

**Report on an Archaeological Watching  
Brief at 'The Hall, Manor Road,  
Garboldisham, Norfolk'**

**NHER 5574**

Prepared for:  
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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out at 'The Hall, Manor Road, Garboldisham, Norfolk (NHER 5574) between June and November 2008 on behalf of Mr and Mrs Waldron. A previously unknown cellar was revealed. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out resulting development proposals at 'The Hall, Manor Road, Garboldisham, Norfolk' (Grid refs. TM 0050 8223) was requested by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. Ken Hamilton/23 March 2008).
- 1.2 Planning Application Number 3PL/2007/1185 applies.
- 1.3 Norfolk Historic & Environment Record 5574; OASIS ID: chrisbir1-59981
- 1.4 This report, CB1160R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results. A *draft* copy of the report was submitted to Norfolk Landscape Archaeology for consideration. This *final* report has been prepared and distributed following approval of the *draft* report received on 21 July 2009.

## **2.0 Project Background**

- 2.1 The proposed development affects the site of a Post-medieval great house; Garboldisham Hall.
- 2.2 A planning decision was made by Breckland District Council pending the collection and submission of further information about the archaeological implications of the development proposal on the historic environment. In the first instance, this required an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and this indicated a need for an Archaeological Watching Brief during the development.
- 2.3 This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA ref. Ken Hamilton/23 March 2008) and a generic Project Design for Watching Briefs by Chris Birks (Birks 2004). Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design.
- 2.4 The site archive will be held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards. An OASIS record has been raised – reference number chrisbir1-59981.

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.1 A full archaeological and historical background can be seen in the report on the Desk-based Assessment (Birks 2007) and information relating to the Hall only is provided in this report.
- 3.2 A precise date for the construction of Garboldisham Hall remains unknown. Pevsner (1968) suggests a 16<sup>th</sup> century date and a site visit by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology indicates a probable 18<sup>th</sup> century date. The latter correlates with documentary evidence of the sale of the Hall in 1734 so it was clearly in existence by this date. The Hall is known to have suffered a catastrophic fire in 1954 and was demolished in 1955.

- 3.3 There are no surviving plans or drawings of the Hall and the precise location of the Hall also remains unknown. Prior to the Desk-based Assessment, no archaeological work had previously been undertaken on this site and little was known about the development of the building prior to its demolition. A composite plan using cartographic, aerial photograph, photographic and historical record sources was created as part of the desk-based assessment and used to estimate impacts that may occur to any sub-surface remains of the Hall through the proposed development.
- 3.4 Very few upstanding remains of the Hall survive. These are (part of) the south wall of the south wing ('Queen Ann wing'), the floor of the kitchen area (and low remains of its walls) and some parts of garden walling. Later additions survive – a Victorian wash-house and well, elements of a horse-ring (built in the 1930s) and dovecote.
- 3.5 The proposed new dwelling to the south-west of the Hall would appear from Bryant's map to be positioned within an area of formal gardens, though no other maps or records provided further details of this area and aerial photographs did not show any remains in this area.

#### **4.0 Geology and Topography**

- 4.1.1 Garboldisham is located approximately 5km south-east of Harling on the Norfolk/Suffolk border between Thetford and Diss and constitutes a pattern of linear settlement along a small tributary to the river Little Ouse that bounds the parish to the south and is fringed by low-lying marsh and fenland. The western boundary of the parish is partly formed by the *Devil's Ditch* (NHER 6115); a possible Early Saxon boundary which can be traced on modern OS Explorer™ maps (Sheet 230).
- 4.1.2 The parish of Garboldisham lies upon a solid geology of Upper Chalk overlain by boulder clays, mainly Lowestoft till and other Anglian tills (Funnell 2005). The soil landscape is divided between the Boulder clay plateau to the east of the parish and the Breckland soils to the west. It has not been until recently that arable farms have dominated this clay upland, much to do with the extensive tile drainage and advent of heavy machinery (Corbett & Dent 1994). Agricultural activity on the Breckland soils is marginal without irrigation, the primary land use being pine plantations intermixed with large arable holdings (Corbett & Dent 1994).
- 4.1.3 The site is gently sloping westwards between c. 25m and c. 35m OD. It was most recently in use as a dwelling with outhouses, barn and a substantial garden.

#### **5.0 Results**

- 5.1 Fieldwork was carried out between 16 June and 20 November 2008 during the excavation of the foundations of the new house and garage and associated services and access route. Site conditions were generally good and access was gained from Harling Road to the east of the site. The weather was sunny with occasional rain showers.
- 5.2 All deposits, exposed surfaces and spoil arisings were scanned with a metal detector. No context numbers were allocated due to the lack of archaeological remains.

- 5.3 The area of the footprint of the new house (*Fig. 2, Plate 1*) was stripped with a mechanical excavator and measured c. 450m<sup>2</sup>. Initially, 0.2m of mid-greyish brown topsoil was removed that overlay 0.35m of brownish yellow sandy loam subsoil. Subsoil overlay a yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit with frequent sub-angular medium sized flints. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

**Plate 1** Excavation of the house footprint, looking west



- 5.4 Two rain water soakaways were excavated. Soakaway 1 measured 1.6m by 1.6m (*Plate 2*) and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m from present ground level. Initially, 0.25m of mid-greyish brown topsoil was removed that overlay 0.35m of brownish yellow sandy loam subsoil. Subsoil overlay a yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit with frequent sub-angular medium sized flints. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

**Plate 2** Soakaway 1, looking west



- 5.5 Soakaway 2 (*Plate 3*) measured 1.6m by 1.6m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m from present ground level. Initially, 0.30m of mid-greyish brown topsoil was removed that contained several small fragments of red brick. Topsoil overlay 0.45m of brownish yellow sandy loam subsoil that overlay a yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

**Plate 3** Soakaway 2 during excavation, looking southwest



- 5.6 The driveway (*Fig.2, Plate 4*) was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m from present ground level removing 0.25m of mid-greyish brown topsoil that overlay brownish yellow sandy loam subsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

**Plate 4** Driveway during excavations, looking east



- 5.7 *In situ* remains of the Hall cellars survive beneath the footprint of the existing 'storage building'. This building was retained and therefore no impact upon the cellars occurred. A brief inspection was made - they have an arched brick ceiling of

red brick in a sandy light brown mortar and some whitewashing remains (*Plate 5*). The ceilings meet vertical brick walls c. 1m apart at a height of c. 1.6m forming an overall height within the cellars of c. 1.8m. The floors are also made of brick, laid perpendicular to the walls (*Plate 6*).

**Plate 5** Existing cellar, looking south



**Plate 6** Floor within existing cellar, looking west



- 5.8 The present driveway to the south of the barn had been used by the contractor as an access route. A collapse in this road revealed part of a brick rubble-filled cellar (*Figs. 2 and 3, Plates 7 and 8*). In consultation with the engineer, it was decided no further material should be removed in case of further collapse and the cellar was backfilled with sand following inspection. The cellar was constructed with red bricks in a sandy

brown mortar. An arched brick ceiling was evident, though partially collapsed, extending in a north-to-south orientation beyond the south edge of the driveway. A vertical wall was present on the north side, presumably the end of the cellar. Two vertical east-to-west single-course walls with a whitewash on each face were present beneath the west side of the arched ceiling forming smaller compartments, the precise nature of which is unknown (*Plate 7*). No further information was gained. The projected dimensions and form of the cellar revealed in the driveway are comparable with the existing cellars though the location lies further towards the north. It seems likely, therefore, that the cellar relates to the central body of the Hall, in which case this lies slightly further towards the west than originally estimated during the Desk-based Assessment (*Figs. 3 and 4*)

**Plate 7** Remains of a cellar, looking south



**Plate 8** Remains of a cellar, looking southwest



- 5.9 The barn was located over a large part of the probable location of the Hall north wing (*Fig. 2*) and the barn was demolished during the present works. The west wall of the barn appeared to contain elements of the 1930s horse-ring to the north. Monitoring

was carried out during works associated with the demolition of the barn. The concrete measured c. 0.3m in depth and overlay a mixed rubble bedding layer. This area was to become landscaped gardens and excavations did not exceed the bedding layer. Concrete at the north edge of the barn had clearly been laid over a flint cobbled surface, possibly an earlier floor of the barn (*Plate 9*). No evidence relating to the Hall was revealed.

**Plate 9** Flint cobbles onto which concrete floor was laid, looking north



- 5.10 A 1960's house was demolished as part of the current development and had access to the cellars via an existing link to the 'storage building'. A new garage building was constructed at this location and access to the cellars has been maintained. The garage foundations (*Fig. 2*) measured 0.6m wide and were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8m from present ground level. Initially, 0.30m of mid-greyish brown topsoil was removed that overlay 0.45m of brownish yellow sandy loam subsoil. Subsoil overlay a yellow sand undisturbed 'natural' deposit with frequent sub-angular medium sized flints. Several sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> century blue & white transfer pottery were recovered from subsoil deposits. They were recorded on site but not retained. No archaeological features were present.

## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The cellar is of interest as its location was not previously known. It seems likely this was associated with the central body of the Hall, the west wall of which is now estimated to have been situated further towards the west than originally thought. Although little of the cellar was revealed, the construction appears contemporary with the existing cellars that have been preserved during the development of the site and access to these has been maintained from the new garage building.
- 6.2 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to have been present, none were revealed during monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of the new house and garage. The precise reasons for this are unknown though the location of the new house was beyond the probable location of the former Hall, within formal gardens to the Hall.

### **Acknowledgments**

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of Mr & Mrs Waldron who also funded the work. Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons. The *draft* report was written by Chris Birks and John Simmons and edited by Chris Birks and the *final* report was prepared by Chris Birks.

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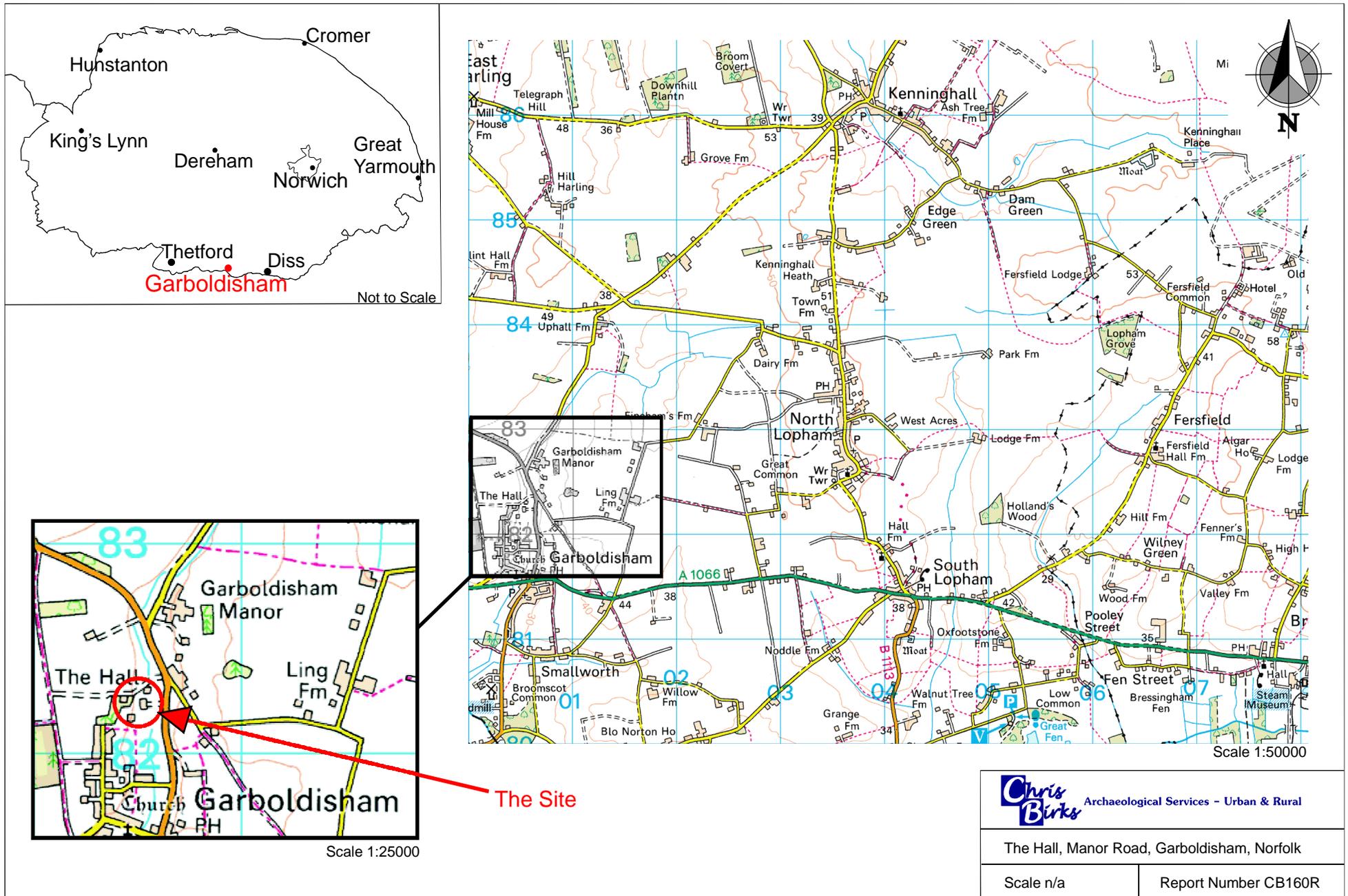


Figure 1. Site location

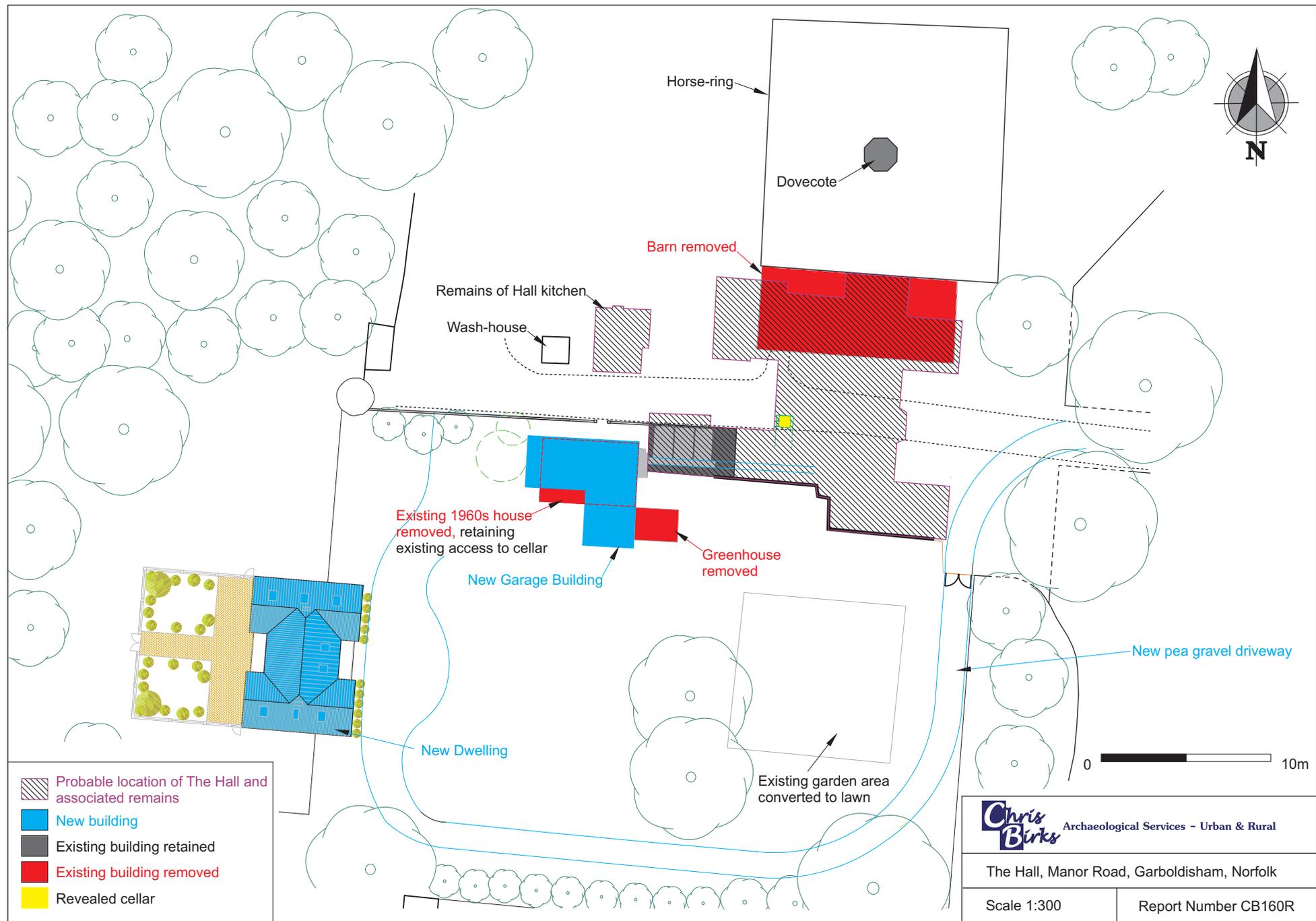
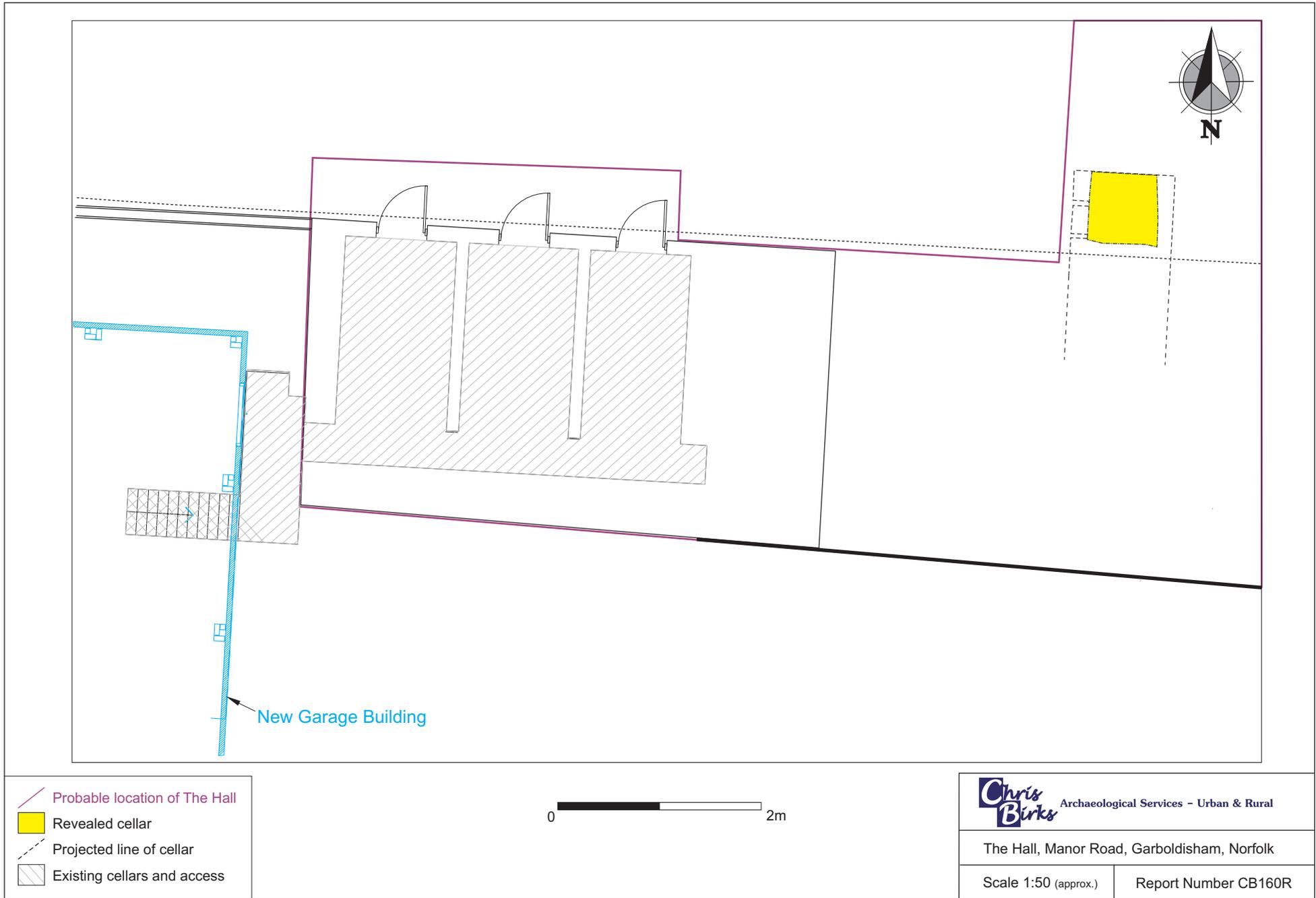


Figure 2. Site plan



**Figure 3.** Plan of Hall



**Figure 4.** Plan of cellars