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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Tathwell, Louth

Land Adjoining Brookside, New Lane

NGR: TF 3207 8318

Site Code **TNL 97**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **271.97**

ELDC Planning Application No. N/174/1234/97

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report prepared for Steven Tozeland

November 1997

LAS Report No. 268

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Summary

A watching brief on a building plot beside The Beck was abandoned after discovery of an extensive, deep feature (apparently natural) containing peaty deposits. The earliest finds from the site were of late 18th century date, probably marking reclamation of formerly boggy ground for a crew yard with a ford and cobbled track access to adjacent fields.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Steven Tozeland in November 1997 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new dwelling on a plot of land adjoining Brookside, New Lane, Tathwell (Fig. 1).

Full permission for a dwelling and garage granted by East Lindsey District Council (dated 29th November 1997) was subject to an archaeological condition and a project specification was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Standard Brief for Archaeological Projects in Lincolnshire* issued by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (dated August 1997).

The purpose of the Watching Brief was to identify and record any archaeological deposits disturbed during groundworks at the above site.

The Site

The development site is positioned on sloping land between New Lane and The Beck (Fig. 2; Pls. 1 and 2). A four-bedroomed house and separate garage were to be constructed at the NE side of a plot of land within about 35m of the open stream.

Archaeological Background

The parish of Tathwell contains remains of several prehistoric burial mounds, some of which are known from air photographs as cropmarks but a group of seven survive at Bully Hills. A Bronze Age pot sherd was found from one of these barrows. Prehistoric worked flints are common in this area.

Medieval earthworks have been recorded close to the application site, marking the arrangement of the medieval settlement. A deep hollow following the north side of New Lane has been identified as perhaps the course of a former road. The name New Lane suggests a later diversion.

The Watching Brief (Fig. 3)

The site was visited by the author on 12th November 1997 when turf was removed by machine from the area of the new house.

A thin layer of topsoil covered a spread of brick and tile rubble, much of which appeared to have been imported onto the site as hardcore. This was densest on the southern edge of the stripped area, where it may have backfilled a pit or trench. Other concentrations were seen close to Thatched Cottage.

Within the site of the new conservatory, in the NW of the stripped area, less rubble was present. The topsoil sealed a dark brown clay loam layer, which may have been eroded from the slope to the north. Below this was a 0.02m layer of fine gravel and chalk fragments, possibly created by cultivation of the slope. A single sherd of blackware pottery, probably 19th century, was the earliest find.

A restricted spread of rounded river pebbles exposed at the NW of the area (within the Lounge) had probably been deliberately laid as part of a metalled track (Pls. 3 and 4). There were indications of a ford at the northern limit of the stream within this property, and the ground contours suggested a curving path leading around the site to the fields behind The Garth. The ford is marked on a 1906 map but not on a smaller scale map of 1891 (Figs. 4 and 5; OS 1906; OS 1891).

Excavation of the house footings began in the SE of the plot. The trench was excavated through the 0.5m thick layer of brick rubble into dark brown clay. At a depth of 1m from the surface, a layer of peat about 0.15m thick was exposed (Pl. 5). Below this peat with reeds was a mixed zone of clay with peat, indicating some disturbance.

Boulder-clay was encountered at a depth of 2.6m. As this exploratory section of trench was excavated below 1.2m, through loose or soft material, there was no opportunity to examine the deposits in detail. A second exploratory trench excavated in the SW corner of the house site located similar deposits.

The watching brief was abandoned after this visit after discussion with Jim Bonnor, Archaeological Officer of the County Archaeology Section.

Interpretation

The thick deposit with peat and reeds indicated an area of formerly waterlogged land, reclaimed with imported building rubble. This reclamation is unlikely to have pre-dated the 18th century. Farm buildings were erected beside this plot before the late 19th century and they probably are contemporary with the change of its condition (OS 1891). The ford and cobbled track seem to have been intended for farm use and are not thought to have been a medieval route.

There are two possibilities for the peat-filled depression which probably occupies most or all of the development site. The Domesday Survey entries for Tathwell record mills but do not mention fishponds, although the large

fishpond depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps south of New Lane is probably of medieval origin (OS 1891). Potentially, the fishpond (or series of ponds) could have extended further north to the edge of the slope within the development plot. New Lane would have been built across such a feature after its abandonment, but the physical difficulties of constructing a road over a recently backfilled wet feature make this unlikely.

The peaty deposits are thought to have formed within a naturally created large depression between the surrounding hills. This depression may have been a glacially modified pond or lake. During millennia of gradual silting the level rose, while leaving an area of marshy ground on which rushes grew. This marshy land may have been visibly boggy and unsuitable for development throughout the medieval period. Reclamation may have been prompted by better drainage methods, perhaps as late as the early 19th century.

Acknowledgements

LAS was grateful for the co-operation received from Steven Tozeland and his contractors. Jim Bonnor (Archaeological Officer, County Archaeology Section) and James Rackham (Environmental Consultant) gave comment and advice. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
2nd December 1997

Archive Summary

Photographs: colour prints LAS 97/81/37 and 97/83/1-7
Annotated copy of developer's Ground Floor plan
correspondence

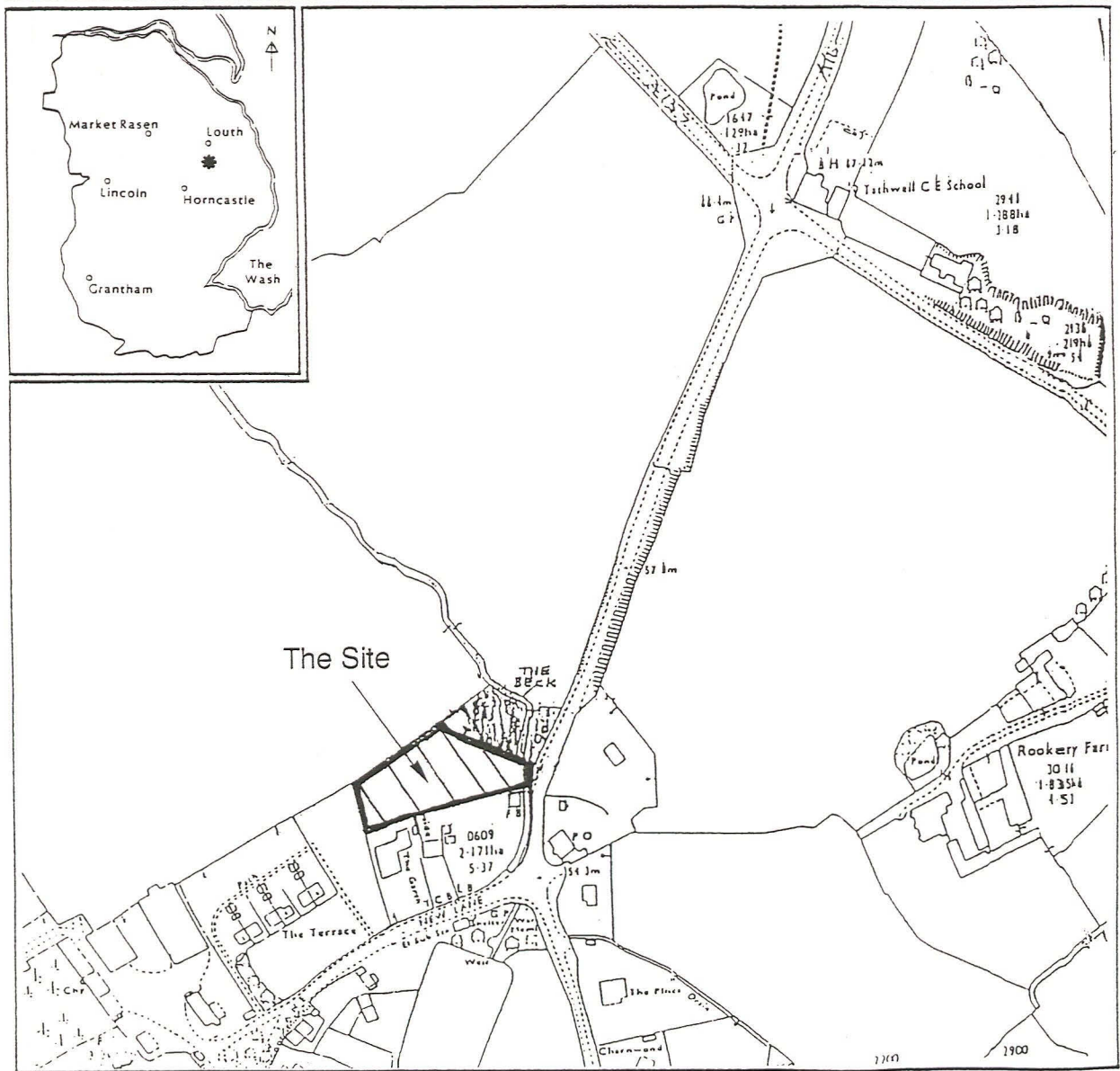
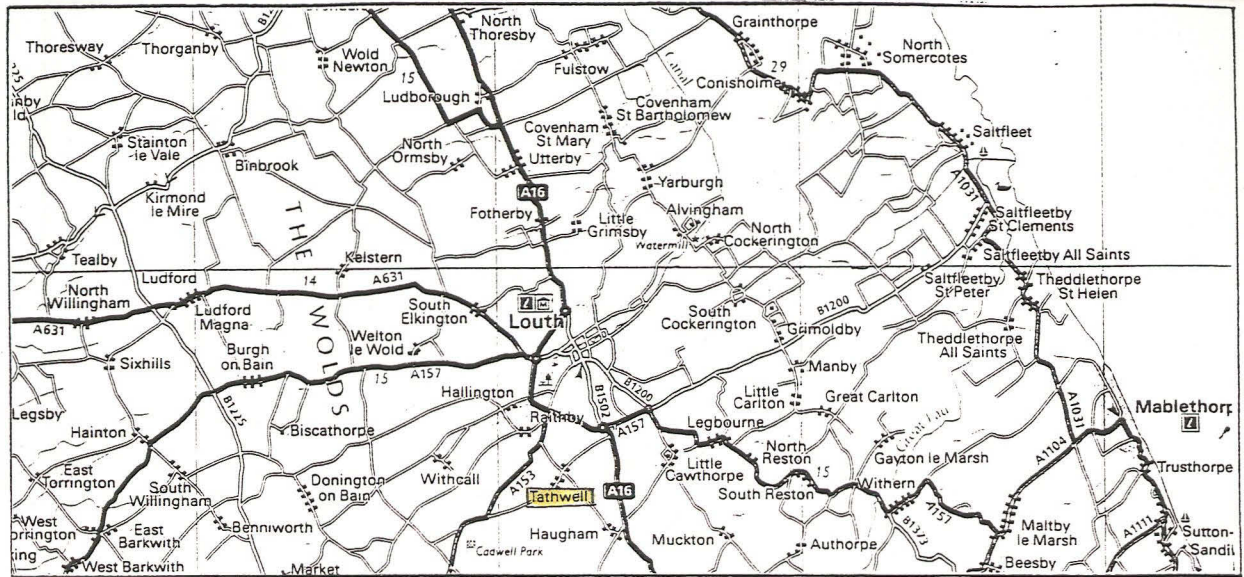


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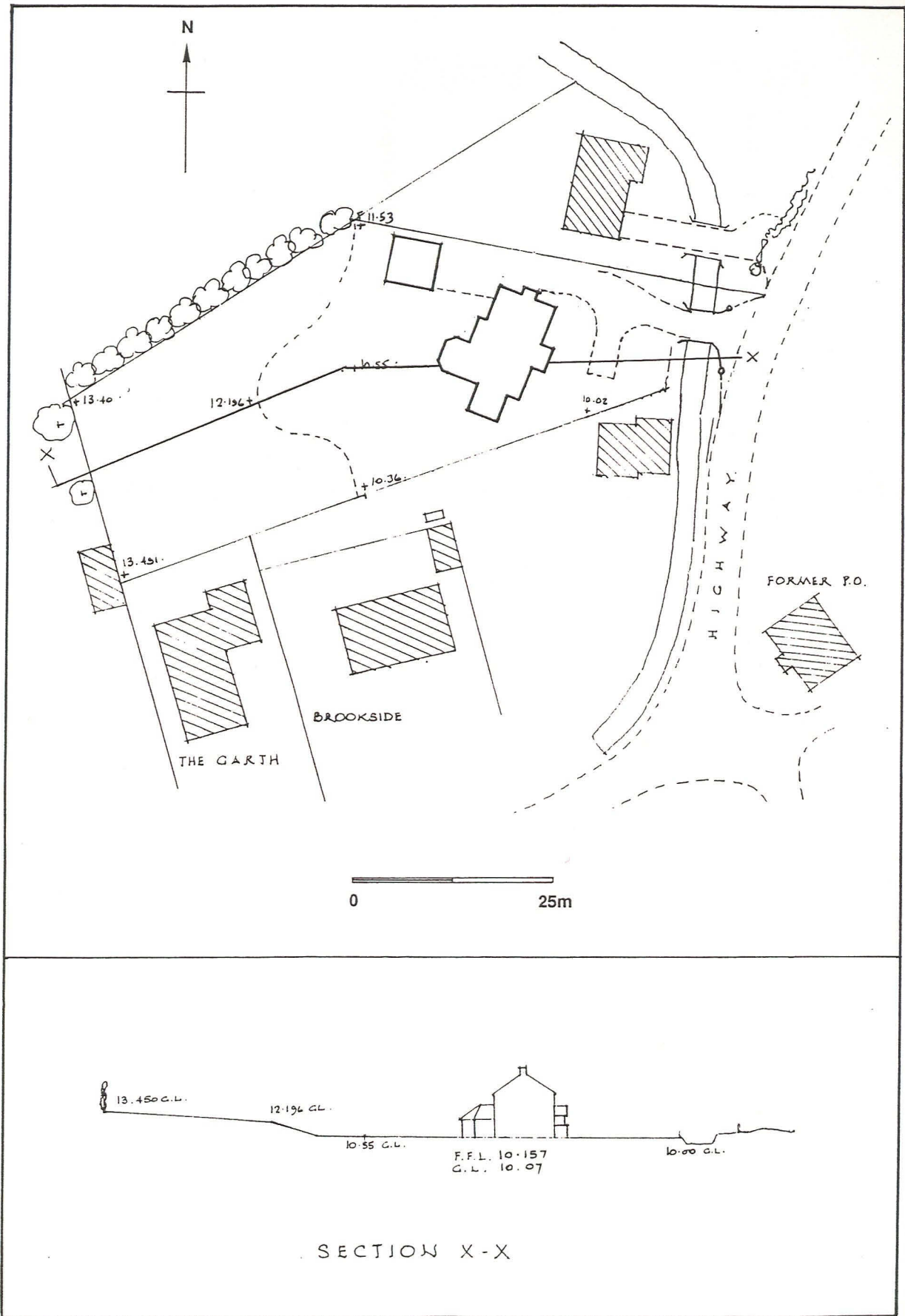


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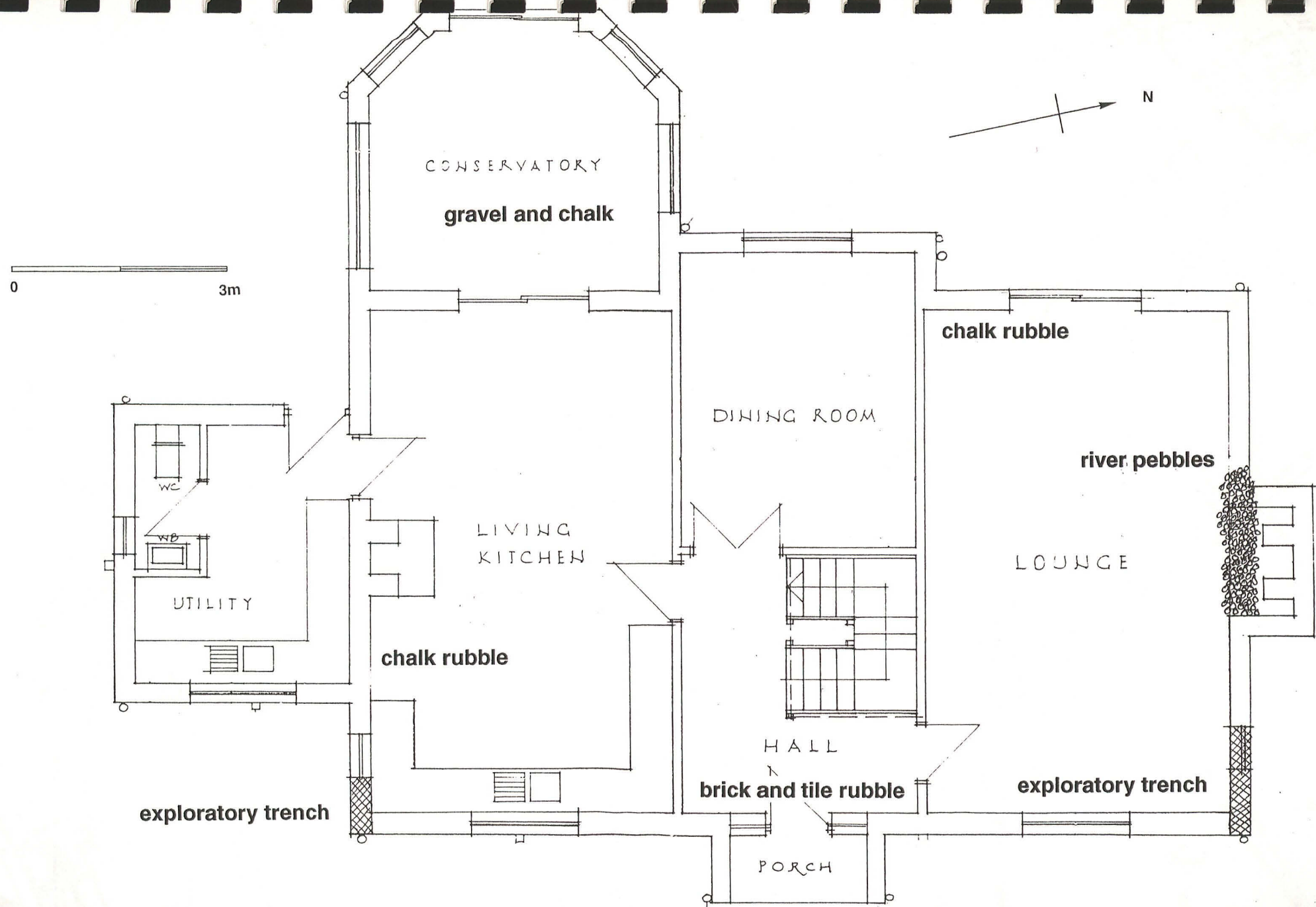


Fig. 3 Plan of the Ground Floor layout of the new building, showing the position of observations noted in the text (reproduced from the Ground Plan [Dwg. D 7.97.6] produced by J.S. Grant for the client).

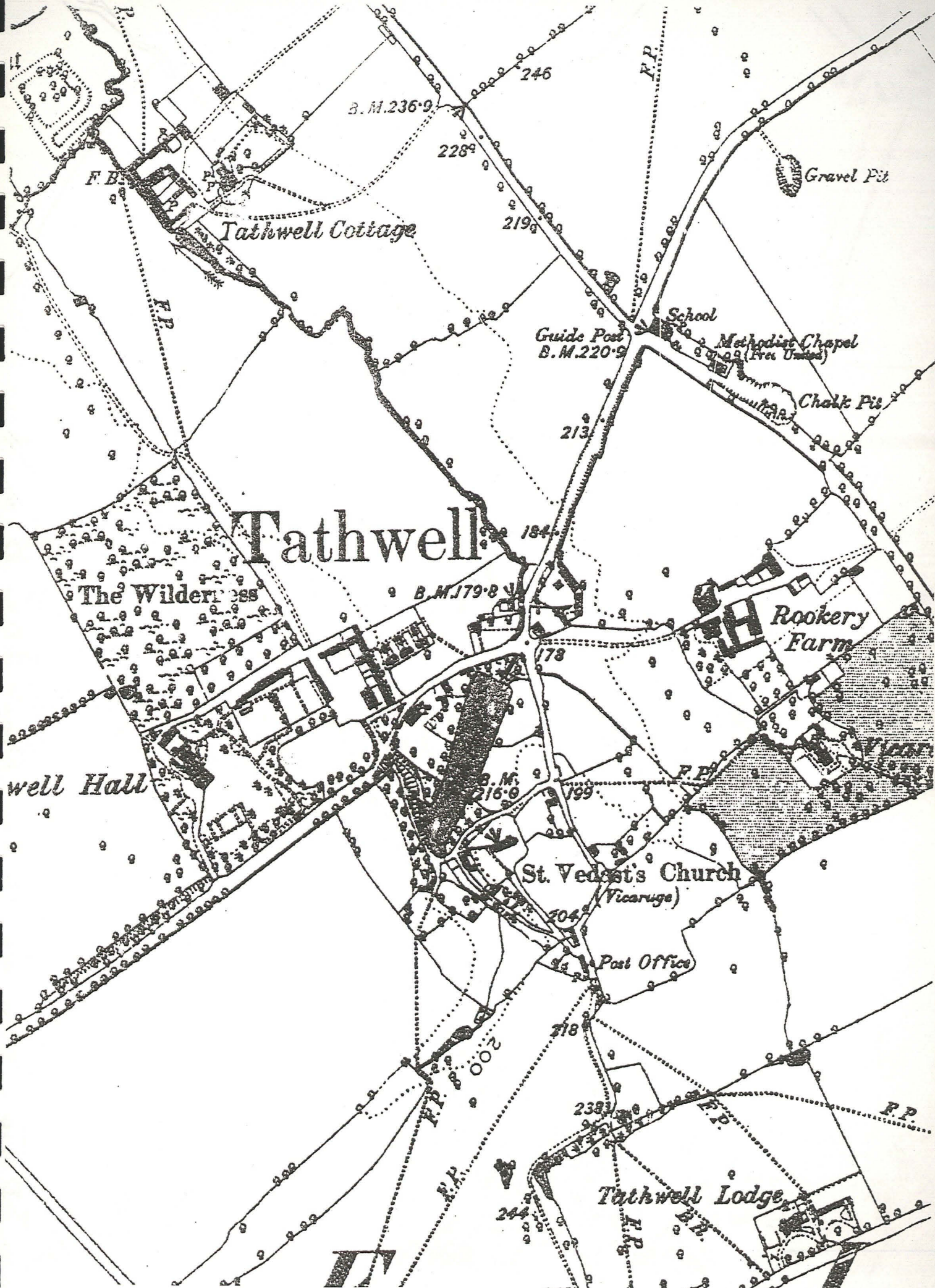


Fig. 4 Extract from the 1891 Ordnance Survey First Edition 6" [1:10,560] map Sheet Lincs. 56 SW (not to scale).

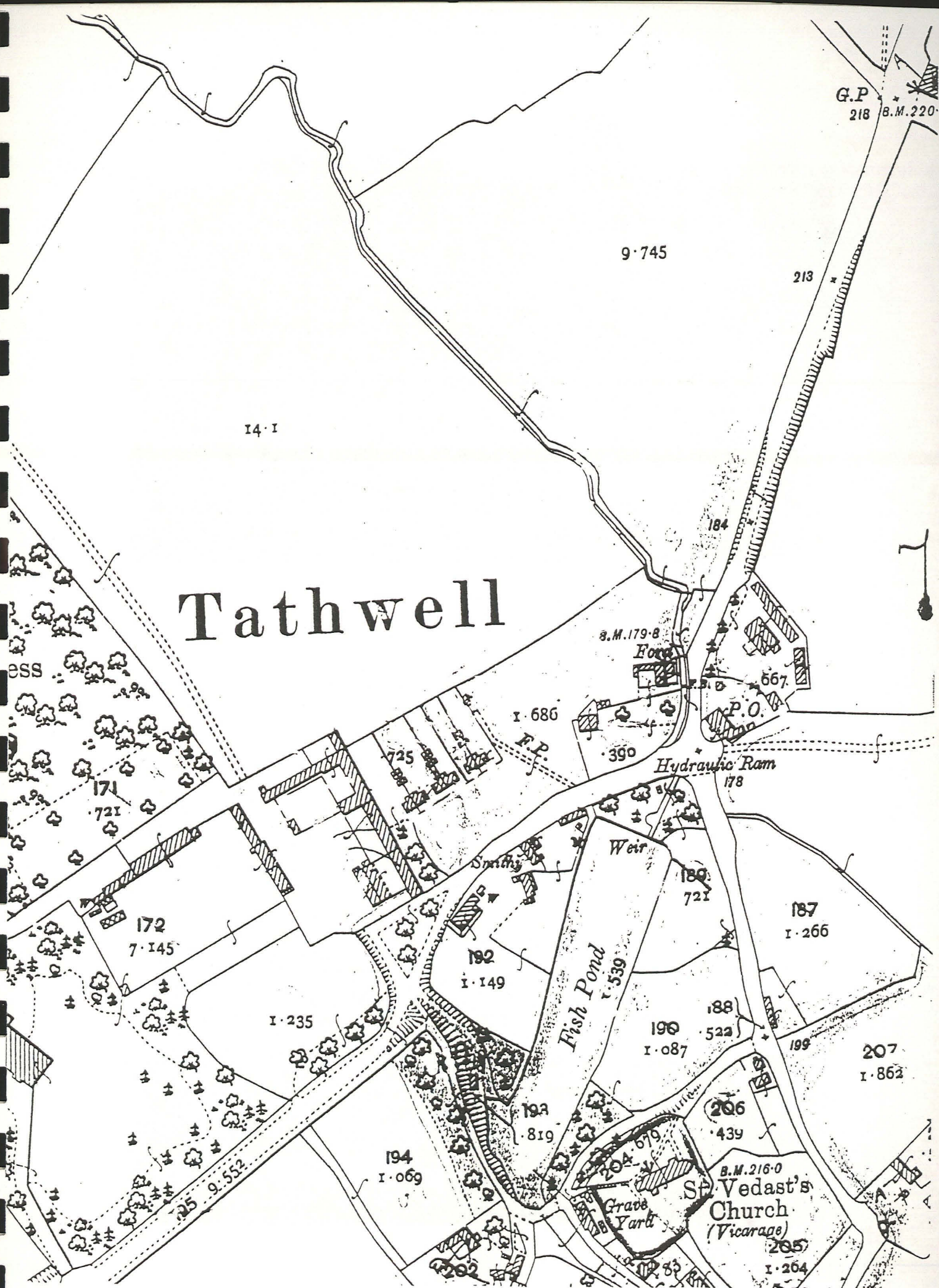


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