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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF LAND ADJACENT TO ABBEY ROAD,
SWINESHEAD,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SAR97)**



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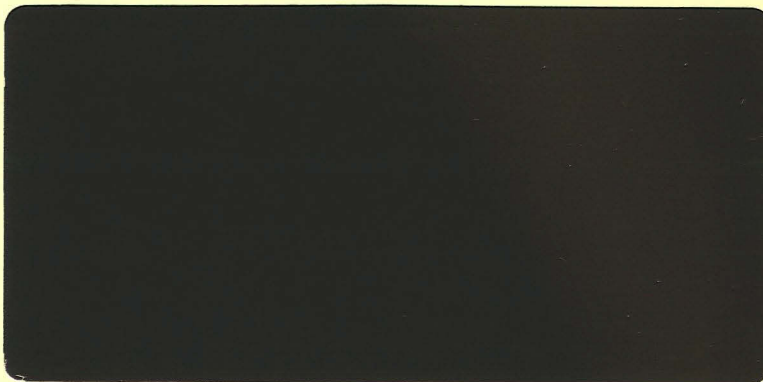
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF LAND ADJACENT TO ABBEY ROAD,
SWINESHEAD,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SAR97)**

Work Undertaken For
Mr Hollingsworth

Report compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner

Autumn 1997

A.P.S. Report No: 32/97

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

1.	Summary	1
2.	Introduction	1
	2.1 Background	1
	2.2 Topography and Geology	1
	2.3 Archaeological Setting	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methods	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Discussion	3
7.	Conclusions	3
8.	Acknowledgements	3
9.	Personnel	4
10.	Bibliography	4
11.	Abbreviations	4

Appendices

1	Context Descriptions
2	The Archive
3	Glossary

List of Figures

Figure 1 . . . General Location Plan

Figure 2 . . . Site Location Plan

Figure 3 . . . Development Location Plan

Figure 4 . . . Plan of Foundations, showing positions of Sections

Figure 5 . . . Sections 1 and 2

List of Plates

Plate 1 General View of the Proposed Development Area

Plate 2 Section 2, showing general sequence of deposits

1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of an extension to the surgery at Church Lane, Swineshead. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the foundations.

There have been no finds of prehistoric or Roman material in the immediate vicinity, but remains of these periods are known from the surrounding landscape. In the fields around the village there is evidence for a series of enclosures (possibly farms or small settlements) tentatively dated to the Romano-British period (c. A.D. 50-400).

Artefacts from the medieval period (c. A.D. 1066-1500) are frequently recovered in the village and surrounding parish. Medieval pottery has been found on land adjacent to the investigation site and the countryside around the village incorporates a series of archaeological monuments from this period. The site is within 100m of the 14th century church of St. Mary, close to the heart of the medieval settlement.

Excavation of the foundation trenches revealed an undated feature beneath a series of deposits associated with levelling the ground surface, prior to its use as a garden.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On the 24th July 1997, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a dwelling on land adjacent to 10 Abbey Road, Swineshead. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application B19/0482/95. Permission was granted subject to a standard condition for archaeological recording. The

archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Hollingsworth and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Swineshead is situated 7km from the northwest coast of The Wash, within the Fenland of south Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Approximately 40km southeast of Lincoln and 10km southwest of Boston, the town lies in the civil parish of Swineshead, Boston District. The investigation site is c. 100m east of the village centre, as defined by the parish church of St. Mary (Fig. 2). Located at National Grid Reference TF 2386 4018, the development area is approximately 11 metres by 9 metres in extent (Fig. 3).

The site and immediate surroundings form an area of relatively flat ground at c. 5m O.D. Local soils are the Agney Association calcareous alluvial gley soils, developed on marine alluvium on flat reclaimed land (Hodge *et al.*, 1984, 87).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Although no prehistoric or Romano-British finds have been recovered in the immediate vicinity of the development, fieldwalking has produced a significant quantity of material from this period within a 5km radius of the site. Aerial reconnaissance has located a series of enclosures, probably farms or settlements, that are typical of the late prehistoric - Romano-British period (B19/001; 002; 004; 012).

Archaeological evidence for occupation during the periods of Anglo-Scandinavian migration and conquest (c. A.D. 400-1066) is restricted to a single late Saxon strap-end (B19/018), found within 400m of the development site. The earliest historical reference to Swineshead, indicating the presence of a monastery, occurs shortly after A.D. 650 (Ekwall 1974, 457). A passage

from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions *Swineshaefed* in 675 A.D. and again in 777 A.D. (Swanton 1996, 37 and 52), suggesting that occupation during the 7th and 8th centuries may be expected.

Medieval finds are common in the vicinity of the development, and the surrounding landscape contains several standing monuments from this period. Pottery of medieval date has been recovered from land adjacent to the parish church (A.P.S. 1995a, 1), and also just to the east and southwest (B19/026 and B19/039). *Stenning* or *Estovening* (B19/014), a village mentioned in the Domesday survey of A.D. 1086 but deserted in the 14th century, was located about 0.7km west of the development area. A church of the 14th century, St. Mary the Virgin (B19/006), lies to north of the site. *Estevening Hall* (B19/015) and *Manwar Ings Castle* (B19/025), relics of the feudal economy, are situated respectively 1km to the southwest and northeast of the development. A Cistercian abbey of the 12th century lies *c.* 1.6 km to the east.

Swineshead was a market town during the medieval period and had charters for two annual fairs (Platts 1985, appendix 1). Within *c.* 200m of the site is the *Butter Cross* (B19/005). Located at the centre of the village, this stone market cross provided a focus for trading activities during the medieval period and later.

Local tradition states that the proposed development is situated where wharves associated with the former River Swin, that once flowed through the town.

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their

date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

The proposed development required the excavation of foundation trenches for new walls. Trenches were opened to a depth of *c.* 0.9m using a mechanical excavator (Fig. 3). The sides of the trenches were then cleaned and examined to identify any archaeological features. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number with an individual written description. Natural geological deposits were also recorded where exposed. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at scale 1:10.

5. RESULTS

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. A stratigraphic matrix of all recorded contexts was created and phased. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A list of all contexts with interpretations appears as Appendix 1. Three periods of activity were recognised:

Group 1	Natural deposits
Group 2	Undated activity
Group 3	Modern activity

The numbers in brackets relate to the context numbers assigned in the field.

Group 1 Natural deposits

Situated towards the centre of the development (Fig. 5, Section 2) was a deposit of light yellowish brown silt (007). This deposit dipped to the east and west and was not visible in the base of all the trenches.

Group 2 Undated activity

Cut into the natural deposits was an indeterminate cut feature (009). The dimensions exposed reveal a cut 0.9m by a minimum 0.1m wide and 0.2m deep and was filled with mid brown clayey silt (008).

Along the west side of the development (Fig. 5, Section 1) was a layer of mottled yellow and yellowish brown silt (004) containing charcoal and clay lenses. The clay lenses suggest an alluvial origin for the deposit.

Overlying layer (004) was a 0.2m thick deposit of mid brown silty sand identified as a make-up layer or dumped deposit (003). This contained a single sherd of Toynton All Saints or Lincoln type pottery (*pers. comm.* Hilary Healey) dating to the 13th and 14th centuries.

Sealing the above deposits was a mid brown silty sand (002) also identified as a make-up layer.

Group 3 Modern activity

A widespread deposit of dark brown silty sand (001) was found across the entire development area. Measuring 0.49m thick, this layer was identified as the topsoil.

6. DISCUSSION

Light yellowish brown silts were exposed across the centre of the development site are interpreted as natural alluvial deposits. A rectangular pit of unknown function was then cut into the natural deposit. Following this, make-up layers were then laid, presumably to level the ground surface. A developed topsoil, formerly the garden of

No. 10 Abbey Road, then accumulates. A recent large rectangular pit identifies the most recent activity on the site.

The accumulation of the layers revealed during this investigation are in keeping with having been laid down in a slow water environment, such as the former river, before being levelled once the river dried up. However, further evidence would be desirable, especially environmental data to support this suggestion.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at Abbey Road, Swineshead were undertaken because the site fell within an area of known archaeological activity, notably its location within the core of a medieval village, and the likelihood existed of archaeological remains being disturbed.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural to modern deposits. Natural silts of alluvial origin were encountered within 0.65m of the present ground surface. Above the natural deposits was an undated pit of unknown function and deposits associated with the making-up of the ground level. Topsoil provided the present ground surface across the area.

A single sherd of pottery was recovered and represents minor activity in the vicinity. Few environmental indicators were found, except for charcoal, although waterlogged material probably survives at depth. As such, this site may be considered as being of local interest only.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to thank Mr Hollingsworth for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis.

Gary Taylor coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Background information was provided by Steven Membury, the Boston District Community Archaeologist. Hilary Healey commented upon the single sherd of pottery.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Finds processing: Denise Buckley
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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Hodge, C.A.H., Burton, R.G.O., Corbett, W.M., Evans, R. and Seal, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their Use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. 13 (Harpenden)

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

Reports by Archaeological Project Services are referred to in the text by the initials 'A.P.S.'.

Numbers prefixed 'B' are the reference codes used by the Boston Borough Community Archaeologist.

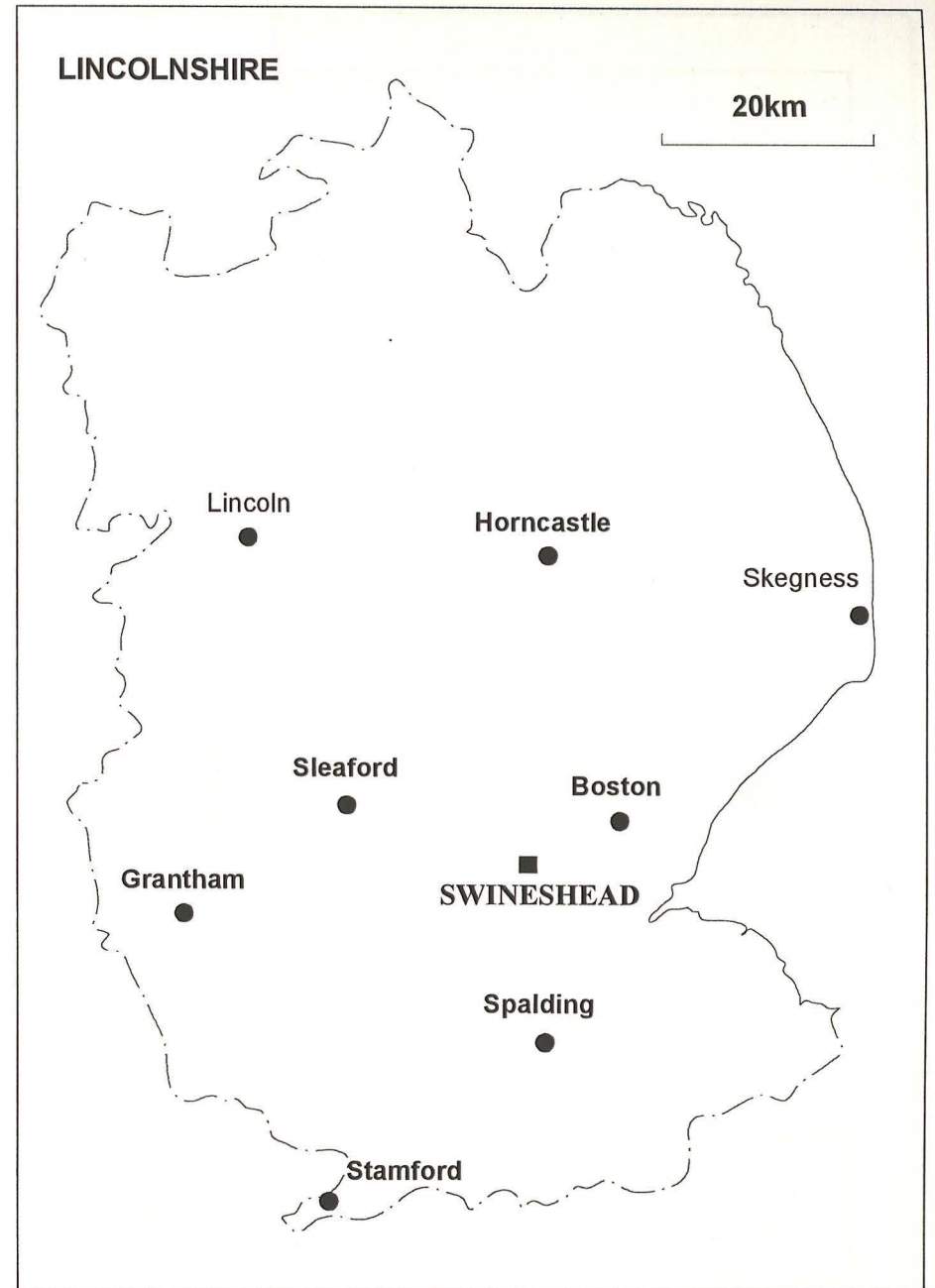
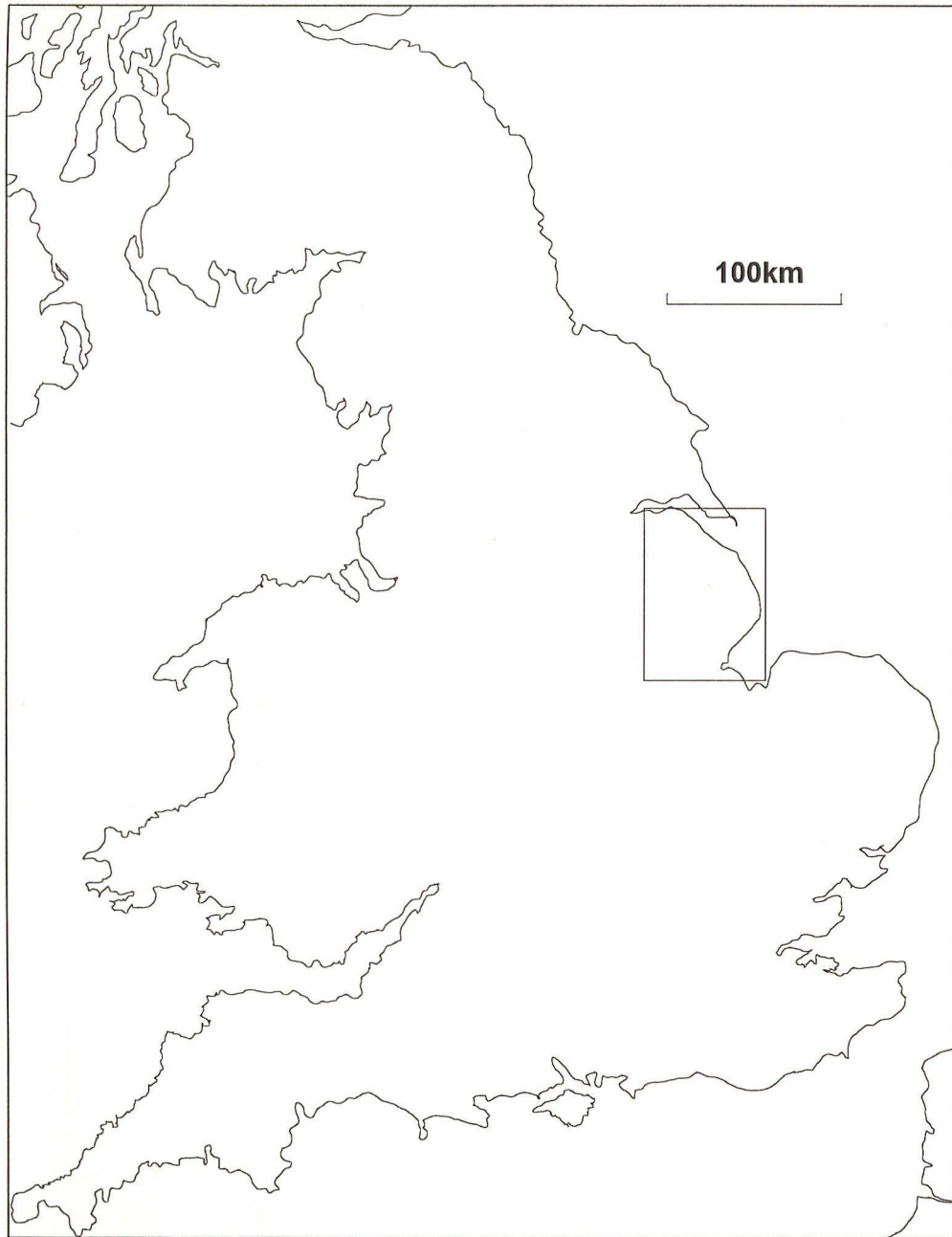
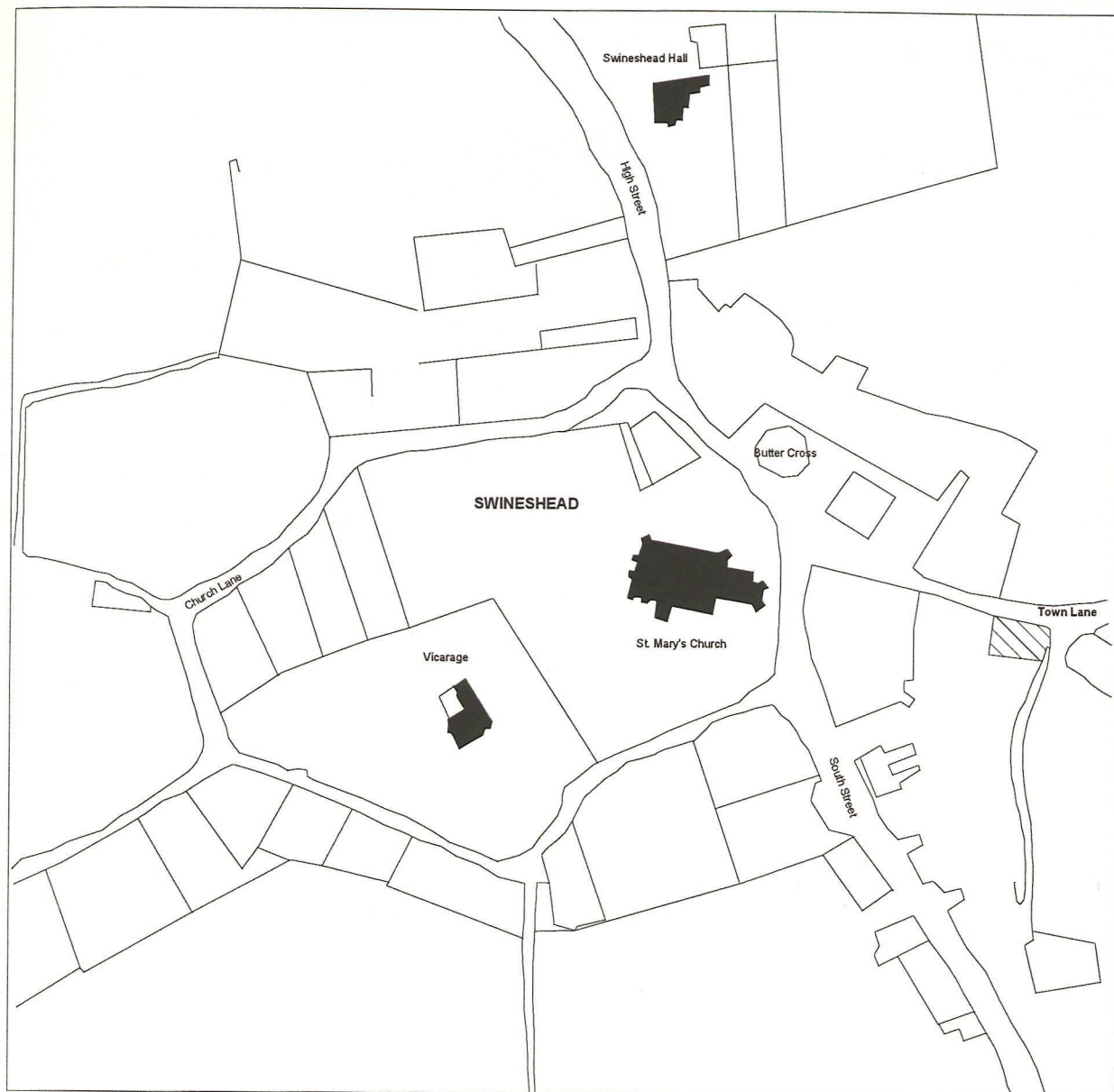


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



Area of Development

Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

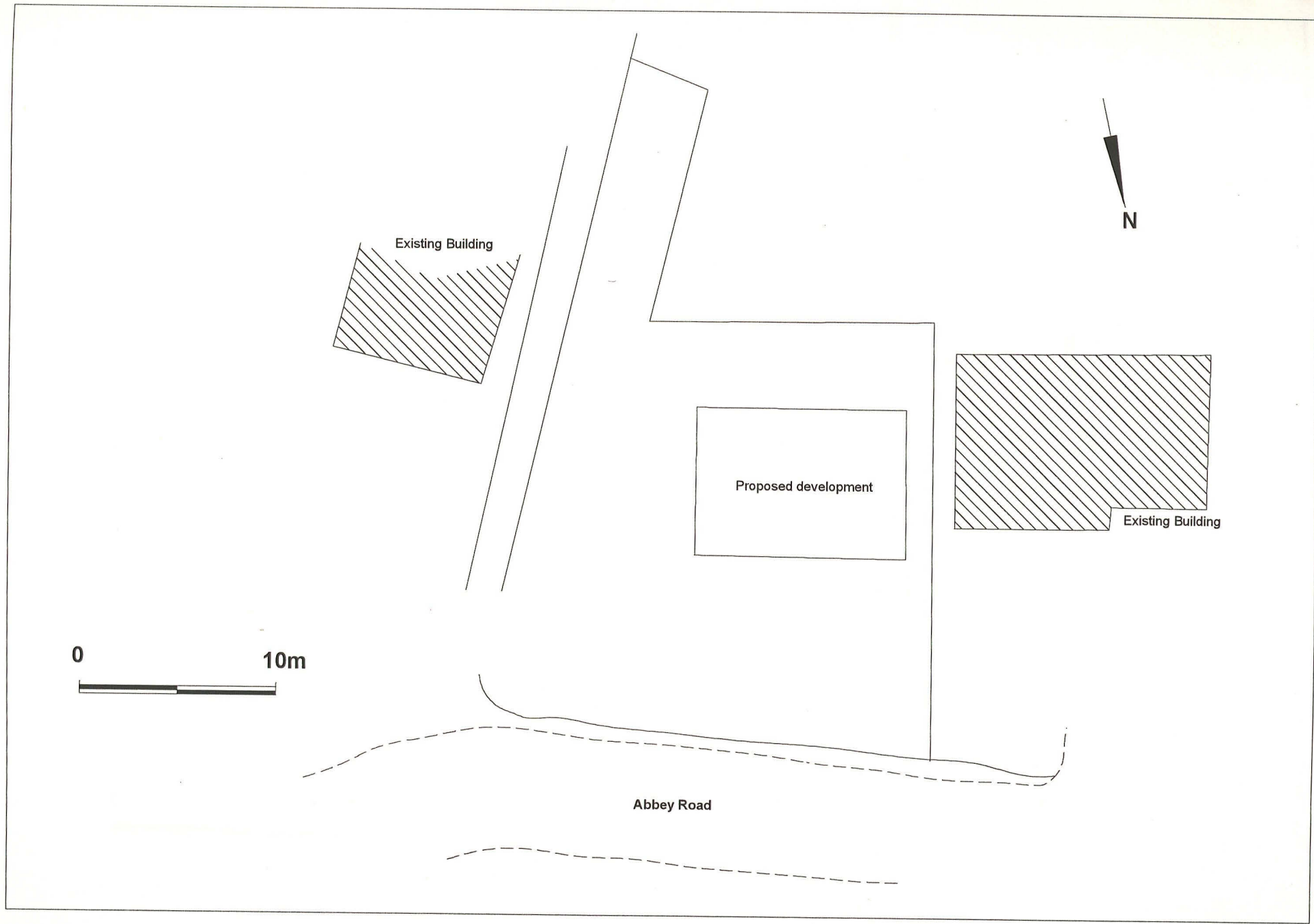


Figure 3 - Development Location Plan

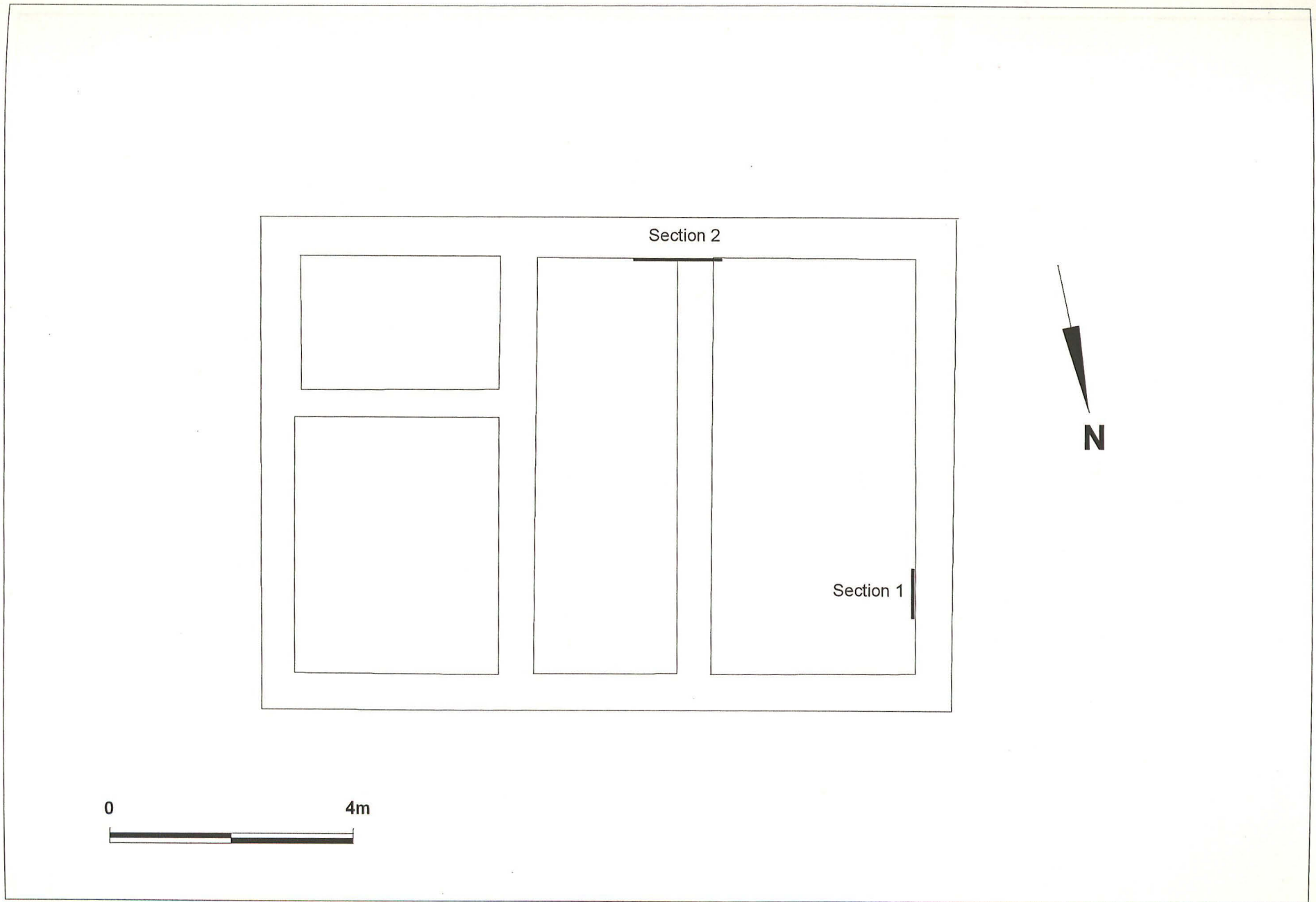


Figure 4 - Plan of Foundations, showing positions of Sections

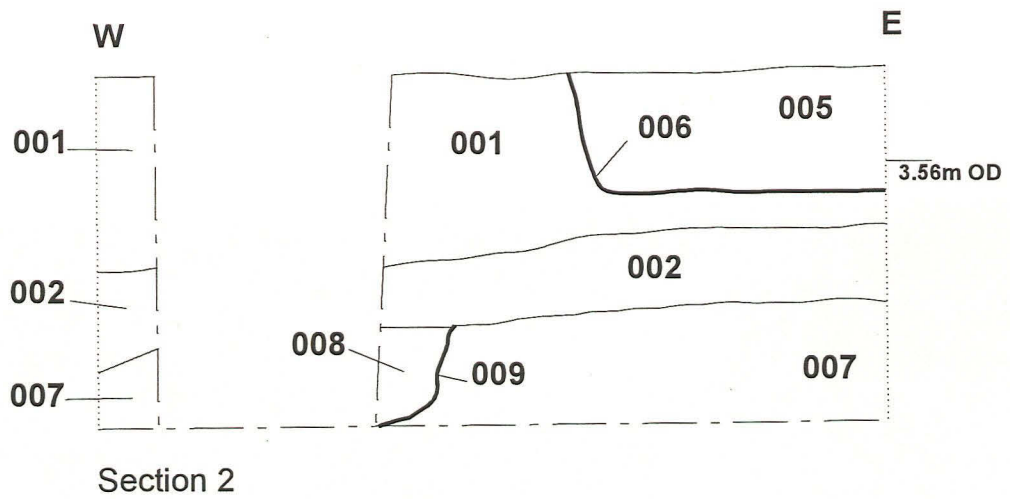
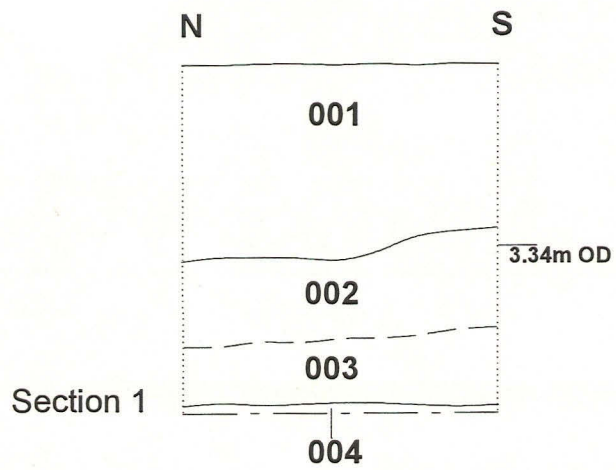


Figure 5 - Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 - General View of the Proposed Development Area,
looking west.



Plate 2 - Section 2, showing general sequence of deposits.

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Section	Description	Interpretation
001	1, 2	Loose dark brown silty sand, 0.49m thick	Topsoil
002	1, 2	Mid brown silty sand, 0.28m thick	Make-up layer
003	1	Mid brown silty sand, 0.2m thick	Make-up layer
004	1	Mottled yellow/yellowish brown silt	Indeterminate layer
005	2	Light brownish yellow sand	Fill of 006
006	2	Sub-rectangular cut, 3.7m by c. 5m by 0.4m deep	Pit
007	2	Light yellowish brown silt, 0.25m exposed	Natural deposit
008	2	Mid brown clayey silt	Fill of 009
009	2	Cut? 0.9m by 0.1m exposed, 0.2m deep	Pit?

Appendix 2

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 9 Context records
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 3 Scale drawings
- 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

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 179.97
Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SAR97

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

- 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.