waterway, which had banks on either side. Settlement along the Car Dyke is known from other areas in Lincolnshire and there is a possibility that development at Ancaster Road would disturb further evidence. An archaeological Desk-top assessment, commissioned as part of a pre-planning evaluation, noted that in other areas of Lincolnshire, the Car Dyke has been found to be larger than the current 10m visible at Ancaster Road. It is possible therefore that 'part of the original channel, now silted up or backfilled, together with the western flanking bank, survive under the investigation area.' Medieval activity, in the form of small rural settlement, may also be present.

There is Post Medieval activity on the site in the form of a railway embankment, which covers approximately one-half of the site. Also two storm drains were observed entering the Car Dyke. Both these later developments are likely to have destroyed archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity. There is a possibility however that archaeological deposits may be

preserved underneath the railway embankment, the watching brief should therefore include an inspection of the soil beneath this embankment.

4.15. REQUIREMENT FOR WORK.

5.1 The objective of the watching brief should be to ensure that any archaeological features exposed by the groundworks are recorded and interpreted. The area which lies closest to the Car Dyke, carries the most potential. Therefore any groundworks in this area must be subject to a Comprehensive Watching Brief. Groundworks in areas away from the Car Dyke should be subject to an Intermittent Watching Brief.

5.2 Any adjustments to the brief for the Watching Brief project should only be made after discussion with the Community Archaeologist of South Kesteven District Council.

5.3 The following details should be given in the contractor's specification:

5.3.1 A projected timetable must be agreed for the various stages of work.

5.3.2 The staff structure and numbers must be detailed. This should include lists of specialists and their role in the project.

5.3.3 It is expected that all on-site work will be carried out in a way that complies with the relevant Health and Safety Legislation and that due consideration will be given to site security.

5.3.4 The recovery and recording strategies to be used must be described in full.

5.3.5 An estimate of time and resources allocated for post excavation work and report production.

6. METHODS

6.1 The investigation should be carried out by a recognised archaeological body in accordance with the code of conduct of The Institute of Field Archaeologists.

6.2 The watching brief should involve:

6.2.1 archaeological supervision of soil stripping;

6.2.2 inspection of subsoil for archaeological features;

6.2.3 recording of archaeological features in plan;

6.2.4 rapid excavation of features if necessary;

6.2.5 archaeological supervision of subsoil stripping;

6.2.6 inspection of natural for archaeological features and recording of them;

6.2.7 any human remains encountered must be left in situ and only removed if absolutely necessary. The contractor must comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act, 1981 or other Burial Acts regarding the exhumation and interment of human remains. It will also be necessary to comply with all reasonable requests of interested parties as to the method of removal, reinterment or disposal of the remains or associated items. Attempt must be made at all times not to cause offence to any interested parties;

7. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 The Community Archaeologist of South Kesteven District Council will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project and will require at least seven days notice prior to the commencement of the work.

8. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 A full report should be produced and deposited with the South Kesteven Community Archaeologist, the developer and The County Sites and Monuments Record. The report should include:

8.1.1 location plan of the trenches;

8.1.2 section and plan drawing, with ground level, Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scales as appropriate;

8.1.3 specialist descriptions of artefacts and ecofacts;

8.1.4 an indication of potential archaeological deposits not disturbed by the present development;

8.2 After agreement with the landowner, arrangements should be made for long term storage of all artefacts in the City and County Museum, Lincoln as outlined in that Museum's document 'Conditions for the acceptance of Project Archives'. The City and County Museum should be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity so that the full cost implications of the archive deposition can be taken into account.

8.3 A site archive should be produced and deposited with the artefacts as detailed in 8.2.

Appendix 2

Context Summary.

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
001	Linear cut with gradual sides at 45 degrees from the horizontal. 2.5m wide x 1.2m deep to the limit of excavation. Orientated north-south	Possible cut for the Car Dyke
002	Firm, mid to dark-brown mixed silty clay and silty sand with frequent limestone fragments	Dumped deposit
003	Firm, mid-brown silty clay with occasional grits. 0.5m thick	Buried soil
004	Firm, dark grey clayey silt with several roots and intrusive modern material. 1.5m thick	Fill of (001)
005	Firm, mid-yellow limestone fragments in a silty sand matrix. 0.9m thick	Natural geological deposit
006	Firm, mixed greyish-brown sandy clays and silts containing limestone fragments and modern debris	Dumped deposit
007	Soft, dark-brown sandy silt with modern debris. 0.6m thick	Fill of (009)
008	Soft, very dark grey silt with frequent roots. 0.3m thick	Fill of (009)
009	Possible linear cut, 1.5m deep. Orientated north-south	Possible cut for the Car Dyke
010	Moderate, mid greyish-brown silty clay with some sand and charcoal. 0.8m thick	Buried soil
011	Moderate, light brown clayey sandy silt. 1m thick	Natural subsoil
012	Moderate, mid greyish-brown clayey sandy silt. 0.6m thick	Uppermost fill of (014)
013	Soft, blackish-brown silty clay with frequent red sandstone fragments. 0.25m thick	Primary fill of (014)
014	Possible linear cut with steep sides and a narrow concave base. 1m wide x 1m deep x unknown length. Orientated east-west.	Possible ditch cut
015	Moderate, light to mid-yellowish brown sand snd grit. 0.4m thick	Dumped deposit
016	Moderate, light to mid-grey clay with occasional brick and limestone fragments. 1m thick	Backfill deposit
017	Soft, black organic material. 0.4m thick	Fill of possible pond
018	Moderate, blackish-brown clayey sandy silt with moderate stones. 0.12m thick	Dumped deposit to form embankment
019	Moderate, light to mid yellowish-brown clayey silt with frequent stones. 0.2m thick	Possible dumped deposit

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
020	Firm, mid blackish-grey silty clay with occasional stones and organic material. 0.4m thick	Possible dumped deposit
021	Firm, mid-brown silt. 0.4m thick	Fill of possible pond
022	Firm, dark greyish-brown silty clay with sub-angular limestone fragments and crushed building material inclusions. 0.4m thick	Deposit dumped to form embankment
023	Soft, mid-brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular limestone fragments. 0.5m thick	Buried soil
024	Indurated, yellowish-brown limestone within a brown sandy matrix. 0.6m thick	Natural geological deposit
025	Firm, mixed dark greyish-brown silty clay with limestone fragments and crushed building material inclusions. 0.5m thick	Deposit dumped to form embankment
026	Soft, mid-brown silty clay containing occasional sub-angular limestone fragments. 0.3m thick	Buried soil
027	Indurated, yellowish-brown limestone within a brown sandy matrix. 0.7m thick	Natural geological deposit
028	Mixed, mid-brown stony clayey sand. 0.9m thick	Possible dumped deposit
029	Soft, very dark-grey sandy silt with frequent organic material. 0.2m thick	Possible dumped deposit
030	Indurated, yellowish-brown limestone within a brown snady matrix. 0.7m thick	Natural geological deposit
031	Possible linear cut, 1.1m deep. Orientated north-south	Possible cut for the Car Dyke
032	Loose, light-brown sandy silt with modern rubbish fragments. Depth not established	Deposit dumped to form embankment
033	Moderate, mid reddish-brown silty clay. 0.15m thick	Overburden
034	Moderate, mid to dark-grey clayey silt. 0.3m thick	Dumped deposit
035	Moderate, light to mid greyish-brown clayey silt with organic remains	Possible levelling deposit for embankment
036	Moderate, light yellowish-grey silty clay. 0.3m thick	Natural subsoil
037	Moderate, mid to dark-brown silty sand with occasional gravels. 0.2m thick	Natural subsoil
038	Indurated, yellowish-white limestone. Depth not established	Natural geological deposit
039	Moderate, dark-grey clayey silt with organic material, bricks and stones. 0.9m thick	Embankment deposit
040	Loose red bricks. 0.9m thick	Dumped deposit

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
041	Moderate, black organic material. 100mm thick	Natural deposit
042	Firm, dark-brown clay. 0.5m thick	Natural subsoil
043	Moderate, light yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional limestone fragments. 0.15m thick	Natural subsoil
044	Firm, mid-brown clayey silt with frequent small sub-angular limestone fragments. 0.3m thick	Embankment deposit
045	Firm, dark brownish-grey clayey silt. 0.2m thick	Embankment deposit
046	Firm, mid-brown clayey silt with frequent sub-angular limestone fragments. 0.6m thick	Embankment deposit
047	Soft, mid-brown clayey silt. 0.3m thick	Buried soil
048	Indurated, yellowish-brown limestone within a brown sandy matrix. 0.5m thick	Natural geological deposit

Appendix 3

Finds Summary
by Hilary Healey

Context	Artefact Description	Latest Possible Date
+	1 flint thumbnail scraper	?prehistoric
+	1 sherd of greyware	Romano-British
+	1 sherd oolitic gritted pottery	?medieval
+	1 sherd unidentified pot	?medieval
+	12 sherds of Bourne 'D' ware	16th-17th century
+	1 sherd of stoneware	19th-20th century
+	1 sherd of willow pattern pottery	19th-20th century

Appendix 4

The Archive

The archive consists of:

47	Context records
14	Scale drawings
30	Photographic records
1	Stratigraphic matrix
1	Bag of finds

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

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

Archaeological Project Services project code:	BAR96
City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number:	24.95

Appendix 5

Glossary

Bronze Age	Period dating from 2,000 - 600 BC, part of the prehistoric era, characterized by the introduction and use of bronze for tools and implements.
Context	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 identified within the report text by brackets, *e.g.* (4).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Dumped deposits	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 raise the ground surface.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Natural	Deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period during which written records were absent, forming the majority of the archaeology in the U.K. until *c.* AD 43.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period AD 43 - 450 when Britain formed part of the Roman Empire