An Archaeological Evaluation through Test-Pitting at the Chapter House of Walsingham Greyfriars, Norfolk.

Prepared for David Watt of
Hutton & Rostron Environmental Investigations Ltd

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Location:	Walsingham
Grid Ref:	TF 9331 3659
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Date of fieldwork:	10th to 14th of October 2013

1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by David Watt of Hutton & Rostron Environmental Investigations Ltd, on behalf of the landowner, to undertake a targeted test-pitting survey of the remains of the Walsingham Greyfriars' Chapter House. The Chapter House is part of an extensive complex of remains (Scheduled Monument No. NF201; 1003162) of a Franciscan Friary, which was founded in 1347 and dissolved in 1538. The surviving ruins include parts of the Great and Little Cloisters, the Guesthouse, the Chapter House and the precinct wall. Little of the church or Great Cloister remains but there are notable portions of the domestic buildings, especially the Little Cloister, Guest House and Kitchen.

The Chapter House is a rectangular building with extant flint & mortar walls standing to a height of 3m which currently act as retaining walls for a large quantity of imported material. Therefore, in addition to natural erosion through weathering, the walls are under lateral pressure, with the eastern wall having partially collapsed. English Heritage and the Norfolk Historic Environment Service (NHES) requested that a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation (by Trial Pits) be undertaken in order to allow a suitable mitigation strategy to be considered in response to proposals for a programme of repair & consolidation work to the fabric of the Chapter House. This forms part of a greater work programme at the site partly funded by Natural England through Higher Level Stewardship.

The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued jointly by the Historic Environment Service (HES Ref: CNF45086_2) and English Heritage. The aim of the test-pitting was primarily to allow a structural engineer to view and assess the Chapter House foundations. This also afforded the opportunity to assess the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any archaeological remains and features exposed by the test-pits. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, the results and the archaeological interpretation of the evaluation.

On completion of the project, the site archive will be offered for long term deposition with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Summary of Results

The excavation of five test-pits has provided information regarding both the character of the Chapter House footings and the infill deposits it retains. In addition, new data on the general method of its construction and information pertaining to the floor level within the Chapter House has been gained.

The Chapter House walls appear to have been constructed in a series of lifts, making use of temporary platforms of rammed earth which brought the floor level closer to that of the Great Cloister. The floor and its mortar bed seems to have been thoroughly robbed away, although an internal change in wall fabric from rough to fair face work may mark the approximate floor level. A sequence of demolition debris has been dumped within the Chapter House, which includes post-medieval materials relating to later activity at the site.

The wall footings have been proven to be particularly deep and in good condition. Overall the test-pitting evidence alongside general observations, paints a picture of a highly ruinous structure that has witnessed several phases of post-medieval robbing activity and at least one major recent phase of consolidation and repair.

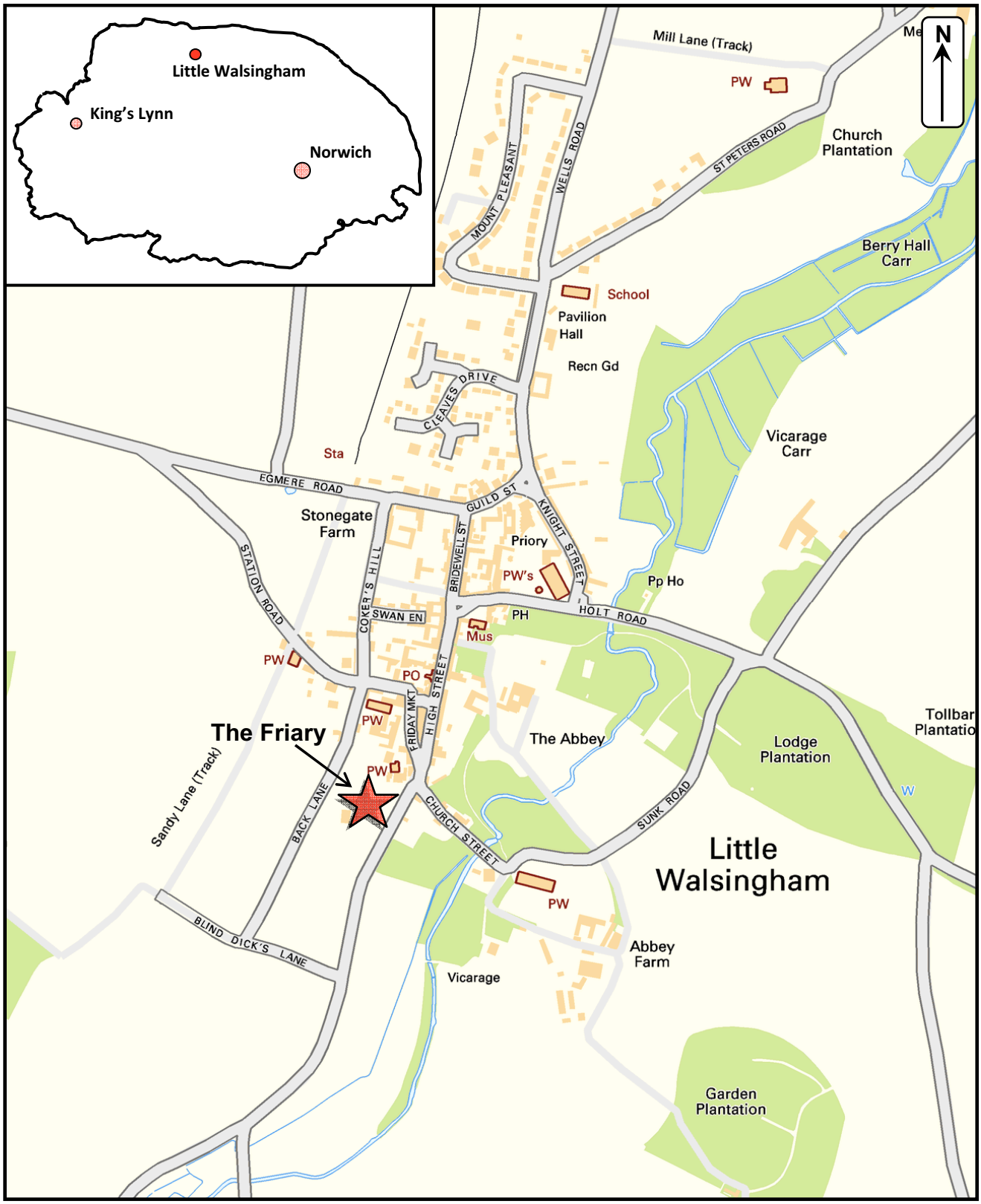

Figure 1. General Location Plan

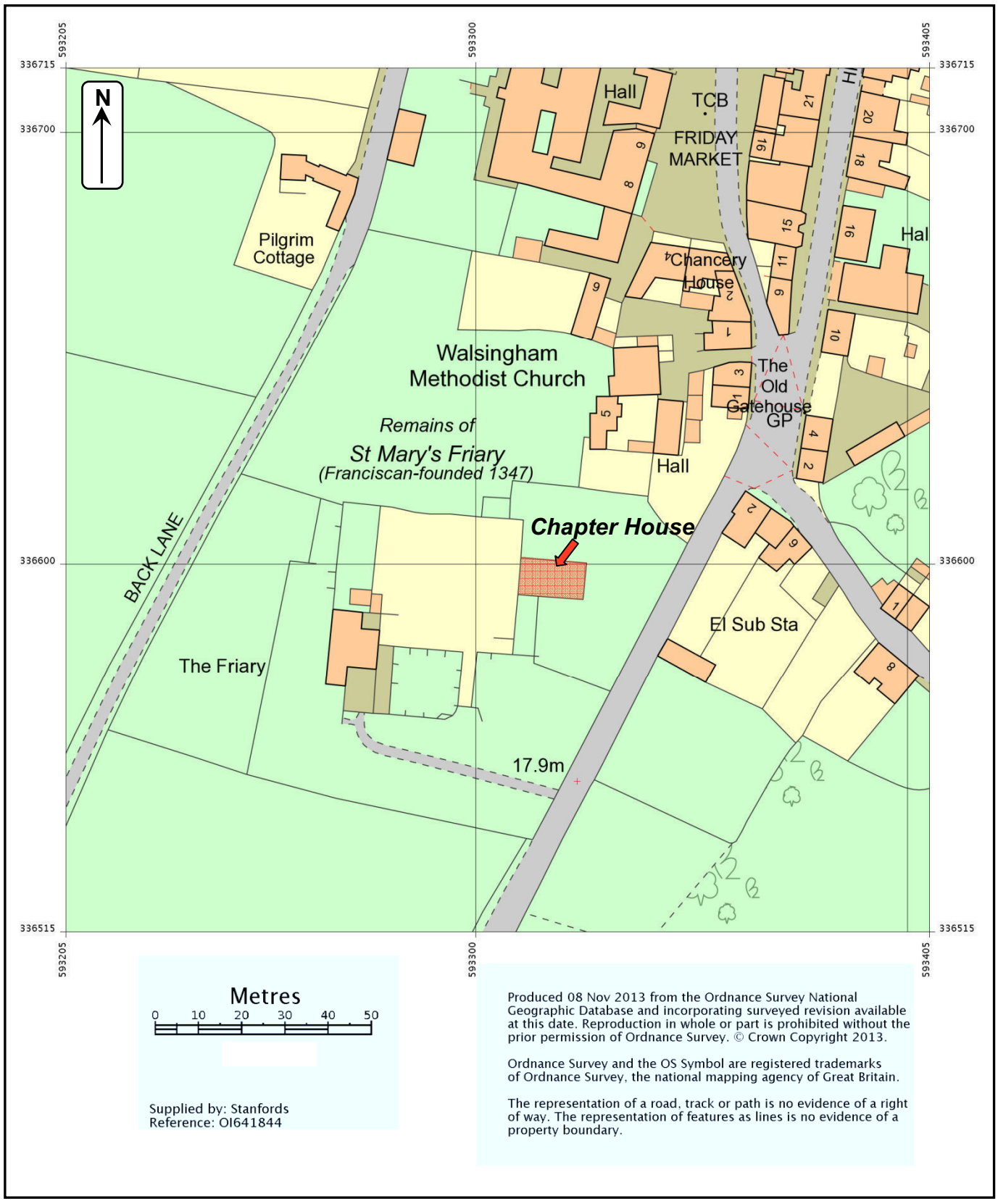

Figure 2. Chapter House Location Plan

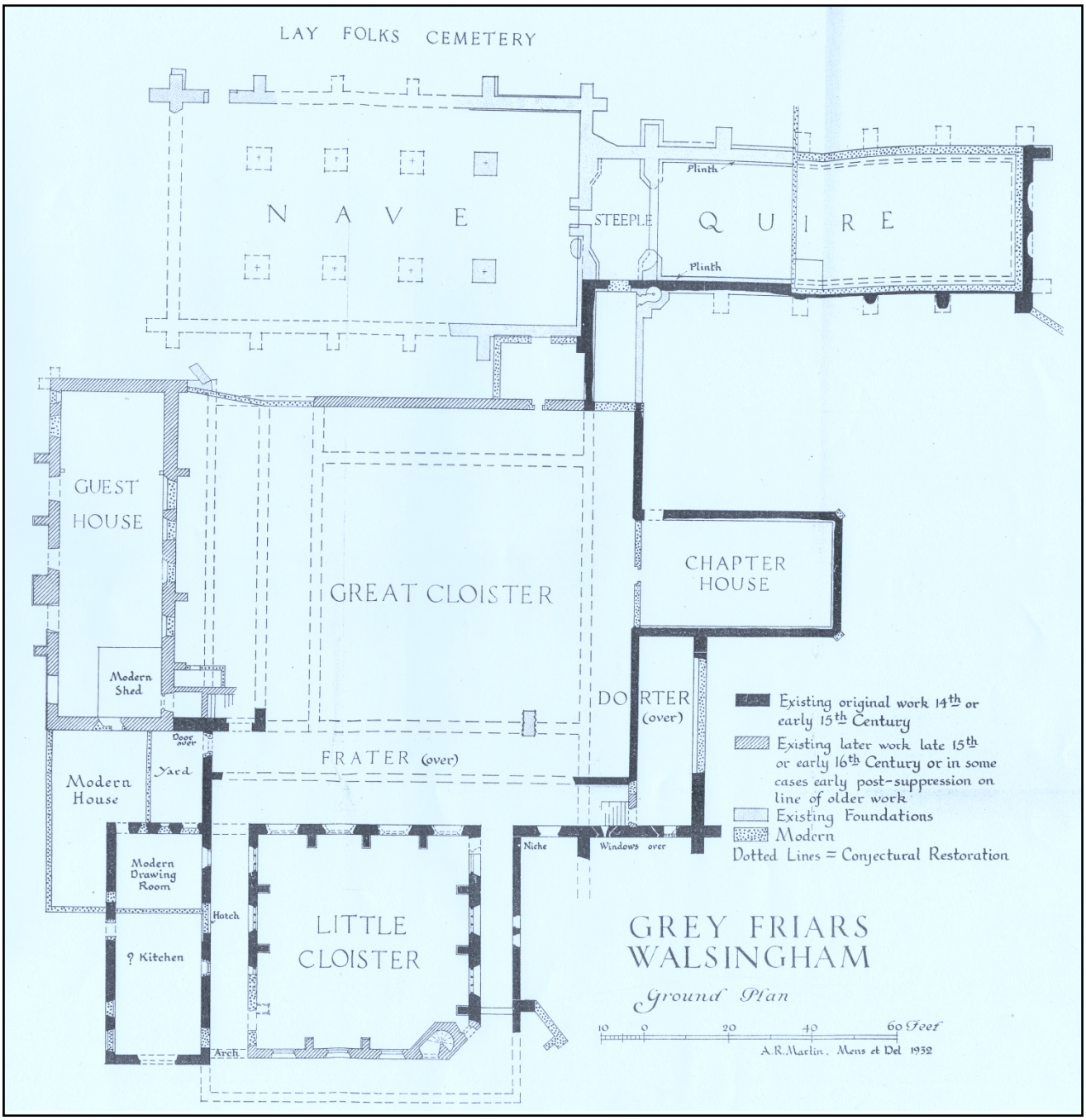

Figure 3. Plan of the Walsingham Grey Friars by A.R.Martin (1932)

3.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located on the eastern slopes of the River Stiffkey valley; c.200m from its western banks, on well sloping ground of c.20m OD rising to c. 24m OD.

The underlying geology is Upper Chalk, overlain by subaerial Quaternary period superficial deposits of clays, silts, sands and gravels, formed mostly by solifluction and/or hillwash and soil creep - Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50 000 (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html).

The sub-surface geology of the site encountered during the fieldwork can be characterised as chalk-flecked sandy-clay with pockets of soliflucted chalk.

4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

Walsingham is located in the district of North Norfolk and is a village formed from two conjoined settlements, Little Walsingham and Great Walsingham. It is famed internationally for its religious shrines in honour of the Virgin Mary and as a major centre for modern pilgrimage.

Walsingham first became a major centre of pilgrimage in the eleventh century when in 1061 a Saxon noblewoman, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision of the Virgin Mary in which she was instructed to build a replica of the house of the Holy Family in Nazareth in honour of the Annunciation. Walsingham quickly rose to become one of northern Europe's great places of pilgrimage and remained so throughout the medieval period.

A religious order and Holy House was founded at Little Walsingham and the first prior was put in place in 1153. St Mary's Augustinian Priory (NHER 2029) was built adjacent to the first Holy House and in the 14th century the Franciscan Friary (NHER 2036) was also built near the site.

To provide accommodation and facilities for the visiting pilgrims, the medieval village of Little Walsingham grew around the religious core, although the extent of any planned settlement remains uncertain. Many of the remaining medieval buildings in Little Walsingham may have served as pilgrim hostels and inns. Excavations in the 1950s underneath the modern Anglican shrine (NHER 2035) revealed foundations of a medieval inn or almonry. Other medieval structures include the Shire Hall (NHER 15129), now a museum, and a leper hospital (NHER 2060).

The pilgrimage centre at Walsingham was reinstated in the 20th century following the construction of a new sanctuary of Our Lady at Walsingham in 1897 and a new Roman Catholic Church. The village is now frequently visited by followers of the Roman Catholic and Anglican faiths, with the additional development of a new Anglican shrine.

The Franciscan Friars were invited to found a religious house at Walsingham by Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter of Gilbert the Red, 9th Earl of Clare. Elizabeth had inherited the Manor from her brother the 10th Earl of Clare. The necessary licences were obtained from both Pope Clement VI and Edward III in 1347.

After nearly two centuries, the Friary was dissolved and surrendered in 1538 to Richard Ingworth, who was appointed to receive English Friaries on behalf of the Crown. Passing through several hands, the property passed to John Bond, a Norwich wool merchant. His son, Nehemiah, a Sheriff of Norwich, is documented as owning a home there in 1648; a stone lozenge placed over the entrance to the Little Cloister bears this date (Bond 1956).

The majority of the complex is thought to have been constructed in the 14th to 15th centuries. The surviving ruins include parts of the Great and Little Cloisters, the guesthouse, the Chapter House and the precinct wall. The church was a simple plan of nave and quire with a central tower. Little of the church or Great Cloister remains but there are notable portions of the domestic buildings, especially the Little Cloister, Guest House and Kitchen. Adjoining to the south was the Great Cloister with the guesthouse in the west wing, Frater to the south and the Chapter House to the east. The Little Cloister with kitchen

to the west adjoins the Frater on its south side. The main entrance to the friary formerly opened out onto the southwest corner of the marketplace. The Friary is believed to have been sited across the former course of a road which led to the market until 1384, when a licence was granted to enclose the area of the 'old road' and create the 'new road' (Page 1906).

The Guesthouse walls are the largest standing remains. Built against its southern end is a house of c.1840. Some areas of the extensive complex of ruins were subject to archaeological excavation in 1932 which included preliminary investigations on the site of the church and other buildings (but not the Chapter House) and a survey of the surviving layout to produce an overall site plan (see Figure 3). An account by A.R.Martin produced as part of the results of the excavation and survey work is presented below:

THE CHAPTER HOUSE

> *The walls of the Chapter House still stand to a height of about 9ft, and like those of the chancel, now serve as retaining walls, the ground within being on a level with their top. The building, which is in the normal position to the east of the great cloister, is rectangular, measuring 25ft by 46ft internally, and was entered apparently direct from the east cloister walk. The walls are of flint laid in fairly regular courses and the present angle buttresses are modern. The remains of what appears to have been an original buttress on the south side, which has been subsequently incorporated in the east wall of the long narrow building to the south, is of well-faced flint with galletted joints and stands considerably higher than the surrounding walls. The whole of the west wall abutting on the site of the cloister seems to have been rebuilt. In it is a narrow brick doorway, possibly of 18th-century date. No trace of the original door survives.*
>
> *Time did not permit for any excavation being carried out in this building, so that it is impossible to say what was the original level of the floor. This may have been laid on a foundation of rammed earth as has been suggested was done in the chancel, so as to bring the general level up to that of the cloister, but in the absence of excavation this is purely conjectural.*
>
> *Martin, A.R. The Greyfriars of Walsingham, Norfolk Archaeology vol. XXV pp.258*

Sites of particular relevance or interest which fall in close proximity to the site include:

The following information has been sourced from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER):

NHER 2036: ***Franciscan Friary****.* The Franciscan Friary at Walsingham was founded in 1346. It was dissolved in 1538. Part of the buildings were excavated in the 1930s and some ruins still survive including parts of the Great and Little Cloister, the guesthouse and the base of the chapter house. Very little is left of the church. The main entrance to the friary led onto the southwest corner of the marketplace.

NHER 53949: ***Franciscan Friary Gatehouse (site of).*** It has been suggested that this is the possible site of the gatehouse to the friary (NHER 2036), on the line of the road leading north to Friday Market (next to the current Methodist Chapel on the High Street). [c. 30m N]

NHER 15507:?***Fish-ponds.*** An L shaped pond and a ditch can be seen on early maps. These could be evidence to suggest the presence of a former medieval moat or fishponds associated with the Friary site. [c. 75m SE]

NHER 2029: ***St Mary's Priory, Walsingham.*** This Augustinian priory was founded in the 12th century but there has been a chapel on the site since the 11th century. The site became an important pilgrimage centre. Existing remains include fragments of 13th to 15th century buildings including the chancel, refectory, precinct walls and gates. There are also two Holy wells east of the abbey (NHER 56856). Parts of these remains were revealed after excavations in 1961. After the Dissolution of the priory in 1538 some of the ruins were built into a new mansion (Abbey House) that was built on the site. A landscaped park was built around the house and ruins in the 19th century. [c. 250m NE)

NHER 14302: ***Market Cross*****.** This is the site of medieval market cross that was removed around 1790 [c. 50m NNE]

NHER 2052: ***Cropmarks/Find-spot.*** A group of three circular cropmarks can be seen on aerial photographs of a field to the west of the Friary site. Site visits have failed to identify these on the ground. Metal detecting has recovered two Roman coins. [c. 150m W]

NHER 24308: ***Find-spot.*** Metal detecting recovered a 1st Century Roman coin from fields to the south of the Friary site. [c. 100m S]

5.0 Methodology (Figure 2)

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to record any archaeological evidence revealed by test-pits excavated against the external and internal walls of the Chapter House. As requested by the Brief, five test pits were excavated by hand, located strategically to assess the footings of the Chapter House walls and the nature of the archaeological deposits contained by the extant structure.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector (Minelab XTerra 705). All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Norvic Archaeology *pro forma* sheets. The trench location, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and both digital and black & white images were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

All levels were taken using a temporary benchmark of 19.41m OD located on a fence post at the south-east corner of the Chapter House, tied to an OS Spot Height of 17.9m OD located on the road outside the entrance to the site.

6.0 Results *(Appendix 1a)*

The Chapter House Footing as revealed by Test Pits 1 to 3

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was excavated against the external face of the southern wall of the Chapter House. The flint and mortar footings were partly exposed here, which revealed a stepped footing (by c. 0.25m) constructed of a solid, slightly splayed flint & mortar build with very rare inclusions of medieval brick fragments (06). The footing was constructed with fairly regular coursing with a fair face using a hard, off-white lime-rich mortar which has been left both unpointed and bleeding in places. Unlike the footings revealed on the northern side in Test Pits 2 and 3, the flint fabric here included several very large unstruck cobbles, particularly in the uppermost courses of the footings.

Plate 2: TP1 [1x0.5m scale]

Part of the construction cut ([05]) for the footings was identified where it flared out from the wall and where it was infilled by silty-sand and construction debris (04). At greater depth the footings were constructed against a vertical cut into the natural geology (07).

Above the infill of the construction cut and abutting the wall footings was a medieval make-up layer (03) of redeposited clay-sand and soil flecked by residual chalk and mortar waste.

A layer of modern soil c.0.3m deep lay above the medieval deposits which shows that the base of the wall has been exposed previously (02). Above this soil and along the base of the wall at this location was a heap of loose soil and flint & mortar rubble (01) formed from the erosion of the wall above.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was excavated against the northern external wall face of the Chapter House. Several construction lifts can be identified within the footings which step out by c.0.2m and which also splay out slightly (13). The fabric made use of the same hard mortar as seen throughout the medieval construction of the Chapter House, although with variations in the flint sizes utilised for each lift. The uppermost foundation lift (b) made use of the largest flint cobbles laid in relatively regular courses with mostly recessed mortar only occasionally extruded or bleeding. The lowest two lifts (d and e) made use of smaller flints obscured by very rough mortar blinding, the result of a trench built method of construction dug vertically into the natural geology.

Plate 3: TP2 & TP3 [1x2m scale]

Above the natural was a firm layer of ?redeposited sandy-clay (11) from which two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. This layer appeared to have been truncated by the construction of the Chapter House foundations. A well-mixed make-up layer of yellowish-brown silty-clay lay above this (10).

Above the medieval deposits was c.0.8m of modern soils, the lowest soil layer (09) contained moderate examples of flint cobbles and chalk pieces, along with fragments of late 19th to 20th century bottle glass. This appears to demonstrate that the wall footings have been partly exposed here before being reburied. Above this soil layer was a make-up layer of very soft loam containing modern tile fragments, glass, coal fragments and occasional building flints (08).

Test Pit 3

Test Pit 3 was excavated at the north-east corner of the Chapter House, solely to determine if solid footings were likely to be present below the eastern wall. The test-pit could not be located along the east wall itself as the face-work there was in imminent danger of collapse.

The trench showed that solid footings extended out from the base of the eastern wall by at least 0.5m here, possibly to serve as a pad to accommodate a former medieval buttress at this location (15). The footings seemed to be artificially buttressed, either as a result of robbing or during consolidation and repair work. The footings were buried here only by modern soil (16) which again demonstrates that 20th century work also exposed the eastern wall footings and that the soils here are the result of subsequent landscaping.

Plate 4: TP2 [1x1m scale]

Plate 5: TP3 [1x0.5m scale]

Plate 6: Partly Collapsed Eastern Wall [1x1m scale]

The Chapter House Walls (internal) as revealed by Test Pits 4 & 5

Modern wall capping

The tops of both the northern and southern walls were capped by a weakly bonded modern stub wall just two courses thick (18 and 33). The fabric contained roughly sorted flints and occasional medieval bricks bonded with a pale whitish-yellow, degraded gritty mortar. This capping build was constructed on a thin layer of soil (35) rather than bonded directly to the medieval remains. This is evidence of modern repair and consolidation work to the Chapter House walls

Plate 7: TP4 [1x1m scale]

Chapter House Construction

Several construction lifts were identified within the fabric of the medieval walls; the two uppermost were seen in both of the test pits while Test Pit 5 revealed two deeper lifts. In general the construction method comprised of regular courses of well sorted flints with occasional fragments of medieval brick, bonded by a hard, gritty lime rich mortar. Only the uppermost lift was vertical and fair faced while lower lifts were markedly splayed with rough and bleeding mortar. The base of each lift was also seen to toe in slightly, where it may have overlapped onto a temporary surface. These observations have significance for the likely method of construction and the level of any original floor surface, which will be discussed below.

Plate 8: TP5 [2x1m scale]

The deepest deposit encountered within both test pits was a compacted redeposited sandy-soil (21 & 32) which can be interpreted as medieval infilling contemporary with the construction of the Chapter House walls. This material was encountered at c. 0.75m below the top of the capped wall in TP4 (at c. 21.03m OD) and c. 0.83m below the top of the capped wall in TP5 (at c. 20.97m OD). Small quantities of mortar and limestone chippings along with a just two medieval brick fragments and a piece of moulding are most likely residual waste from construction activity. The walls of the Chapter House appear to have been constructed in a series of very rough lifts, each used to contain the next platform of imported soil until the desired floor level was reached – possibly close to where the internal wall becomes vertical and fairer faced.

Robbing Activity

Plate 9: TP4 [2x1m scale]

Plate 10: TP5 [2x1m scale]

Abutting the walls above the level of the medieval construction deposit (21 & 32), were layers rich in demolition debris which may be tipped within broad robber trenches. Although the exact nature of these features could not be defined within the confines of the test-pits it is suggested that they may be associated with a general horizon of activity relating to the removal of final make-up and mortar bedding layers meant to support the floor and possibly any stone furniture which may have existed around the edge of the Chapter House wall.

Therefore, the change in wall fabric construction from rough to fair appears to be the best available evidence thus far gained for the likely level of the Chapter House floor. No invasive scarring or other evidence for robbed out decorative masonry was identified within either test-pit.

The base of a cut for robbing/demolition activity was identified in TP5 ([34]) and a similar feature was also recorded in TP4 ([34]). In TP5 this contained crushed mortar with frequent examples of fractured building flints and lumps of mortar (30), few large flints were present and it can be assumed reusable materials were sorted out for reuse as freestone. In TP4 the infill of a similar feature was a mix of silty-sand and mortar with waste flints (22).

A further 0.5m deep sequence of imported deposits of sorted demolition waste, rich in crushed mortar and lumps of mortar was dumped against the wall of TP5 (29 & 28), which may either be fills of the robber cut or later spreads of material. A lens of sooty, grey silty-sand containing a few small pieces of coal lay above this, from which tobacco pipe stem was retrieved (27).

A similar sequence of dumped demolition waste-rich deposits was recorded in TP4, where two main layers of demolition waste mixed with soils (19 & 20) were recorded to a depth of c. 0.65m above the fill of a possible robber cut along the wall ((22) within [34]).

Upper deposits in TP5 were subjected to frequent root disturbance and consisted of a well-mixed layer of soil and demolition/repair waste (26) below a spread of silty-clay make-up (25) which may coincide with the creation of the modern capping of the Chapter House wall.

A 0.35m deep soil build-up (17 & 24) from modern vegetation cover lay above all, which had partly obscured the wall top.

It should also be noted that the deposits exposed by the partial collapse of the eastern wall seem to share a similar sequence as that recorded within the test-pits; with a lower ?medieval compacted soil layer below demolition rich waste (see Plate 6). An ash rich layer or tip was also present at approximately the same horizon as that recorded by TP5 within which clay tobacco pipe and fragments of animal bone could be observed (at c. 0.5m below the vegetation covered surface).

Plate 11: Late Post-medieval wall & door leading to the Great Cloister (Looking W) [1x2m scale]

Summary

The limited but informative evidence afforded by the two internal test pits appears to demonstrate that following the Dissolution and initial robbing of the Chapter House, a much later post-medieval phase of robbing/dumping activity can be identified by the presence of clay tobacco pipe and occasional incorporation of post-medieval building materials (which includes both ceramic and stone tiles, brick and fragments of York stone) within the demolition material.

This later activity may have seen extensive excavation and robbing of the remainder of any floor surface materials – which could well account for both the lack of any surviving floor horizon and subsequent build-up of post-medieval soils normally expected following abandonment and removal of a building's superstructure.

The internal space has then received significant dumps of well sorted demolition waste, possibly either the result of an 18th to 19th century 'beautification' programme of work within the monastic complex, which may be linked more specifically to the clearance of the cloister to create an open garden, or the construction of a post-medieval house at the site. Some form of 17th century house relating to the Ingworth family is believed to have existed at the site (Bond 1956), whilst the current 19th century house built against the southern end of the Guest House was constructed c.1840 (with later extensions). In addition, many parts of the ruinous complex have seen late post-medieval consolidation and repair work, for example the whole of the west wall of the cloister has been rebuilt, with a narrow brick doorway (of possible 18th century date) linking it to the Chapter House (see Plate 11).

The top of the Chapter House walls have been capped in modern times and the present angle buttresses are modern, sited where much larger and impressive medieval buttresses should be. Upon brief examination much of the face-work of the external walls can be postulated to have seen post-medieval or modern intervention. How extensive this could be remains unclear without further assessment but it was noted on site that the external face-work of the eastern wall was in imminent danger of 'peeling away' as it was untied into the fabric of the wall, this may indicate that this material is a later skin added to the original fabric.

This paints a picture of a highly ruinous structure that has witnessed several phases of post-medieval robbing activity and at least one major recent phase of consolidation and repair. This later activity would also account for the clearance of soils to expose the base of the wall and top of the footings as witnessed in Test Pits 1 to 3.

Plate 12: Vertical Scar (Looking SW) [1x2m scale]

Additional Observation: Vertical scar in the fabric of the eastern wall

A concave vertical 'scar' in the wall fabric of the external face of the remaining section of eastern wall was noted during the fieldwork. The flint and mortar here appears to have been constructed to receive some form of vertical shaft or respond. It is located off centre and could therefore be one of a pair of such features.

Whether hidden evidence for similar features may be present elsewhere in the remaining fabric of the Chapter House walls is currently unknown. Post-medieval remedial work to the external face of the walls may have masked any such features, if they are indeed present.

7.0 Finds Analysis *(Appendix 2a)*

- **Pottery**

Introduction

Eleven sherds of pottery weighing a total of 115g were collected from four contexts. This is a small assemblage of residual fragments collected from make-up deposits, dumped deposits and modern soils. All of the post-medieval sherds are in relatively good condition with little abrasion, although the medieval sherds show more sign of post-depositional wear. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric:

Context	Description	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV	Date Range	Comments
08	Transfer-printed earthenwares	LTPE	3	13	0.12	3	19th to 20th	
	Refined white earthenwares	REFW	1	11	0.10	1	L18th to 20th	Plate
	Late glazed red earthenware	LGRE	1	25	0.11	1	18th to 19th	Base
09	Pearlware	PEW	1	14	0.22	1	L18th to M19th	Bowl base

Context	Description	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV	Date Range	Comments
11	Medieval shelly wares	MSHW	1	3	0.05	1	12th to 13th	
	Local medieval unglazed	LMU	1	6	0.05	1	11th to 14th	Sooted
20	Late medieval and transitional	LMT	3	43	0.16	2	15th to 16th	?jar/pipkin
	Grand Total		**11**	**115**	**0.81**	**10**		

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric

Methodology

Basic quantification was carried out using sherd count and weight. All fabric types follow the post-Roman fabric series after Sue Anderson with form terminology following MPRG (1998).

Comments

The two medieval sherds were both collected from the earliest deposit encountered by Test-Pit 2. They may represent residual sherds of medieval pottery from local activity which may either predate or coincide with the founding years of the Franciscan Friary, which was established from 1346.

Three LMT sherds, which may all be from the same jar/pipkin were collected from a dumped deposit within the Chapter House which was rich in demolition waste. The vessel was decorated with parallel incised lines and demonstrates partial drip glaze.

The remaining sherds are all late post-medieval in date. These were collected from modern soils which appear to have been relocated against the base of the external wall of the Chapter House following some form of repair/consolidation work. They comprise mainly of transfer printed table-wares of varying quality and include English floral patterns along with a sherd of salt-glazed press moulded plate. This indicates that dumped rubbish from a 19th to early 20th century household is present in the area of the Chapter House.

Conclusions

This is a very small assemblage with a range of fabrics, from medieval to modern. The sherds have provided limited but valuable dating evidence for the deposits and features they were collected from.

- **Ceramic Building Material**

Introduction

A total of 21 fragments of ceramic building material of varying sizes were collected, weighing a total of 4.881kg. Of this twelve are brick fragments (weighing a total of 3.059kg), eight are roof tiles (weighing a total of 1.102kg) and one is a piece of glazed floortile.

The assemblage was counted, weighed and examined to identify fabric and form. Fabric and forms were mainly characterised based upon previous work in Norwich (Drury 1993).

Fabric and forms

Early Bricks

The medieval bricks are exclusively of estuarine fabric and, aside from a single fragment, all exhibit similar forms and medieval manufacturing methods to that described by Drury. They are generally of medium density estuarine fabric in dark pink to purple with some voids, tempered by very occasional clay pellets and grog. These bricks exhibit straw marks and rough wipe marks which usually indicate a 13th to 14th century period of manufacture. A

single highly abraded piece of light pinkish-orange fabric with frequent small grog pellets is also likely to be of a medieval date but from a different production source, although it is possible the piece may be of Romano-British manufacture, reused within hearth or walling of medieval or later buildings. All traces of mortar were of a pale whitish-yellow gritty, coarse texture.

Roof tiles

The majority of the ceramic roof tiles are post-medieval and are of a similar fine sandy mid-orange fabric with two examples of square nail holes. A single post-medieval example is of a possible ridge tile in a plain, finer sandy clay fabric. One fragment of medieval roof tile is present in the same assemblage which has a reduced core consistent with medieval tiles. The medieval tile also has mortar on both sides and may have been reused in walling.

Late Brick/Floor Tiles

Two examples of later fabrics of post-medieval date were collected, both of which may be fragments of floor bricks. The mortar traces on both pieces are of a similar white, lime rich mortar

Glazed Floor tile

A single small fragment of a Flemish style floor tile was found, with white-slip and yellow-glaze. Such tiles were commonly installed as part of patterned floors within ecclesiastical and high status buildings from the 14th to 16th centuries. They were generally imported but some were also made locally by peripatetic craftsmen commissioned for specific projects, particularly for later religious houses which favoured the 14th/15th-century chequerboard-style of flooring.

Context	Fabric	form	no	wt(g)	abr	L	W	H/T	mortar	comments	date
04	Est	EB	2	298	+	-	-	47	-	Conjoining	Medieval
20	RS3	RD	1	296	-	-	-	18	-	Ridge tile, knife shaped	Post-med.
20	RS2	RT	6	660					Gritty/white	Square pegholes	Post-med.
20	Est	RT	1	146	-	-	-	15	Gritty/pale yellow	Mortar bifacially	Medieval
20	RS2	FT	1	54	++			54		Flemish tile – yellow glaze over white slip	Late Med./ E.P.med
20	Est	EB	1	1952	-	235	110	46	Gritty/pale yellow	Whole brick	Medieval
20	Est	EB	2	562	-	-	120	50	Gritty/pale yellow	Dark purple fabric	Medieval to post-med.
20	RS1	LB	1	412	+	-	-	-	White	Poss. floor brick	Post-med.
20	RS2	FB/T	1	133	+	-	-	30	White	Floor brick/Tile	Post-med.
26	Est	?EB	1	18	++	-	-	-	Gritty/white		?Medieval
28	Est	EB	2	235	-	-	-	47	-		Medieval
32	Est	EB	2	115	-	-	-	-	-		Medieval

Summary

These fragments were collected primarily as residual waste dumped within the Chapter House and may have been produced from the sorting of unwanted fragments during localised phases of demolition or sorting of materials for reuse. The presence of several post-medieval roof tiles and floorbricks suggests that some of the later dumped materials may include elements of building material from a post-medieval building, which is also suggested by the presence of limestone tiles (see below).

- **Mortar**

Four larger fragments of chalky lime mortar were collected from demolition waste rich layers within Test Pit 5 (28 & 29), weighing a total of 786g. All four pieces share the same

fabric – a coarse sandy, gritty mix with chalk and flint inclusions of around 3mm and occasional pieces of up to 100m. Three pieces exhibit smooth surfaces while the largest (weighing 522g) is from the internal fabric of a wall with numerous scars from the building flints. The surface fragments are up to 40mm thick and may be fragments from a thick bedding layer for a tiled floor.

- **Worked Stone**

A total of six pieces of worked stone were collected from dumped deposits recorded in Test Pit 5. This small worked limestone assemblage is predominantly of pale yellow fine grained fabric characteristic of the Caen stone quarries of Normandy. These pieces represent residual waste from either construction or demolition activity associated with the monastic complex.

Context No.	SSD	Material	No.	Weight (g)	Comments
26	TP5	Fine grained oolitic limestone (Caen)	2	141	Finely tooled and polished fillet & roll ?mullion/voussoir frags. Abraded.
28	TP5	Fine grained oolitic limestone (Caen)	1	109	A fragement from tracery with part of a glazing rebate present
32	TP5	Fine grained oolitic limestone (Caen)	2	191	Misc, frag.. Plus smooth polished plain roll mullion
32	TP5	Shelly limestone (Barnack)	1	17	Abraded, fine tooling noted.
		Totals	6	458	

Of the identifiable pieces, one has axe tooling and may be a fragment of tracery with a glazing rebate (28), whilst of the three moulding fragments, one is a plain roll while two highly abraded pieces are roll and fillet mouldings, possibly from mullions or voussoir pieces. They have polished surfaces with fine tooling and one example of claw marking. A single small fragment of shelly limestone (?Barnack) was also recovered.

- **Stone tiles and fragments**

Ten fragments of stone ?roof tiles weighing a total 328g were collected from dumped deposits within both TP4 and TP5 (contexts 20 & 26). All the pieces are thin, angular fragments which measure c.100m thick where both smooth faces have been retained, some of which have traces of white mortar on a single side. Such tiles are heavier than slate and are often both pegged and mortared into place. The fragments include both sandstone and sandy limestone 'Collyweston type' pieces. Of the two sandstone pieces collected from context (20) in TP4, one has a circular peg-hole 8mm in diameter indicating that all such pieces collected are likely to be the broken fragments of post-medieval roof tiles.

Three large fragments of Yorkstone were collected from context (20), weighing a total of 1.152kg. The fragments are from slabs or paving of slightly varying thickness (23mm, 29mm and 34 mm) one of which appears to have a worn surface.

These materials appear to show that the deposits that contain them include materials much more likely sourced from a post-medieval structure of 17th to 19th century date than the monastic complex itself.

- **Tobacco Pipe**

Two pieces of snapped tobacco pipe stem were collected, weighing a total of just 5g. One was collected from modern soils (08) in Test Pit 2, while the other was collected from ashy lens (27) recorded in Test Pit 5. Neither piece can be easily dated, although the piece from context (27) has a relatively large bore (c. 3mm) which may indicate the use of straw as

part of the moulding technique rather than wire. This may suggest an earlier post–medieval date range of c. 1580 to 1700, although it should be noted that stem fragments are common finds and this piece could be residual within a later post-medieval deposit.

- **Animal Bone**

Four fragments of butchered animal bone (weighing a total of 66g) were collected from the post-medieval demolition waste rich deposit (20) recorded in Test Pit 4. The remains are in fair condition and include the radius of an adult sheep/goat, a fragment of bovine rib and two fragmentary pieces of bovine limb bone; the larger of which may be identifiable to a humerus. Both fine cut marks from defleshing and larger chop marks are present on the sheep/goat bone while the humerus fragment has been heavily chopped and broken to allow easy access to the marrow. The assemblage is from a well-mixed deposit and cannot be securely dated, although appears to indicate minor evidence of meat processing on a domestic level from a post-medieval kitchen/household incorporated into dumped demolition waste.

- **Shell**

Three shells in good condition were collected from Test Pit 5, weighing a total of 11g. A cockle shell was collected from a dumped post-medieval deposit (29) and a further cockle shell and the upper shell of an oyster (Ostrea edulis) were collected from a post-medieval deposit rich in demolition waste (29). This very small assemblage represents residual food waste.

8.0 Conclusions

Although limited in scope, the archaeological excavation of five test-pits has provided useful information regarding both the character of the Chapter House footings and the infill deposits it retains. In addition, new data on the general method of its construction and information pertaining to the floor level within the Chapter House has been gained.

The deepest deposits encountered within both internal test pits was a compacted redeposited sandy-soil which can be interpreted as medieval infilling contemporary with the construction of the Chapter House walls. The walls appear to have been constructed in a series of lifts, which, although fair faced externally, were particularly rough and splayed internally. These lifts may each have been used to contain the next temporary platform of imported soils until the desired floor level was reached – possibly at the approximate level where the internal wall becomes vertical and fairer faced. Significantly, this internal change in wall fabric construction from rough to fair appears to be the best available evidence thus far gained for the likely level of the Chapter House floor. No scarring for stone furniture was identified, although an alternative explanation for the change in fabric may relate to the former presence of such stonework against the internal wall (K.Morrson *pers comm*). The method of using ‘rammed earth’ to raise internal levels of buildings on the eastern side of the Friary complex has been suggested for the Chancel and was also conjectured by A.R.Martin for the Chapter House, a theory he was unable to test during the 1930s investigations.

Above the level of the medieval soil make-up, were layers rich in demolition debris which seem initially to have been tipped within broad robber trenches responsible for removing the final make-up and mortar bedding layers meant to support the floor and any stone furniture around the edge of the Chapter House wall.

Following the Dissolution and initial robbing of the Chapter House, a much later post-medieval phase of robbing/dumping activity can be identified. This later material could be the result of several possible phases of post-medieval activity, which include; the possible construction/clearance of a post-medieval house at the site relating to the Ingworth family

(Bond 1956), an 18th to 19th century 'beautification' programme of work within the monastic complex (which may be linked more specifically to the clearance of the cloister to create an open garden) or activity associated with a programme of late post-medieval consolidation and repair work; an example of which is the whole of the west wall of the cloister which has been rebuilt, with a narrow brick doorway (of possible 18th century date) linking it to the Chapter House.

The footings of the Chapter House were proven to be both substantial and in good condition. They were constructed primarily in a series of splayed flint & mortar lifts, built tightly within a trench dug into the natural geology. No base to the flint & mortar footings was reached and they have been shown to exceed 1.2m in depth. The use of banded deposits tamped within a construction trench, which is a common medieval construction method identified within medieval stone buildings across the county, appears to have been either installed at a much lower depth or is absent for this particular method of construction. The reasoning behind this may be the well-sloping natural topography, which demands a particularly robust foundation to prevent subsidence, along with the need for the footings and walls to act as retaining-walls for the large volume of imported material used to artificially raised the internal floor level to one much closer to that of the Great Cloister.

Both lost medieval angle buttresses have been replaced by superficial modern stonework, presumably to neaten scars at both corners. The wide foundations revealed by Test Pit 3, located on the north-east corner, indicate the presence of a large pad for the original buttress, formed via an extension of the flint & mortar footings. This reflects the evidence for fairly substantial buttresses along the lines as that suggested by Martin, who noted the presence of what appears to have been an original buttress on the southern wall, which has been '*subsequently incorporated in the east wall of the long narrow building to the south, which is of well-faced flint with galletted joints and stands considerably higher than the surrounding wall*'.

Evidence for an extensive phase of recent consolidation and repair was also indicated by modern disturbance along the base of the walls. The top of their footings have been exposed, prior to reburial and landscaping using soils of 19th century date or later. This may relate to some form of remedial work and indeed upon brief examination much of the face-work of the external walls can be postulated to have seen post-medieval or modern intervention. How extensive this could be remains unclear without further assessment but it was noted on site that the external face-work of the eastern wall was in imminent danger of 'peeling away' as it was untied into the fabric of the wall, this may indicate that this material is a later skin added to the original fabric. In addition, the top of the medieval fabric has been capped by two courses of modern flint & mortar fabric.

Overall, the test-pitting evidence, alongside general observations, paints a picture of a highly ruinous structure that has witnessed several phases of post-medieval robbing activity and at least one major recent phase of consolidation and repair. Any future study of the structural fabric of the Chapter House has the potential to elucidate further on the various phases of its construction and later modification.

9.0 Acknowledgements

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Post-excavation analysis work was carried out by the author with contributions from John Percival. NHER data was obtained directly from the archives of the Norfolk Historic Environment Office at Gressenhall.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Fill of	SSD	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
01	Deposit		TP1	Loose, mid-greyish brown silty-sand/loam mixed with flint rubble and mortar debris, c.0.25m deep	Rubble	*Modern (lost facework)*
02	Deposit		TP1	Friable, mid greyish-brown sandy-loam, occ.. flints & mortar, c. 0.25m	Soil	*Modern*
03	Deposit		TP1	Firm, mid-yellowish-brown clay-sand/loam, freq. chalk and mod. mortar, c. 0.2m deep	Make-up	*Medieval*
04	Deposit	[05]	TP1	V.firm, light yellowish-brown silty-sand, freq. flint and mod. mortar flecks. Rare med. Brick frags.		*Medieval*
05	Cut		TP1	Steep sided construction cut	Construction cut	*Medieval*
06	Masonry		TP1	Splayed flint & mortar foundation with v.rare med. Brick frags and hard lime mortar.	Footing	*Medieval*
07	Deposit		TP1	Firm, light brownish-yellow sandy-clay, freq. chalk flecks, sterile.	Natural Geology	
08	Deposit		TP2	Soft, brownish-grey silty-loam, occ. cbm/glass/stones, rare coal, freq. roots c. 0.6m D.	Soil make-up	*Modern*
09	Deposit		TP2	Friable, greyish-brown silty-loam, mod. stones, occ.bottle glass, c. 0.15m deep	Soil make-up	*Modern*
10	Deposit		TP2	Friable, yellowish-brown silty-clay, freq. chalk/stones, c. 0.10m deep	Make-up	*Medieval*
11	Deposit		TP2	Firm, orangey-brown silty-clay, occ. chalk/stones. c. 0.2m deep	?Subsoil/make-up	*Medieval*
12	Deposit		TP2	Hard, pale yellowish-white, soliflucted chalk, sterile	Natural Geology	
13	Masonry		TP2	Footings of northern wall of the Chapter House	Footings	*14th century*
14	Cut		TP2	Foundation trench (tight to build)	Footings	*14th century*
15	Masonry		TP3	Footings of ?buttress at NE of the Chapter House	Footings	*14th century*
16	Deposit		TP3	Same as (08)	Soil make-up	*Modern*
17	Deposit		TP4	Same as (24)		
18	Masonry		TP4	Same as (33)		
19	Deposit		TP4	Friable, orangey-brown mixed silty-sand/silty-loam, freq. mortar, mod. small stones c. 0.25m deep	Similar to (26)	*Post-medieval*
20	Deposit		TP4	Friable, yellowish-brown silty-sand and 25% crushed mortar, occ. flint/cbm/mortar lumps		*Post-medieval*
21	Deposit		TP4	Firm, mid yellowish-brown, clay-sand/loam, mod. flints, occ. mortar	'Rammed earth' infill	*14th century*
22	Deposit	[37]	TP4	Loose, light brown silty-sand with freq. mortar lumps, mod. flints and rare brick pieces		*Post-medieval*
23	Masonry		TP4	Northern flint and mortar Chapter House wall		*14th century*
24	Deposit		TP5	Soft, brownish-grey silty-loam, freq. roots, occ. stones, modern rubbish and rare L.p-med. Tile. C. 0.35m deep		*Modern*
25	Deposit		TP5	V.friable yellowish-brown silty-clay, freq. chalk/mortar/stone c. 0.12m deep		*Modern*
26	Deposit		TP5	Friable, orangey-brown mixed silty-sand/silty-loam, freq. chalk/mortar/stones, rare cbm, freq. roots, c.		*Post-medieval*

Context	Category	Fill of	SSD	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
				0.15m deep		
27	Deposit		TP5	Loose, mid-grey silty-sand (sooty), rare coal 'lens'		*Post-medieval*
28	Deposit		TP5	Loose, yellowish-white, crushed chalky –mortar, 20% mortar lumps, freq. flints and rare abraded brick pieces c. 0.25m deep		*Post-medieval*
29	Deposit		TP5	Firm, yellowish-white crushed-mortar, freq. flints/mortar lumps, rare limestone chips and brick pieces, c. 0.25m deep		*Post-medieval*
30	Deposit	[34]	TP5	Friable, whitish-yellow crushed mortar, freq. flints/mortar lumps, rare cbm flecks and limestone chips		*Post-medieval*
31	Void			(same as 32)		
32	Deposit		TP5	Firm (compacted), yellowish-brown clay-sand/loam, occ. mortar/stones, chalk, rare cbm and limestone chips	'Rammed earth' infill	*14th century*
33	Masonry		TP5	Flint & mortar capping , friable pale whitish-yellow degraded gritty mortar, c. 0.25m high		*Modern*
34	Cut		TP5	Broad cut containing residual demolition waste	Robber activity	*16th century*
35	Deposit		TP5	Soft, dark brown v.silty-loam, mod. flints/chalk 60mm thick		*Modern*
36	Masonry			Southern flint and mortar Chapter House wall		*14th century*
37	Cut		TP4	Broad cut containing residual demolition waste	Robber activity	*16th century*

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Chapter House	1
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Robber Trench	2

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)	Comment
04	Ceramic building material	2	298	Medieval brick
08	Pot	5	49	
08	Tobacco pipe	1	3	Stem
09	Pot	1	14	
11	Pot	2	11	
20	Animal bone	4	66	
20	Ceramic building material	8	1102	Roof tile
20	Ceramic building material	1	54	Floor tile
20	Ceramic building material	5	3059	Medieval brick
20	Pot	3	43	
20	Worked stone	3	1152	
20	Worked stone	2	123	Tile
26	Ceramic building material	1	18	Medieval brick
26	Worked stone	2	141	
26	Worked stone	8	205	?Tile
26	Shell	2	9	Oyster + cockle
27	Tobacco pipe	1	2	Stem
28	Ceramic building material	2	235	Medieval brick
28	Mortar	2	220	Medieval
28	Worked stone	1	109	
29	Mortar	2	566	Medieval
29	Shell	1	2	Cockle
32	Ceramic building material	2	115	Medieval brick
32	Worked stone	3	208	

Appendix 2b: NHER finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Ceramic Building Material	11
	Floor Tile	1
	Mortar	4
	Pottery	5
	Worked Stone	6
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Animal Bone	4
	Ceramic Building Material	9
	Pottery	6
	Shell	3
	Stone Tiles	10
	Tobacco Pipe	1

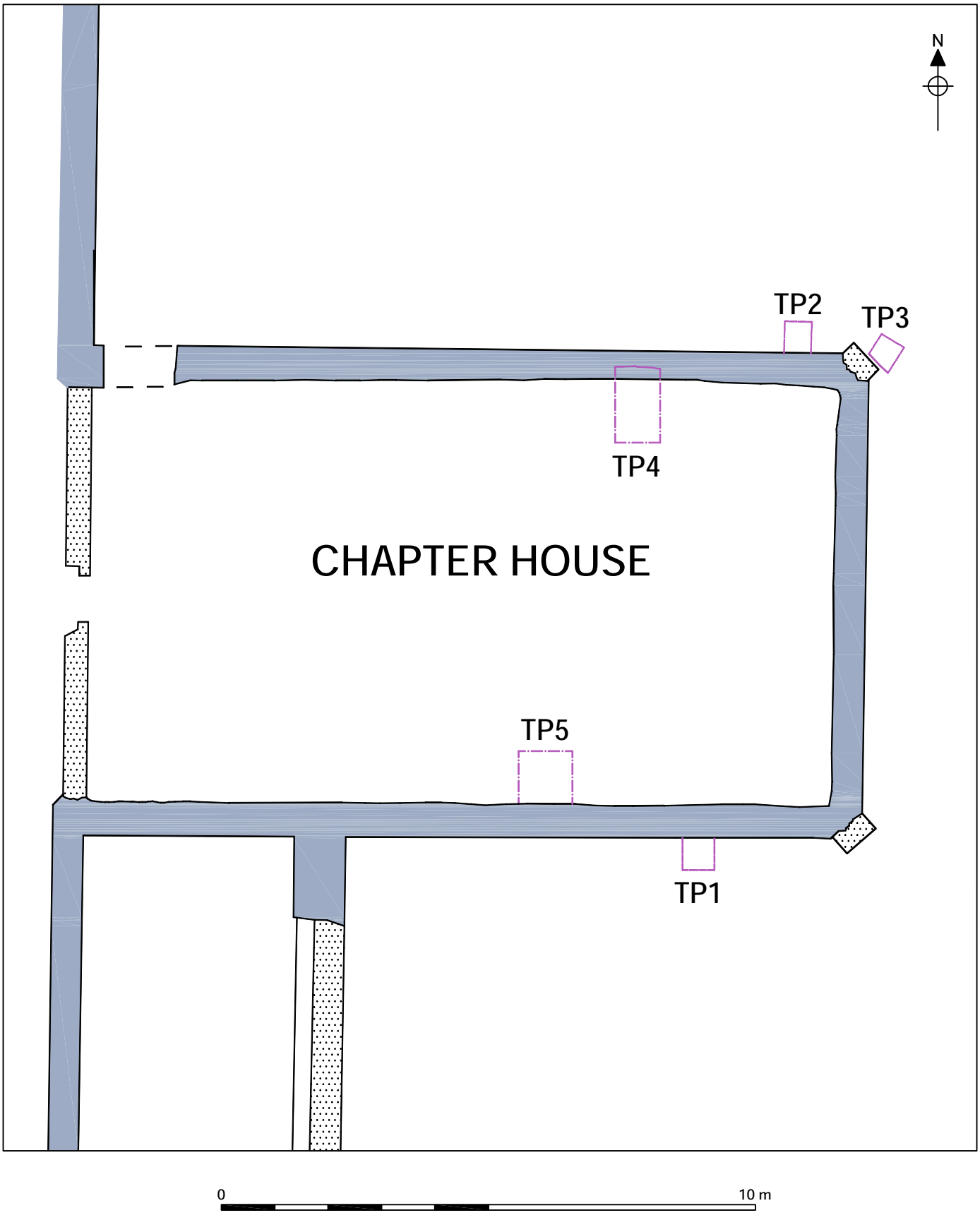


Figure 4. Test-Pit Location Plan (tied to A.R.Martin's Survery Plan of 1932). Scale 1:100

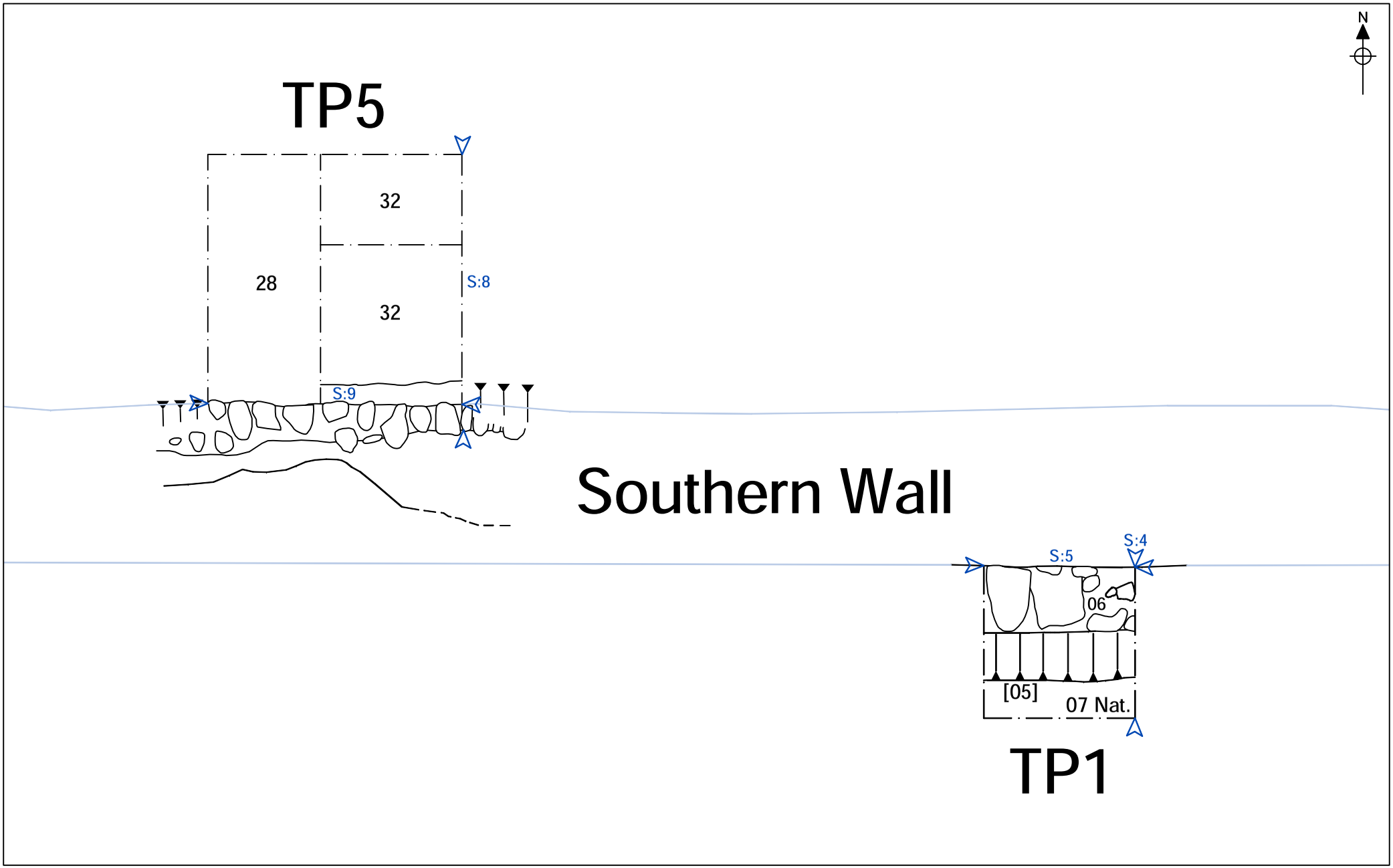


Figure 5. Test-pits 1 and 5. Scale 1:20

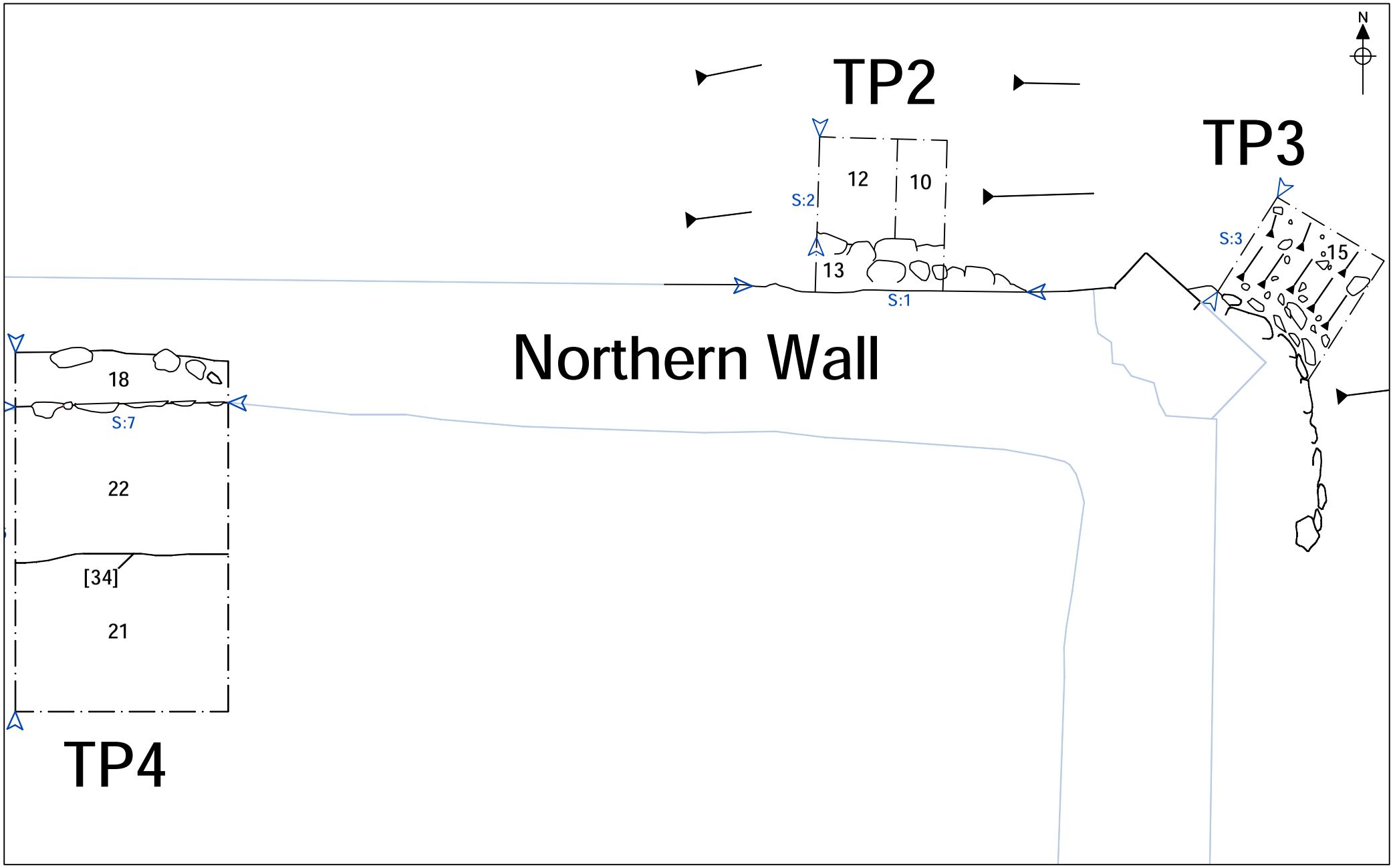


Figure 6. Test-pits 2 to 4. Scale 1:20

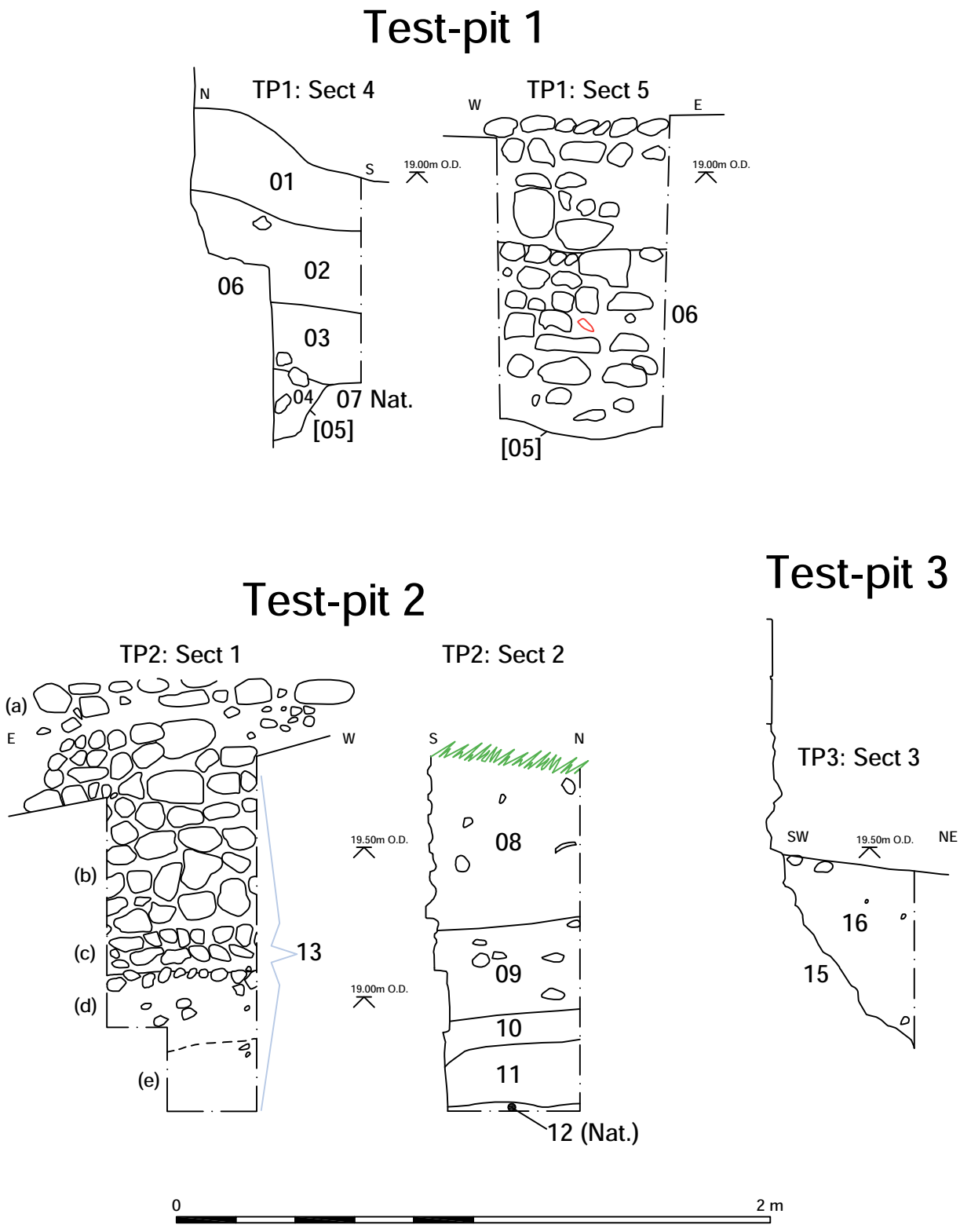
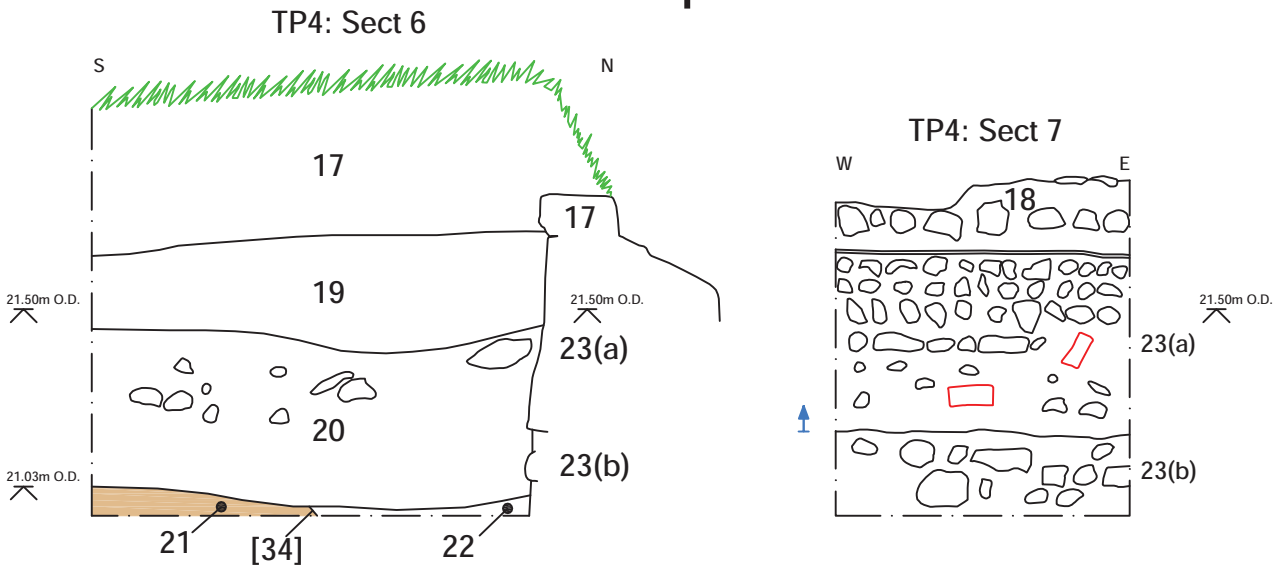


Figure 7. Test-pits 1 to 3, Sections/Elevations. Scale 1:20

Test-pit 4



Test-pit 5

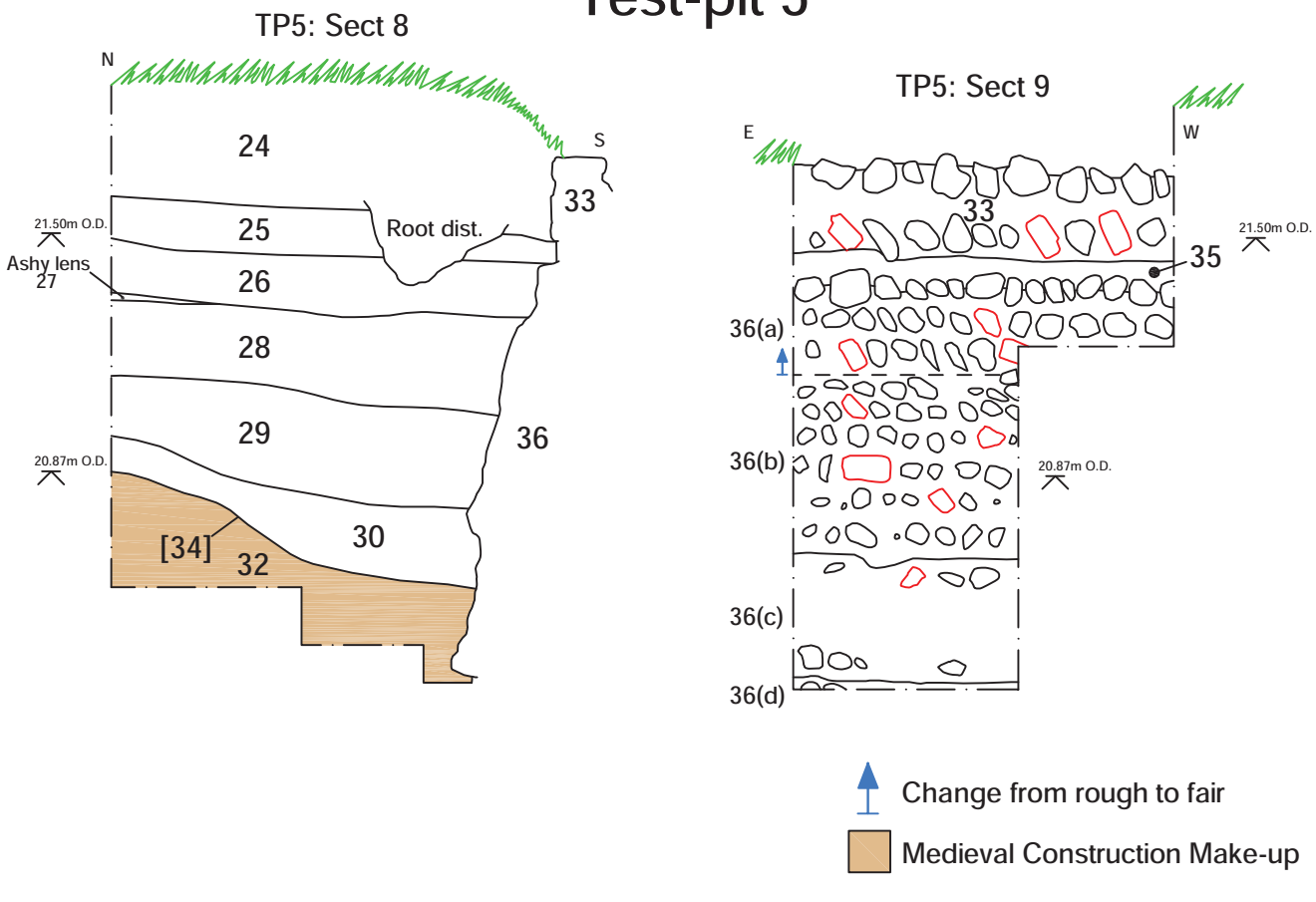


Figure 8. Test-pits 4 & 5, Sections/Elevations. Scale 1:20