

# **Continuous Archaeological Recording at Little Manor Church Hill Kersey Suffolk**

Grid reference: TM 0014 4398

Planning Application No's: 9B10/01324/FHA

B/10/01324/FHA; B/12/00211/LBC

Oasis No: 128141

HER No: KSY 028

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*Little Manor, viewed from Church Street with two of the originally three arcaded fronts for the workshop in the side cross wing*

## Summary

Continuous Archaeological Recording was carried out on Little Manor Church Hill Kersey (LBSUID: 276580) between the 7th of August 2012 and the 6th of November 2014. This was carried out in advance of the erection of an extension, drainage and groundworks, a new outhouse, external retaining walls and repairs to the fabric of a historic house. During the course of the monitoring the original open-hall hearth, which during some time was also possibly used in the process of making broadcloth, was discovered. Some architectural elements were uncovered including an original mullioned window and possible evidence for an attached building to the side of the house. Within the floor of the house some unusual slag deposits were found, packed tightly into a gully.

The specification and current report have been written in response to an archaeological brief written by Keith Wade of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services Conservation Team, dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2012; now curated by Dr Richard Hogget of the SCC/ACT.

## 1. Introduction and Planning Background

1.1 An application was made by the clients Ms L Crosbie and Professor E Higgs for the erection of an extension, drainage and groundworks; a new outhouse; external retaining walls and repairs to the fabric of a historic house.

1.2 The house has been studied by Leigh Alston and shown to be part of a 15<sup>th</sup> century house and a workshop - the other part being *Woodbine Cottage*. (Leigh Alston, '*Little Manor*', *Kersey, Suffolk: Historical Assessment*, November 2010).

1.3 Planning permission has been granted for the erection of a retaining wall and alteration to car parking and access at Little Manor, Church Hill, Kersey (B/10/01324/FHA). In addition, planning permission and Listed Building Consent has been granted for renovations and the erection of an extension and outbuilding. All these consents are conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (B/10/01324/FHA, B/12/00210/FHA and B/12/00211/LBC). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed works indicates that mitigation of any damage to the historic asset can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.

1.4 The Planning Authority has been advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of archaeological investigation work taking place before development begins in accordance with the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLD 2012) which replaces Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5, DCLG 2010). This sets out the requirements for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made. The *Local Plan Policy B22*, while stating that there should be a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important archaeological features and sites, outlines the process to be followed in order that the archaeological importance of a site may be determined and mitigation strategies put in place if necessary. This is also the requirement of the Deposit Joint Replacement Structure Plan (Policy 7, June 1998). As a result of the application, and to comply with planning policy, continuous archaeological recording was commissioned from Archaeoserv – DP Archaeological Services. Research was undertaken at the Suffolk Records Office Ipswich and the Suffolk Historic Environment Record office was consulted. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Suffolk HER and an on-line report will be made available with the Archaeological Data Service/Project Oasis.

## 2 Site Location and Description

Grid Reference: TM 0014 4398



*Figure 1. Location of Kersey*

2.1 The village of Kersey is a picturesque village set within a valley on one of the tributary streams of the River Brett, two and a quarter miles north-west of the town of Hadleigh. The drift geology for the area is predominantly heavy boulder clay of the *Till* deposits of central Suffolk (BGS 207) at c. 40m OD.

2. 2 Little Manor is situated at TM 002 439, the house lies to the immediate south of the village and is the first building viewed when entering Kersey from the south. From a landscape perspective it is an important view and feature of the village. Topographically, Little Manor sits at one of the two highest points within the village which also retains the Parish church of St Mary. The house location, almost adjacent to the church, is also significant.

### **3. Archaeological and Historical Background**

#### **3.1 Archaeological Interventions within Kersey**

The following archaeological interventions are recorded on the OASIS website: Gardner, R. (2004) Kersey CEVCP School (A Report on the Archaeological Monitoring). Ipswich: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Report No 2004/109, recorded no archaeology. Newman, J (2010) The Mount, The Row, Kersey, Suffolk- Archaeological Monitoring Report. Henley, Suffolk: John Newman Archaeological Services, produced no archaeology except residual medieval and post-medieval pottery. Newman J (2011). Erection of Extensions to Park Place, Church Hill, Kersey, Suffolk, Archaeological Monitoring Report, Henley Suffolk (John Newman Archaeological Service), produced evidence of an earlier building or structure by way of foundation walls of a substantial nature thought to be Medieval.

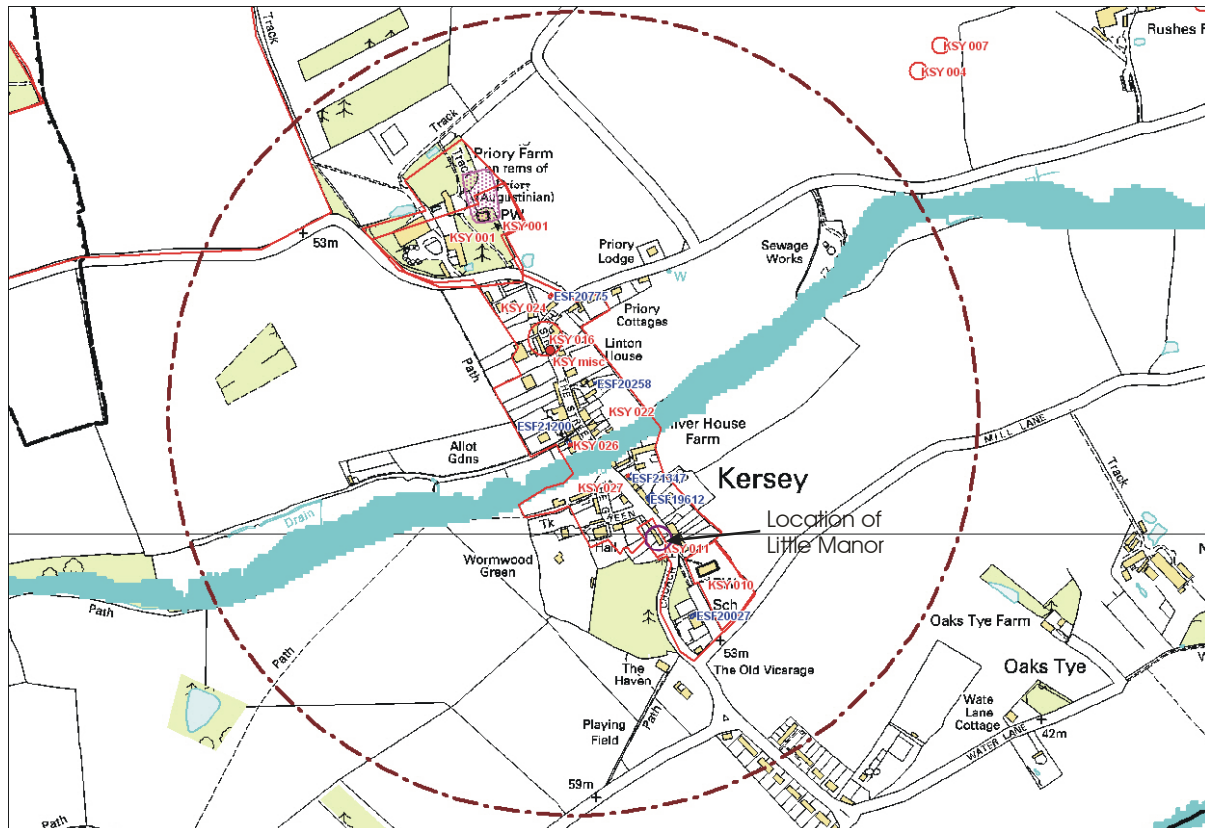
#### **3.2 Historical background**

Kersey is remarkable due to its high number of listed buildings present. These buildings reflect the high level of prosperity that prevailed here throughout the late medieval period until Tudor times and the early seventeenth century, a period when central Suffolk was an important centre for trade, particularly in the cloth industry, with the town of Lavenham at its centre.

*Little Manor* is certain to have been a house built upon the wealth, at its height, in the fifteenth century, and is therefore one of the most important and historical buildings in Kersey, and certainly one of the earliest. Presumably, *Little Manor* was known previously as *Woodbine Cottage*, the name retained by the separately owned wing of the original hall house, as it is referred to as Woodbine Cottage by Pevsner who states: 'a picturesque timber-framed house of before the Reformation (Pevsner, 1974). *Little Manor* itself incorporates several rare features, in particular an open arcade to the ground floor parlour wing. It is this feature that confirms its importance as a merchant's house as opposed to the usual arched window of a shop front typical of this period ` In most respects it is typical of the region's many urban merchants' houses of the late Middle Ages' (Alston, L, 2010).

The role that Kersey played within the cloth industry is evidenced by a broadcloth that was known as 'kersey cloth,' also the village was known for leather working. Kersey is of particular archaeological and historical interest as it progressed to a level of sophistication beyond the ordinary rural village, even within Suffolk. Kersey assumed urban characteristics such as a grant for a market in 1252, a fair, that survived as 'a pleasure fair on Easter Monday until the mid-nineteenth century, and is noted for the ivy mantled ruins of a Priory of Augustine Canons, which was founded as a hospital or free-chapel about the year 1218 (White, W, 1844) The fair and market was held adjacent to *Little Manor* on the former village green off Church Hill, also two parish guilds are known here. Kersey therefore became an important centre that was instrumental to performing various social and economic functions, a far wider network and trade than the local parish.

It is these far wider social and economic functions that gave Kersey its prosperity, especially within the cloth trade, leather working and the related agricultural trades dependent upon them. Like Lavenham, Kersey's prosperity declined as the industry peaked by the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, particularly when cheaper imports of cloth were arriving from the continent and competed with the home markets.



*Figure 2. Historic Environment Records Map of Monuments in Kersey*



## **4. Results**

4.1 All plans were drawn to a scale of 1:50

4.2 A metal detector survey was carried out at all stages of the project.

4.3 All artefactual evidence was retained for dating and analysis.

4.4 A full photographic archive was produced consisting of colour slide, monochrome print and digital at 10 million pixels resolution, and will form part of the site record to be curated at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

4.5 Site plans were digitized to archive standard, reduced versions of which are included in this report.

4.6 Levels were recorded at Ordnance Datum.

4.7 All features were described in detail with an overall statement of the potential for further work.

## **5. The Archaeological Recording and Monitoring: Groundworks**

5.1 Recording of the groundworks commenced on the 7<sup>th</sup> Of August 2012 for the trenches to create new drainage for the property. All trenches were excavated by a mechanical digger.

5.2 In November 2014, during the last phase of earthworks for a new retaining wall at the side of the property, a feature that appeared to be a wall cut [038] was noted, it contained a post (036) surviving as waterlogged wood, a further feature was also recorded, a post hole [040] c. 3m along the trench from the wall cut, and were both seen in section of the trench (plts. 19, 20).

5.3 Four test pits were excavated by the groundwork contractors, three around the house and one inside for geological assessment and water tables. All test pits were monitored, during which time no archaeology was revealed. A test pit within the house however did reveal a layer of compacted clay (003), which was likely to be a base for the floor bricks (001). A further test pit (S. 3) located at the side of the house contained a modern concrete layer (005), below this a top soil (006), and below this a mixed clay and stones back-filled deposit (010); a fourth test pit was not recorded as it contained the same deposit model as the previous test pit.

5.4 During excavation of the rear elevation wall to underpin the foundations, the original brick wall plinth (014) was exposed (plts. 5, 6). Of the two metre section revealed the brick course was interrupted by a change in the brickwork, suggesting that something had been previously built into the plinth or possibly a repair. The former seems more likely because further disturbance to the deposit below the wall plinth was noted by way of a compacted rubble and soil layer (015) within a cut [040]; only a small part of this was observable (S. 4).

5.5 During excavation to reduce the compacted clay floor within the hall of the house, a gully [012] was observed on the same alignment as the internal wall between the shop/workshop and the hall (see plt. 7, S. 13 & plan 1). It was considered to be the wall cut for the internal wall, but this was not directly beneath the wall and was located to the side of the wall. Two sections were cut into this feature to test if it was continuous or linear, the results of which proved that it did run the entire depth of the hall and was indeed linear. The fill of this feature was essentially large clumps of a slag material (011) with practically no other material (plt. 8).

5.6 Further excavations by the builders within the hall to reduce the floor level revealed a hearth structure (018). This was located c. 0.60m away from the 17th c fireplace, at a depth corresponding to the later hearth, c. 0.20 m below it, in a central position of the hall. The hearth lay beneath an earlier floor level (016) to that mentioned previously (001), being the latest brick floor. The layer of bricks were of very poorly fired fabric (016) and were mortared together and mortared down by (024) over the hearth itself. For the hearth, the following sequence was encountered, a layer of poorly fired bricks with mortar (016); a layer of fired earth (017), which extended beyond the hearth (018) towards and under the later fireplace. A hearth consisting of roofing tiles laid on edge and densely compacted to form a solid structure (018); a layer of mortar to bed down the tiles (019); around all of the above a layer of charcoal enriched fired-earth (020). This was a very truncated structure consisting of mortar and cobble stones (021), which limited the extent of the charcoal enriched layer (020), forming the base of all of the above (plts. 9-18). All the above contexts sat upon a silty clay (004), this deposit was encountered throughout the hall floor, had been heavily reduced by building works and contained small quantities of cbm and fragmented bone, the depth of which could not be estimated due to the water table. Other features believed to be associated with the hearth were two small stake holes [027, 028] that contained no fills as they appeared as voids and were sunk into the charcoal enriched fired earth (020), but did not penetrate the made-up clay layer (022). A re-deposited clay (023) was observed to the side of the hearth complex (Pl. 3) and a further deposit, a mortar or heavily compacted earthen layer (025), heavily truncated, contemporary with the hearth and part of the same sequence (this may have been the original floor). A group of bonded bricks (026) were abutting the later 17th c. hearth and were likely to be contemporary with that.

5.7 It was not possible to half section the hearth complex as the client wished to preserve its integrity and will be preserved in-situ (see plans: 2, 3, 4 & 5), however, it was possible to section an area of the hearth structure that had been eroded by the fire. A section was cut into approximately one quarter of the hearth structure where it had been damaged by fire and general use (see plan 5, 6 & S. 9). Section 9 showed the layer of fired earth (017) as described above, over a further darker fill of fired earth (033), which lay above a further sequence of fired earth (034), that lay above a primary layer containing charcoal (031) forming an earlier hearth of crude structure [032] to the main hearth (plt. 19). This earlier hearth had been cut by a re-deposited clay (030) forming the base of hearth (018), the main structure, all within a cut [035].

5.6 Section 7 was a recording of the works to reduce the original floor level in the workshop, revealing the made-up layer of silty clay (004) (ubiquitous to the ground floor) above a secondary deposit (013), a mixed silty cbm, the same deposit seen in the hall over the slag deposits (011), which was above a natural sandy clay (029), and the only location that the natural was revealed inside the house. Levels taken of the hall and workshop floors showed that the floor in the workshop was originally 0.25m higher than in the hall.

## **6. Recording of the Building Fabric**

Much of the lower framing to the building was replaced, having suffered from rising damp from the underground stream, known to exist below the house. Underpinning and consolidation work to the foundations did not reveal much of archaeological interest except for the change in the brickwork to the rear wall plinth as mentioned (4.4). Within the timber framed wall to the rear of the property an original mullioned window was exposed with diamond cut mullion sockets. This had been filled in, presumably when the upper storey was inserted sometime likely after c. 1570 to around c. 1640, using a section from a carved window casement from either the original window frame or from another early building (plts. 1, 2). Further alterations were revealed when a corner fitted cupboard was removed from the solar above the workshop. A number of truncated storey posts indicated to the likelihood of original window locations at the corners of the front and side elevations (plt. 4). On the rear elevation wall, the rear doorway appeared to have been altered and or repaired some considerable time ago.

Early on in the renovation to the exterior, an original wall pigment was observed, which appeared a pinkish colour and may be the original colour-wash for the house (plt. 22).

## 7. Table of Contexts

Context	Type	Description/Dimensions	Interpretation	Find Types /comments
(001)	Layer	Bricks	Floor bricks	Woolpit Whites
(002)	Layer	Sand	Base for floor	
(003)	Layer	clay	Base for floor	
(004)	Layer	Silty clay, depth unknown	Back-filled	A made-up layer, seen throughout the ground floor of the house
[005]	Layer	Concrete	modern	
(006)	Layer	Top soil; depth 0.15m	Garden soil	
(007)	Layer	Sub soil; depth 0.22m		
[008]	Layer	Concrete	modern	Test pit 4
(009)	Layer	Top soil; depth 0.25m	Garden soil, similar to (006)	Test pit 4
[010]	Layer	Mixed clay with CBM; depth 0.25m		Test pit 4
(011)	Fill	Slag nodules (large)	Uncertain use, deposit found in a linear gully within floor interior of house	Several found, total unknown, tightly packed with no infill
[012]	Cut	Gulley; linear, depth 0.25m, width 0.34m	Possibly a channel for drainage containing the slag to stop it silting up?	No infill with the slag
(013)	Layer	Silty layer with mainly cbm; depth 0.03m	Uncertain, possibly base for floor	Mainly consisting of cbm
(014)	Structure	Brick plinth	Wall foundation for house	
(015)	Layer	Mixed soil with compacted rubble, cbm; depth 0.30m, width 0.40m	Back-filled deposit -disuse of void	

## Context table contd.

(016)	Layer	Floor bricks	Flooring over of hearth	Disuse
(017)	Layer	Fired earth; depth 0.05m, extent uncertain, but carried on under later fireplace	Scorched by fire from hearth	Secondary to hearth-industrial?
(018)	Structure	Compacted layer of tiles laid on edge; depth 0.05m, width 1.00m by 0.58m	Hearth	Domestic hearth with probable secondary use in producing cloth (for heating water)
(019)	Layer	Mortar; depth 0.03m, width 0.35m	Base for floor	Possibly mortar under bricks (016) and equivalent to
(020)	Layer	Charcoal-stained earth; depth 0.03m, width 0.35m	Base of flue to structure (0210)	Section width
(021)	Structure	Cobbled stone with mortar; depth 0.10m, width 0.60m	Base of structure	To heat water?
(022)	Not used			
(023)	Layer	Clay; depth 0.07m, width 0.45m as exposed	Re-deposited clay for a floor base or to act as cement	
(024)	Layer	Silty clay; depth 0.03m, width not determined	Base for floor?	Similar to (003)
(025)	Layer	Mortar; depth 0.03m. width 0.65m as exposed	Floor surface, possibly original floor to house	
(026)	Structure	Bonded bricks; depth 0.07m, width 0.18m	Base of later fireplace (17 <sup>th</sup> c)	
[027]	Cut	Circular and vertical void,; depth 0.10m, width 0.03m	Stake hole, possibly part of structure (021)	No fill
[028]	Cut	Circular and vertical void,; depth 0.10m, width 0.03m	Stake hole, possibly part of structure (021)	No fill
(029)	Layer	Natural mid-brown sandy clay; depth 0.22m (exposed, width 0.84m	Natural geology	
(030)	Layer	Clay; depth 0.05m, width 0.25m	Re-deposited clay used for as a cement to bond the hearth tiles?	
(031)	Fill	Brownish yellow silty clay with charcoal; depth 0.07m, width 0.55m	Primary deposit of earlier hearth	Below open hearth (018)

## Context table contd.

(032)	Cut	Hearth; depth 0.18m, width 0.55m of section	Base of a small fire pit	Pre-dates open hearth
(033)	Fill	Fired, reddish-brown clay; depth 0.02m, width 0.30m of section	Sequence of fired earth in small fire pit	
(034)	Fill	Fired pinkish-red clay; depth 0.07m. width 0.58m of section	Sequence of fired earth in small fire pit	
(035)	Cut	Initial cut for main hearth (018); depth 0.07m, width 0.30m	Base of later fireplace (17 <sup>th</sup> c)	
(036)	Structure	Waterlogged wooden post; depth 0.26m, width 0.30m	Post for a wall, possibly part of a lean-to structure to side of house	
(037)	Fill	Of wall cut [038] of greyish brown silty clay; depth 0.30m, width 0.80m	Back fill of wall cut	
{038}	Cut	Wall cut; depth 0.30m, width 0.80m	Wall cut containing post (036), possibly for the lean-to structure	
(039)	Fill	Post hole fill of greyish-brown silt with cbm at its base; depth 0.40m, width 0.18m	Disuse	
[040]	Cut	Post hole; depth 0.40m, width 0.18m	Post for a wall, possibly part of a lean-to structure to side of house, opposing (036)	Position suggests opposite corner post to (036) post
[041]	Cut	Yellowish-brown, mixed sandy deposit with cbm; depth 0.05m, width 0.25m	Truncation to upper level of slag deposit (011)- [012	This deposit was seen in the workshop floor after reduction by building works; it may represent the reconstruction of the floor See S.7
(042)	Layer	Layer below (004), a made-up silty clay with occasional cbm	Possibly for floor levelling	Secondary sequence

## 8. Plans and Sections

### 8.1 Plans

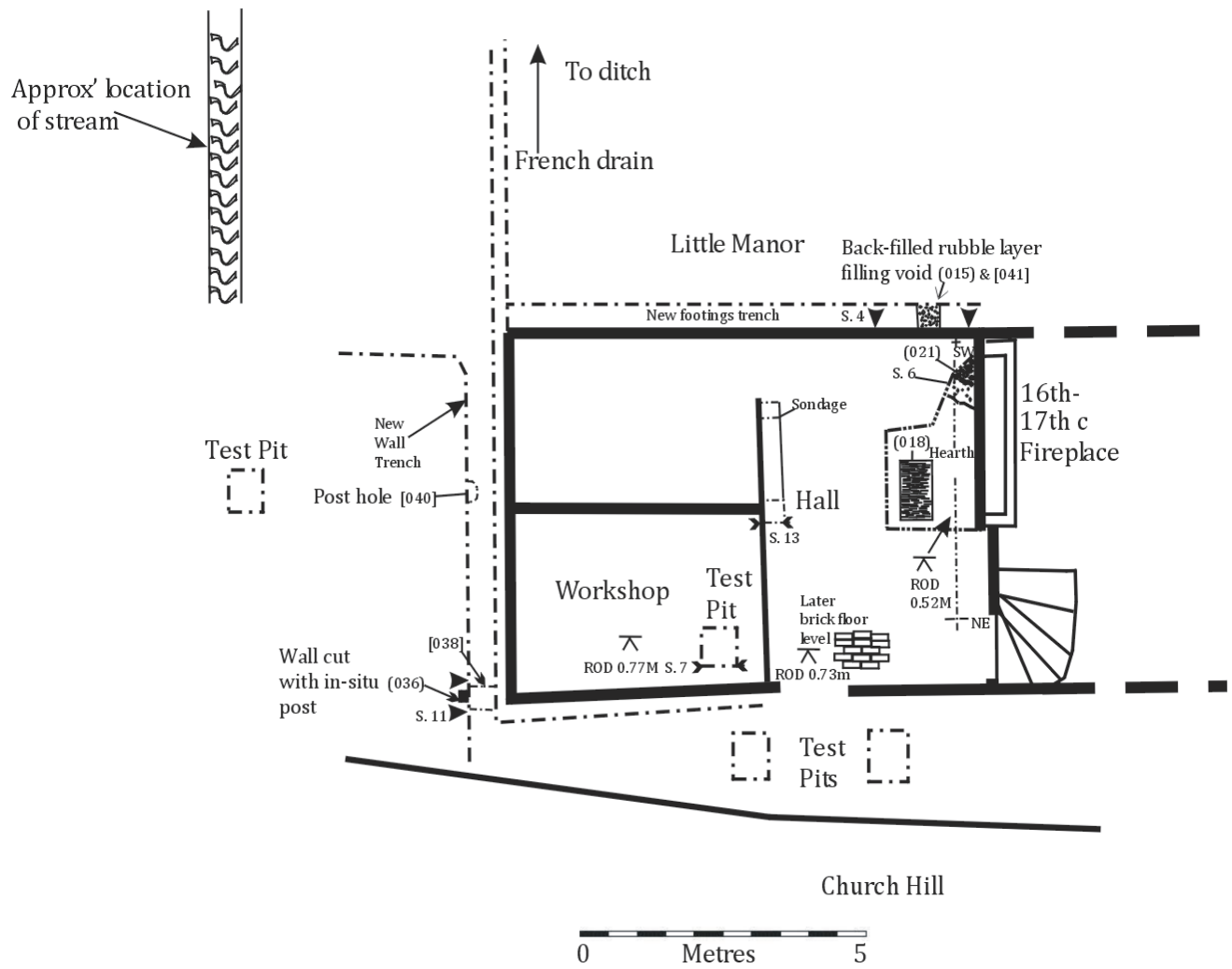
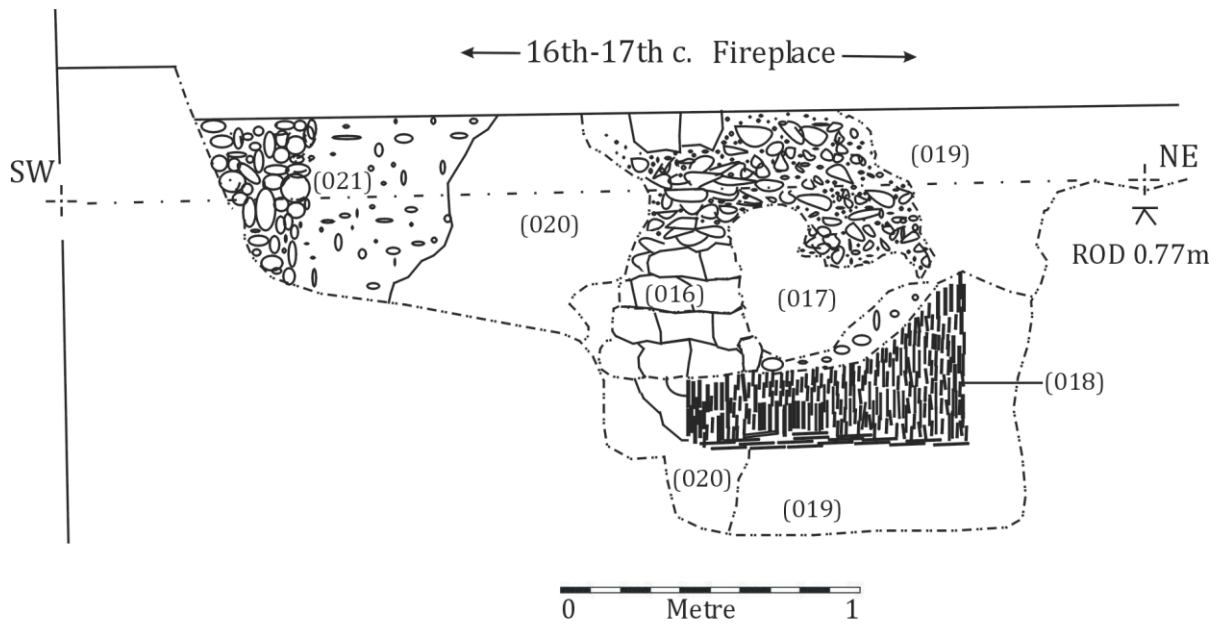
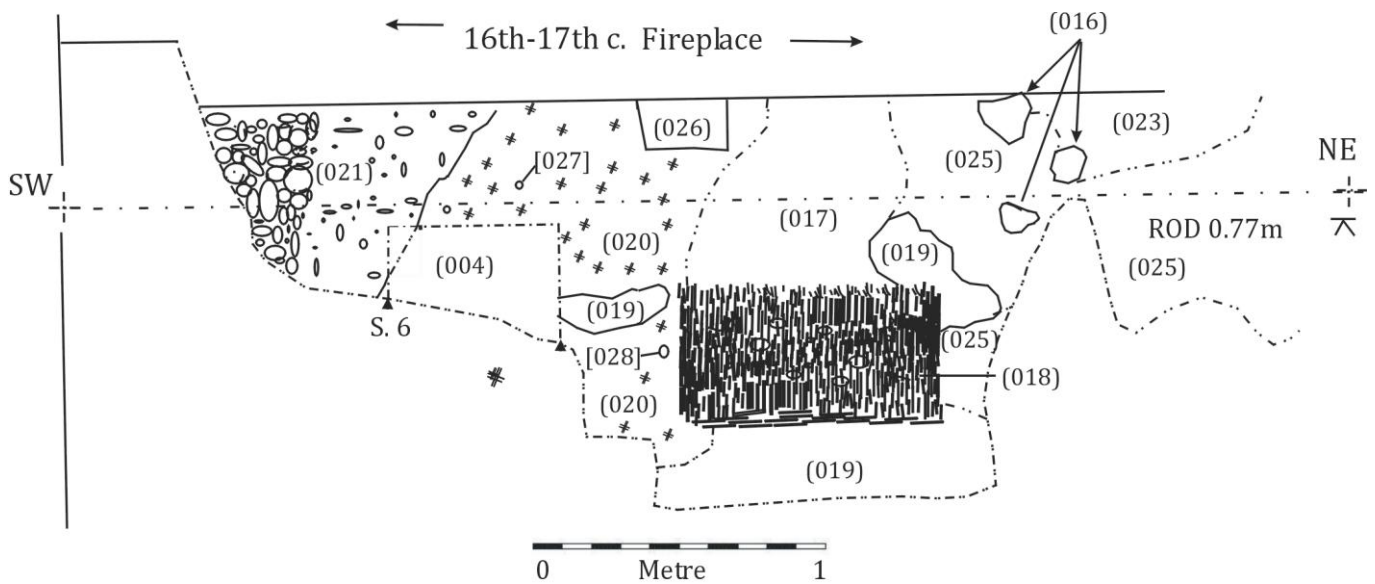


Figure 2. Plan of house showing significant find and feature locations, scale at 1:100



Open Hearth (018), scale 1:20

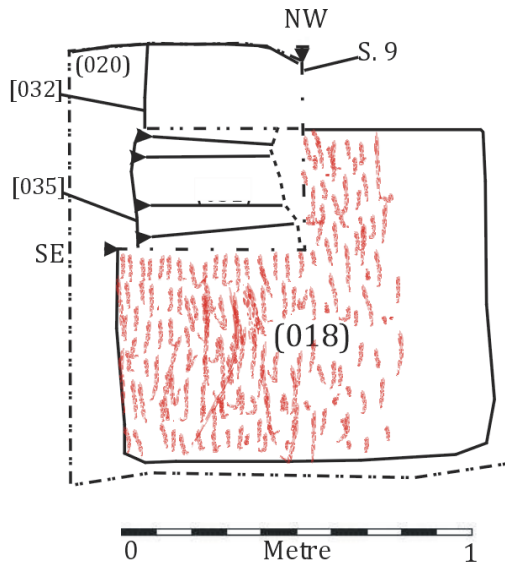
*Figure 3. Plan No. 2 of Open Hearth in Hall*



Open Hearth (018), scale 1:20

*Figure 4. Plan No.3 of Open Hearth in Hall*

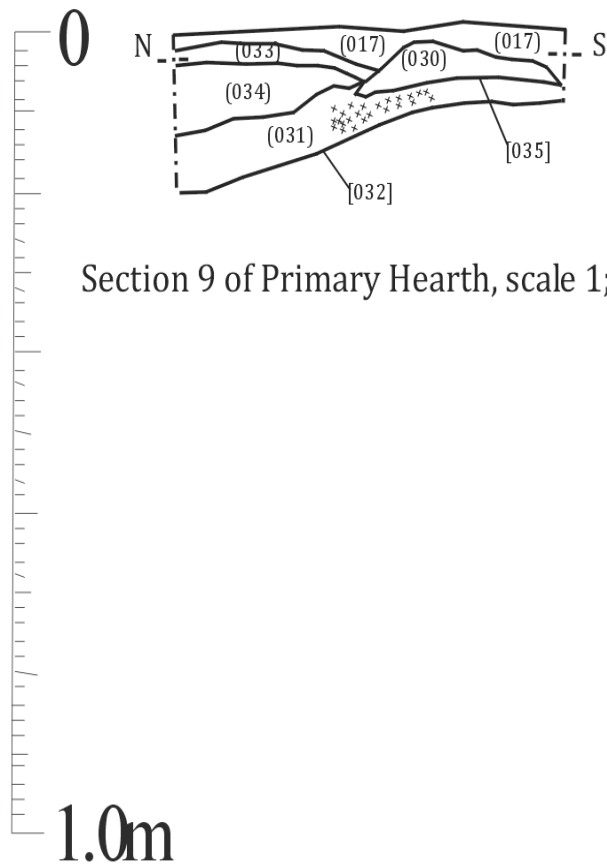




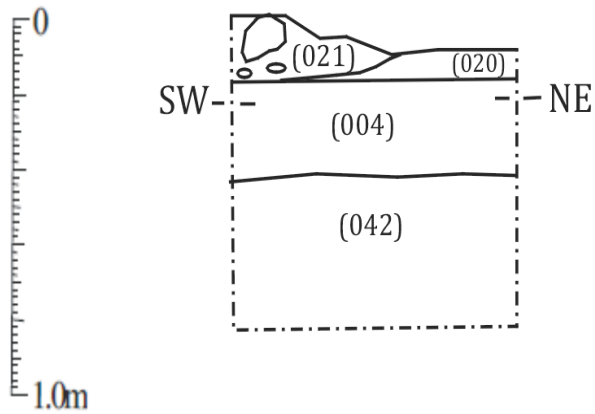
Plan of primary hearth [032] cut by later hearth [035] containing (018)

**Figure 5. Plan No. 4 of early hearth [032] cut by later hearth [035] with (018) hearth tiled base**

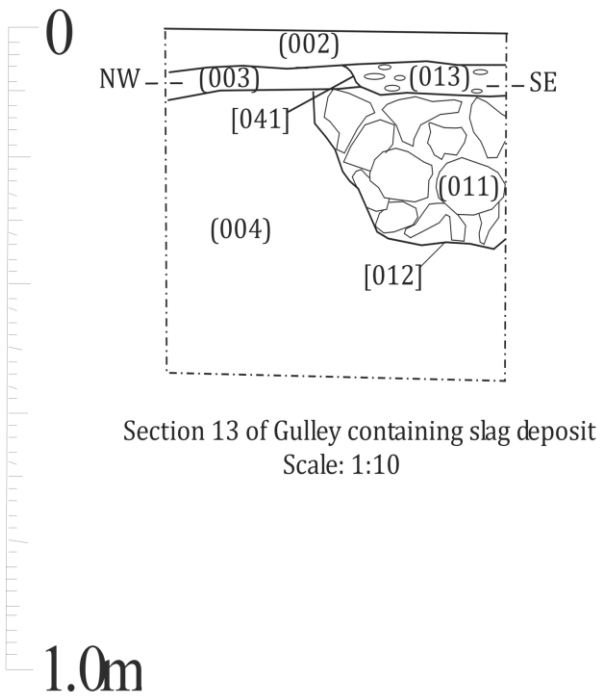
## 8.2 Sections



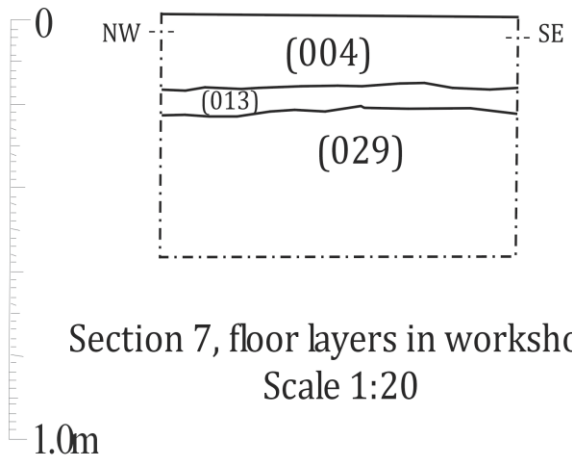
Section 9 of Primary Hearth, scale 1:10



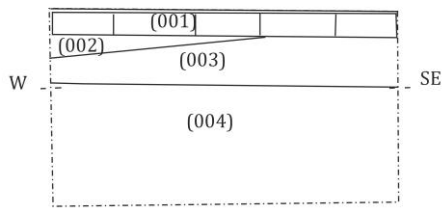
Section through structure (021), charcoal layer (20)  
 (004) make-up layer and (042) a secondary make-up layer  
 Scale 1:20



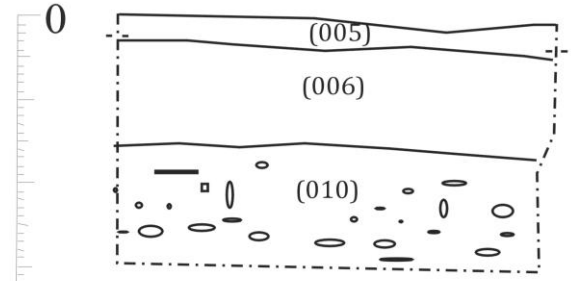
Section 13 of Gulley containing slag deposit  
 Scale: 1:10



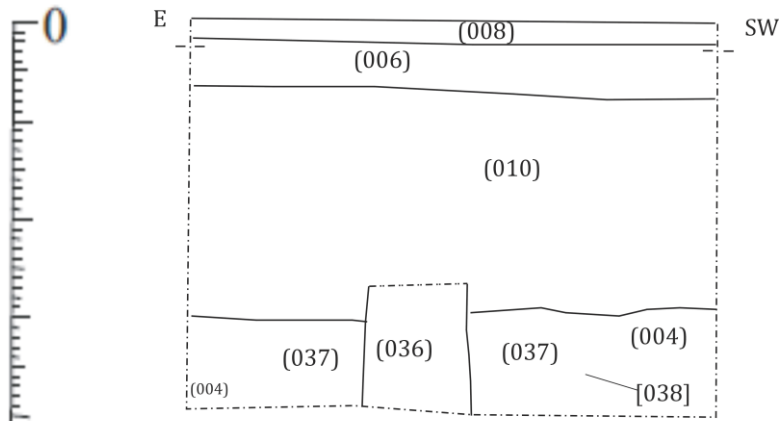
Section 7, floor layers in workshop  
 Scale 1:20



Section 1, test pit in workshop floor  
Scale 1:10

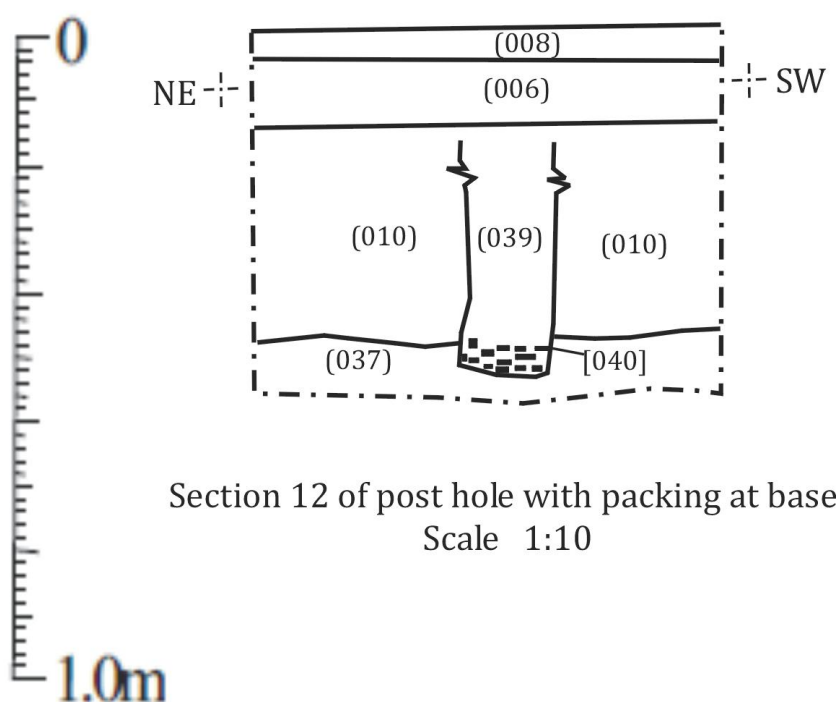


Section 3, test pit to side of house  
Scale :1:10



Section 11 of wall cut with in-situ post  
Scale 1:10





## 9. The Finds and Environmental Evidence

### 9.1 Ceramics

By Sue Anderson

Two fragments (46g) of plain roof tile were collected from levelling layer 004. One is in a fine sandy fabric (14g) and the other is fine sandy with occasional flint inclusions (32g). Both are fully oxidised to a mid-orange colour and they are likely to be of late or post-medieval date.

### 9.2 An assessment of the plant macrofossils.

By Anna West

#### Introduction and Methods

Two bulk samples were taken from archaeological features during a monitoring at Little Manor, Kersey. The samples were all processed in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful insight into the utilisation of local plant resources and agricultural activity, as well as looking for any industrial residues that could provide further evidence of the range industrial activities taking place on the site.

The samples were processed using manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. Once dried the flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant macro remains or artefacts were recorded in Table x. Identification of plant remains is with reference to New Flora of the British Isles, (Stace).

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh and sorted when dry. All artefacts/ecofacts were retained for inclusion in the finds total. Both the flot and the non-floating residues were scanned with a magnet to recover any ferrous material that may be present.

#### Quantification

For this initial assessment, macro remains such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones were scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories

# = 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens

Remains that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored for abundance

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

#### Results

SS No	Context No	Feature / cut no	Feature type	Approx date of deposit	Flot Contents
1	004	004?	Layer	?	Charred cereal grains #, Fish bones ##, Charred weed seeds #, Charcoal ++, Rootlets +
2	017	?	Hearth	?	Fish bones #, Charcoal ++, Snails +

Both flots were relatively small at 50ml for Sample 1, (004) and 20ml for Sample 2, (017). The preservation of the macro fossils within the samples was through charring and is generally poor. Wood charcoal fragments were common in both samples, making up the majority of the flot material. The charcoal was on the whole very fragmented, to the point of powdery, but a few fragments remained large enough to be identifiable as being from a ring porous wood, therefore some of this material may be suitable for radiocarbon dating or species identification if required.

Only Sample 1, from layer (004) contained charred cereal grains, in very small numbers. Two grains were identifiable as wheat (*Triticum* sp.), with the rounded shape of a bread wheat, six other fragments were too small to identify to species but were most likely also wheat.

Fish bones were also present within Sample 1 along with a single charred Cleavers (Galium aparine L.) seed, this could be either a crop contaminant associated with the sparse cereal remains or material accidentally collected along with fuel material represented by the charcoal.

Magnetic ferrous flakes were recovered from the non-floating residues from both samples in small quantities. Two flakes within Sample 1 (004) and twenty two flakes from Sample 2 (017). These appear rather large for hammerscale which is produced during smithing but their presence does suggest that metal working of some sort may have been taking place within the vicinity. No ferrous spheroids were recovered from either the flots or the non-floating residues. Spheroid hammerscale is formed when molten metal is expelled during welding and is often observed within flot samples where metal working has taken place on site.

### Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In general the samples were poor in terms of identifiable material.

The bread wheat grains recovered are representative of the cereals grown during the Medieval period and the fish bones illustrate a common source of protein rich food.

The mix of material present suggests that it most likely represents domestic type refuse, the chance loss in a hearth, fire or oven during food preparation, which has become incorporated into the archaeological deposits. The presence of the ferrous remains suggests that small scale industrial activities could also have been taking place within the vicinity.

It is not recommended that any further work is carried out on the flot material from these samples at this stage as they have little information of value to add to the archaeological investigations on this site.

### Bibliography

Identification of cereal remains from archaeological sites, 2nd Ed 2006 (Stefanie Jacomet et al) Archaeobotany Lab IPAS, Basel University.

New Flora of the British Isles, 3rd Ed (Stace C.)

## 10. Interpretation

### 10.1 Groundworks: External

Groundworks for the installation of French drains, the extension to the rear of the property and a new retaining wall to the side of the property revealed little to suggest previous associated structures separate to the house as was thought possible by Leigh Alston (Alston, L, 2010). The last phase of groundworks however did reveal the possibility of evidence for there having been a side structure attached to the house in the form of a wall cut [038] with an in-situ post (036), having been preserved by water-logged conditions. Its age and authenticity for being an early post was attested by the remains of the sole plate (bottom plate) having also survived below the replaced brick-built side elevation wall, opposite to the section, in a similar condition by water-logging, turning them a black colour. Post hole [040] was noted on an alignment that respected the side elevation wall of the house, which would easily have formed part of a frame for an extension, seen in the same section (S.11, S. 12) for the new retaining wall at the side of the house, its position was logical for this to be associated with wall cut [038].

Upstanding evidence for this structure can be seen with the blind tenons in the corner bracket to the timber framing of the house, suggesting something was attached here. As this part of the house was a workshop it would be logical that at some time an extension was needed to facilitate increased production. It is likely that the structure was not of the highest standard and was removed.

At the rear of the house, groundworks exposed the brick plinth to the wall (014), which incorporated a change in the brickwork, suggesting that something had been inserted into the wall. Below this, a compacted rubble layer of infill (015) was also seen and recorded as a sketch section (S. 4); the extent of these features could not be seen, but they may constitute evidence for either an earlier extension to the house or an inlet or drain. The depth of the compacted rubble feature would suggest an inlet or drain for some industrial purpose, with a depth of c. 0.60m below the wall plinth. The position of the possible drain or water supply is interesting when associated with the hearth, which may suggest an industrial function.

### 10.2 Groundworks: Interior

As groundworks proceeded inside the house, a hearth (018) was discovered, constructed from roof tiles laid on edge in a condensed array to form a solid base for the fire (plts. 9- 18). The position of the hearth is central to what would have been the open hall, before the room was ceiled over and a new fireplace and chimney inserted, probably at the same time; in a pioneering article in 1953 (Past and Present 4) W.G. Hoskins characterised improvements such as the introduction of chimneys and the insertion of a floor above the hall as 'The Great Rebuilding', which he dated to the seventy years after 1570 (Hoskins, W, G., 1953). If Hoskin's statement is correct then the open hearth should pre-date 1570 and most likely dates to the origins of the house around the first quarter of the fifteenth century. This would have coincided with its heyday as a place of production, a commercial and domestic house. Whilst the hearth would have functioned primarily as a source of heating, its position, less than 3 metres away from the partition wall, which runs between the hall and the workshop.

Generally these hearths were positioned around seven feet from the dais end of the hall (Bayleaf Farm has one identical to this at the Wealden and Downland Open Air Museum Chichester), so the Kersey example is in not far away from the normal position. It does seem though that this house functioned as an industrial unit as a matter of the highest importance, as is attested by the workshop in the cross-wing, with its domestic status being compromised to a lower level than in the vast majority of houses at this time. The question of this hearth's use and function does seem to revolve around a domestic and or industrial use. The evidence for a secondary industrial purpose has been proffered by the existence of ancillary features to what would have been the domestic hearth, such as the enigmatic structure (021) seen much truncated adjacent to the hearth. The extent of the fired earth (017) continued away from the hearth, underneath the later fireplace, suggesting that the hearth was too small for its re-adaptation to another function other than purely domestic use. Furthermore, did the owner of this house sacrifice further domestic space to incorporate more of its industrial function? It may be entirely possible that the house was turned over to total production, with the owner moving out to another house. This is all purely speculation, but Kersey was an important location for its famous *broadcloth*, a period of heightened production, which may have dictated such extraordinary circumstances, rarely witnessed elsewhere, so it is not entirely unreasonable to consider this a strong possibility.

Environmental samples taken from the fill around the hearth revealed little to suggest that the hearth was being used for little more than its primary function for heating and cooking. There were however a small number of metallic flakes recovered from this sample suggesting that some low-scale industrial function (metal working) may have been carried out here; no spheroids suggests no smithying or smelting was evident. However, if we look for alternative uses for the hearth then it is quite possible that large volumes of water may have been heated; hot water was used as part of the cloth production process. The remains of some kind of structure (021) were recorded, consisting of a cobbled and mortar layer, truncated to the level exposed. This feature, which delimited the extent of charcoal-enriched earth and possibly the flow of gases, may have been used to hold water, heated by a flue from the fireplace and could explain the use of this hearth from being purely of a domestic nature.

The process of producing cloth included washing of the wool, the wool was washed for the fibres that would be used to make woollens or probably even broadcloth, famous from Kersey. The cleansing process was particularly stringent, and could include hot alkaline water, lye, and even stale urine. The aim was to remove the "wool grease" (from which lanolin is extracted) and other oils and greases as well as dirt and foreign matter (Munroe, J, H., 2003).

If one assumes that this is a multi-functional hearth, which is quite possible, then the industrial element of this house extends into what would normally be the domestic space, the open hall. Whilst one would assume that anything to do with the production process would be carried out in a separate building, this may not necessarily be the case here.



A cross-over of usage for a room normally designated for a particular purpose is likely to be a grey area, but the defined uses of space could possibly change with need, as and when required, with living space being utilised for whatever purpose a cottage industry may demand of it. The paucity of evidence for external buildings to the rear of the building seems to support this theory, although some kind of structure was likely to have existed to the side of the house, but no evidence for its purpose was established.

The small quantity of metal flakes found in the environmental sample may be residual, having been brought in from outside; the large clumps of slag found in a gully between the hall and the workshop are most intriguing, but again may have been used in the process for producing cloth or they may simply have been inserted into the floor to effect a form of drainage; the problem of dampness in this house must have been a continual one since the house was built as it was built over a natural spring.

## **11. Discussion**

Little Manor is an interesting house, well preserved from the time it was built, sometime in the early fifteenth century. Not least of its interesting features was the hearth, found where it was predicted beneath the floor of the house, which had been built over with a later floor layer finished in poorly-fired bricks, suggesting maybe that it was a rapid cessation of industrial use.

The hearth is the focus of any house and has been since humans lived within a dwelling that offered the basic needs of shelter, keeping warm and a hearth to cook from. The open hearth discovered in this house is by no means less of a focus here and by far the most interesting feature found. It may represent the key to the past of Little Manor and its use not only as a house but as a place of production adapted for the purpose with a possible rapid cessation of that function when the wool industry fell into decline by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and the evidence found in this house has allowed an insight into its past.

From a structural point of view, very little was revealed that would suggest that the house had undergone major changes and that's why this house is quite original in itself.

There is the possibility that the house had a possible lean-to structure, which most likely was associated with its commercial aspect. Indeed it all seems to add up to the assumption that the building was very successful in playing its part in the cloth industry.

If the house served as a residence as well as a place of production, it is entirely possible that it could not accommodate the higher production demands made of it at some point, probably during the fifteenth century, when Kersey played an important role producing a well respected broadcloth known as ``Kersey cloth``.

## **12. Conclusion**

This archaeological monitoring and recording was successful in showing that no significant archaeology will be compromised by the current development. In addition, the major find of an open hearth will be preserved in-situ for posterity.

Domestic houses, also forming a place of production during the medieval period, and their place in society is a subject for further study that would greatly improve our knowledge of pre-industrial Britain.

It is recommended that no further archaeological work is required on this project, subject to SCC/ACT confirmation to this effect.

## **13. Archive Deposition**

The paper and photographic archive will be held at the County Store, Suffolk County Council Archaeology, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

A digital record and copies of the report can be viewed at The Historic Environment Record office, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds and online at:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>.

The finds archive is held at the County Store, Suffolk County Council Archaeology, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

## **14. Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank Liz Crosbie and Professor E. Higgs, the owners of Little Manor, who commissioned and funded the archaeological work.

This report for archaeological recording was written by Dennis Payne BA (Hons) AlFA (Archaeoserv), who also managed the project and carried out the field-work.

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**Appendix I: Digital Images**



*Plate 1. Re-sited window frame with moulding reversed*



*Plate 2. Re-sited window frame removed (showing moulding)*



*Plate 3. mullioned window sockets in lintel From the rear of the house*



*Plate 4. Truncated storey post- possible sites of window apertures*



*Plate 5. Wall plinth (014), altered to the left*



*Plate 6. CBM backfill (015) below plinth*



*Plate 7. Gully [012] containing slag deposit (011)*



*Plate 8. Slag deposit (011)*



*Plate 9. The open hearth (018) with first over-burden removed, showing the tiled hearth with brick and mortar layer (016) and fired earth layer (017) above, with charcoal-stained earth (020) behind; in the background, the much truncated structure (021, all revealed upon the made-up layer (004)*



*Plate 10. Detail of deposits above and to the side of the hearth: cobbled and mortared structure (021) to the left, charcoal stained deposit (020) centre, poorly fired brick and mortar layer (016), right*



*Plate 11. Detail of structure (021) with possible flue to the right and (020) charcoal-stained earth*



*Plate 12. Section of structure (021), charcoal layer (020) and two sequences of make-up (004) & (042)*



*Plate 13. Section of structure (021), charcoal layer (020) and two sequences of make-up (004) & (042)*



*Plate 14. Secondary hearth base represented by (017) fired earth*



*Plate 15. Hearth (018); Plan 3*





*Plate 16. Layer (025) a compacted floor base to the right of the hearth, probably the original first earthen floor of the house*



*Plate 17. Plan 4, and section 7 of secondary hearth degrading the tiled hearth (018); in plan, a re-deposited clay (030) centre left*



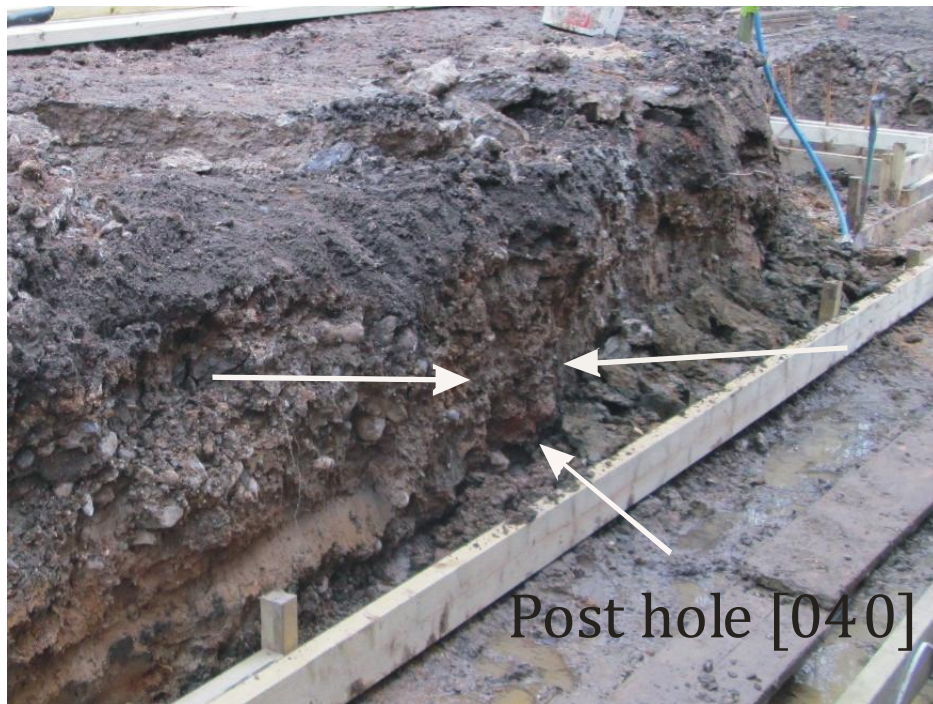
*Plate 18. Re-deposited clay layer in section, below hearth*



*Plate 19. Section 9 of primary and secondary hearth cuts [032 & 035]*



*Plate 20. Wall cut [038] with in-situ post (036; make-up deposit (010) above; to the side of house*



*Plate 21. Post hole [040] to the side of house, associated with [038]*



*Plate 22. Original wall infill of plaster showing a primary paint surface-pinkish in colour, front elevation*



*Plate 23. Drainage trench at the rear of the house, looking north*



*Plate 24. The test pit from the workshop floor of the house showing the latest brick floor*