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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

## Little Carlton (Lincs.):

**Archaeological Watching Brief  
during Groundworks at**

**The Manor House, Manor Farm**

*NGR: TF 4031 8538*

Site Code: **LCM 97**  
LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **97.97**  
ELDC Planning Application No. **N/101/1997/96**

Report prepared for Mr W.A. Hennessy

**July 1997**

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## **Little Carlton: Watching Brief during Groundworks at Manor Farm**

NGR: **TF 4031 8538**

Site Code: **LCM 97**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **97.97**

ELDC Planning Application No. **N/101/1997/96**

### **Summary**

*The western edge of a deep north-south linear feature was identified to the east of the existing house. This was thought to be part of the moat associated with the medieval manor house, but only 17th century pottery was recovered from the backfill. On the west edge of the moat, a 13th/14th century pottery sherd was found; this was the earliest find present.*

### **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Mr. W. Hennessy in March 1997 to conduct a watching brief during the mechanical excavation of house footings for an extension onto the eastern side of the house at Manor Farm, Little Carlton (Figs. 1 - 3).

The watching brief was required to satisfy Condition 3 of East Lindsey District Council's full planning permission N/101/1997/96. This stipulated a watching brief, for which a brief was prepared by the Archaeology Section of Lincolnshire County Council in March 1997. LAS prepared a specification dated 3rd April 1997 which was approved.

Manor Farm is located on the northern side of Main Road, Little Carlton, between the village and the site of St. Edith's Church (demolished 1993). The existing house is a brick structure with several phases of brick extensions, set back about 40m from the road and about 15m west of the churchyard boundary ditch. The present outbuildings lie to the west of the house (Fig. 2).

### **Archaeological Background**

Little Carlton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, confirming the origins of the settlement in the Saxon period (Foster and Longley 1924, 103). During demolition of the church in 1993, a 10th century graveslab was found in the fabric of the medieval nave wall (Field 1994).

Manor Farm and the adjacent Manor House are located just west of the site of the parish church. It is probable that this site was moated, and existing field boundaries around the house and farm buildings may indicate parts of its course. The area around the church and manor is likely to have been the focus for Saxon and early medieval settlement.



### **The Watching Brief** (Fig. 4)

The foundation trenches for the extension were excavated by machine on 9th April 1997 in the presence of the author. The trenches were cut to a width of about 0.55m and to depths varying up to 1.6m. The deepest trench, for the eastern wall, was recorded from the ground surface for safety reasons, although access was possible to most parts of the other trenches.

### **Post-medieval and modern features**

The area of the extension had been cleared of turf and any existing structures before the monitoring visit (Pls. 1 and 2). Several modern drains serving the house, and a water main, crossed the area.

1. The foundation of Manor House at its SE corner consists of a single brick offset course two courses below the existing ground level. No evidence of any earlier structure beneath the house was seen and there were no truncated foundations extending beyond the house. One sizeable sherd from a late 13th/14th century green and brown glazed vessel was found close to the north corner of the house.

2. A red clay land drain was seen running west-east across the southern end of the extension towards the existing churchyard ditch. This was suspected to have been installed after construction of the house but the relationship with the house foundations was not revealed.

3. In the centre of the extension the brick foundations of a small outhouse or cess pit 2.1m from the house were bisected by the central trench (Pls. 1 and 3). The foundations were 2.4m west-east and 1.7m north-south and survived to a depth of 0.4m from the stripped ground surface. A spur water pipe leading into the area of the foundations seemed to indicate that this had been in use until recently.

### **Undated features** (Figs. 4 and 5)

4. A deep feature was revealed along the eastern side of the new extension, extending westwards to within 1.7m of the existing house (Pl. 4). Its extent in other directions is not known. The western edge sloped at about 30°. This feature probably represents the western edge of a north-south length of moat.

Backfill of this feature could be distinguished 0.35m from the stripped surface, and was a very mixed dark brown clay loam deposit containing brick fragments and charcoal to a depth of 0.85m (Pl. 4). Two 17th century pottery sherds were recovered from this upper fill. To the west of this fill there was an underlying layer of sandy gravel, which may possibly have been an upcast bank although no natural gravel was exposed at the trench base.

Beneath the clay loam with brick inclusions the fill was a crumbly brown/dark brown clay, overlying yellow/orange clay which appeared to be a natural layer. The crumbly material was over 0.3m thick and at least 1.6m wide; it sloped downwards towards the east.



### **Conclusion**

The large feature on the eastern side of the extension probably represents part of the medieval or earlier moat which has been assumed to have enclosed the manorial site. Small pieces of brick rubble were found to a depth of 0.85m, and these may have derived from levelling of the ground when the present house was built or at a subsequent date. The mixed and friable nature of the fill beneath this would be consistent with gradual backfilling; it contained a few pieces of animal bone but no pottery or other datable material was found. The edge of the ditch would have filled earlier than the centre as a result of casual rubbish disposal, but early deposits could have been removed by scouring of the feature before it fell from use.

The width of the moat cannot be reliably assessed from the present site observations but the lower ground level west of the churchyard ditch suggests that all this land has been excavated and backfilled. This is not to say that a moat filled this entire 9m width; it is more probable that the moat fluctuated between a water-filled feature and a silted rubbish pit throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods with successive recuts gradually pulling the ditch position closer to the church.

### **Acknowledgements**

Site plans were provided by Mr. Hennessey. The full co-operation received from Mr and Mrs Hennessey was appreciated.

LAS would also like to thank the Lincolnshire County Archaeology Section, especially Jim Bonnor (Archaeological Officer), Mark Bennet (SMR Officer) and Sarah Grundy (Assistant SMR Officer) for their help during preparation for this watching brief.

The illustrations and site archive were prepared by Mick McDaid. Pottery was identified by Jane Young. The report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
15th July 1997

### **References**

- Field, N. 1994 *St. Edith's Church, Little Carlton near Louth* (unpublished LAS report).
- Foster, C.W. and Longley, T. 1924 *The Lincolnshire Domesday and The Lindsey Survey* Lincoln Record Society 19 (reprinted 1976) Gainsborough.

### **Archive Summary**

archaeological finds: pottery; developer's site plans (part copies);  
photographs; sketch section and annotated sketch plan; correspondence.





Fig. 1 Location of Little Carlton



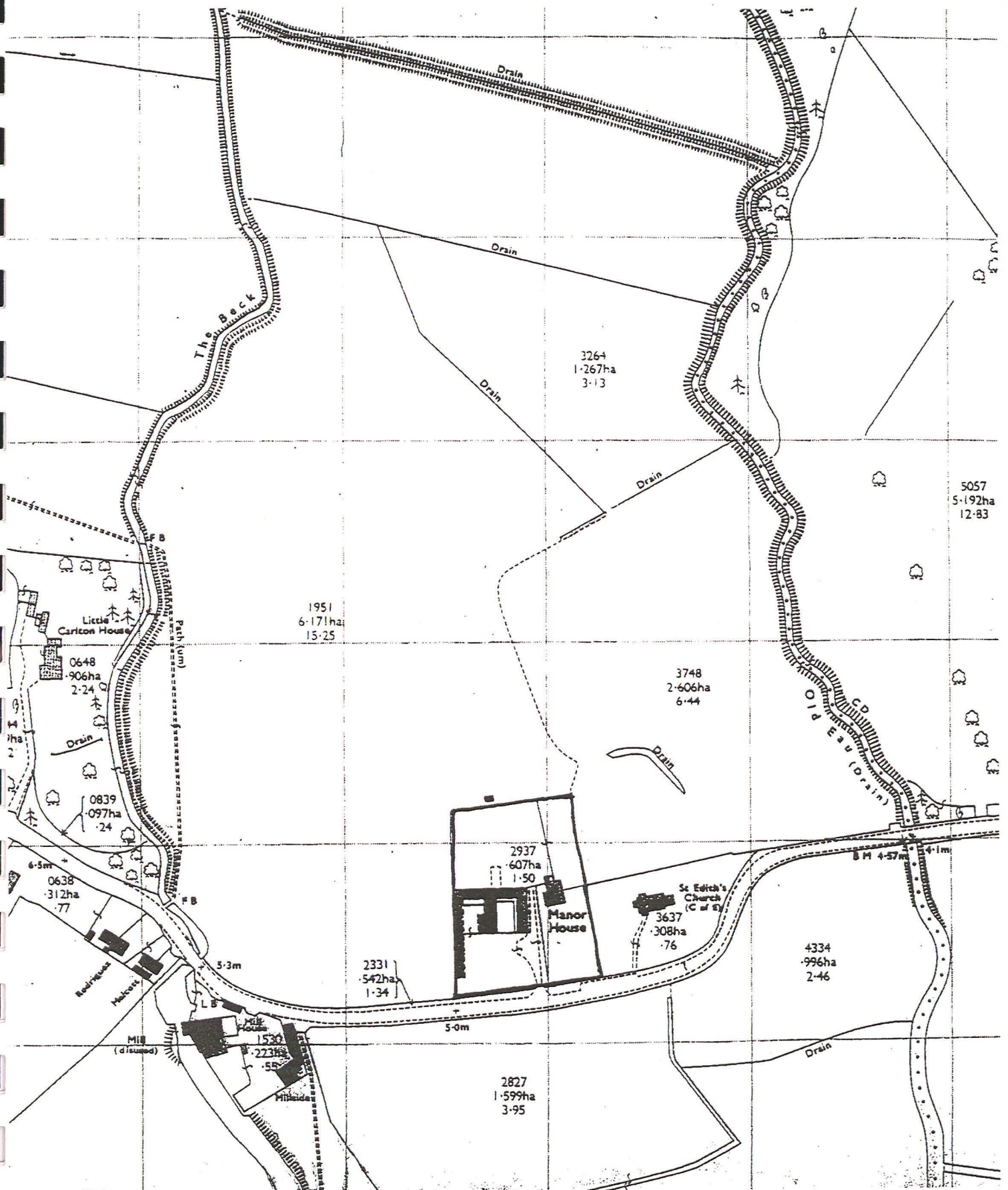


Fig. 2 Location of the Application Site (reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map; Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. Licence No. AL 50424A).

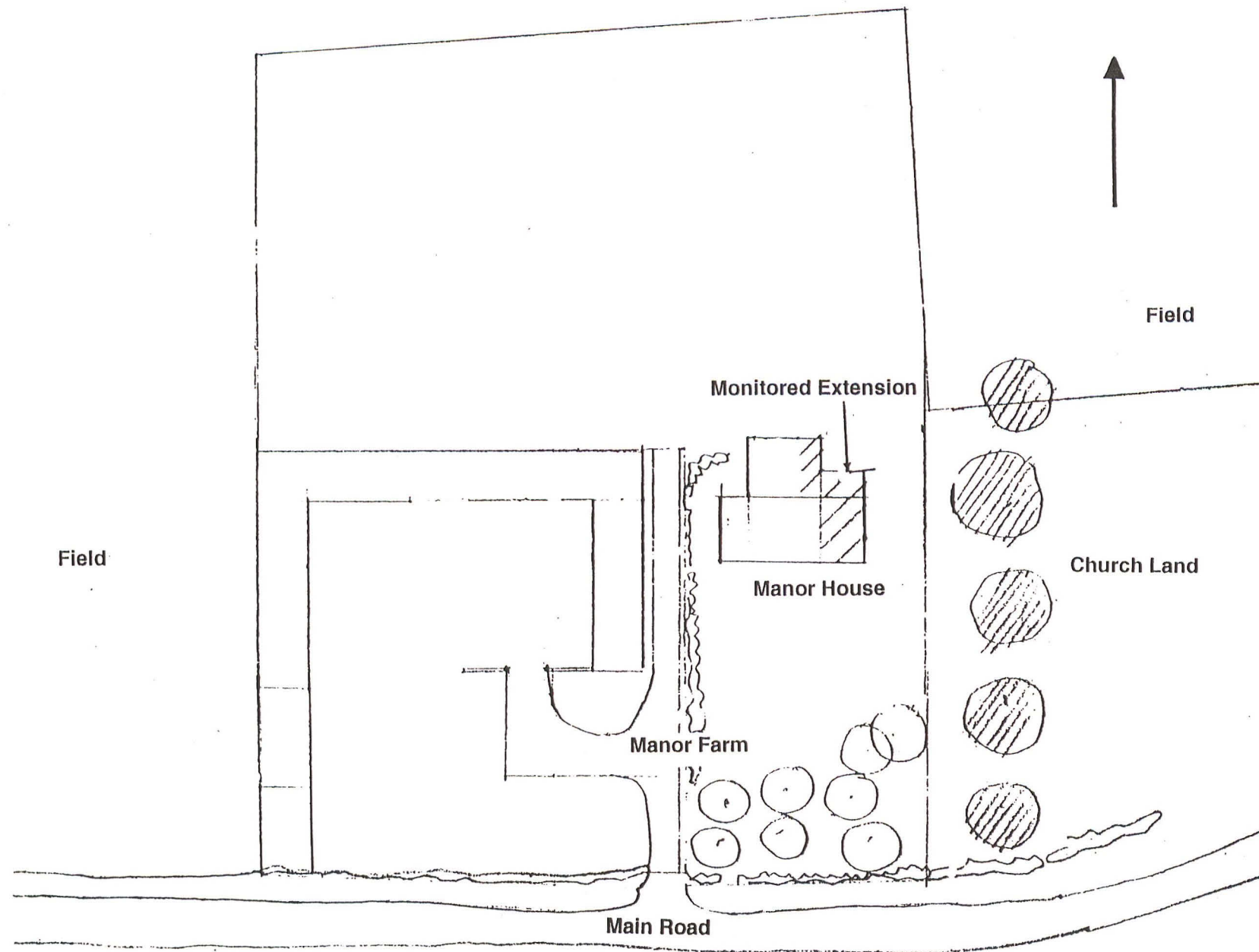


Fig. 3 Manor Farm and The Manor House (from a plan of the site provided by the client).



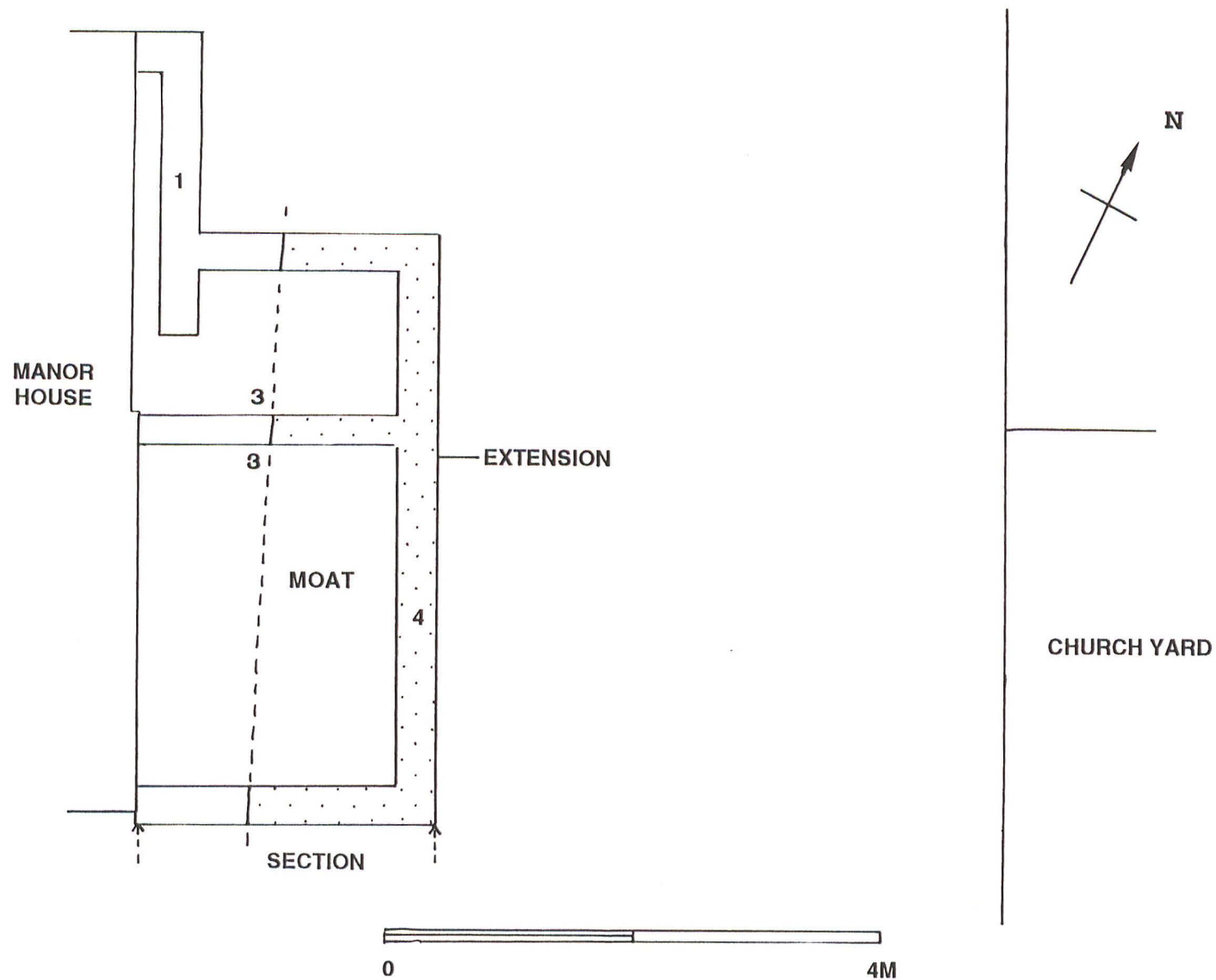


Fig. 4 Archaeological features observed during groundworks (McDaid, after Tann; based on a redrawn plan of the foundations provided by the client).

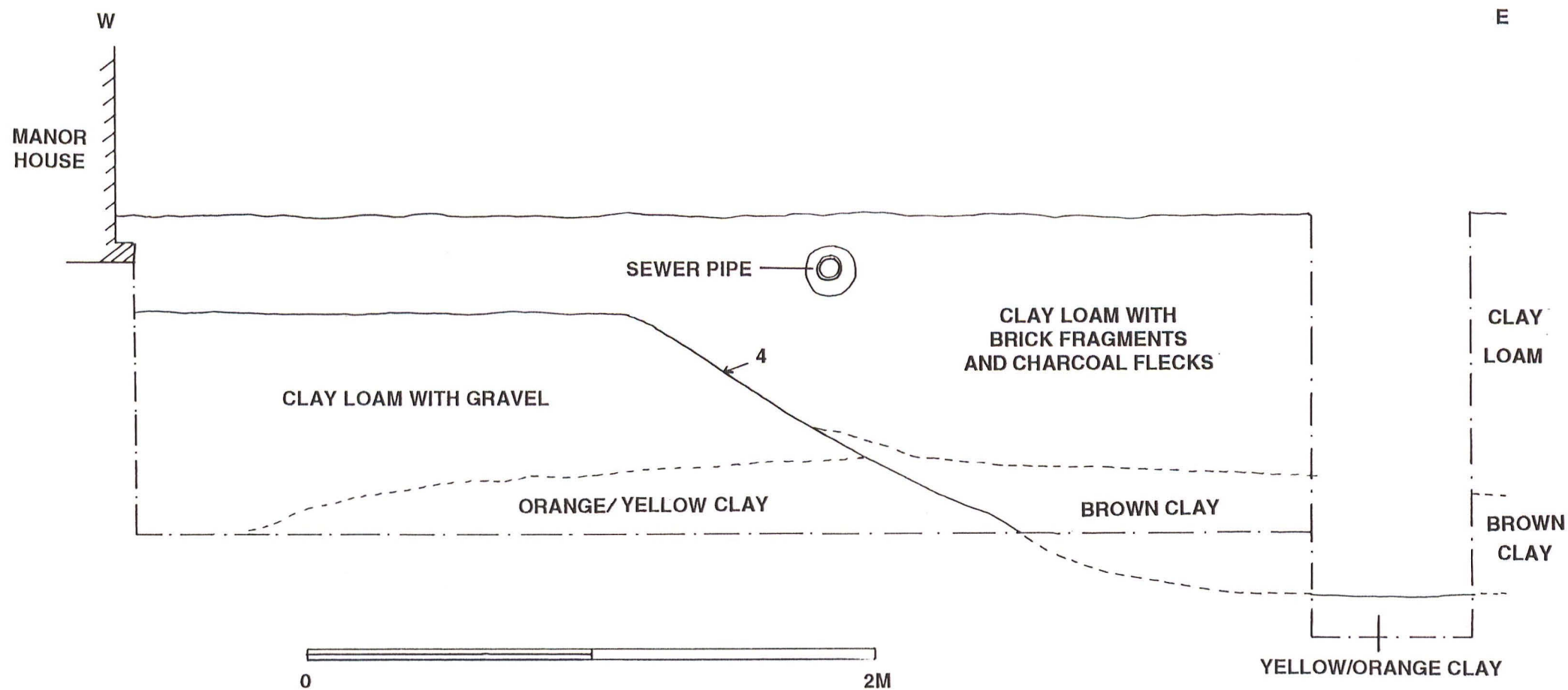
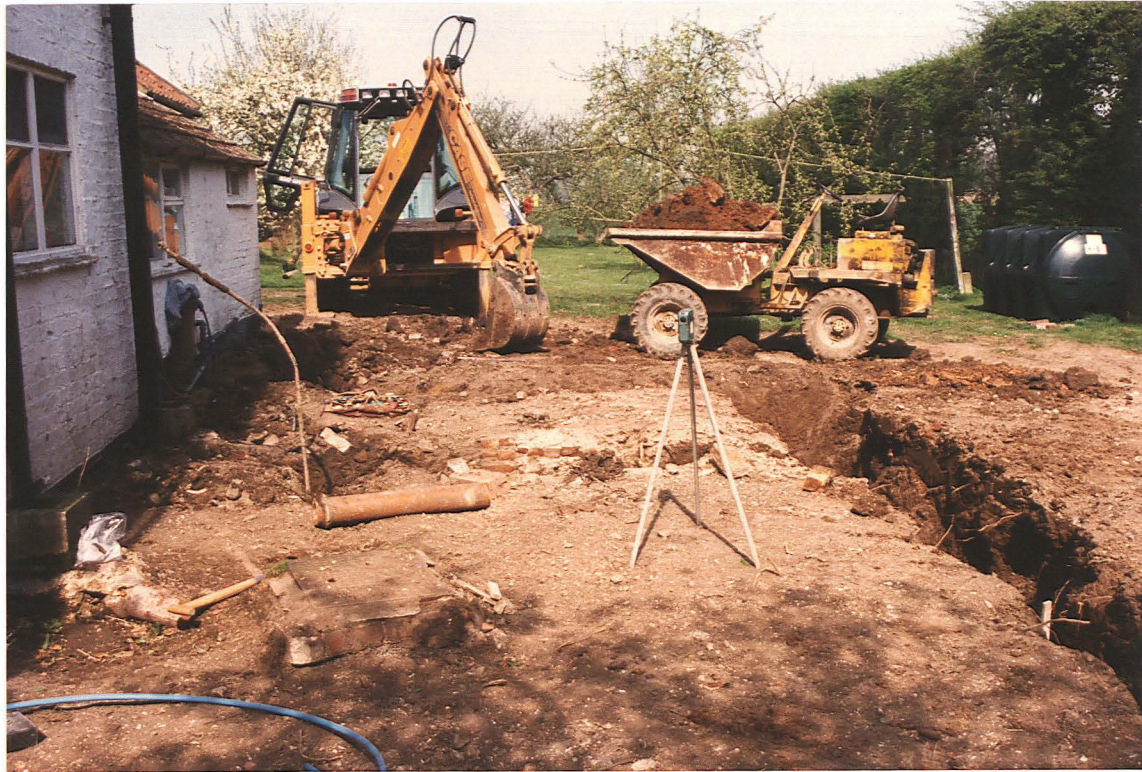


Fig. 5 Section across the exposed width of the moat 4, seen in the north side of the southern wall foundation trench (McDaid after Tann).





**Pl. 1** Excavation of footings for extension on east side of the Manor House (looking north). Brick foundations of a small structure are visible behind the tripod.





**Pl. 2** Composite view of the sloping ground between the Manor House (extreme right) and the churchyard boundary (left). One side of the moat seems to have occupied this area (looking south).





**Pl. 3** Brick foundations of an outhouse or cess pit built into dark clay loam backfill of the western edge of the earlier moat 4 (looking north).





**Pl. 4** Composite view of fill at the western edge of the backfilled moat 4, showing in the face of the foundation trench. The side slopes up below the sewer pipe, with gravelly material to the west of the clay loam fill. Looking north, scale divisions 0.5m and 0.2m.