

Marches Archaeology

The Moat Lower Brockhampton Brockhampton Herefordshire

Report on an archaeological watching brief

February 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 318

This report is produced by

Marches Archaeology

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**The Moat
Lower Brockhampton
Brockhampton
Herefordshire**

Report on an archaeological watching brief

**HSM: 34721
Accession No. 2003-30
NGR: SO 6875 5599**

Report by
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Report on an archaeological watching brief

Summary

Work to repoint and rebuild revetments along the edge of the moat at Lower Brockhampton House was subject to a watching brief. A redeposited clay layer was identified at the edge of the moat, but no features were seen nor were any significant finds recovered.

1 Introduction

Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was granted to Frank W Haywood Associates, acting as agent to The National Trust, for works to the moat at the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Lower Brockhampton House (County Monument SAM 67). The site located on the Brockhampton Estate near Bromyard and is centred on NGR: SO 6875 5599.

The works consisted of the extension of the retaining wall to the moat, rebuilding and repairing the existing walls. The SMC required archaeological recording.

Frank W Haywood Associates commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services, which were based on a project proposal approved by English Heritage.

The watching brief was carried out between 30th May and 9th June 2003. The report was issued on 3rd February 2004. The project has been allocated the County Sites and Monuments Record number HSM 34721 and the archive is accessioned by Herefordshire Museum Services as 2003-30.

2 Scope and aims of the project

The purpose of an archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the

watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

The aims of the project were to:

- { observe all topsoil stripping, other earth moving and trench excavation until natural subsoil was reached.
- { record the sequence of soil deposits present and all archaeological deposits and features, including above ground structures
- { to collect, identified and catalogued all significant artefacts
- { to inform the relevant parties immediately if significant archaeology is identified in order that appropriate action may be taken to minimise the damage to such deposits and to record them appropriately.
- { to fully process archaeological materials and produce an appropriate report.

3 Methodology

Fieldwork

Observations and appropriate recording were undertaken of all ground breaking activity in association with this proposed development. A photographic record of the banks and retaining walls was made after the water level has been reduced and prior to the commencement of repair works.

A sump for use by the fire brigade was to be dug into the moat. This work was finally carried out in January 2004 without informing Marches Archaeology in advance. It is understood that the sump was dug into silts and not into the base of the moat itself, and the agent for the National Trust decided that the presence of an archaeologist to watch the procedure was unnecessary.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record was by means of site notes, accompanied by sketches. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed as appropriate. The areas affected were noted on a plan of the moat at a scale of 1:200, no other measured drawings were considered necessary. The photographic record consists of black and white negative and colour transparency film. No environmental samples were taken. A representative sample of post-medieval finds were recovered. All earlier finds would have been collected, but none were found.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefacts were assessed. Only post-medieval finds were discovered. These were recorded on finds sheets for the appropriate context, then discarded.

This illustrated client report was produced detailing the aims, methods, and results of the project. It includes a non-technical summary and details of the location and size of the archive.

4 Archaeological and historical background

The site is a moated site of medieval origin with a standing dwelling, Lower Brockhampton House, on the moat platform (HSM 7157) and a gatehouse on the line of the former southern arm of the moat (HSM 939). The timbers for the gatehouse, dated by dendrochronology, were felled in AD 1542-4.

To the west is a chapel built probably at the end of the twelfth century (HSM 938). A further moat stands to the north-east of the existing moat (HSM 4895). Recent research by Herefordshire Archaeology has suggested that there may be an earlier moat on the site, one part of which may be in the area of the proposed works.

5 Results

The existing revetments to the moat immediately east of the gatehouse are built of local mudstone (Fig. 2, plate 1). Most of the stones are undressed, but occasional dressed pieces are included, presumably reused from an earlier structure. Where visible the original mortar was yellow or white and friable. Wall [11] (plate 2) had previously been repointed in patches, and walls [07] and [08] had lost much of their mortar, especially below water level. The low flowerbed revetment [09] is drystone build with no mortar. Walls [08], [10] and [11] have undressed, roughly triangular coping stones. Wall [07] is much lower than the others (0.8m high at the east end) and has flat slabs on top at the level of the grass. Walls [08], [09] and [10] are all bonded together and must have been built at that the same time. There is a butt joint between wall [11] and [10], so wall [11] might represent a different phase of construction. The walls passing under the gatehouse are not continuous. There is a straight butt joint between walls [07] and [08] and the stretches of wall directly under the gatehouse. Presumably the walls under the gatehouse are earlier and walls [07] and [08] are later additions or rebuilds.

Walls [07], [08], [10] and [11] were to be repointed. Some stones needed replacing at the base of wall [11]. Wall [09] needed rebuilding. It was demolished and the section behind it was recorded before rebuilding. Wall [09] was a single faced revetment built into the deposits behind it, which must have been laid down as [09] was being constructed. A core of stone [13] was built up then, when the wall was *c.*150mm below its finished level, topsoil [12] was deposited over and around the back of the wall stones.

East of wall [11] the edge of the moat was cut back *c.*0.85m to a depth 150mm below the water level (approximately 82.78m OD). This cutting was the foundation trench for a new revetment wall (plate 3). In the trench the deposits on the edge of the moat could be clearly seen. The topsoil [01] was *c.* 0.2m thick; its surface where the trench cut it was at *c.*84.06m OD. Below this was another layer of dark brown clayey loam [02], but more clayey than the topsoil. This was interpreted as relict topsoil (Ap-horizon). Beneath this was *c.* 0.15m of brown silty clay containing *c.*40% stones and tile fragments [03]. It also contained one hand-made brick, bone and fragments of oyster shells. The finds were all late post-medieval in date. This appeared to be a layer of rubble and domestic rubbish laid down at the moat's edge, possibly to consolidate a muddy patch.

Layer [03] was deposited on top of a red-brown silty clay [04], more malleable than the natural clay and dirtier in colour. This seems to have been redeposited here for some purpose, but there was no dating evidence and, as it was not possible to see the deposit in plan view, its function could not be ascertained. An amorphous lump of tufa was found in deposit [04]. The interface between [03] and [04] lay at *c.* 83.57m OD. Beneath [04] was the undisturbed natural clay [05], which was a red-brown silty clay and not very malleable. It seemed to be largely composed of partially degraded mudstone. The upper interface of [05] was at *c.* 83.26m OD. At the eastern end of the foundation trench a patch of pale green-grey silty sand [06] was seen in the base of the trench at a level of *c.* 82.83m OD. This was an area of degraded sandstone, presumably bedrock.

6 Discussion and conclusions

Apart from post medieval tile, brick and bone from layer [03], and small quantities of unstratified post medieval pot sherds there were no finds recovered from the works. Layers [03] and [04] suggest the deposition of material at the moat edge, but the section could give little explanation of the function of this activity. Deposit [04] may be related to the construction of the moat, but it produced no dating evidence.

No previous moat revetment structures were found, so the original medieval moat edge may have been a simple sloping bank. There may be traces of earlier revetment walls behind walls [07], [08] and [10], but the present works did not reveal these.

7 Sources

OS 1:2500 map sheets, SO 6855-6955 and 6856-6956, 1973
Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record

8 The archive

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Herefordshire Museum Services. The accession number is 2003-30. The site code is MLB03A, and the SMR number is 34721.

The archive consists of:

- 1 context index sheet
- 13 context sheets
- 1 index of drawings
- 1 field drawing
- 1 sheet of levels
- 1 sheet of site diary
- 2 finds recording sheets
- 3 photograph index sheets
- 2 films of black and white photographic negatives
- 1 films of colour photographic transparencies

All finds discarded after basic recording

Appendix I

List of contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Dark brown loam with almost no stones. 0.2m thick	Topsoil
2	Dark brown clayey loam up to 0.1m thick. Similar to 01 but more clayey and compact.	Previous topsoil
3	Brown silty clay c.0.15m thick containing c.40% stones and tile fragments. Stones generally angular and sub-angular mudstone <150mm in length, but 1 cobble measured 230mm in length. The tile is post-medieval and 1 hand-made brick was recovered. Also occasional bones, oyster shell fragments and charcoal	Rubble layer laid down to consolidate the moat edge.
4	Red-brown silty clay, fairly malleable. Contains almost no stone, but a calcareous lump was recovered. Some worm disturbance. Some charcoal and small tile fragments near interface with 03. Clay deposit dirtier and more malleable than natural.	Probably redeposited clay
5	Red-brown silty clay, not very malleable. Composed of lumps of rotted silt stones in clay matrix. Much firmer and less malleable than 04. Distinct colour changes between strong red and brown, with sharp, cut-like boundary, but continuity of texture suggests a change in oxidisation, not a cut feature. Mottled in places with grey silt.	Undisturbed natural
6	Pale green-grey silty sand, very compact. Iron oxide mottles	Natural <i>in situ</i> rotted sandstone
7	Revetment on N side of moat near gatehouse. 1.5m high at W end, 0.8m high at E end. Turns at E end into very low rough wall 0.3m high along moat edge. Built mostly of uncut mudstone, but some pieces have been shaped and are probably reused. Stones up to 0.5m long. Friable yellow/white mortar only visible in places, largely eroded away. Topped with large flat slabs. Straight butt joint at W end where it meets the wall under the gatehouse.	Moat revetment wall
8	Revetment wall on S side of moat next to gatehouse, c.2m high. Constructed as 07. Also has butt joint with wall under gatehouse. Roughly triangular shaped coping stones.	Moat revetment wall
9	Revetment to flowerbed at base of wall 10. Single face built into earth and stones behind. Up to 0.75m high. Made of uncut mudstone up to 360 x 300 x 100mm. Roughly coursed. No mortar. The revetment is in the process of collapsing. Continuation of base of wall 08, built at same time as 08 and 10	Moat revetment wall
10	E facing wall, essentially continuation of 08 with same coping stones and construction. Only 0.8m high as flowerbed and reveting wall 09 juts out from its base.	Moat revetment wall
11	Revetment on S side of moat. Roughly coursed, undressed mudstone. Yellowish mortar. Roughly triangular, undressed coping stones. c.1.6m high. Not bonded with 10.	Moat revetment wall
12	Dark brown loam, c.150mm deep, dumped over stone layer 13	Topsoil in flower bed behind 09
13	Deposit of mudstones up to 0.3m in length and brown silty clay. 0.6m deep. Most stones are approximately horizontal but it is not coursed or built. Merges with wall core behind face 08 and extends under 10. Behind 08 and under 10 there are just voids between the stones.	Wall core

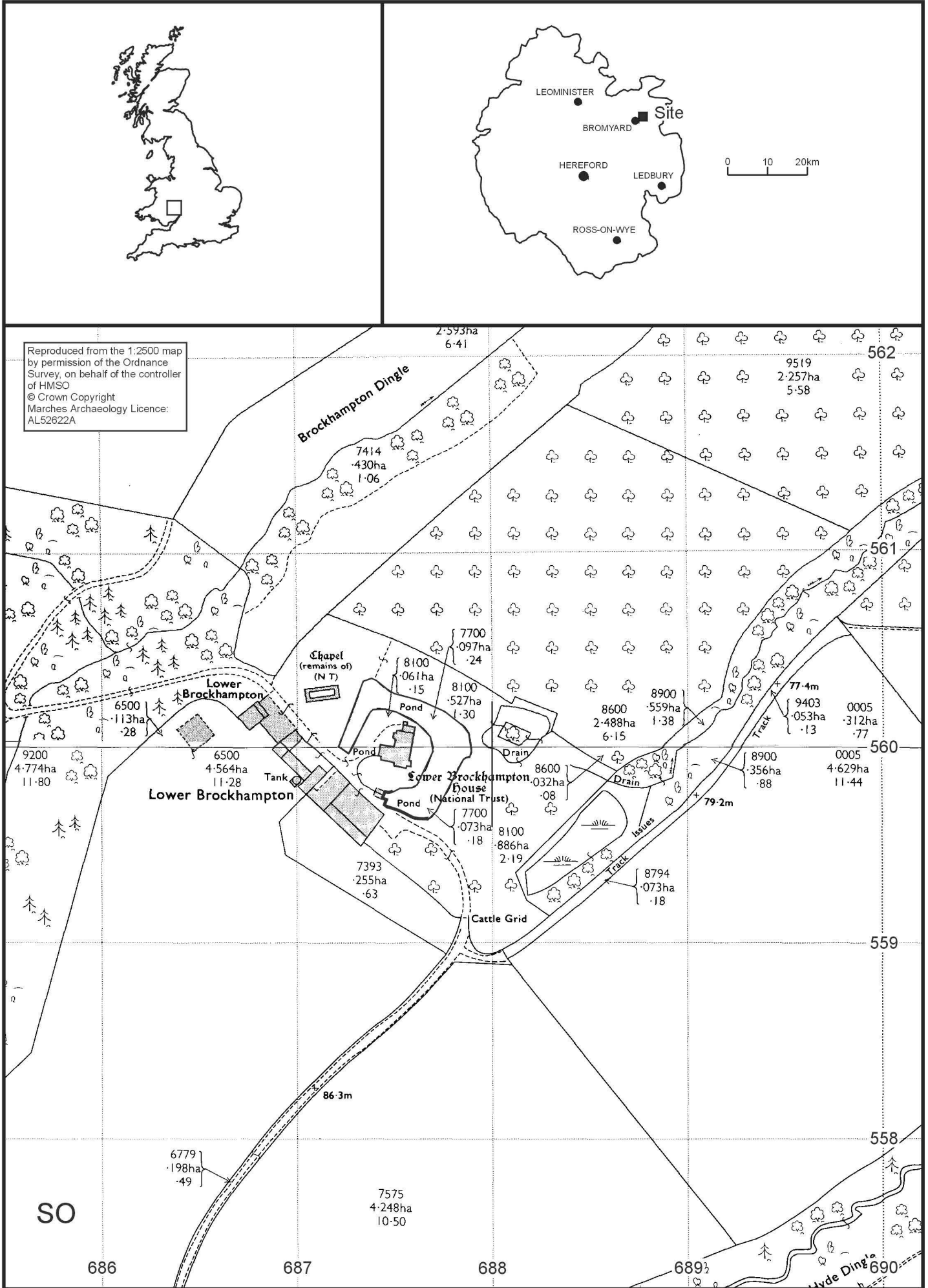


Fig. 1: Location of site (affected moat edge highlighted)

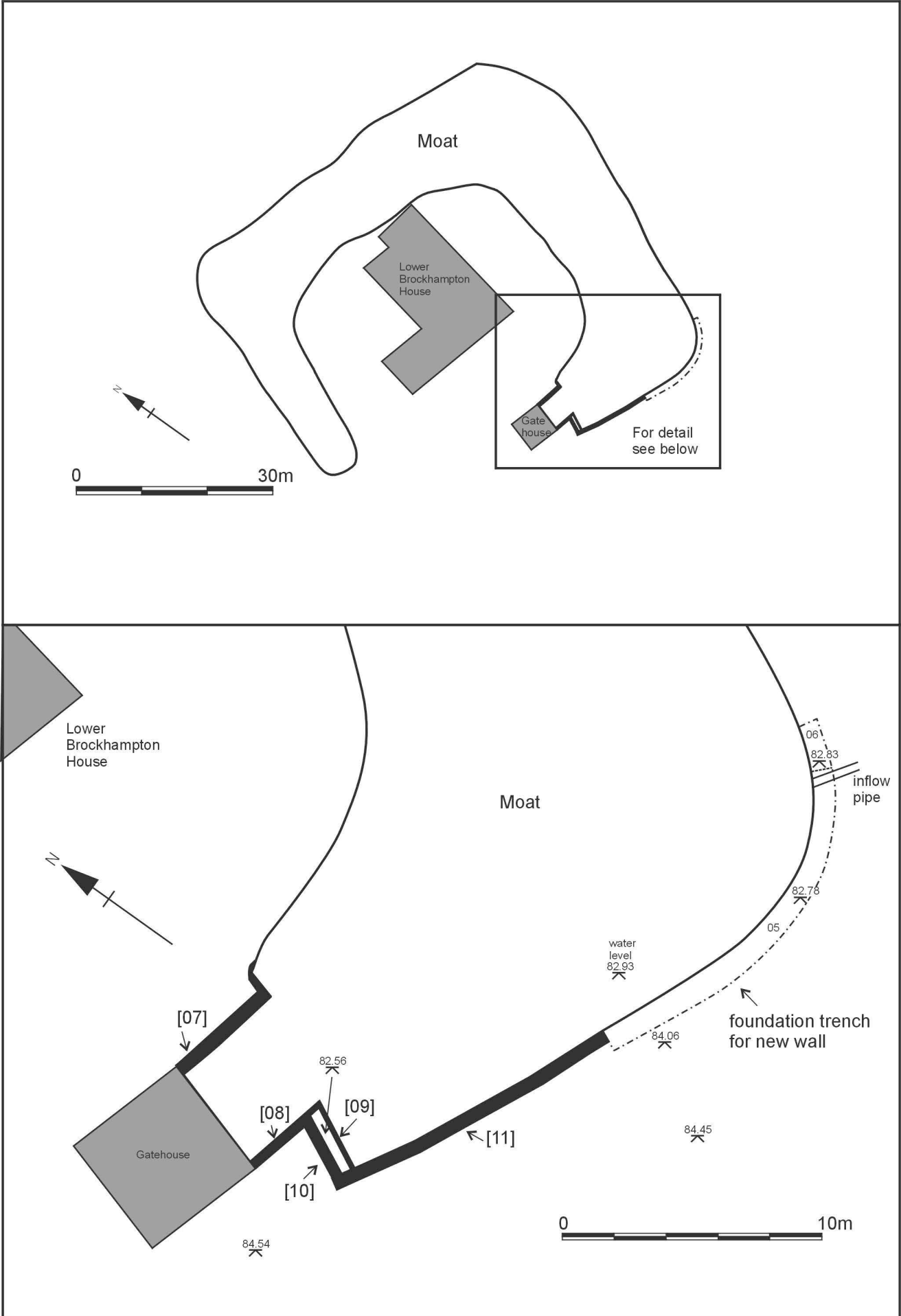


Fig. 2: Location of revetment walls and foundation trench (based on plan supplied by Frank Haywood and Associates)



Plate 1: View of area of moat to be renovated



Plate 2: Revetment wall [11]



Plate 3: Digging foundation trench for new revetment wall