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Modern living in an historic environment

Archaeological investigation of the putative lower garden terraces at Lyveden, Northamptonshire 2017

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On behalf of The National Trust



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Archaeological investigation of the putative lower garden terraces at Lyveden, Northamptonshire, 2017

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Summary

Trial excavation has indicated that foregoing published interpretation of Aerial Photographs regarding lower Garden terraces at Lyveden Old Build, between the orchard and the Old Build are very much off beam and such terraces lack any physical evidence. The landscape observations of Col KC Brown in the 1930s have been borne out – the slope was traversed by a very large ditch which began to be infilled in the mid-17th century. In addition, further trenching produced no evidence for a western approach to the Old Build.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Rachael Hall and her colleagues at The National Trust at Lyveden for their forbearance during our fieldwork. Also to David Hunter, Lead Ranger, for his assistance with logistics and site access. Thanks to Becky Hillman from Archaeology Warwickshire for their GPS survey of the trenches. To Jim Byrne goes our gratitude for his neat machine excavation.

Introduction

This report will require the reader to become acquainted with the following landscape elements (Fig 1):

The New Build (also called Bield, or simply The Lodge) – The unfinished cruciform building by Sir Thomas Tresham, 1596.

The Old Build (also called Bield) – The former manor house of the Tresham family.

The moated orchard (or middle garden) - A square moated area containing a circular maze and associated snail mounts and pyramidal mounts.

The orchard – an extensive fruit tree orchard originally containing a wide variety of fruit trees, recently replanted.

The lower garden – the area of the current investigations, but this is a modern term and appears to have no historic forerunner.

Following the acquisition of the Old Build, or Lyveden Manor in 2013, the National Trust is considering the setting of the lower section of the complex of enhanced landscape –or gardens- in which the buildings created by Sir Thomas Tresham and his son are situated (NGR: SP 98168 85882,

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Fig 1). The manor was the subject of a 2017 programme of building recording (Prentice and Soden 2017).

The area in question has been specifically called the Lower Garden, but for only a relatively short period in modern times. That nomenclature is continued here to prevent confusion.

The southern portion, (the orchard), at the top of a natural slope across which the site is laid out, has been historically the main focus of previous investigations. This is largely due to its closer proximity to one of the greatest architectural survivals of the late Elizabethan age, the New Build. This cruciform building, though never completed, was to have been a garden lodge, or even a small dwelling, for Sir Thomas Tresham and displays the highly developed architectural talent that he had refined on other buildings across his estates, including the principal family seat at Rushton Hall, near Kettering. Close by is located the Moated Orchard with its associated spiral and pyramidal mounts, the latter connected by a terrace along the northern side which also acts as a dam for the northern arm of the moat referred to. Further north still was a fruit orchard and it is beyond this, towards the lower part of the site as it descends into the valley, that the Lower Gardens are located.

The area of land in this current programme of archaeological investigation lies outside the area of the Scheduled Monument (List Entry 1003640; Fig 1). It lies partly within the area designated on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (List Entry 1001037; Fig 1). That entry lists the gardens as Grade I.

The Lower Garden has until recently been in separate ownership and was acquired along with the Old Build, or Lyveden Manor in 2013 by the National Trust. It is currently under rough pasture with areas of newly planted native trees arranged in informal clumps with no historic precedent.

The area is known to have been under agricultural cultivation from after the Second World War until at least the 1970's and probably as recently as the late 1980's. Further earthmoving by the last private owner created a cricket pitch and edged garden beds east and south of the Old Build between 2000 and 2010.

The area of land closest to the Old Build has, in many ways, been the property's 'poor relation' largely due to its separate ownership since 1922. At that date the New Build and the more complete (though never actually completed) garden earthworks associated with it were acquired by the National Trust. The history and development of the upper part of the site is well recorded and need not be repeated here (Felus and Eburne 2010; HTLP 2014). The simple fact that the area of land which is the focus of the present investigation lies across the lower portion of the natural slope upon which the whole property is located means that it has previously been referred to as the Lower Garden, although this appears to be a modern name, though when it was first used is unknown.

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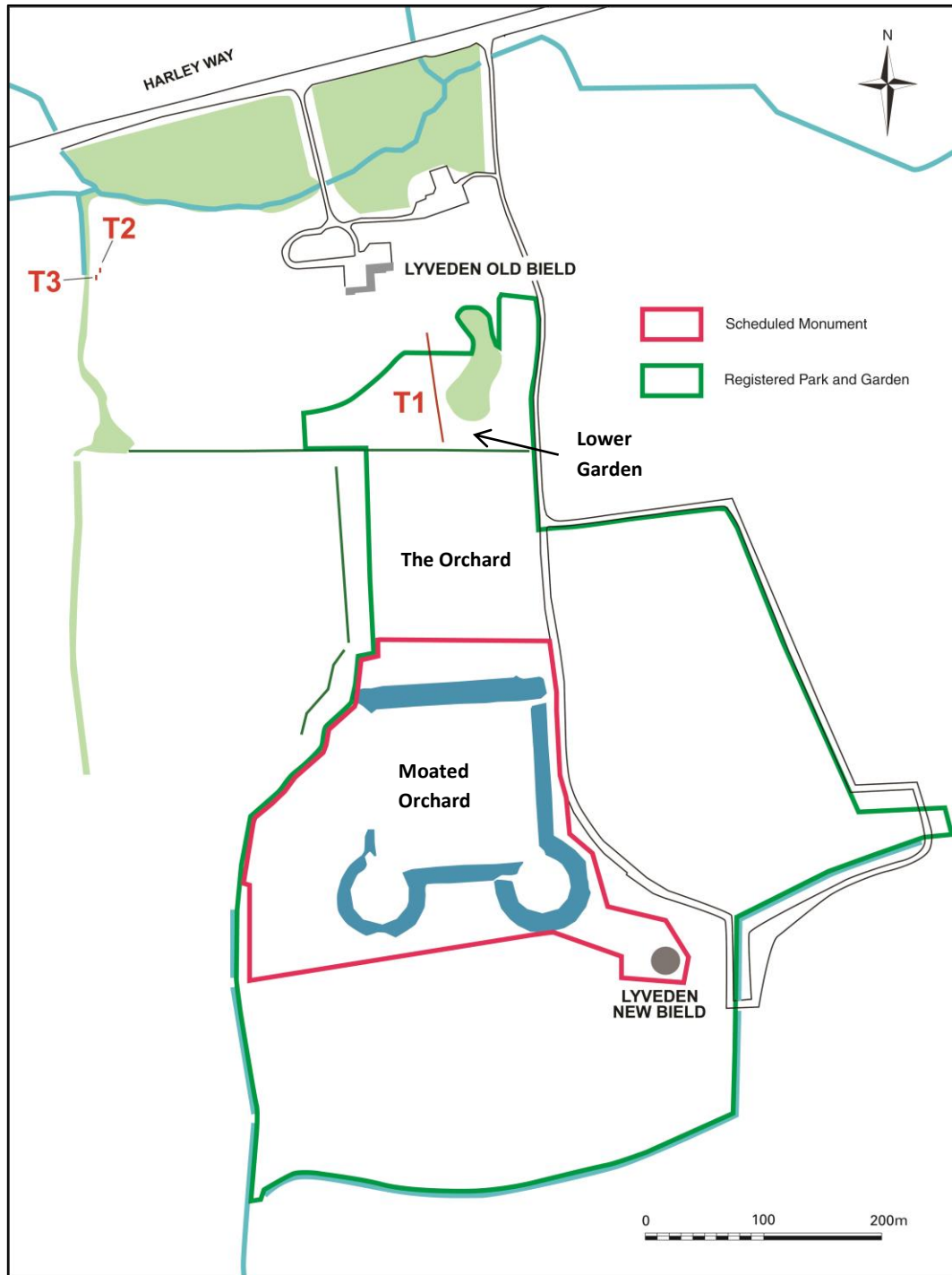


Fig 1: The Lyveden Gardens and buildings complex with 2017 trench locations (Candy Stevens and Andy Isham). For a closer depiction of the trench locations in the landscape see Fig 8.

Historical background and documentary evidence

The history of the Tresham family, primarily focused on the life of Sir Thomas (c1543-1605), has been extensively documented previously (Gotch 1883; Halstead and Heward 1998; Heward and

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Taylor 1996). However, certain elements of his life and works are greatly significant when considering the potential remains of the lower garden.

Having designed and constructed buildings earlier in his life at Rushton and Rothwell, by circa 1594 Tresham appears to have turned his attention to Lyveden. The reasons for this have been much debated and it seems most likely that the remote location appealed to him after his various spells of confinement for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith at a time when such belief was considered both illegal and potentially treasonous. The family had owned the Lyveden property since the mid-fifteenth century but appear to have undertaken little there until the mid-sixteenth century (Prentice and Soden 2017). Documents found among the Tresham Papers, hidden in a hole in a wall and re-discovered in 1828 or 1832 (sources differ) at Rushton Hall, indicate that by 1596/97 he was well underway in his new project at Lyveden. However, for much of the last few years of his life he was in prison and it is largely due to this fact that so many letters survive since he was communicating his ideas in this way.

He was giving instructions to his steward, or under-foreman, George Levens, regarding the laying out of the garden and his 'garden lodge', now known as the New Build. Progress on both appears to have been relatively slow, since in 1604, Tresham was again writing to Levens regarding progress on 'my buylding at Lyffden' (Prentice and Soden 2017). The exact reasons for the slow progress cannot now be determined, they could simply be that he was taking his time or it might be that he was limited by his financial situation, the availability of staff, materials or even the weather. He was only released shortly before his death in 1605. Thereafter all work ceased. The New Build remains essentially as it was left and the Moated Orchard too appears to have been incomplete since the west side of the moat was never excavated.

Shortly after his death his son and heir, Francis, died in The Tower of London where he was being held for his part in the Gunpowder Plot and the estate passed to his second son, Lewis. Lewis appears to have suffered from the same, if not worse, financial constraints of his father, and in 1611 was created a baronet and came into the family's property, including The Old Build. He died there in 1639 leaving a son and heir, Sir William, who himself died during the Civil War in 1643 leaving as his heirs his sister Mary, the wife of Thomas Lord Brudenell, and the sons of his sisters Elizabeth, Frances, and Katherine, namely, Henry Lord Morley and Mounteagle, William Lord Stourton, and Sir John Webbe, bart.

None of these heirs, however, appears to have had any interest in Lyveden, the limitations under the various settlements being to heirs male. Frances, widow of Sir William Tresham, who in 1649 married George Gage, held the manor after Sir William's death and it was sequestered by Parliament because of her and her husband's recusancy.

At the Restoration of the Monarchy the manor of Lyveden with Lyveden House, was said to lie with the Crown and in 1660 were granted to Edward Earl of Sandwich, despite rival claims.

The co-heirs of William Harbord were dealing with the manor during the first half of the 18th century. By 1744 it had devolved to Ann Fitzpatrick and her son John who was created Earl of Upper Ossory in 1751.

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John died in 1758, and his son, also John (second Earl) died in 1818, leaving two unmarried daughters, Gertrude and Anne, known as the Ladies Fitzpatrick of Farming (Fermyn) Woods. Both these ladies died in 1841, when the manors passed to an illegitimate daughter of the second earl, Emma Mary and her husband Robert Smith Vernon MP. He held various ministerial offices and was created Lord Lyveden in 1859. On his death in 1873 he was succeeded by his eldest son Fitzpatrick Henry Vernon, who died without issue in 1900 (Prentice and Soden 2017).

The subsequent history of the gardens, or more accurately the surviving garden earthworks, is effectively lost until the twentieth century when various people began to show interest in them as well as the buildings. There was, however, a small amount of passing reference to the gardens during the nineteenth century, although the focus of the attention on the site has been the spectacularly beautiful, but unfinished, New Build and to a lesser degree the Old Build, both of them enduringly enigmatic and which continue to challenge and stimulate debate.

Historic Maps

None of the historic maps, including the series of Ordnance Survey maps published from the 1880's, shows any indication of lower garden earthworks or layout. Of the earlier maps there is little to comment upon as none show anything in the area occupied by the Lower Garden. The earliest that shows the site at a usable scale is the Eyres map of 1771 but not even field boundaries are indicated in the area (Fig 2a). Similarly, the c1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map shows little apart from a single long rectangular field extending from the north side of the northern moat terrace almost as far as the Old Build but clearly separated from the latter by a boundary aligned east-west across the slope (Fig 2b).



Fig 2a: Map of Northamptonshire by Thomas Eyre 1771

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Fig 2b: The Ordnance Survey Surveyors' preparatory map c1810. North to top.

To the north of that point there is a separate enclosure within which the group of buildings including the Old Build (on the map called Liveden Lodge) is shown as blocks of red. To either side of the long rectangular field are apparently two tracks shown by dotted lines, one each to the east and west, both aligned north-south.



Fig 2c: 1834 Old Series OS depiction.

A broadly similar layout is depicted on the 1834 Old Series Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2c). One curious feature shown on that image is an apparent avenue of trees extending east-west to the south-east of the Old Build. However, whether or not it actually existed is unclear. It is not shown c1810, nor is it present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map c1880 (Fig 3b). At this time the property was owned by the Fitzpatrick family and subsequently by Robert Smith Vernon (see above). It is possible that the ladies Fitzpatrick may have felt inclined to plant an avenue, but one has to ask would they bother when the property is thought to have been tenanted and why in that location? It neither leads to or from the Old or New Buildings but rather awkwardly lies between the two. It apparently starts on the east side of the track which leads from the Old Build to the New Build and then stops abruptly in the middle of a field, short of Bearshank Wood through which there is not even a ride.

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If an avenue is planted, the usual route is leading to the main property to add grandeur to the approach, or radiates outwards from it, either singly or often as one of three (known as a *patte d'oie* or goose foot) leading the eye into the wider landscape, perhaps terminating in a distant folly or another feature such as the spire of a church. The avenue shown here does none of those things and sits uncomfortably on the slope. Nothing can be seen on the aerial photograph (Fig 6) either indicating a track or the planting pits associated with the avenue. Given that much earlier planting pits can be seen showing the layout of fruit trees in the orchard, this casts doubt on the entire representation. Unless other evidence is found it might be appropriate to consider the existence of an avenue as doubtful.

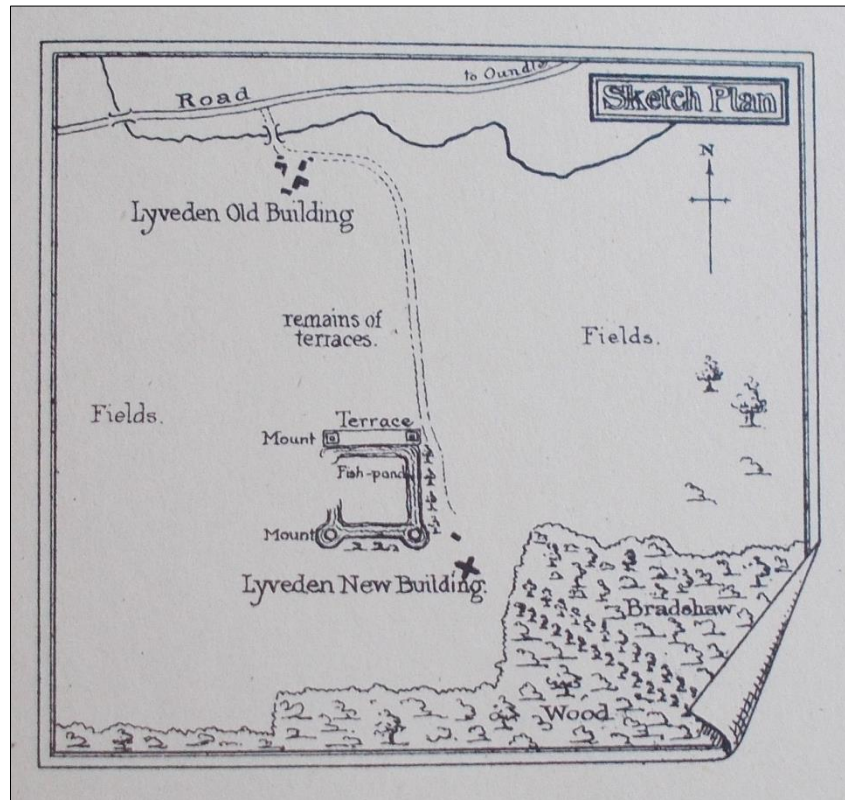


Fig 3a. The sketch plan of the Lyveden site from Gotch (1883, plate 3). Compare the contemporary OS plan below (Fig 3b)

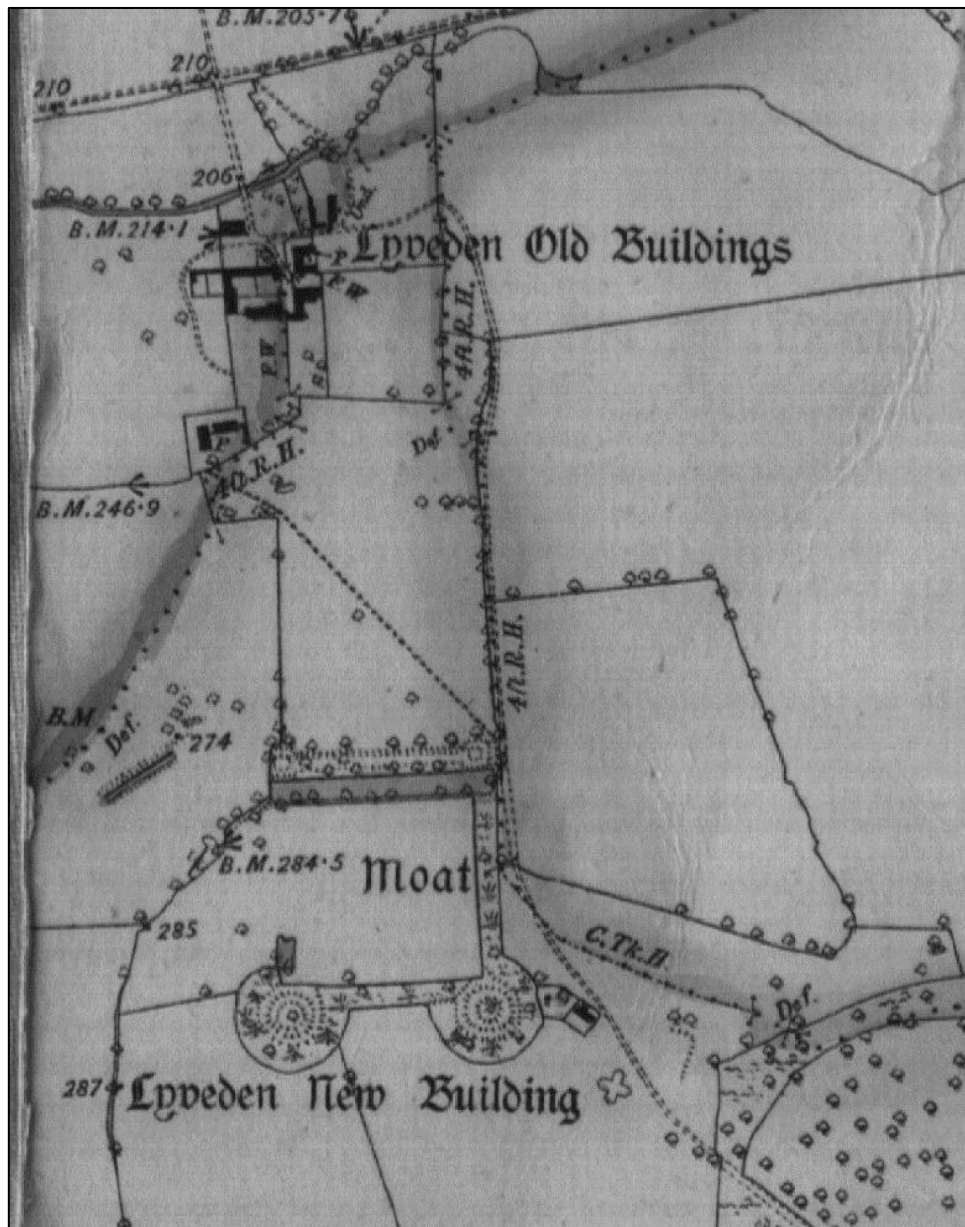


Fig 3b: Almost contemporary with Gotch's sketch plan, Lyveden as surveyed by the Ordnance Survey for their 1st edition (Sheet 18SE).

Antiquarian Interest

A well-known book was written in the 1840s which describes the location in typically romantic terms (Bell 1847). The book, entitled *The Ruins of Lyveden*, does have some useful descriptions which must have been taken from observations of the site by the author. He describes the Old Build as follows:

'This building, formerly a residence of the TRESHAMS, is situated about a quarter-of-a-mile to the north-west of the New Building, the ruins of which have been described, and to which it is evidently connected by mounds, planted with sycamores and elms, and fishponds, &c, now nearly dry'.

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This description appears to describe the Moated Orchard and associated mounts. He continues on the next page after describing the Old Build:

'The terrace to the garden still remains, and the gardens themselves may be traced by flowers peeping up among the grass. The walks are planted with Wych-elms, a very fine one stands close to the house. On the north side the moat and fishponds still remain, though nearly filled up'.

This text is most useful as it is the earliest description of what apparently survived close to the Old Build. The terrace (interestingly singular, *not* plural) is noted to still remain, though frustratingly its location is not mentioned. Flowers are noted suggesting the former presence of gardens but Bell does not record what flowers they were. Was he really seeing plants placed there by Sir Thomas in the late 1590s or early 1600's? That seems most improbable. By the 1840's cultivated flowering plants are unlikely to have survived since the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-centuries, a period of over two hundred years. Their survival seems even more unlikely given the disjointed ownership of the site and its apparent occupation for much of the period by tenants. It is more likely that if he did indeed see cultivated flowers he was seeing varieties planted much later by later residents of the building.

There are some other confusing elements. There is no indication now, nor is any indicated on historic maps, of a moat around the Old Build, and given its location it appears that one was impossible given the significant changes in level from the south to north sides of the building. It appears that the 'moat' was simply a modification of the natural brook which flows along the valley on the north side of the building.

The disparity of the description might well be the result of Bell confusing the cardinal points of the compass and the fact that he might have been looking also at the (now masked) remains of the medieval moat earthworks to the west of the moated orchard. We cannot second-guess what Bell saw in the 1840s.

Relevant here is the content of a letter written by the widow of Sir Thomas four years after his death (in September 1605) to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. She wrote to offer him:

'...half a hundredth trees out of Lyveden Orchard towards the planting of the orchard I hear your Lordship intendeth at Hatfield; they and what els is here shall be at your honors command whensoever your Lordship shall think best to have them' (Cross, 2004).

This rather sad missive reveals that the gardens created by her late husband were by c1609 of little use to her and she was willing to dig up fruit trees planted only a few years earlier and present them to someone else who was creating an orchard of his own. In fact she may have been paying off family debts (Finch 1956). Not only that, she offers him '*what els is here*' suggesting that it was not only fruit trees she was happy to dispose of. It seems increasingly unlikely that what Bell saw in 1847 was at most a tiny remnant of planting by Sir Thomas, not only because such plants do not live that long, but also because it seems that they may well not have been there for many years after his death.

J Alfred Gotch spent a considerable amount of time and effort researching the New Build in the 1880's, published in this book *The Buildings of Sir Thomas Tresham* (1883). He only fleetingly mentions the lower garden terraces and concentrated his efforts upon the New Build and the

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Moated Garden at Lyveden with some shorter notes on the Old Build. The few words he used to describe the lower terraces are '*...and at the north end a series of terraces begin which connect the whole up to the Old Building*'. He does include a sketch plan which shows the disposition of the various elements of the site (Fig 3).

This sketch plan by Gotch in 1883 shows the entire site and approximately half way between the moated garden close to the New Building and the Old Building Gotch tantalisingly writes '*remains of terraces*' but does not indicate in what form they survived; nor does he depict any of them. It is therefore useful to reproduce here exactly what met the eyes and theodolite of the Ordnance Surveyors as they mapped the landscape in the 1880s, with far greater exactitude than Gotch was interested in.

Attention returns to the gardens

There appears to have been no concerted attention on the Lower Gardens until Col Kenneth C Brown undertook some reconnaissance in 1932, published in 1935 (Brown 1935).

A plan he published is extremely interesting (Fig 4a and 4b detail). He shows the Moated Garden as though completed with all four sides water-filled and everything is depicted very crisply but he also shows features which are no longer visible and have been disregarded in the past.

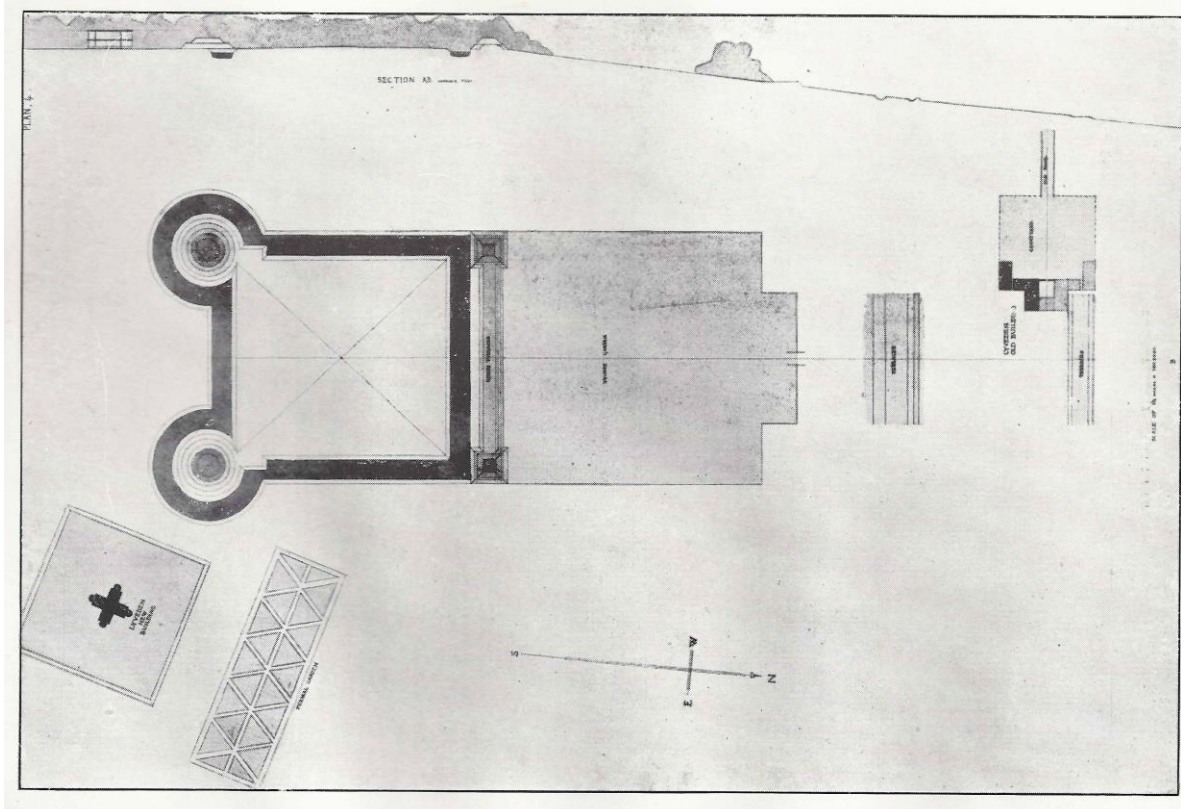


Fig 4a: Plan by Col KC Brown, with (at top) a running profile down the slope. North is to right

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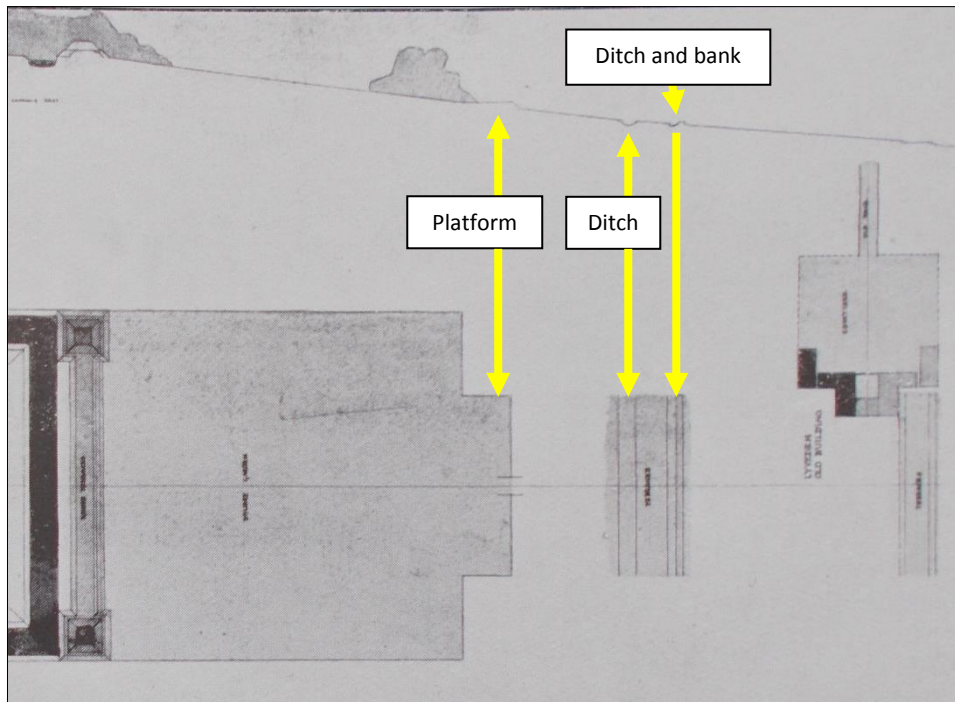


Fig 4b: Detail of Col K C Brown's plan and profile of the gardens and buildings at Lyveden c1932.
North to right.

One of the most significant parts of the drawing is the ground surface profile which extends across the upper edge of the plan and matches the features shown beneath in plan. The whole is somewhat regularised, including the (fictitious) completion of the moat which he shows as fully enclosing the central area. When the profile of the lower terraces is examined it can be seen that only the projecting rectangular platform (possibly for viewing) is depicted with a terraced lower (northern) edge. The four parallel lines to its north, interpreted later (see below - Brown and Taylor) as two more terraces are shown by KC Brown as a broad ditch to the south and a ditch and a bank to the north though curiously having drawn the two linear features as ditches he apparently writes the word 'terrace' between the two, though the quality of the reproduction in the booklet makes this interpretation uncertain (and for which no evidence was forthcoming in excavation – see below). If his interpretation of two of the parallel features as a broad ditch and a ditch and bank is accurate then it is unclear why he then writes the word 'Terrace' in between. Terraces are quite definitively **not** created by the digging of, or bordering by, ditches. If identified by K C Brown as ditches, and he draws them in his profile quite clearly as such, they are surely more likely to be field boundary ditches.

K C Brown also shows two smaller terraces closer together and slightly to the north of the surviving element of the Old Build. These he depicts clearly as small terraces and not ditches.

This attention on the upper slopes continued until the 1970's, almost certainly influenced by the fact that the lower garden area was not in the ownership of the Trust when they acquired the New Build and some surrounding land in 1922 (HTLA 2014).

The most comprehensive survey of the entire site was carried out in 1969 (Brown and Taylor 1972, Fig 5).

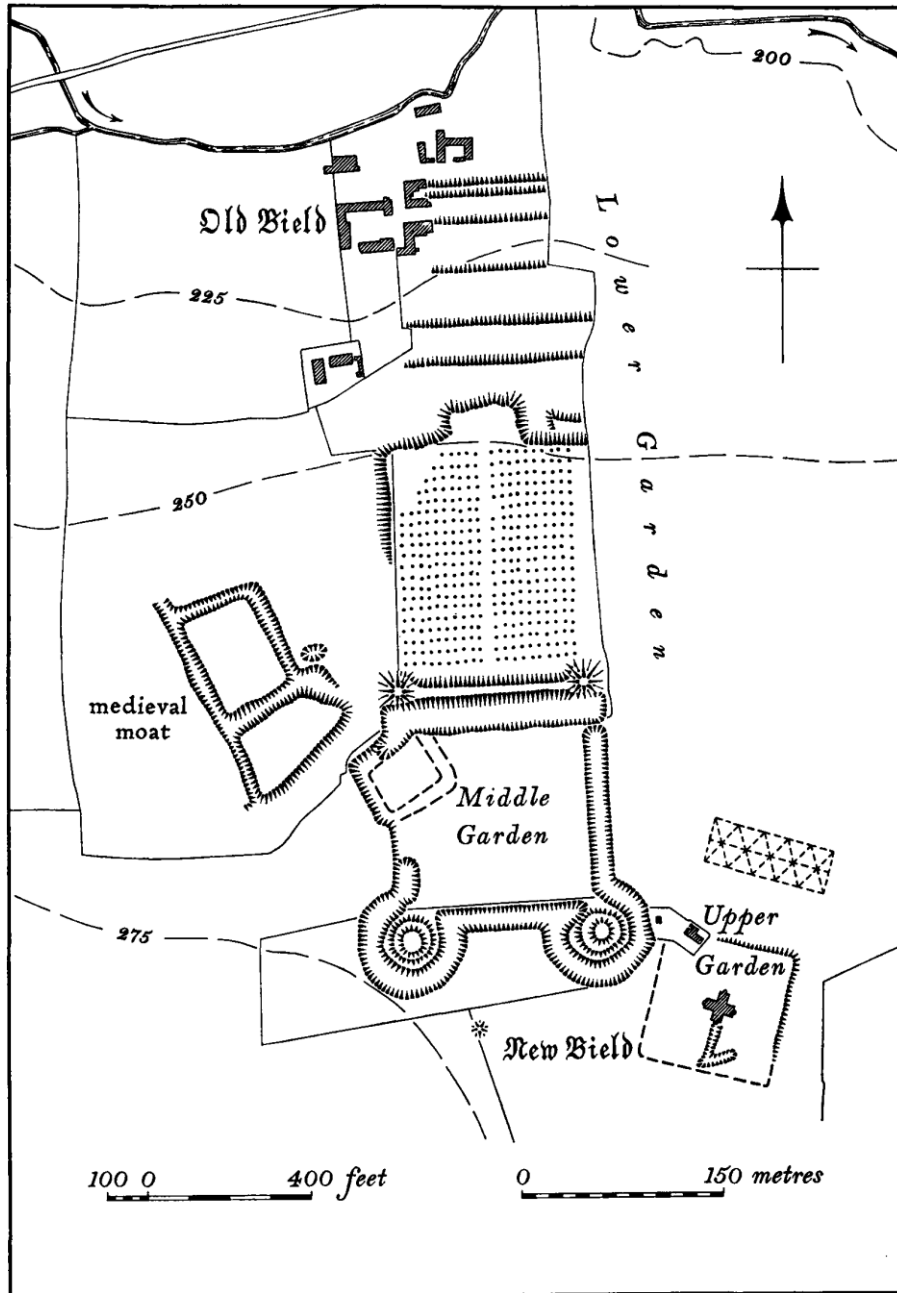


Fig 5: The garden earthworks at Lyveden published by Brown and Taylor (1972).

The site survey was carried out in 1969 by students attending a field archaeology course organised by the Department of Adult Education at Leicester University. The article begins with a short introduction and then description of the setting. In that section it paints a depressing picture of post-war destruction by modern farming and records that there were at least two deserted medieval villages and extensive remains of ridge and furrow cultivation. It continues:

'Most of these earlier remains and indeed much of the gardens have been ploughed up during the last twenty years and almost totally destroyed (The lower garden in Fig 5). The one part of the garden which still remains reasonably intact is now in poor condition, overgrown with trees, its moats polluted with sewage and its interior under cultivation' (The middle garden in Fig 5).

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This rather damning description does not indicate or suggest neglect by the National Trust but indicates the state of the country only slightly over two decades after the end of the most destructive conflict in history. Britain took many years to recover from the Second World War, and agriculture was an essential part of that recovery. Garden history was in its infancy in the late 1960s and the fact that a few people were paying these earthworks any attention at all was in itself unusual.

The Brown and Taylor text continues with significant elements relating to the lower garden 'terraces' highlighted here in bold by the author of this report:

*'The north, or Lower Garden, on the valley side is a rectangular area 170 metres by 400 metres. **Much of it now is under permanent cultivation which has destroyed all but the major earthworks and only by reference to air photographs taken between 1945 and 1950, together with a short and inadequate note on the remains published in 1935, can the original layout be ascertained.** On the lower, flatter slopes immediately E and SE of the Old Build were six long, low scarps oriented east-west and apparently less than one metre high. Between these scarps and cut by them were traces of low ridge and furrow running north-south. These scarps must have been intended as the major divisions of a formal garden adjacent to the Old Build, but the existence of the ridge and furrow clearly shows that this part of the garden was never completed. To the south of these minor scarps, as the slope of the valley increases, there are the remains of a much larger scarp which survives to almost two metres in height in the modern arable and which returns southwards though a right-angle at its west end. This scarp is still very irregular and in the centre extends forwards down the slope to form a roughly rectangular projection 60 metres wide and 20 metres deep. **Modern ploughing has removed its detailed form** but air photographs taken before its destruction show that its irregular appearance was due to the partial dumping of spoil on its downhill face. This spoil overlay ridge and furrow. Below the scarp and east of the projection there was another small projection or platform, probably less than one metre high, also overlying ridge and furrow. Traces of this still exist. The large scarp, with its projection, is certainly an unfinished terrace which was meant to separate the two halves of the Lower Garden'.*

It is extremely important to note that at the time of the survey in 1969 it is noted that the site was *'under permanent cultivation which has destroyed all but the major earthworks and only by reference to air photographs taken between 1945 and 1950, together with a short and inadequate note on the remains published in 1935, can the original layout be ascertained'*.

What is telling is that the report does not refer to the plan and profile drawing which accompanies the 'inadequate note' from the 1935 (K C Brown) note. Interestingly no-one else appears to have done so since. Until now the Brown and Taylor plan of the lower terraces, drawn not on the ground but from aerial photographic evidence, has been taken as a true representation of this lower section of the site. It is clear that essentially nothing could be seen on the ground. It was all based upon AP-interpretation.

Recent, closer examination of the K C brown plan throws this interpretation into doubt. The interpretation of the earthworks visible on aerial photographs appears, on this evidence, to have been somewhat creative, perhaps relying overly on the eye of faith. Indeed if the lines of the lower garden 'terraces' are overlaid onto an image of the site which shows them it can be seen that they are not as parallel to each other, or the remainder of the garden earthworks of the upper gardens, as the Brown and Taylor plan suggests (compare Figs 5, 6, and Fig 7).



Fig 6: Detail of the c 1944 (USAF) aerial photograph of Lyveden.

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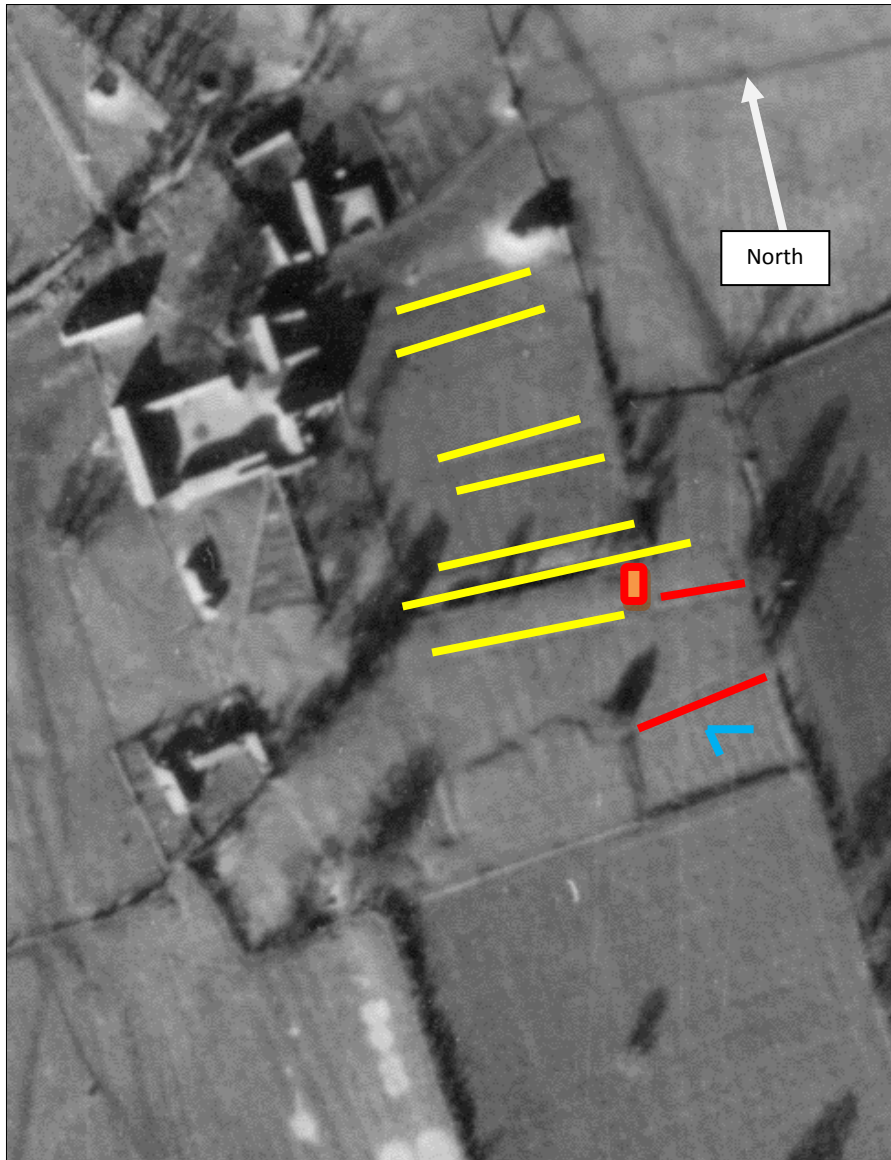


Fig 7: The c1944 aerial photograph with lines of the Brown and Taylor 'terraces' highlighted in yellow (cf Fig 5). Note discrepancy in number, irregular spacing and alignment. Other 'features' attested but not transcribed by Brown and Taylor in red. Feature outlined in blue identified by Brown and Taylor but not visible on photograph.

There are a number of discrepancies between the hachures presented on the Brown and Taylor plan when compared to the aerial photograph. The 'terraces' have been previously, and continue to be so here, numbered 1 to 6 from north to south.

One of the important features visible on the 1944 aerial photograph, and apparently not recognised until now, is that some of the features re-drawn as terraces by Brown and Taylor cannot have been so. They exhibit the dark shadow-line of a cut feature on one side (closest to the sun, here shining from the south-west/bottom left) but also the paler (highlighted) opposite slope, facing the sun on the parallel side. Terraces have only one slope, not two, and when viewed under the sunlight at that time would have shown-up as a single dark shadow only. This dark-and-light can be clearly seen on the more substantial earthworks of the medieval site to the west of the upper Moated Garden, the ridge and furrow and even the slight depressions of the grid of planting pits within the orchard.

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A less-easily reconcilable problem is the spacing of the Brown and Taylor 'terraces' down the length of the slope. The two northernmost earthworks (numbers 1 and 2), to the immediate east of the demolished farm buildings, while apparently shown by K C Brown as small terraces, present a problem when their location is considered. It can be seen that they line up exactly with the gap between the two lost northern ranges which along with an attached west range formed an open sided courtyard. Could it not be just as likely that the 'terrace' was a track leading to and from that courtyard and the 'terrace' merely the levelled surface of that track?

The four remaining linear features (numbers 3 to 6) are quite clearly not evenly spaced as represented by Brown and Taylor and it is in fact almost impossible to determine which lines they have transcribed to create the regularly-spaced terrace sequence (compare Figs 5 and 7). This moving of the features to create the impression of carefully spaced terraces cannot be easily explained.

Similarly the precisely parallel nature of the linear features to each other in Brown and Taylor is not detectable when the original aerial photograph is examined, and indeed none of the features is truly parallel to either the northern boundary of the Orchard or to the line of the terrace which defines the Moated Orchard. If they were part of the same sequence of earthworks set out by workmen under the direction of Sir Thomas, it seems unlikely that they would not be laid out in a neatly parallel pattern.

There is one feature which Brown and Taylor identify which cannot be seen at all on the c1944 photograph;

'Below the scarp and east of the projection there was another small projection or platform, probably less than one metre high, also overlying ridge and furrow. Traces of this still exist'.

(see Fig 7, outlined in blue, compare with Fig 6).

When the original 1944 photograph is examined, the only features visible in this area are the shallow north-south linear earthworks of (apparently) ridge and furrow cultivation, now lost.

Finally, the size of the 'terrace' features indicated by Brown and Taylor is difficult to reconcile with the features seen on the photograph. In their accompanying text they suggest that the 'terraces' were probably less than 1 metre in height and yet they are drawn as though the slopes of the terraces were up to ten metres in length when compared to the accompanying scale bar. This is a surprisingly long slope and would have created a terrace with such a shallow incline as to be almost indistinguishable from the natural hillside at this point. Such large terraces would surely be much more visible on the aerial photographs.

The main feature which can be seen on the c1944 aerial photograph and which matches most closely with the Brown and Taylor drawing is the large roughly rectangular platform which is the southernmost of the earthworks features. It is also visible (although not highlighted by the authors) in a recent reappraisal of aerial imagery, including Lidar, in which variations in plant type outline it (Cox and Jarvis 2017, fig 5, sections 5.21-22). Brown and Taylor suggest that its irregular northern limit was due to partial dumping of spoil on this face since it overlay the ridge and furrow. This apparent irregular northern edge could indeed suggest partial dumping, potentially as part of construction curtailed when works on the gardens ceased. The faint indications of ridge and furrow

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within the area to the south of the northern limit of this feature suggests that the 'platform' was never fully levelled since it seems highly unlikely that Sir Thomas would have been prepared to accept a terraced platform with the remnants of ridge and furrow across its surface.

This range of apparent discrepancies is thoroughly confusing and entirely inexplicable when the aerial photographic evidence is reviewed. It is possible that errors may have crept in to the published drawing during transcription, especially since the accompanying text clearly states that effectively nothing could be seen on the ground. At that time there was almost certainly not the time, money or opportunity to investigate further by excavation. Regrettably, since the publication of the contour plan, there has been no subsequent opportunity to re-evaluate the available evidence and it has therefore become received wisdom.

Geophysical survey was undertaken but failed to identify any pertinent sub-surface features (Malone 2014). Similarly heritage assessments of both Aerial photographs and LiDAR imagery failed to elicit further information and stopped short of confirming the existence of early terraces (Cox 2017; Cox and Jarvis 2017).

This was the background of the decision in 2017 to evaluate the site by means of trial trench excavation. The following details the fieldwork and results.

Trial excavation

Three evaluation trenches were opened between 25 and 29 September, 2017. Trench 1, measuring 94m long x 1.5m wide, was positioned to investigate the large rectangular terrace with its central projecting platform at the southern end of the lower garden area and the two adjacent 'terraces' (Fig 6). Nothing further north could be assessed since it had been lost entirely to earthmoving for the recent cricket pitch created by the last private owners.

Trenches 2 and 3, each 5m long x 1.5m wide) were located on the western limit of the National Trust property boundary (known as the Western Meadows) to investigate the possibility of the presence of a former western approach road in that location. This has previously been postulated on historical documentary evidence but this was equivocal, not least because no mapped depiction supports this assertion.

All trench locations had been agreed with Rachael Hall (National Trust East Midlands and National Trust Archaeologist) on a site visit prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

The trenches were opened using a 5.5-ton tracked 360-degree excavator under archaeological control. Each trench was excavated using a flat-bladed ditching bucket, 1.5m in width.

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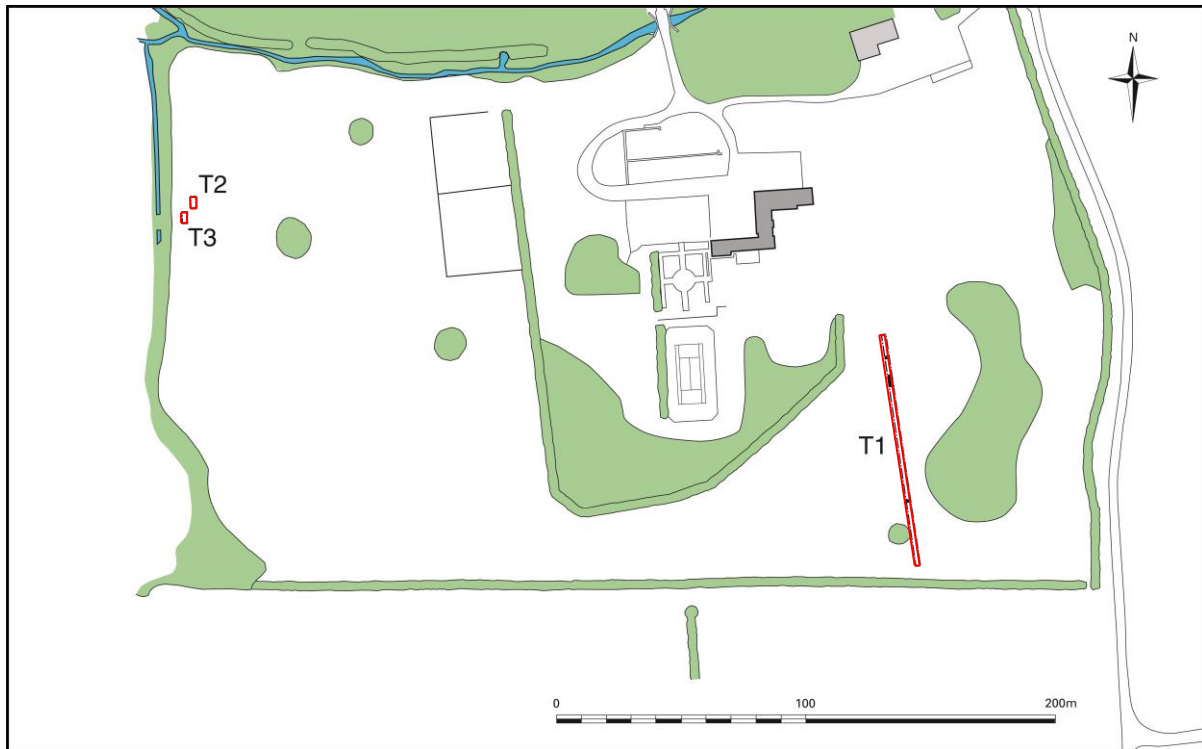


Fig 8: The location of the 2017 trenches in their immediate landscape (Andy Isham).

Trench 1

A single 94m-long trench aligned north-south commenced approximately 6m from the northern boundary of the Middle Orchard and extended as far as was possible within safe-machining parameters until the edge was reached of the terraced cricket field created by the previous owner to the south-east of the Old Build (Fig 6). The land falls from 77.7m at the south end to 72.5m at the north, a drop of 5.2m in a distance of 94m (1 in 18 or 5.5%). North of the trench the cut for the modern cricket field fully interrupts the slope with a sudden drop.

The topsoil comprised a light/mid grey-brown cultivation soil remarkably lacking in humic content and composed predominantly of the natural underlying clay (1). This heavy clay topsoil layer is apparently the result of a relatively short period of cultivation which appears was only undertaken at the very end of the Second World War and which continued perhaps into the early 1980's. Given the survival of medieval ridge-and-furrow earthworks until the date of the 1944 aerial photograph, it seems apparent that until that date the landowners or tenants regarded the land as unsuitable for cultivation. The topsoil contained occasional flint and rounded pebble inclusions but no finds that are normally associated with post-medieval manuring regimes such as glazed china, clinker and clay tobacco pipe. There were a very few and much-abraded sherds of 12th -14th century shelly fabric pottery typical of the Lyveden/Stanion medieval kilns.

Beneath the topsoil there was no discernible subsoil but instead the distinct upper horizon of the natural clay (2). This was distinguishable from the topsoil by its slightly lighter colour, a light yellow/brown, and the presence of varying but generally consistent quantities of rounded pebbles ranging from less than 5mm to more than 30mm in diameter. There were also occasional larger, and mostly rounded, sandstone boulders or glacial erratics which are a common feature of this type of

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geology. Aligned in a consistent north-east to south-west pattern were a series of bands of greyer clay which appeared to be natural features, almost certainly glacial frost cracks.

Recognition of the rectangular platform (Figs 9 and 10)

Cutting into the natural clay 24m north from the southern limit of the trench was a distinct upper edge of a steeper slope which appears to represent the upper edge of the rectangular projecting platform [4] (Figs 9 and 10). This feature was noted by both Col Brown and Brown & Taylor. The slope only survived for 1.5m at which point it continued almost perfectly horizontally for another 5.5-6m when the gentle downward slope to the north truncated this flat platform. This very slight break of slope could just be made out on the ground before trenching began but it is almost imperceptible to the untrained eye.

Infilling the space between the lower edge of the modern ploughsoil (1) and the artificial surface created to form the terrace slope and platform beyond [4] was an area of soil only slightly different from the topsoil (3). However, this layer contained a substantially larger quantity of medieval Lyveden pottery fragments including fragments of glazed floor tile wasters.

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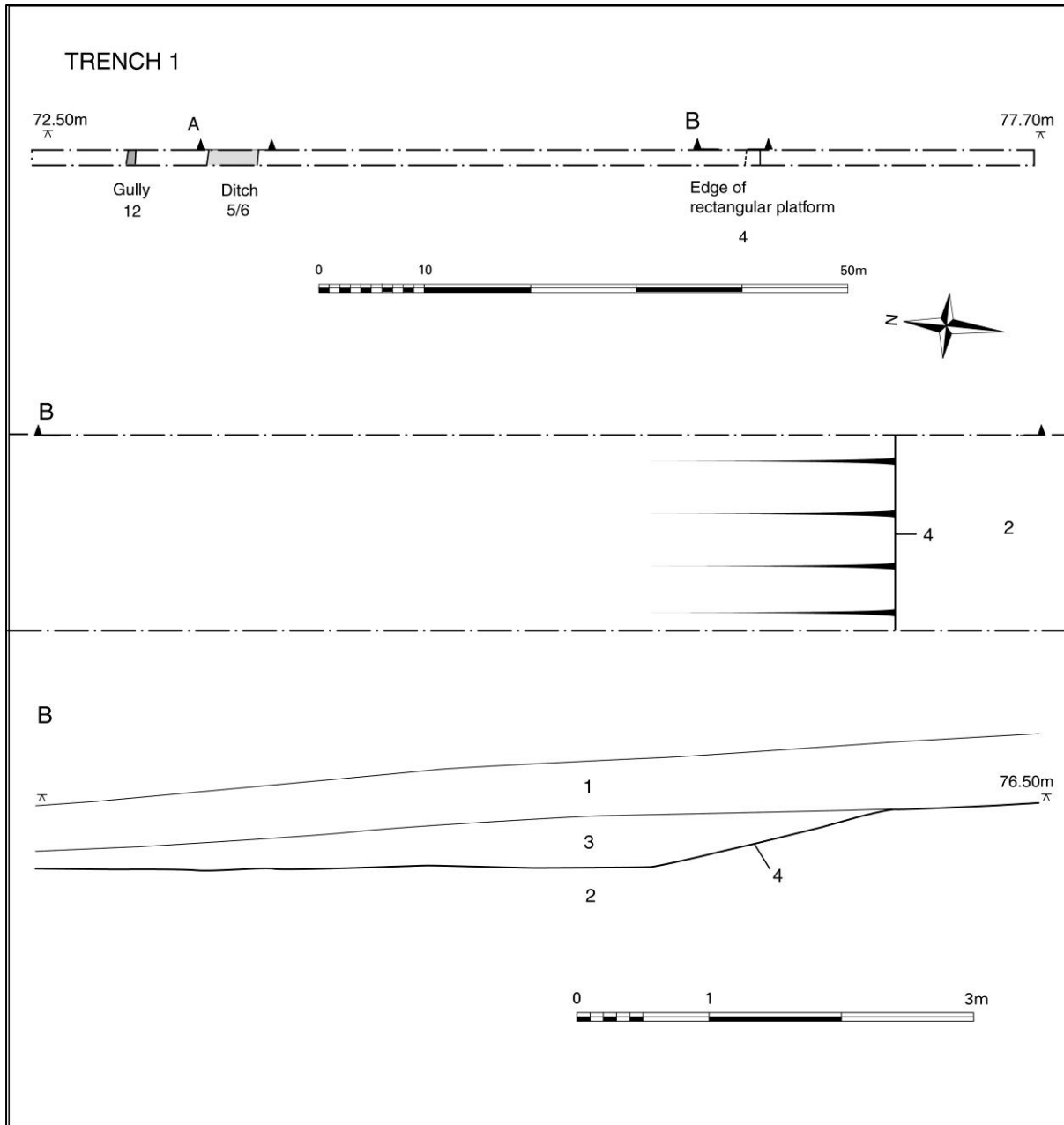


Fig 9: Trench 1 plan with detail showing plan and section of the rectangular platform edge [4]. See photograph (Fig 10) (Andy Isham)

Beyond this remnant of the rectangular terrace platform the trench continued down the slope with only the same topsoil layer lying directly above the natural clay for a distance of 72.5m from the south end of the trench (Fig 9).



Fig 10: The platform edge [4], as noted during trenching. View looking south; scales 1m

The ditch noted by K C Brown c1935 (Figs 11 and 12)

At this point there was a broad spread of distinctly yellow clay which appears to represent a deliberate dumping of material introduced to fill a depression (7). This lay directly beneath the topsoil and overlay a dark brown humic layer (8). This layer represents the uppermost fill of a broad ditch which had been cut slightly eccentrically across the slope west-north-west to east-south-east and appeared to include an early re-cut [5/6]. Together they comprise a ditch-sequence in total 4.8m across and 1.1m deep. The humic layer contained modern window glass, small pieces of plastic and a complete, small, dark blue moulded glass container such as might have contained an ointment. It must therefore have remained open well past the mid-20th century.

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Beneath this, on the north side of the cut, was a mid-grey clay deposit (10) which contained many fragments of 17th-century pottery. Beneath this, and extending almost the full width of the cut was a further, similar layer which was darker in colour (11). Again it contained distinctive 17th-century pottery. The layers in the ditch also contained quantities of oyster shell, coal, fragments of lime plaster, roof tile both ceramic and stone slate, iron nails, clay tobacco pipe and small pieces of window glass.

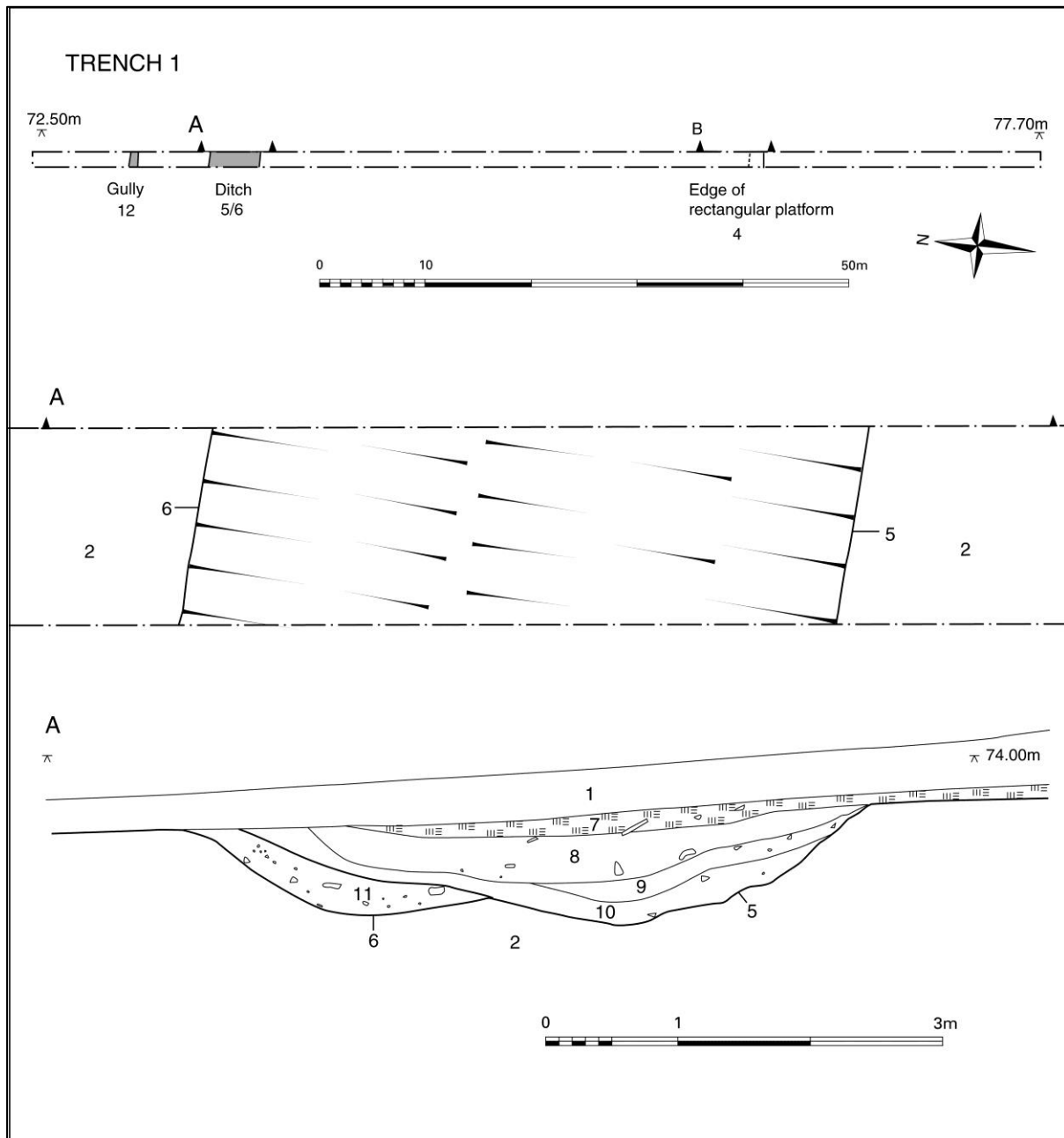


Fig 11: Trench 1 plan with detail showing plan and section of the large ditch [5/6] (Andy Isham)

A few metres north of the ditch lay a very shallow gully [12]. It was about 400mm wide and was a gentle-U shape in profile, but so little depth of it survived that only the presence of 17th-century pottery in its fill (13) confirmed that it was the vestige of a feature and probably contemporary with the large ditch nearby.



Fig 12: The large ditch [5/6] emptied, looking north towards the Old Build; scales 2m (foreground) and 1m (background)

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Fig 13: Ditch [5/6] West-facing section (see Fig 11 for drawing). Scales 2m and 1m.

Trenches 2 and 3.

These were located at the western limit of the land recently acquired by the National Trust (Figs 1 and 8). They were placed in that location to investigate the possibility of a western approach to the site from that direction as suggested by Heward (Halstead and Heward 1998).

A nearby causeway within the adjacent field boundary ditch incorporated blue engineering brick copings and salt-glazed piping, indicating the earliest possible production date from around 1850 onwards, probably reused here in the 20th century.

Trench 2 measured 5m N-S x 1.5m wide, and the land here fell from 66.7m to 66.3m. Natural clay geology lay at 66.5m in the centre of the trench.

Trench 3 measured 5m N-S x 1.5m wide, and the land here fell from 67.2m to 66.7m. Natural clay geology lay at 66.9m in the centre of the trench.

There were no features of any kind in these two trenches. There was no evidence present of the purported former western approach at this point.



Fig 14: The view from trenches 2 and 3 looking east towards the Old Build. Scale 2m

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The Finds

Pottery

Iain Soden

Trench 1 produced a total of 170 sherds in 13 fabrics or types, dating between the 12th and the 17th centuries. In total these weigh 2883 grammes. They have been related to the Northamptonshire County Type Series where possible. Yields by context and type are as follows:

Context/sherds and weight (grammes)	CTS code	1	3	8	10	11	13	Total
?Thetford-type ware	?103		1/55					1/55
Lyveden/Stansion A ware	319	13/140	43/883	2/35	8/124	17/195	2/8	85/1385
Lyveden/Stansion B ware	320		3/89		2/42	7/99		12/230
Midland Purple ware	403				5/90	2/11		7/101
Cistercian ware	404				1/10			1/10
Midland Yellow ware	406				4/40	10/88	4/42	18/170
Glazed red earthenware	407				5/49	5/48		10/97
Midland Black ware	411				5/88	6/66		11/154
Frechen German stoneware	421				9/395	3/37	1/12	13/444
Cologne German stoneware	422					2/66		2/66
Maiolica	423					3/15		3/15
Martincamp flasks	98				3/89	3/7		6/96
?Werra slipware	-					1/60		1/60
Total		13/140	47/1027	2/35	42/927	59/692	7/62	170/2883

Medieval ceramics

The medieval material is all local and all residual, comprising mostly Lyveden/Stansion types in the earlier fabric A and a few in the later, glazed B fabric. None should be surprising here on the industry's doorstep and indeed all are residual, from the large ditch to the plough-soil. The greatest concentration occurred in the angle below the rectangular terrace (context 3), a group which was exclusively medieval in origin, with no later material. The same group included seven fragments of glazed floor-tile wasters (weighing 813 grammes), suggesting that a former tile kiln lies nearby, since such material is most unlikely to travel far.

Roof tile fragments were not uncommon and occurred in contexts 1, 3, 8 and 10. A single pierced fragment of Collyweston tilestone also occurred in context 3.

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Post-medieval ceramics

The later material, found together in the lower fills of the large ditch (5/6; contexts 10 and 11), betoken a date of deposition in the mid-17th century. Deposition of the fill of the small gully (12; context 13) is not dissimilar.

Regional domestic wares

There are regional domestic types present (Midland Purple, -black, -yellow) but a notable concentration of imports indicative of the date.

The origin of the Midland Purple wares is not apparent but they may originate from Ticknall, Derbyshire, which was certainly sending its wares to Northampton and Coventry, and possibly Peterborough. The single Cistercian ware sherd is overfired and far more brown/green than the usual black, an often-overlooked characteristic. The Midland Black types (mainly tygs and cups before 1650) are of unknown origin. However, kilns known to be producing Midland Yellow products are principally Nuneaton in Warwickshire and Bourne in Lincolnshire (Woodfield 1984). Since excavations have recently shown that Bourne was the principal provider of pottery to nearby Peterborough in the 15th-17th centuries, it is likely that these yellow wares hail from Bourne (Soden 2017). However, this has an added use, since a massive fire in 1637 ended Bourne's pottery industry overnight, so the yellow wares probably date to before 1637, although another, ongoing source cannot be discounted.

Continental imports

The Martincamp flask fragments are typical sherds from red-bodied, thin-walled mammiform flasks or costrels of Type III, a type fossil of the 17th century (Hurst et al, 1986, 103-4). They come from the French Coast and surprisingly, were apparently imported empty, but in wicker containers. A lesser tradition of English-made (probable copies) is noted at Ticknall, Derbyshire (Spavold and Brown 2005, 53, 77).

Three sherds of maiolica are probably North Netherlandish imports, for which they have the darker buff fabric, although a London copy is a possibility. North Netherlands Maiolica became the Delft industry subsequently. The dark body clay distinguishes them from the lighter buff of south Netherlands Maiolica. (Hurst et al, 1986, 119-20; Hildyard 2005). The forms present are unclear from the small sherds, but albarelli are likely.

The German stoneware is a common find on many sites and is a type fossil for the 17th century, not least the Frechen (freckled) stamped Bartmann-jugs represented here, also called traditionally Bellarmine jugs (Hurst et al 1986, 214-5). Cologne sherds are also present, from similar jugs or squatter examples of schnellen or drinking vessels with flared bases.

Much less common is the possible Werra-type slipware. The attribution is not certain but the single large sherd here lacks a footring which marks out a Dutch origin, it is only glazed internally (a Werra slipware characteristic), and the applied slip includes a stylised bunch of grapes, again a Werra characteristic (Hurst et al 1986, 242-4). More would need to be found to confirm the attribution. A 17th-century date is not in doubt, however.

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Other finds

The date of the final infilling of the large ditch is indicated by context 8 which, along with residual medieval pottery, produced a large piece of clear modern window glass, a complete blue-glass ointment pot dating no earlier than the 1960s and a waxed sweet wrapper, probably of the 1960s-70s. This is a period during which the ditch is no longer visible on any depiction, concealed by ploughing.

Context 10 produced two fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem, coal and half of a large sandstone hone-stone. It also produced sherds of thin discoloured window glass and a broken iron buckle.

Context 11 also produced iron nails and a small iron hinge-pivot.

Animal food-bone was present but in far too small quantities to be of value. It was, however, well-preserved (as a guide to any future work).

Dating

The medieval assemblage is redolent of a typical rural material dominated by a local kiln-source. It is typical of Eastern Northamptonshire rural settlement in the 12th-14th centuries. Closer dating is not possible from this material.

The post-medieval contexts date from no earlier than the second quarter of the 17th century, but a preponderance of earlier 17th century wares, combined with an absence of anything later than around 1650, suggests that the material might have been dumped at around that time. Much however, is residual, comprising only a few small sherds from a number of vessels –it is not a primary deposit. It perhaps represents a clear-out of a room or building around the middle of the 17th century. More is almost certainly dumped and strewn further along the ditch to both east and west.

Conclusion

Until recently the Old Build, or Lyveden Manor, at the northern extremity of the site and its accompanying land, has been relatively little-researched. The focus, for a century or more, has been primarily on the New Build (or New Bield, Garden Lodge, or House) and the associated Moated Garden earthworks. Historically these separate elements were never thus, and were once an integrated designed landscape and wider parkland created to be experienced as one interconnected whole experience.

It seems inescapable that the New Build, whilst considered by some to have been no more than a garden lodge or pavilion, was intended to have been much more than that. Its position, at the top of the hill with extensive views across both gardens and wider landscape must surely have been intended to be Sir Thomas Tresham's physical and religious refuge. After so many years in custody would not his greatest garden and architectural creation, one man's earthly paradise, been irresistible? It is also surely pertinent that almost all of the contemporary evidence we have of his designs and instructions were written by him whilst in prison; the project was clearly hugely important to him at this time.

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If the family had not suffered a relatively speedy decline, both socially and financially, precipitated initially by the death of Sir Thomas, followed almost immediately by Francis his son and heir and the subsequent financial difficulties which dogged Lewis, his second son, Lyveden would have been a very different site. It should also be remembered that if the family had continued the project to completion and had retained longer ownership is it almost certain that the buildings and garden would have been prey to changing fashions and might well not survive as they do today. The effective abandonment of the property has largely ensured its survival.

Lyveden is a snapshot of a short but brilliant flowering of a hugely creative, pious man. However, this snapshot element of the last of Tresham's creations also presents us with a problem. The creation is incomplete. The most obvious manifestation of this unfinished work is the New Building, quietly abandoned. Similarly work appears to have halted on the Moated Garden whereby the western side was, and still is, unexcavated. The site retains the melancholy air of an extravagant party called off at the last minute.

Archaeological evidence of gardens is often difficult to identify given the sometimes slight physical intervention that cultivation requires. Here the creation of much larger components such as the moat, terraces and prospect mounts has ensured the survival of those features. On the one hand their short lifespan means that they did not undergo long-term maintenance which might have reinforced the outlines and profiles but at the same time this abandonment has equally ensured their survival, however degraded they are by time.

However, it seems that the most significant damage to the area of the Lower Garden in particular has been inflicted since 1944. Firstly this was by cultivation during the latter years of the Second World War which continued until at least the late 1960's and possibly as late as the 1980's. Secondly the extensive remodelling of the northern part of the area by the previous owner of the Old Build in order to create a large flat area suitable for playing cricket which has entirely removed all evidence that might have survived closer to that building. Neither was done with the deliberate aim of destroying what may have remained, but both have irreparably diminished the surviving resource.

Until the present archaeological investigation, the only previous assessment of the Lower Garden to be credited with presenting the former remains in this area has been the Brown and Taylor article published in the Archaeological Journal in 1972. However, that assessment appears on close examination to have represented the available evidence in such a way as to be difficult to replicate. The highly organised disposition of a series of almost equally-spaced and closely parallel terrace earthworks they presented cannot be seen even when the aerial photographic evidence had been re-examined by Cox.

The current archaeological evidence suggests that the features drawn by K C Brown in the 1930's, but dismissed by Brown and Taylor, were in fact what survived into the twentieth century, even before the 1944 Aerial Photograph. The ditch Brown saw is depicted on early Ordnance Survey Maps where it is merely a long-lived field boundary, present in maps of 1810 and again in 1886 and on the 1944 Aerial Photograph, just before ploughing masked it.

Just like the Ordnance Surveyors before him, KC Brown saw and recorded an open ditch, and that is exactly what the present evaluation has found once more, in the same place, aligned slightly eccentric to the hill-slope. Cut and re-cut, with both original fills producing well-dated 17th-century

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pottery, the final infilling (by ploughing) is dated by modern finds to around the time of Brown and Taylor's research. Witness their statement that nothing could be seen on the ground. Their dismissal of Col Brown's note as 'short and inadequate' failed to allow that his fieldwork was, however, accurately surveyed and drawn.

Pottery found within the earliest context indicates that the large ditch cut across the slope was open in the mid-1600's and is therefore likely to have been cut up to a generation after the work instigated by Sir Thomas. However, it was clearly not a terrace. It seems more likely that the feature was created to intercept water flowing down the slope towards the Old Build and could perhaps have been dug to prevent flooding should the north terrace of the moat ever breach, with its consequent threat to the manor at the bottom of the hill. By the time it began to be infilled, around 1650 (when the manor was sequestered), any sense of alarm had passed.

There is evidence that the large rectangular platform was, in part, created and it seems unquestionable that it was part of the earthwork creation designed by Sir Thomas. North of that point there is nothing surviving to suggest that he either intended, or commenced, further landscaping. Indeed, the very nature of the projecting central platform almost gives the impression of a termination to the designed area of the gardens, a point from which to survey the wider landscape. A broadly similar central platform survives at Holdenby House, Northamptonshire, where another contemporary series of garden earthworks survives to this day (RCHME 1981, 106 & fig 83).

In the extensive contemporary documents there appears to be nothing which indicates a series of terraces descending downwards as far as the Old Build. The degraded nature of the projecting platform, much truncated by modern cultivation, and the aerial photographic evidence for an incomplete feature, would suggest that this, like the remainder of the site, was abandoned prior to completion. The letter by his widow offering plants from the garden four years after his death suggests that she, at least, had no desire to complete the project.

No archaeological evidence has been found to suggest that there was a western approach to the Old Build along the valley from that side.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	Lyveden Terraces Project
OASIS ID	iainsode1-304081
Project Type	Desk-based assessment and Evaluation
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Rachael Hall for NT / Iain Soden for ISHeritage
Previous/future work	Unknown
Current land use	Pasture/Garden
Development type	n/a
Reason for investigation	Research
National grid reference	SP 98168 85882
Start/end dates of fieldwork	25-09-2017 to 03-10-2017
Archive recipient	National Trust/Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	5ha



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

25 October 2017

Revised incorporating NT comments 19 December 2017