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Archaeological Evaluation Excavation of
Land at 33 Water Lane, Bassingham, Lincolnshire

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9104 6010

Carried out by

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on behalf of

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for

Mr M A Gray

JSAC 288/97/02
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Mr M A Gray proposes to develop an area of land for residential housing and associated access and drainage (Planning Application No. N/7/0203/96 NGR 491 040/360100). The Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council recommended that an archaeological investigation be undertaken prior to determination and has supplied a Brief for Field Evaluation. Robert Doughty Consultancy, acting for the landowner Mr Gray, commissioned *John Samuels Archaeological Consultants* to submit a specification for the work which was accepted by the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council. The proposed development area covers 0.36ha covered by brambles, weeds, grasses and the remains of an old apple orchard.
- 1.2 A geophysical survey of the site, undertaken by GSB Prospection, identified 7 features. The excavation was directed by John Samuels BA, PhD, FSA, MIFA and supervised on site by Aleck Russell.
- 1.3 The excavation corresponds to the guidelines set out in Planning Policy Guidance : *Archaeology and Planning* (DoE) (PPG16). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, including :

Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), and *Code of Conduct* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1991);

Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA 1994).

2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.1 The village of Bassingham is situated approximately 14km south-west of Lincoln, and 25km north of Grantham, Lincolnshire. Aerial photographs and a geophysical survey indicated an extensive enclosure system and manorial complex in Hall Field on the western side of Water Lane, directly opposite the current development area. An archaeological excavation at Hall Field was undertaken by APS in January 1997. This confirmed a Romano-British enclosure system of 2nd-3rd century date along with a 13th-14th century medieval manorial site.
- 2.2 There have been only three definite prehistoric finds located in the immediate area of Bassingham. A group 2 Neolithic stone axe was found 300m south of Hall Field, a dolerite adze was found along Torgate Lane and a flint chisel was found 1.5km north east of Hall Field.
- 2.3 The Romano-British enclosure system and associated features indicated an occupation site in the immediate area. No direct evidence of any such settlement was found, but there is a Roman villa 2km away at Norton Disney and the cemetery found at Hall Field may be connected. Also found was a Domitian coin (AD 81-96) 500m south of Hall Field and a gilt bronze crescent beaded pin found after dredging the river that runs 400m to the north of Hall Field.
- 2.4 Anglo-Saxon finds are limited to the font at St Michaels Church, 400m to the south of Hall Field, and a small sherd of pottery recovered from a recut of one of the earlier Romano-British enclosure ditches. The final piece of Saxon evidence is the place name of Bassingham which means settlement of Basa's people (Ekwall 1974).
- 2.5 The main medieval activity in the area was a large manorial site with four associated smaller buildings, including barns, garderobes and a dovecote along with large boundary ditches. Bassingham was mentioned in the 1086 AD Domesday survey as having two mills and a church and was owned by King John and Earl Morcar. It was given to Roger or Robert De Bassingham, the first rector of St Michael's Church, in the 13th century (Pevsner 1989). Medieval spot finds in Bassingham are quite limited but include a long-cross penny (Henry III) which was found 600m north east of Hall Field, a small lead ball-seal found 500m to the north of Hall Field, and a 13th-14th century chest key found in Torgate Lane.
- 2.6 By the 18th century, the manorial buildings on Hall Field seem to have been demolished and the building material re-used in several larger structures in the village.

3.0 Methods

3.1 The evaluation took place over one week between the 22nd and the 26th September 1997. Three trenches were excavated, measuring as follows :

Trench 1	15m x 1.60m
Trench 2	10m x 1.50m
Trench 3	5m x 1.60m

3.2 Topsoil/subsoil was stripped down to the uppermost archaeological or natural horizon under archaeological supervision. All features were excavated and recorded in plan and section by measured drawing; colour print, colour slide and black and white photography and by written record. A full written, drawn and photographic record was kept throughout on the basis of individual contexts.

3.3 In this text, features are shown in square brackets and fills in round brackets.

4.0 Results

4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3 & 5)

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was sited in the south west corner of the main development area and had maximum dimensions of c. 15m by 1.50m with an east/west orientation of its main axis. The topsoil (101) was a dark grey/black sandy loam with an average depth of c. 0.22m and overlay a subsoil (102) of dark grey brown sandy silt with an average depth of c. 0.52m to natural yellow sand and gravel (103). Several post holes and a possible linear feature were identified, cut into the natural.
- 4.1.2 One post hole [105] (Figure 5) was square cut with an average width of c. 0.40m, located at the south western end of the trench. In profile [105] had vertical sides and a flat base with an average depth of 17cm. It contained one fill (104) which was a dark brown sandy silt with common small sub-rounded stones (Figure 7).
- 4.1.3 Post hole [107] (Figure 5) was a sub oval cut with a length of c. 0.50m and width of c. 0.38m. It was located on the northern side of the south western end of the trench. In profile [107] had a vertical eastern face and a sharply sloped western face with a depth of c. 0.23m. It contained one fill (106) which was a dark grey brown sandy silt with abundant small sub rounded stones (Figure 8).
- 4.1.4 Cut [111] (Figure 6) had only one definite edge but was indicated as a linear feature through geophysical survey and was located at the eastern end of the trench. The known profile of [111] was stepped with the upper part being very steep sided and the lower half vertical to a depth of c. 0.80m. It contained four fills with the upper fill (108) a dark olive brown silt c. 0.40m in depth, the second fill (109) a mid grey clay with pockets of olive brown clay c. 16m in depth, over fill (110), a dark ginger brown sandy silt 0.26m in depth and the final, lowest fill (112), a dark orange brown sandy matrix with abundant small sub rounded stones which seemed to be a slump deposit against the base of the cut [111].
- 4.1.5 No finds were retrieved from postholes [105] and [107]. [111] contained 19th-20th century ceramic pottery, unidentified fragments of animal bone and one large sherd of decorated Anglo Saxon pottery. The Saxon pottery was certainly redeposited, probably during recent landscaping by the landowners using material from the Hall Field excavation.

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 3 & 9)

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was sited on the southern side of the main development area and had maximum dimensions of c. 10m by 1.50m and orientated north/west on its long axis. The layer (201) was a dump of topsoil from the Hall Field excavation, used by the landowners to landscape part of the development area and had an average depth of c. 0.26m. The original topsoil (203) was a dark grey brown sandy silt with its sealed original turf horizon and an average depth of c. 0.60m. This overlay a subsoil (204) of dark orange brown

sandy silt with an average depth of c. 0.48m which overlay a layer (205) of modern sand dump material 0.20m thick only found in the northern end of the trench, probably connected to quarry activity, which in turn overlays the natural yellow and (209). One slightly amorphous linear feature was found dug into the natural.

4.2.2 Cut [206] (Figure 10/11) has two linear arms with parallel edges running into a slightly amorphous main body at the northern end of the trench. Only one of the linear arms offered a complete profile of gradually sloping sides tapering to a rounded base with a width of c. 0.64m and a depth of c. 16cm. It contained one fill (207) which was a grey brown sandy silt with occasional small sub rounded stones. Due to the feature's shape and orientation it was very difficult to determine its true extent. No finds were recovered to give a date.

4.3 Trench 3 (Figures 3 & 12)

4.3.1 Trench 3 was sited in the western end of the development area and had maximum dimensions of c. 5m by 1.50m and was orientated east/west on its long axis. The capping layer (301) is a mixture of tarmac and road stone chippings with a depth of c. 14cm and overlays a topsoil (302) of mid grey brown silty clay with a depth of 0.86m. The natural yellow sand and gravel (305) lay directly beneath this topsoil. Several pit like features were found dug into the natural.

4.3.2 Pit [303] (Figure 12) was a sub oval cut located at the eastern end of the trench. It measured c. 1.56m wide, c. 0.40m deep and c. 1.46m long before running southwards out of the trench. In profile [303] had a steeply sloping western edge and a gradually sloping eastern edge. It contained one fill (304), a light grey brown silty clay which contained common small sub rounded stones and large animal bone fragments, mainly in the upper part of the fill which indicated domestic butchery.

4.3.3 Cut [308] (Figure 12) was very difficult to define as it extended only 0.46m into the western end of the trench. It measured 1.50m wide and was over 2.07m deep. The feature had vertical sides but the base was unexcavated due to depth restrictions. It contained 5 fills, the upper fill (309) being a mid grey brown silty clay with occasional small sub rounded stones and c. 0.88m deep. Below, was a thin band of light grey brown silty clay (310) which contained occasional small sub-rounded stones and was c. 12 cm in depth. A mid grey brown silty clay (311) with common small sub rounded stones with a depth of c. 0.66 m overlay (311), the lowest excavated fill, a thin band of light grey brown silty clay (312) with common small sub rounded stones and c. 7 cm in thickness. The final layer (313) was a mid grey brown silty clay with occasional small sub rounded stones, no thickness of layer was available due to the depth of the cut [308] continuing beyond c. 2.12m (Figure 13 & 14).

The upper fill (309) contained modern brick fragments which (310) contained glazed pottery, brick fragments and animal bone fragments, fill (311) contained glazed pottery, brick fragments and animal bones, while fill (312) contained no finds and finally fill (313)

contained glazed pottery and several brick fragments. None of the pottery seemed to be older than 16th century and the brick fragments were too small to give a useful date.

5.0 Discussions

- 5.1 The aims of the trial trench evaluation were to determine if the large Romano-British enclosure system, small Roman cemetery and 13th-14th century manorial site identified at Hall Field extend through into the proposed development at 33 Water Lane. Two factors made gathering dating evidence almost impossible : there has been extensive sand and gravel extraction in the immediate area since the 16th century; and following the excavations at Hall Field, the landowners at 33 Water Lane used excess soil from that site to landscape the current study area.
- 5.2 Pit features in Trench 3 contained pottery that indicated a post 17th century date. One of these features [308] only extended 0.46m into the trench and could not be fully bottomed due to its depth. Earlier use of this pit might therefore be identified at lower levels.
- 5.3 In Trench 1, one feature contained predominantly 19th century glazed ceramics throughout the fills. A single piece of decorated Anglo-Saxon pottery would seem to have been introduced more recently, possibly through gravel pit backfilling or more recent landscaping. No other features in any of the trenches contained any Anglo-Saxon pottery.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The trial trench evaluation proved that there was no indication of any Romano-British or medieval activity on the development area at 33 Water Lane. Neither the extensive Romano-British animal enclosure or the cemetery that were located through excavation of a large area on Hall Field on the western side of Water Lane continued across the road. Nor was there any indication of features that could be connected to the large 12th-13th century manorial site and its associated smaller buildings extending from the Hall Field site across to the proposed development area.
- 6.2 Much of the study site had been disturbed by sand and gravel quarrying and recent landscaping. No features pre-dated the 16th century and all were probably the result of post-medieval and modern activities.
- 6.3 It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work be required.

7.0 Figures

Figure 1 : Location of Bassingham, Lincolnshire

Figure 2 : Location of development site, 33 Water Lane, Bassingham

Figure 3 : Archaeological trenches

Figure 4 : Geophysical survey results

Figure 5 : Trench 1 post excavation plan

Figure 6 : Trench 1 long trench section and cut [111]

Figure 7 : Trench 1 section across post hole [105]

Figure 8 : Trench 1 section across post hole [107]

Figure 9 : Trench 2 post excavation plan

Figure 10 : Trench 2 long trench section and cut [207]

Figure 11 : Trench 2 short trench section and cut [207]

Figure 12 : Trench 3 post excavation plan

Figure 13 : Trench 3 long trench section and cut [308]

Figure 14 : Trench 3 short trench section and cut [308]

Figure 15 : Trench 3 section across pit [303]

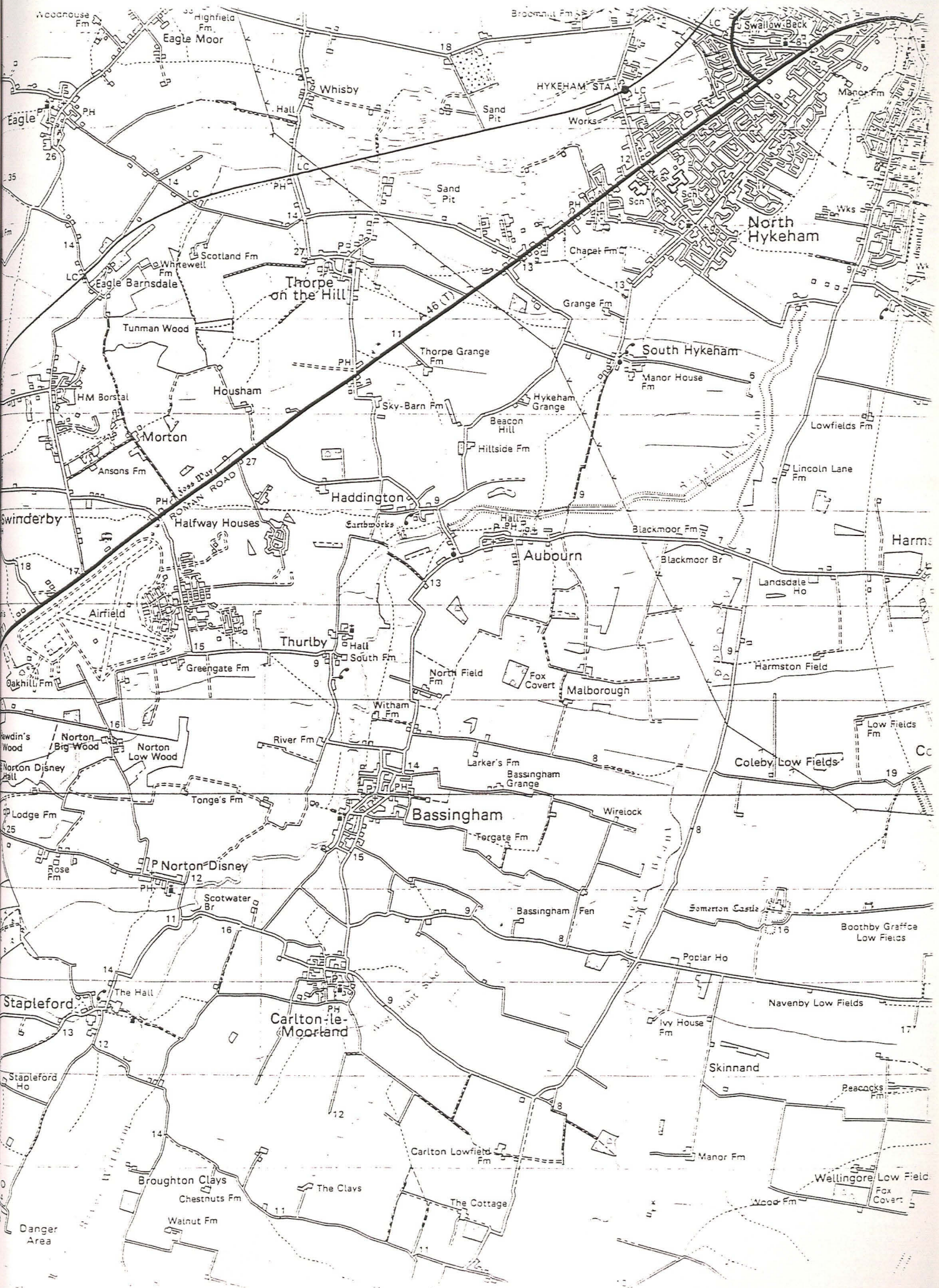
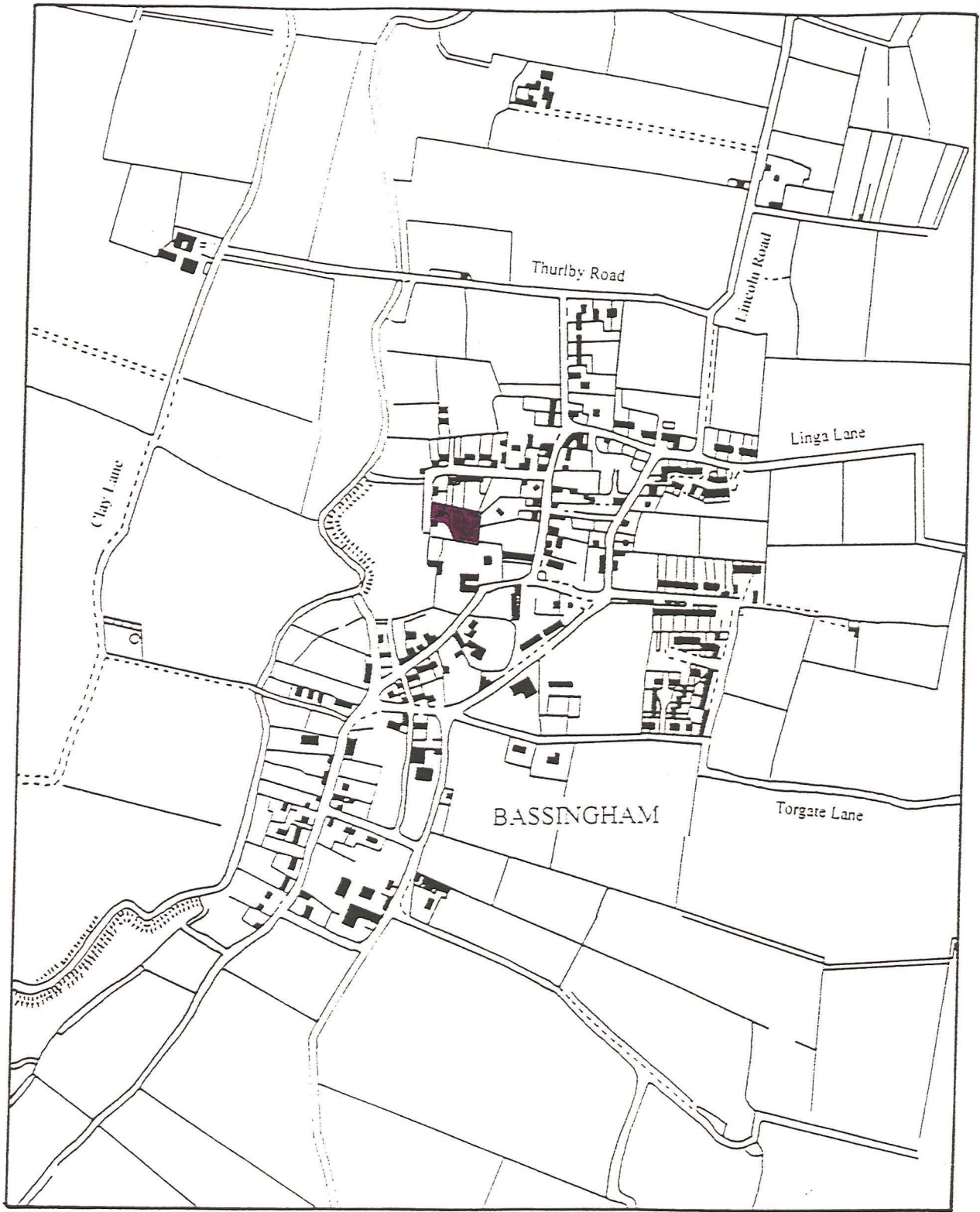


Fig 1

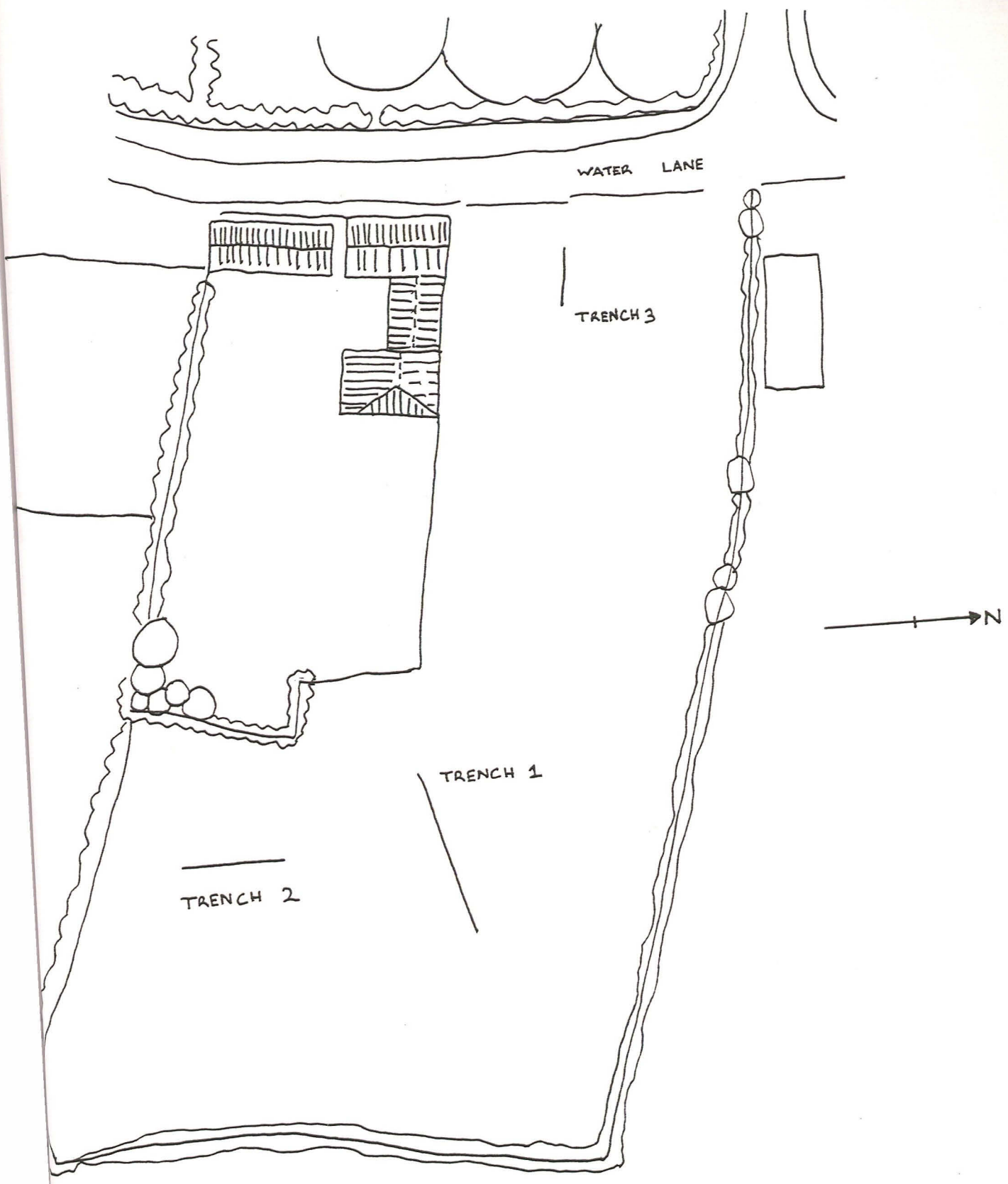


0 1km



Area of Development

Fig 2



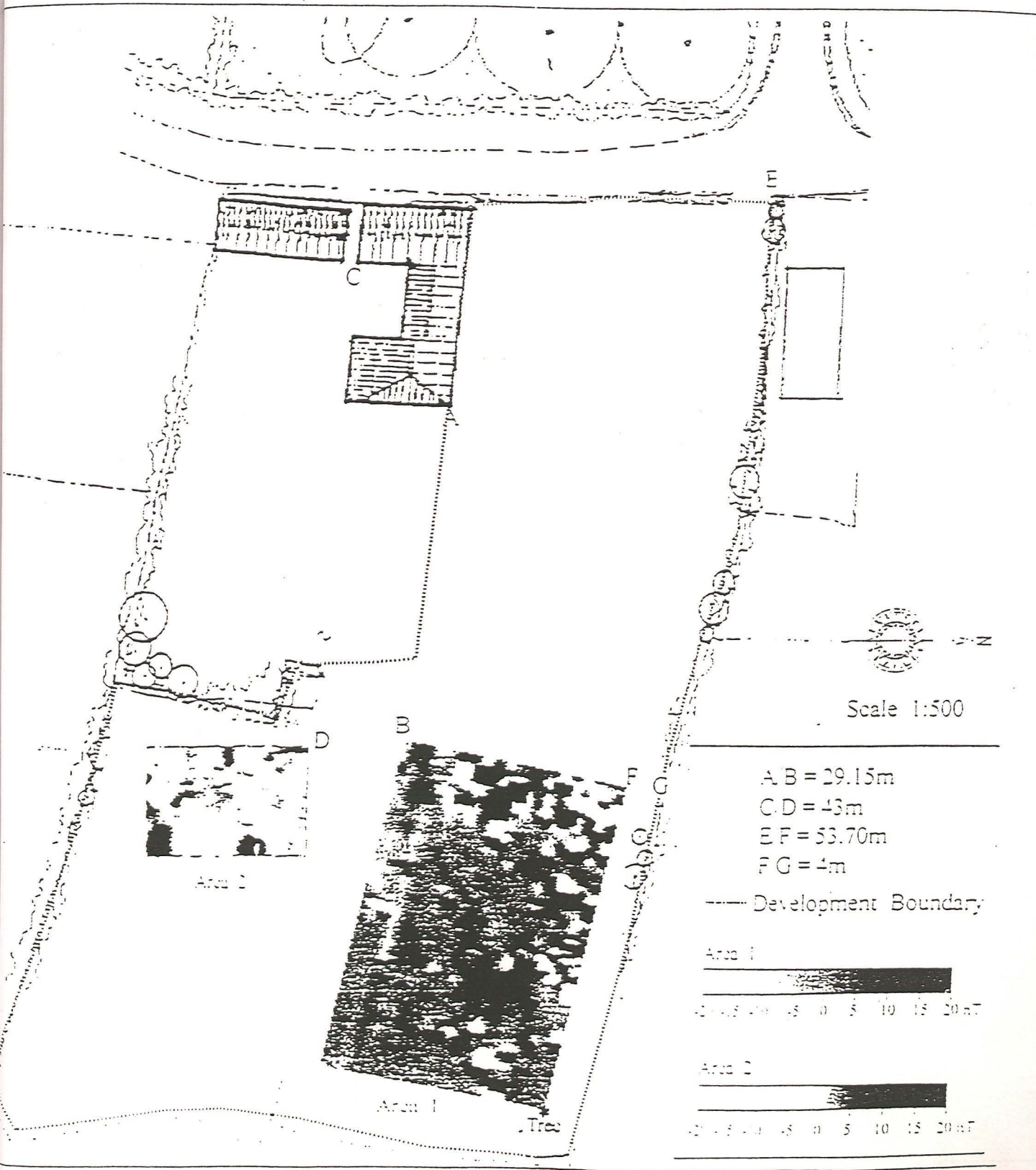
1:500 Scale.

Fig 3

Proposed Development at Bassingham, Lincolnshire

Magnetometer (Gradiometer) Survey

Overview



A.B = 29.15m
 C.D = 43m
 E.F = 53.70m
 F.G = 4m

----- Development Boundary

Area 1
 0 5 10 15 20m

Area 2
 0 5 10 15 20m

Fig 4

TRENCH 1

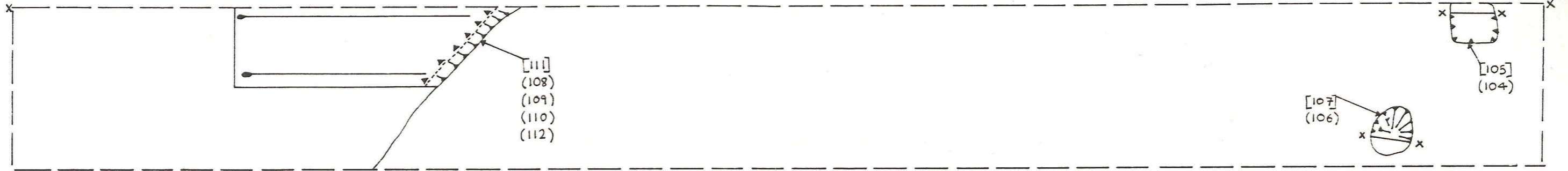


Fig 5

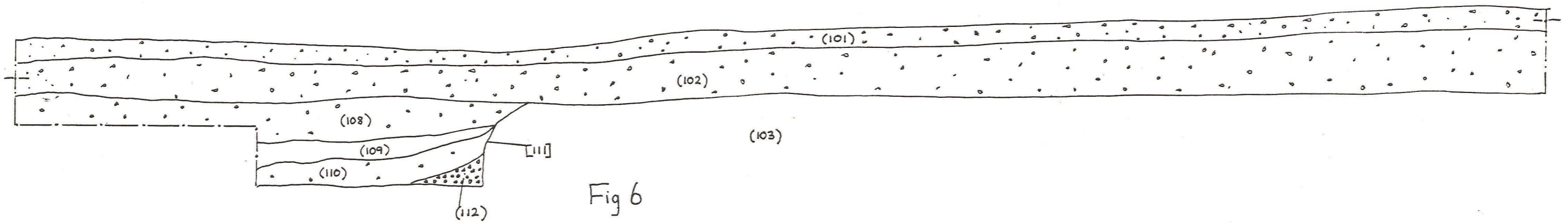


Fig 6



1:20 Scale.

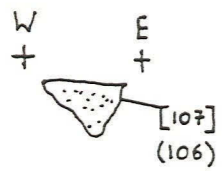


Fig 8

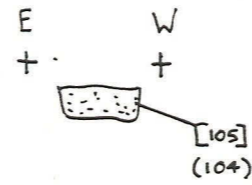


Fig 7

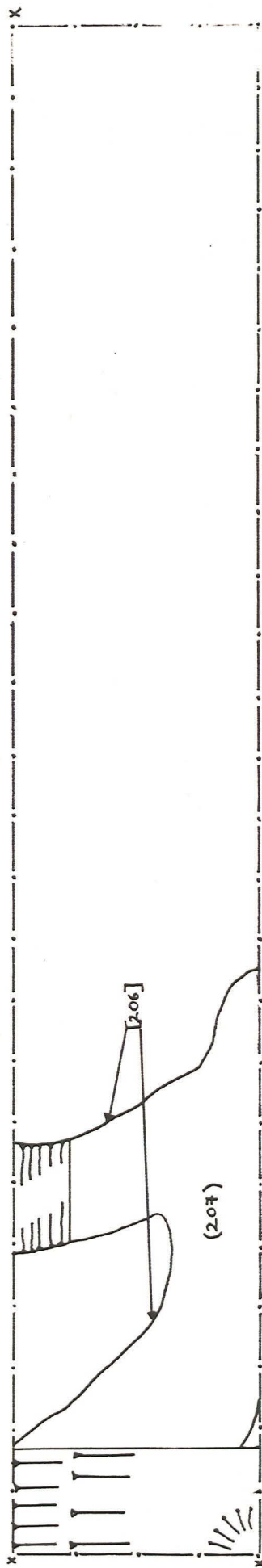


Fig 9

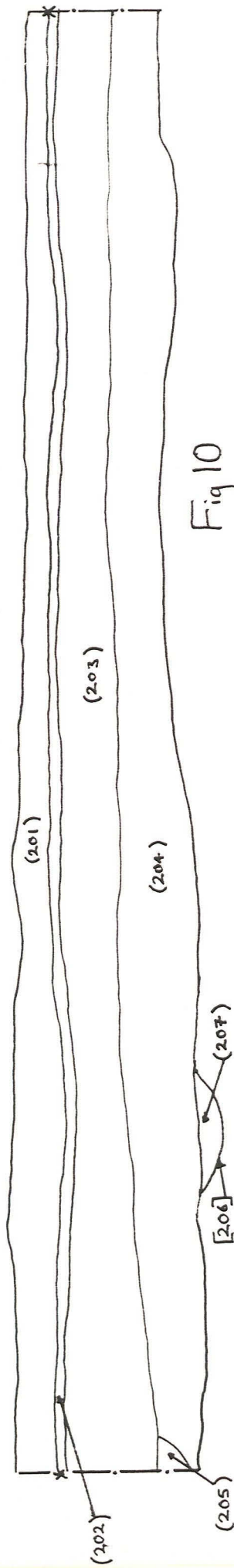


Fig 10

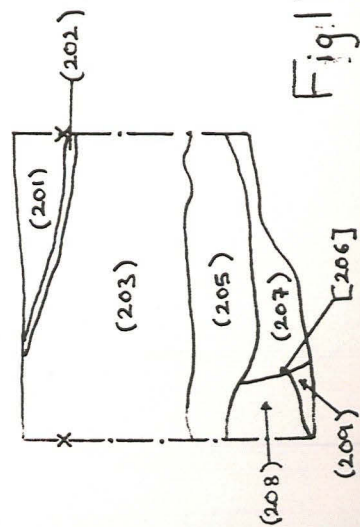


Fig 11



1:20 Scale.

TRENCH 3

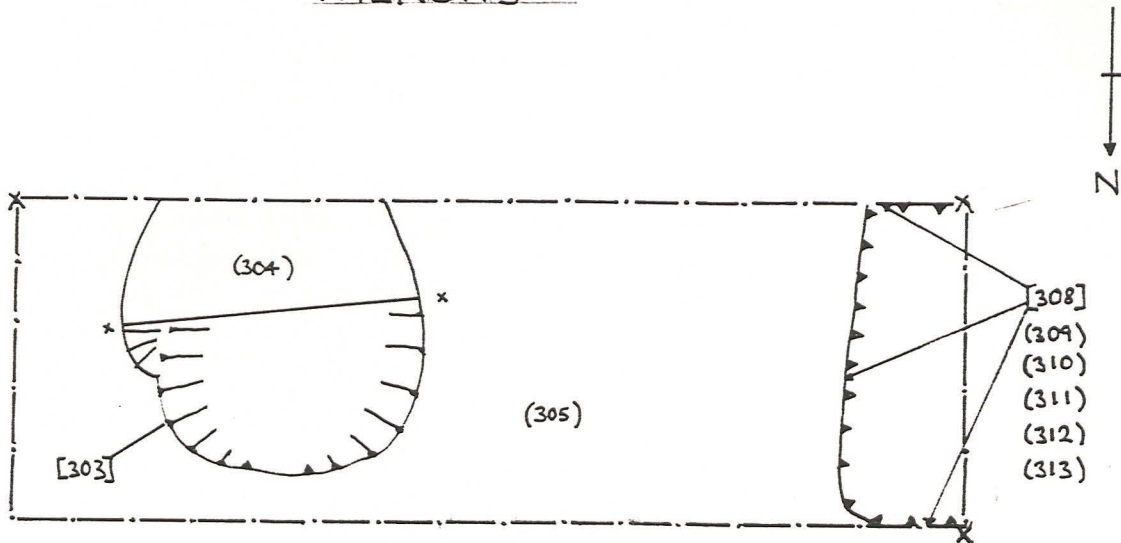


Fig 12

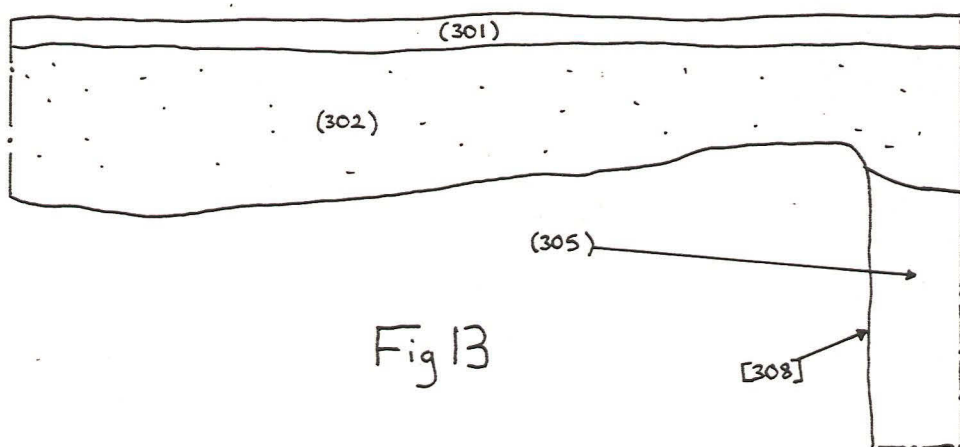
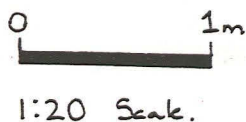


Fig 13

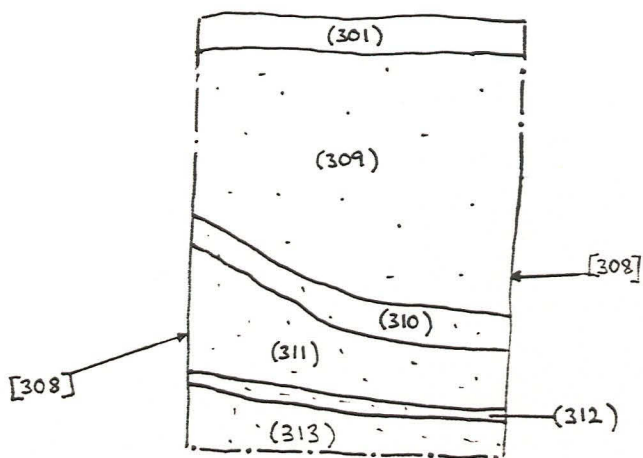


Fig 14

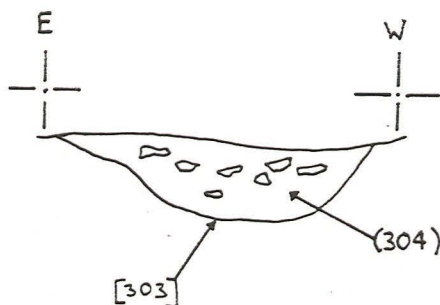


Fig 15