

# Langley Hall

Langley Park, Derwentside, County Durham

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Summer 2011



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*Prepared for Mr J and Mrs J Gray as part of a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement by:*

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**Site Name:** Langley Hall, Langley Park, County Durham  
**Clients:** Mr M and Mrs J Gray  
**NGR:** NZ 2107 4662  
**Oasis Reference:** alanwill1-109579  
**Field Visits:** Winter 2010, Summer 2011



**Figure 1:** A representation of Langley Hall on a Church Commissioners plan of the Manor of Langley made prior to 1736 (Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections CCB/MP/51)

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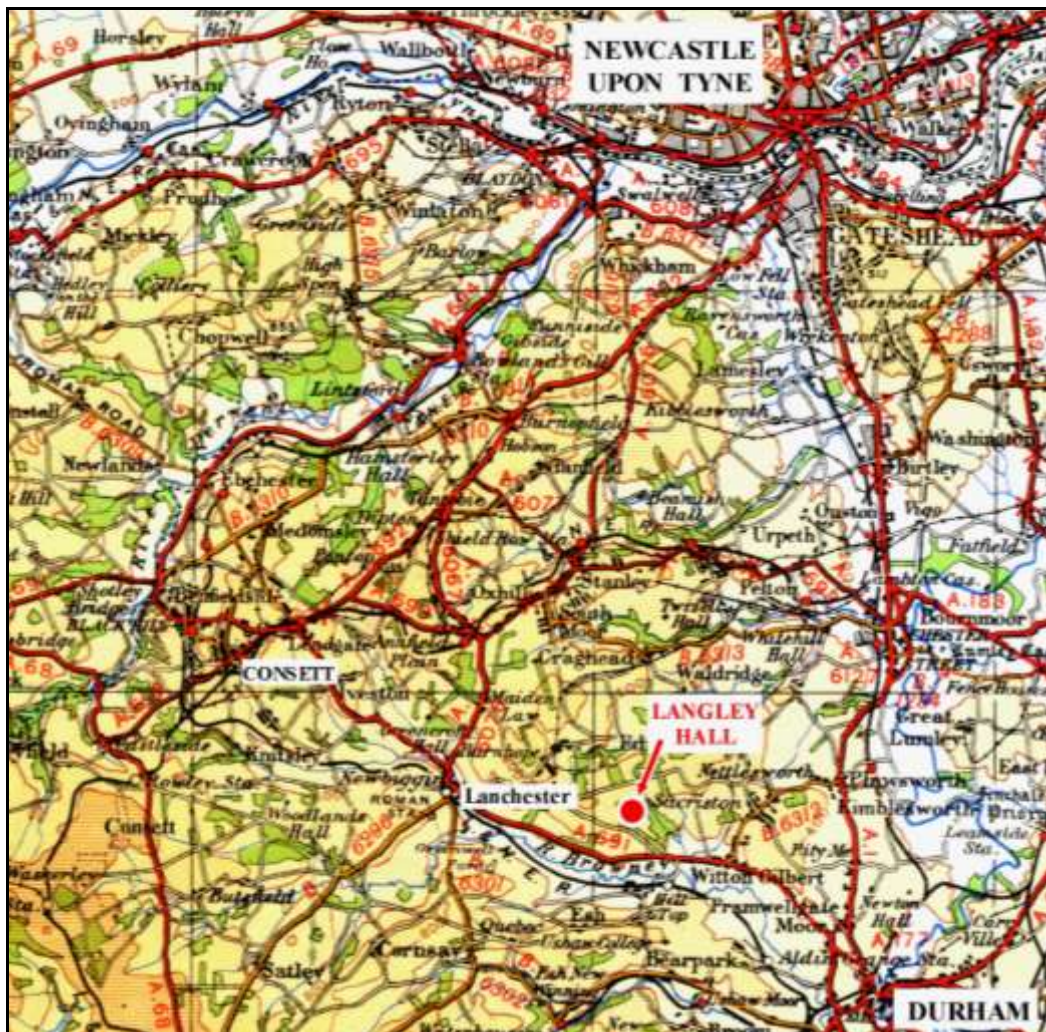
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## SUMMARY

*Langley Hall is a sixteenth-century moated manor-house lying in woodland on the northern slope of the valley of the River Browney and seven kilometres to the north-west of the City of Durham. It is in ruins and at immediate risk of further collapse. The buildings are listed grade II and the site scheduled. The remains of the hall have been identified as appropriate for conservation under a Countryside Stewardship (CSS) Agreement entered into between the tenants of the site, Mr M and Mrs J Gray, Langley Estate and Natural England.*

*The following report forms one component of an overall management plan prepared as part of this agreement which will inform and guide the long-term maintenance of the site, setting out recommendations for conservation of standing and below-ground remains and placing these remains within a topographic and historic context. It identifies earthwork features surrounding the hall as recorded by Photarc Surveys Ltd and accompanies the detailed structural description of the hall provided by Peter Ryder. This report also provides a brief overview of the history of the site and indicates areas of greatest sensitivity around the ruins to be avoided during the impending consolidation works.*



**Figure 2:** The location of Langley Hall north-west of the City of Durham

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Requirement for Recording and Planning Background**

The remains of Langley Hall lie within woodland on the north side of the Browney Valley in County Durham. The site is a scheduled monument (Durham 71). Langley Hall is entered on the English Heritage At Risk Register with a grade 'A' priority; denoting it is at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric.

The site has been identified as appropriate for conservation under a Countryside Stewardship (CSS) Agreement entered into between the tenants, Mr J and Mrs J Gray, Langley Estate and Natural England. The following report forms one component of an overall management plan prepared as part of this agreement which will guide the long-term maintenance of the site, setting out the context of these remains within a broader landscape.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Management Plan**

The overall objectives of the management plan (MP) for Langley Hall site are set out in section 1.2 of the project brief prepared by Tom Gledhill, North East Historic Environment Advisor for of Natural England in October 2009:

- To identify the works required to bring the ruins back to good repair, based on an 'informed conservation' approach.
- To provide a record of the structures and the historic features associated with them to enable these to be respected during the works, and to provide information which may be used in interpretational material for the site.
- To provide a tree survey to establish which trees should be protected and which removed for the protection of the monument.
- To provide a full specification and costed schedule for repair.

### **1.3 Survey Requirements**

The project brief sets out a range of requirements for survey and architectural and archaeological input to inform the management plan including a metric survey of the structural remains of the hall accompanied by fabric analysis of the structures (this analysis provided by Peter Ryder) and a topographic survey of the area around the hall accompanied by a description of the earthworks and their historic context, to also inform the most appropriate access routes for building contractors during the consolidation works.

### **1.4 Sources of Information**

Information for this report has been gathered from a number of sources including Durham County Council's Heritage Event Record, County Durham Archives and Durham University Archives and Special Collections Library. Material accessed is listed in section 8 along with published material.

### **1.5 Site Designations**

#### ***Scheduled Ancient Monument***

Langley Hall and its environs are scheduled as ancient monument Durham 71. Scheduling of a site by the Secretary of State denotes it is of at least national significance and provides statutory protection over the defined area.

#### ***Listed Building***

The buildings at Langley Hall are listed grade II.

## 1.6 Site Inspection

The site was visited in December 2010 and July 2011 during which the earthworks were inspected and a photographic record compiled. Any understanding of the site as a whole is hindered by the tree cover which obscures many features and prevents any overall view of the earthworks. The moat ditch is especially affected in this respect with dense areas of both plantation and earlier tree cover, some of it fallen, lying within and around it. This is perhaps most marked along the north arm of the ditch where there is no clear view of the profile. Undergrowth and brash across the site also make the identification of less substantial features problematic. For instance, no evidence for the edges of the south arm of the moat ditch were noted during the visits although they were visible in 1983 when an RCHME survey of the site was carried out, possibly because the cover was then less prevalent. Despite these limitations, it is fairly clear that the earthworks, unlike the structural remains, have not been greatly eroded or altered since inspected by English Heritage in 1991.

## 2. LANGLEY HALL: LOCATION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The Site Today

The remains of Langley Hall lie seven kilometres to the north-west of the City of Durham on the northern slope of the valley of the River Browney (figures 1 and 2) at NZ 2107 4662. It is a remote, hidden site, lying in woodland and accessed only from a rough track running north from Langley Lane, a minor road climbing westwards up the valley towards Anfield Plain. The nearest modern settlements are Langley Park, one and a half kilometres to the south, Witton Gilbert a little over two kilometres to the east and Burnhope a similar distance to the west.

The hall and its partially enclosing ditch sit within Old Hall Wood which, from map and photographic evidence, extended across the site over the twentieth century. The area of the moated platform, and for a little way to the south, forms a nearly level terrace within a fairly constant slope, falling southwards towards the River Browney. Because of the tree cover, it is not possible to gain an overview or perspective of the remains.

The surviving structures of the hall lie within a moat ditch. They consist of two parallel, very partial and unconnected ranges, their long axes running nearly north-west to south-east. They are the remnants of the north-east and south-west sides of a quadrangle of buildings bounding a rectangular courtyard.

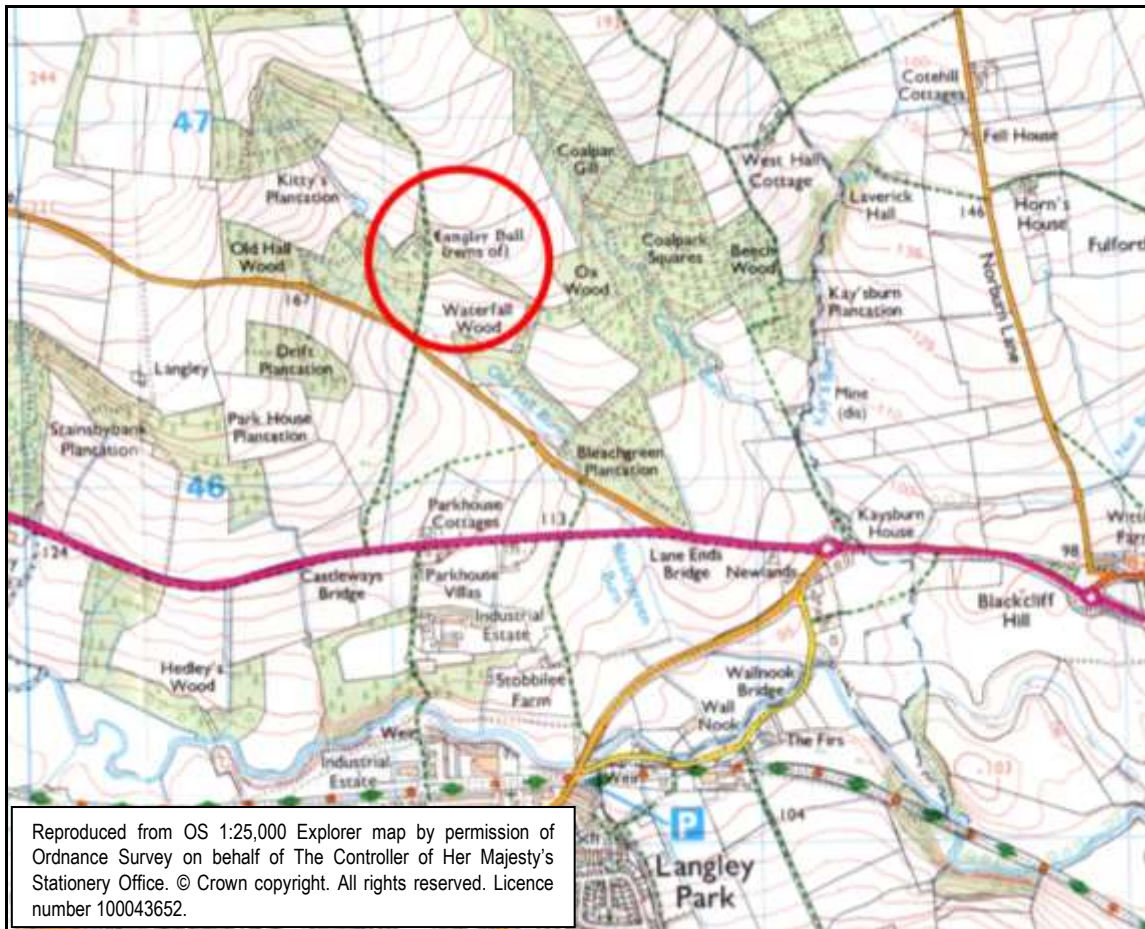
The moat ditch extends around the north-west and north east flanks of the ruins of the hall. A sub-rectangular pond lies just beyond the south-east angle of the hall. No substantial evidence for a ditch along the south-west flank of the ruins was noted during the present project, although the south and north edges of a ditch on this course were noted by the RCHME surveyors of the site in 1983.

### 2.2 Historical Background

#### 2.2.1 Prehistoric to Romano-British Periods

There is little evidence for prehistoric activity in the area around Langley Hall. A sub-rectangular elongated enclosure 75m by 45m lies at NZ 2066 4626 about 600m to the south-west of the hall (HER 1314). It is probably, although not certainly, of prehistoric date. The Roman fort of *Longovicium* lies 4.5km to the west of the hall at Lanchester on Dere Street between the forts of *Vinovia* (Binchester) to the south and *Vindomora* (Eborchester) to

the north. There is no known Roman route eastwards along the valley of the Browney from Lanchester, nor any native settlements identified near to Langley Hall.



**Figure 3:** Langley Hall to the north of Langley Lane on the northern slope of the valley of the River Browney

### 2.2.2 The Middle Ages

The name Langley probably derives from the Old English *langleia* – long clearing. The vill or township of Langley, part of the historic and very extensive parish of Lanchester is mentioned in the Boldon Book (Austin 1982, 47):

*Acto the steward has Langley as much for the service which he did for the Lord Henry, Bishop of Winchester, of good memory, as for that which he did for the Lord Hugh, Bishop of Durham*

The manor and vill of Langley was held by the Percys for at least a part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and by the time of Bishop Hatfield's Survey (1377-1380) it was in the hands of the Scrope family. They remained in the possession until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with the extinction of the direct line of the family.

The settlement of Langley was abandoned at some point over the medieval period and is not marked today by any earthworks. The Medieval Village Research Group places it at NZ 2100 4670 - just to the north-west of Langley Hall along the Old Hall Burn (HER 7815) although this location should probably be treated with some caution.

The earliest occupation on the site of Langley Hall is not known, nor is whether this was associated with any adjacent occupation. There is considerable scope, given the scale of works that would have been required to construct the visible structures and earthworks, that any earlier remains have been masked or removed.

### **2.2.3 Langley Hall: A Moated Site**

Ryder includes an historical background to the development of the hall in his accompanying report on the structural remains and it will not be repeated here. It is sufficient to note that the hall was constructed, as far as can be established, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century for Henry Lord Scrope.

Langley Hall is a moated site. Moats are a late medieval phenomenon, frequently associated with high status sites, such as manorial complexes. They appear first in the mid to late 12<sup>th</sup> century and continue into the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout England around 6,000 have been identified. They are most frequent in the Midlands and east of the country. There are around 30 moated sites in County Durham of which Langley would appear to be a late example. Typologically, it is of single island form; the hall ranges lie on one 'island' or platform defined by a broad and deep ditch with no evidence for adjacent platforms. Moated sites set into slopes, as at Langley, have been described as 'perched', a typological rather than a functional classification.

Although a benefit to the security of the establishment, the moat ditch at Langley, like the hall itself, is not a primarily military or defensive structure. The hall is set on sloping ground overlooked from the north and the ditches, at least as presently understood, did not form a complete circuit. In part, the moat will have been a symbol of status and wealth, an adjunct to a lordly house and an important visual addition to its setting.

### **2.2.4 Post-Medieval Langley**

The hall was passed to the family of the Marquis of Winchester over the 17<sup>th</sup> century and by the 1750s, Langley was owned by Henry Lambton. At some time, at least parts of the hall were converted to farm ranges and a farmhouse added on to the north range. This is seen on an engraving of the hall made in the 1820s when the hall was already very dilapidated. The ranges were ruinous by the 20<sup>th</sup> century and have fallen into further serious decline over the past 50 years.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The following section describes the earthworks of Langley Hall. The basis of the section is evidence gathered during site visits and the detailed survey of the hall and its surroundings prepared as part of the current project by Photarc Surveys Ltd (Appendix 1). Other sources also provide important information on the topography of the hall and its environs including the 1983 RCHME survey of the site (figure 12) and the successive Ordnance Surveys (figures 8 to 11)

### **1: The Moat Ditch**

As seen today in plan, the moat ditch forms a chevron (figure 4) with its point to the north-west and its arms bounding the north-eastern and north-western sides of the hall. The length of the north-western arm of the ditch (along the outer edge) is 112m with a short return to the east, and the length of the north-eastern arm 44m. The north-east upslope arm is the more substantial. On the line of profile **A** the ditch is 20m across and 6m deep (base at 157.70m aOD); on **B** it is 14m across and 2.5m deep (base at 157m aOD); and at **C** it has dwindled to 12m across and 1m deep (base at 157m aOD). When visited during



winter 2010/11, two areas held standing water (see figure 12 for the same areas of flooding identified in 1983) which had gone by summer 2011. The profile of the ditch varies along its course but is generally bowl-shaped.

Whether the ditch was ever continuous or nearly continuous around the platform is not certain although map and survey evidence indicates that it was formerly more extensive. The first edition Ordnance Survey (figure 8) outlines what is presumably the former extent of the south-west arm of the moat ditch, running from the current terminal of the ditch at the north-west corner of the south range to the sub-rectangular pond lying beyond the south-east corner of the hall. A line running beyond the pond and extending to the north of it is presumably intended to indicate the former extent of the south-east arm of the moat. The Victoria County History (Page 1905, 356) includes a plan of the site. This is based on the second edition Ordnance Survey but with additions showing the extension of the eastern end of the north-east arm of the ditch across the course of the hedged trackway (figure 9). The source of this additional information for the extent of the ditch is not referenced. The 1983 RCHME survey of the site marks the north and south lips of the south-eastwards extension of the present north-western arm of the ditch to the pond although not quite as per the first edition OS outline.

## **2: The Moat Platform or Island**

Langley Hall sits on a spur of land overlooking the Old Hall Burn in an area otherwise falling fairly steadily south towards the River Browney. Material excavated from the moat ditch will almost certainly have also helped to level the site, creating a relatively flat platform (or island) for the construction of the hall ranges and possibly terracing out to the south (see 8, below). The fall north-south across the platform - between the north-west end of the platform and the pond (9) - is 1.7m, a 1 in 50 slope, whereas over a similar distance along the adjacent trackway the fall is 10m, a 1 in 8 slope. The area between the north and south ranges, formerly a courtyard, is just about flat.

## **3: Woodland Boundary/Drainage Ditch**

A broad, shallow ditch 0.5m deep and 3m wide, falling to the north towards a stone culvert. The ditch is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey marking the eastern edge of Old Hall Wood.

## **4: Ditch Running from Moat (North-West Side)**

A ditch running at right angles from the western lip of the moat ditch. Narrowing from 6m at the edge of the moat to 4m, and 1.2m -1.3m deep. Falls slightly to west. On the first edition Ordnance Survey it is shown forming or accessing a tributary to the Old Hall Burn, acting as a leat or overflow from the moat.

## **5: Channel Running into Moat (North-East Side)**

A channel running into the north-eastern arm of the moat ditch at its broadest and deepest point. Possibly associated with a narrow water course shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey running from Old Hall Well upslope to the north of the moat

## **6: Internal Bank along North-East Arm of Moat Ditch**

A bank, 35m long, between 10m and 12m wide and up to 2m high along the inner lip of the north-eastern arm of the moat ditch and separated from it by a narrow berm or path. The north face is regular, the south irregular and cusped with a narrow spur running back from the eastern edge, this possibly formerly associated with an extension of the moat to the south as suggested on figure 9 which is now lost. The bank is shown on the first Ordnance Survey as a simple, regular feature with no sign of the irregularity to the south as apparent

today. There is no evidence on the ground that it was formerly more extensive. What purpose it served is unknown.

#### **7: Linear Hollow**

A linear hollow curving from the inner edge of north-east arm of the moat ditch. Uncertain context or function

#### **8: South-West Arm of Moat Ditch and Terracing**

The hall sits on a spur to the north-east of the Old Hall Burn and overlooks this stream on a relatively flat area of land. It is likely that this level area was extended to the south by using spoil removed from the moat ditch upslope. This would have made excavation for the southern part of the moat ditch less onerous. The extent of this terracing would only be certainly established by excavation. There is today little trace of the southern part of the moat ditch although map evidence and previous surveys strongly indicate that it existed with (9), below, forming the junction with a south-east arm.

#### **9: Pond**

A shallow, sub-rectangular and overgrown pond, 20m long by 10m wide in a broader depression beyond the south range and on the edge of the terraced platform of the hall. A channel (10) runs from it to the south-west and a linear hollow (11) runs in from the east. The first edition Ordnance Survey (figure 8) shows the pond as having formed the south-east corner of the moat ditch with an arm extending to the existing ditch to the north-west and an extension to the north-east running along much of length of the indicated outer face of the south-east range.

#### **10: Channel**

A shallow channel, slightly constricted at its mid point and running downslope from (9). It is between 2m and 4m wide and a maximum of c0.5m deep. Presumably served as a leet for overflow from (9).

#### **11: Linear Hollow**

A linear hollow running up to (9) from the east. Possibly a pathway but not indicated as such on any Ordnance Survey. Possibly a modern feature.

#### **12: Curving Linear Hollow**

A curving linear hollow branching to the north-west from (11). Possibly an access route to the hall ranges but would have sat within the north end of the moat ditch as this is marked indicatively on the first edition Ordnance Survey. Possibly a modern feature or associated with the post-medieval use of the hall as a farm and farm ranges.

#### **13: Hedge Line**

Modern hawthorn hedge (shown on the 1920s Ordnance Survey) forming a boundary beyond the north-west arm of the moat ditch.

#### **14: Intermittent Hedge Line and Former Track**

An intermittent hawthorn hedge and redundant track formerly running north to Langley Hall Farm (this now removed by opencasting) and beyond. The hedge and track are of some age, shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey, but postdate the levelling of the eastern arm of the moat ditch. The track has now been superseded adjacent to the moat ditch by a curving detour to the east.

## **15: Trackway**

An unmetalled track and public footpath running north from the A691, across Langley Lane and to Long Edge in the north. A modern detour curves to the east adjacent to Langley Hall. The origins of the track are not certain.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Langley Hall was constructed at the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century within a moated enclosure. This is late for the construction of a moat but there is no current evidence to suggest that the moat was present before the hall was built. It is thought that the medieval village of Langley, deserted at some time over the Middle Ages, lay close by which might indicate a lengthier occupation of the site as a manorial complex, in whatever form this might have taken, than generally considered.

The moat ditch visible at Langley today is only a part of what was formerly present. A south-western arm extended between the current terminal at the south-west corner to the pond; and a south-eastern arm continued for a distance beyond the northern edge of this pond (figure 4). There is also evidence to suggest that the north-east arm of the moat ditch ran further to the east. This leaves a broad opening on the eastern side of the moated platform, indicating that the hall would have been approached from this side.

The function of areas within the moated platform beyond the main ranges, and whether there were adjacent areas of activity, is not certain. Ryder suggests in his accompanying report that there was an outer court to the east of the main buildings and still within the moat which may have served as a garden. The purpose of the bank along the inside of the north ditch is also unclear.

The arrangements required to maintain the designed level of water in the moat may have been fairly complex but were clearly tied in with the Old Hall Burn and its tributary streams and possibly the Old Hall Well to the north. A number of ditches and channels run into the moat but their functions are uncertain. Nor do we have any clear idea of the original form and profile of the moat ditch.

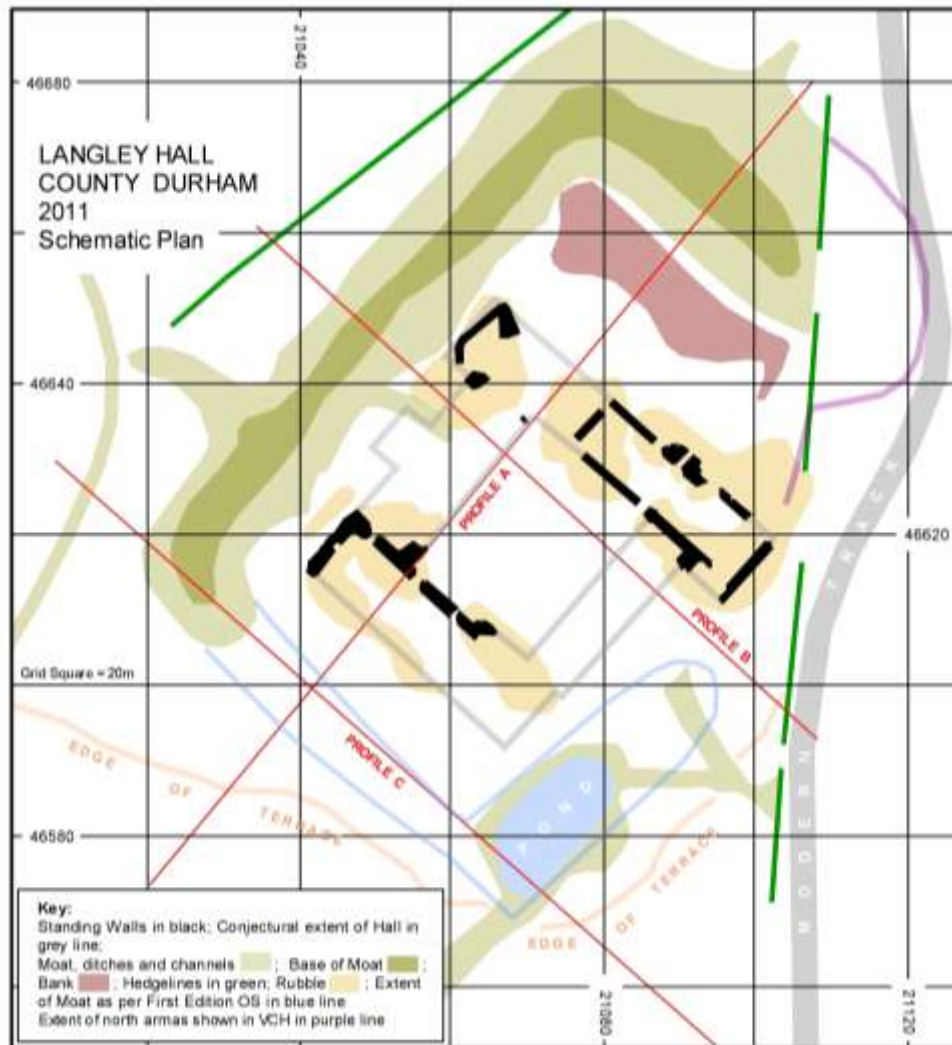
## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Access/Movement of Plant and Materials During Consolidation Works**

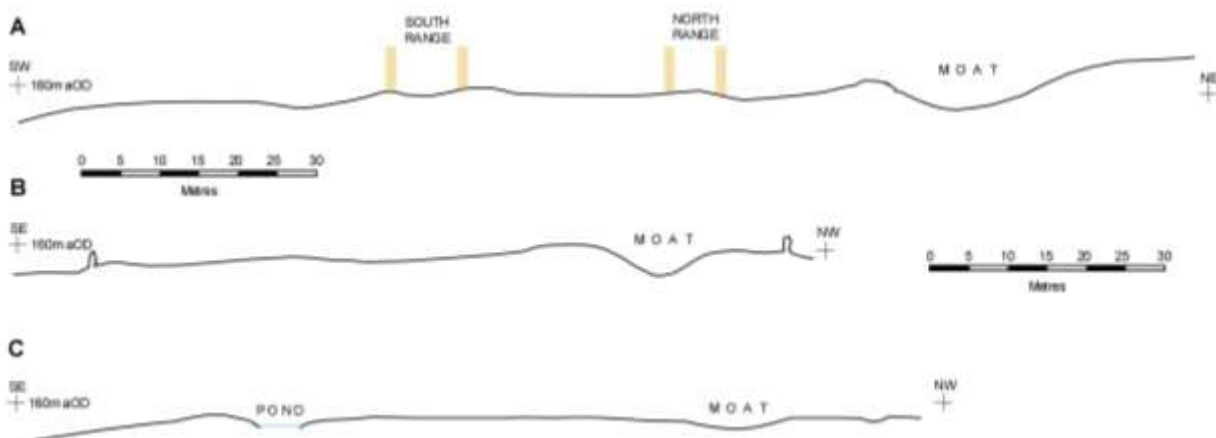
Understanding of the extent and phasing of the archaeological remains at Langley Hall is partial. It is certainly impossible to designate any areas of the site as archaeologically sterile. Therefore, plant must always be used carefully, with due thought to prevailing conditions and with cognisance of the designation of the site as a scheduled monument.

Movement of materials should wherever possible be along existing routes and not across earthworks. If movement of plant beyond route ways is deemed necessary, a strategy should be implemented to protect these areas. Storage areas alongside routes should also include sufficient ground protection to prevent impact on deposits.

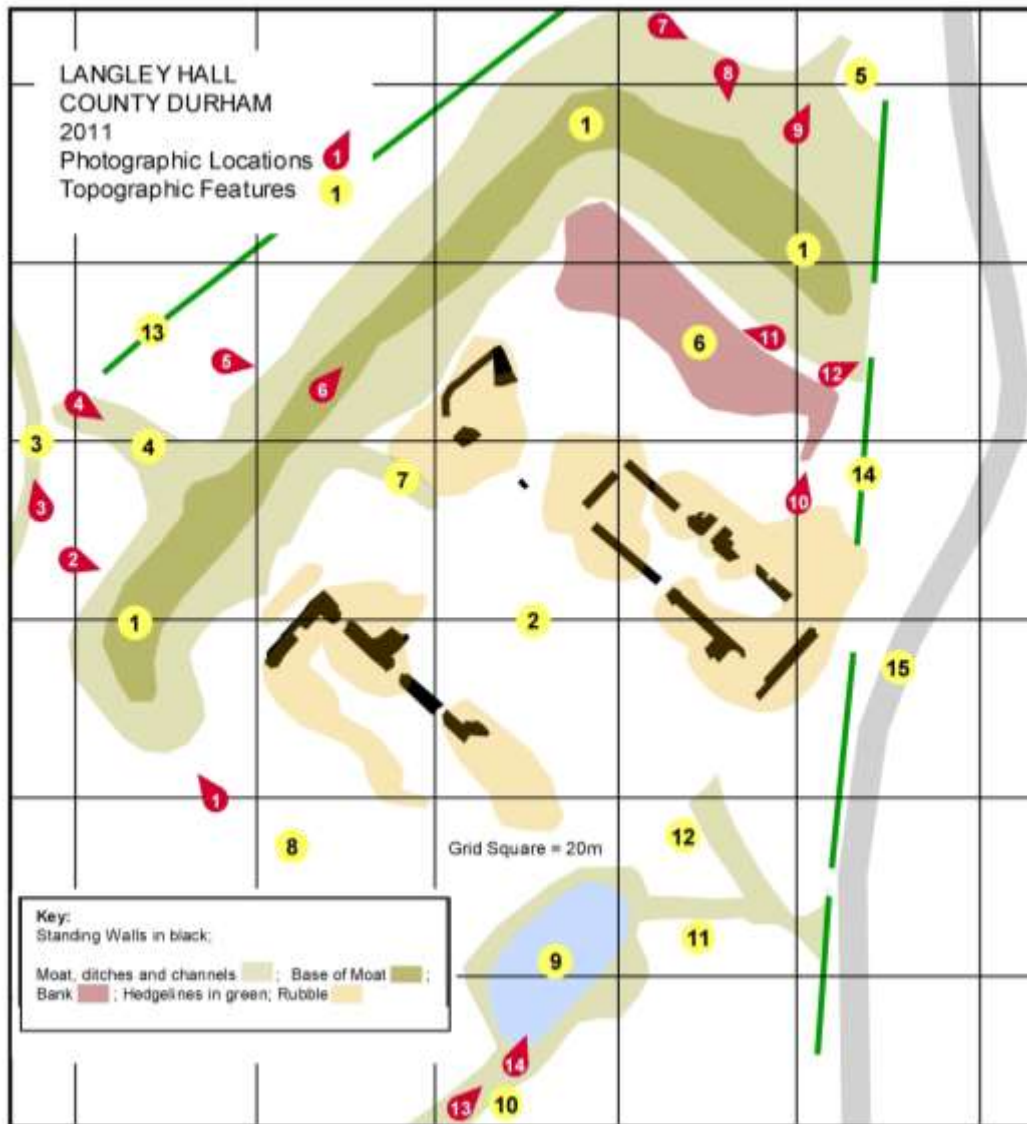
A full strategy for access and storage should be prepared between the site contractors, site architect and approved by English Heritage prior to any works commencing.



**Figure 4:** Schematic plan of Langley Hall and its adjacent earthworks based on the Photarc Survey prepared in 2011 (see Appendix 1). For profiles as indicated see figure 5. For key to features and location of photographs across the site see figure 6. 1:1000 scale



**Figure 5:** Profiles across the site. Locations as per figure 4. 1:1000 scale

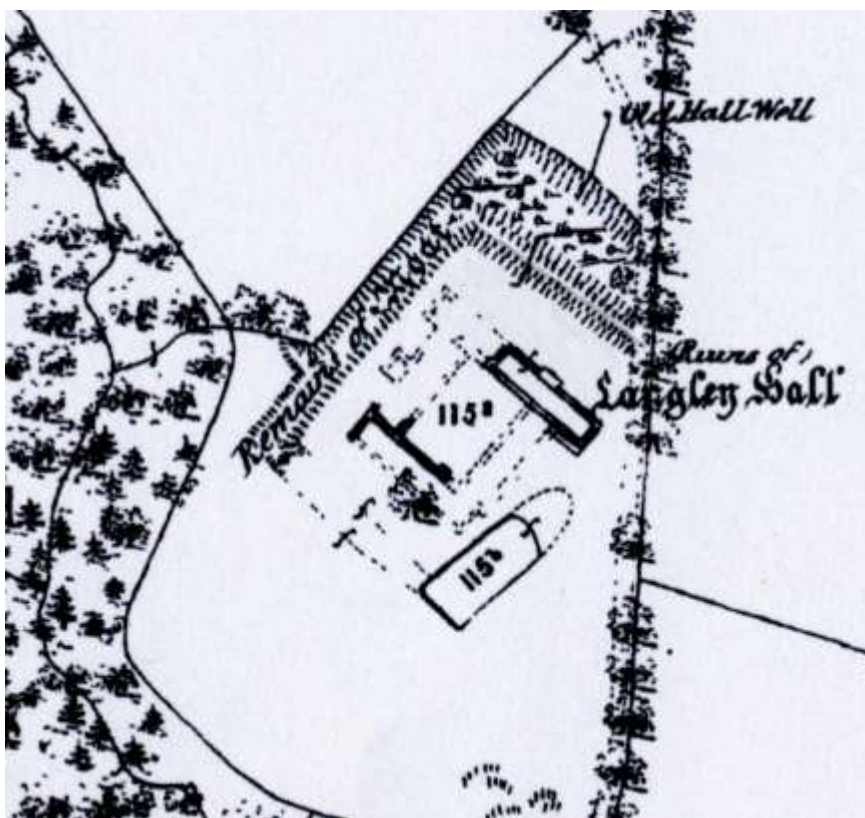


**Figure 6:** Key for the location of topographic features and photographs of the site (see sections 3 and 7 respectively). Not to scale

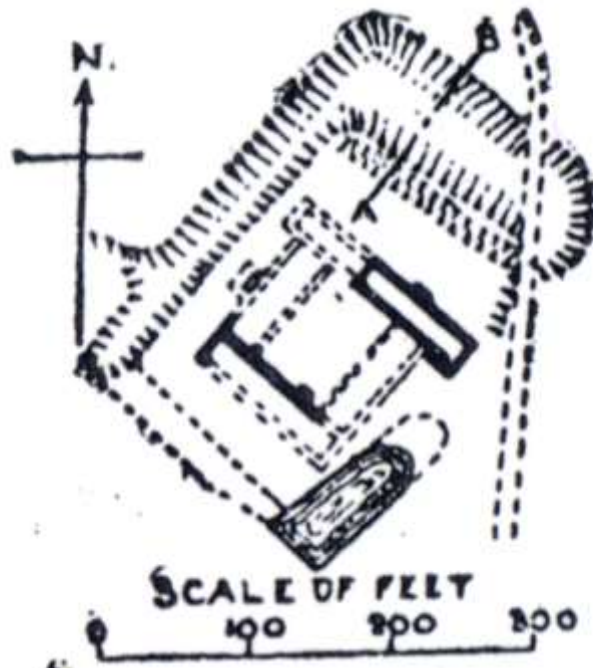
## 6. MAPS AND PLANS



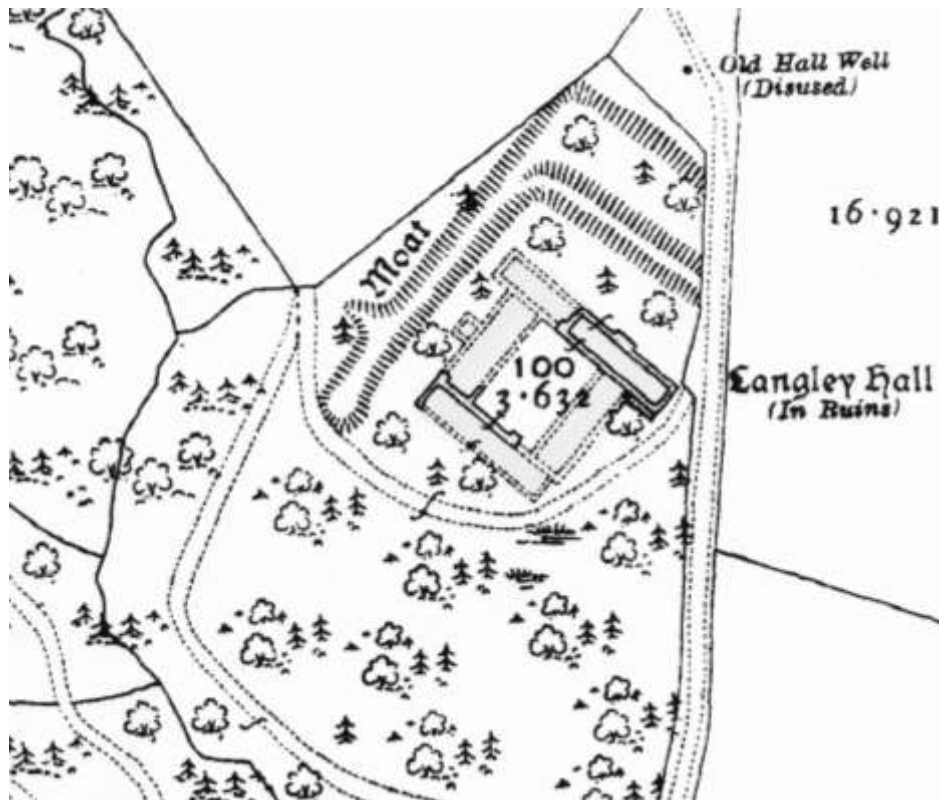
*Figure 7: Langley Hall shown on a Church Commissioners Plan dating to before 1736 (see figure 1 for enlargement and reference)*



*Figure 8: First Edition Ordnance Survey 1857 showing the standing structures and indicative outline of the fallen ranges and the former extent of the moat ditch along the south-west and south-east perimeters*



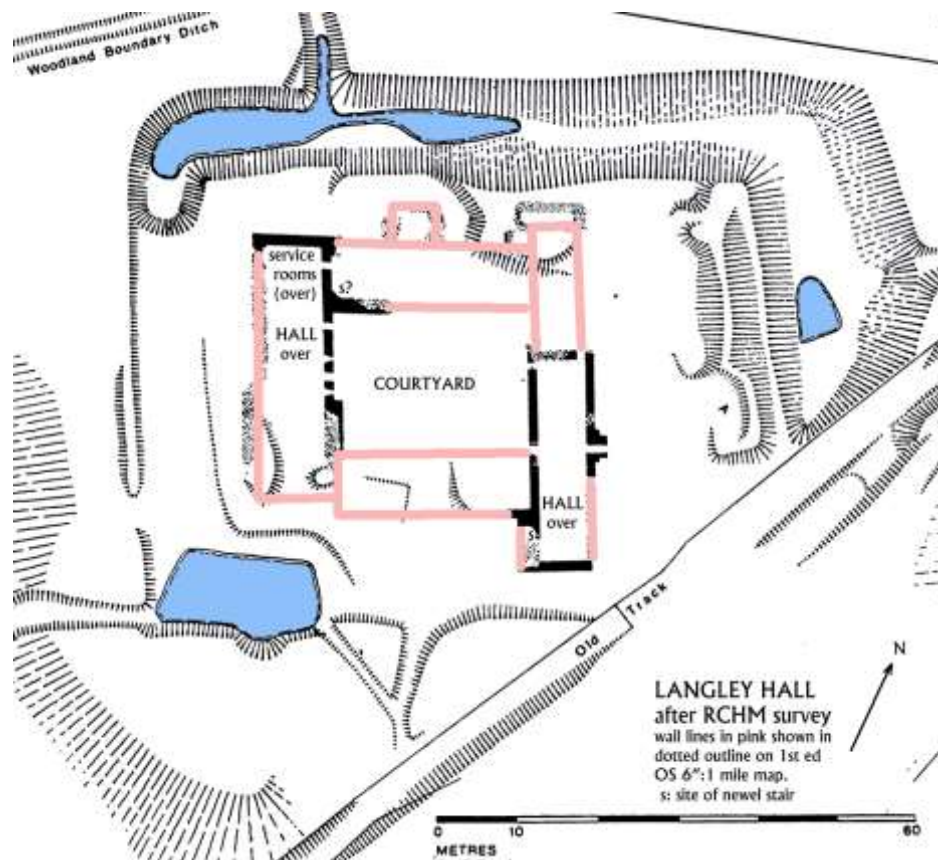
**Figure 9:** Plan of Langley Hall moated site from the Victoria County History for County Durham. Based on the second edition Ordnance Survey it also shows an additional area of the moat at its north-east end with a spur to the south of this



**Figure 10:** 1920s Ordnance Survey. Plantation woodland has encroached over the site



**Figure 11:** 1960s Ordnance Survey



**Figure 12:** 1983 RCHME survey of Langley Hall showing earthworks. Pink outline of structures added by Ryder as per first and later editions of the Ordnance Survey Standing water in the moat ditch and in the south-eastern pond in blue tone



**7. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE** (see figure 6 for locations)



*Plate 1: The southern terminal of the moat ditch, looking north-west*



*Plate 2: Looking east across the south end of the moat ditch*



***Plate 3: Looking north along the line of ditch [3]***



***Plate 4: Looking south-east along ditch [4]***



*Plate 5: Looking down the east edge of the moat ditch*



*Plate 6: Looking north-east along the west arm of the moat ditch*



*Plate 7: Looking south east along the northern arm of the moat ditch*



*Plate 8: View into the base of the north arm of the moat ditch, looking south*



**Plate 9:** Looking up the channel [5] on the north side of the moat ditch



**Plate 10:** Looking north along the eastern spur of the bank [6]



**Plate 11:** *Looking west across the top of the bank [6]*



**Plate 12:** *Hedgeline [14] Looking east*



**Plate 13:** Looking north-east along channel [10] running into the pond [9]



**Plate 14:** Looking north-east across the pond [9]

## 8. SOURCES

### 8.1 Publications

- Austin, D. (1982) *Boldon Book*
- Boyle, J.R (1892) *Comprehensive guide to the County of Durham*
- Darvill, T.C (1988) *Monument Protection Programme Class Descriptions: Moated Sites*
- Hutchinson, W. (1787) *The history and antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (vol 2)
- Mackenzie, E. and Ross, M (1834) *Historical view of the County Palatine of Durham*
- Page, W. (ed) (1905) *Victoria History of the County of Durham* (vol 1)
- Pevsner, N. (revised Williamson, E) (1983) *The Buildings of England: County Durham* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)
- Surtees, H.C. (1820) *History of Durham* (vol 2)
- Wilson, D. (1985) *Moated Sites* (Shire Archaeology)

### 8.2 Archival Material

#### **County Durham Archives Record Office, County Hall, Durham:**

Ordnance Survey maps as detailed in captions

#### **Durham University Library Archives and Special Collections, Palace Green, Durham:**

A Plan of the Manor of Langley Describing its Boundaries (pre 1736) CCB/MP/51

Langley Manor Division by Jos. Grainger (1795) UND/CH1/B 82 (not used)

Tithe Plan for the Township of Langley (1843) DDR/ EA/TTH/1/148 (not used)

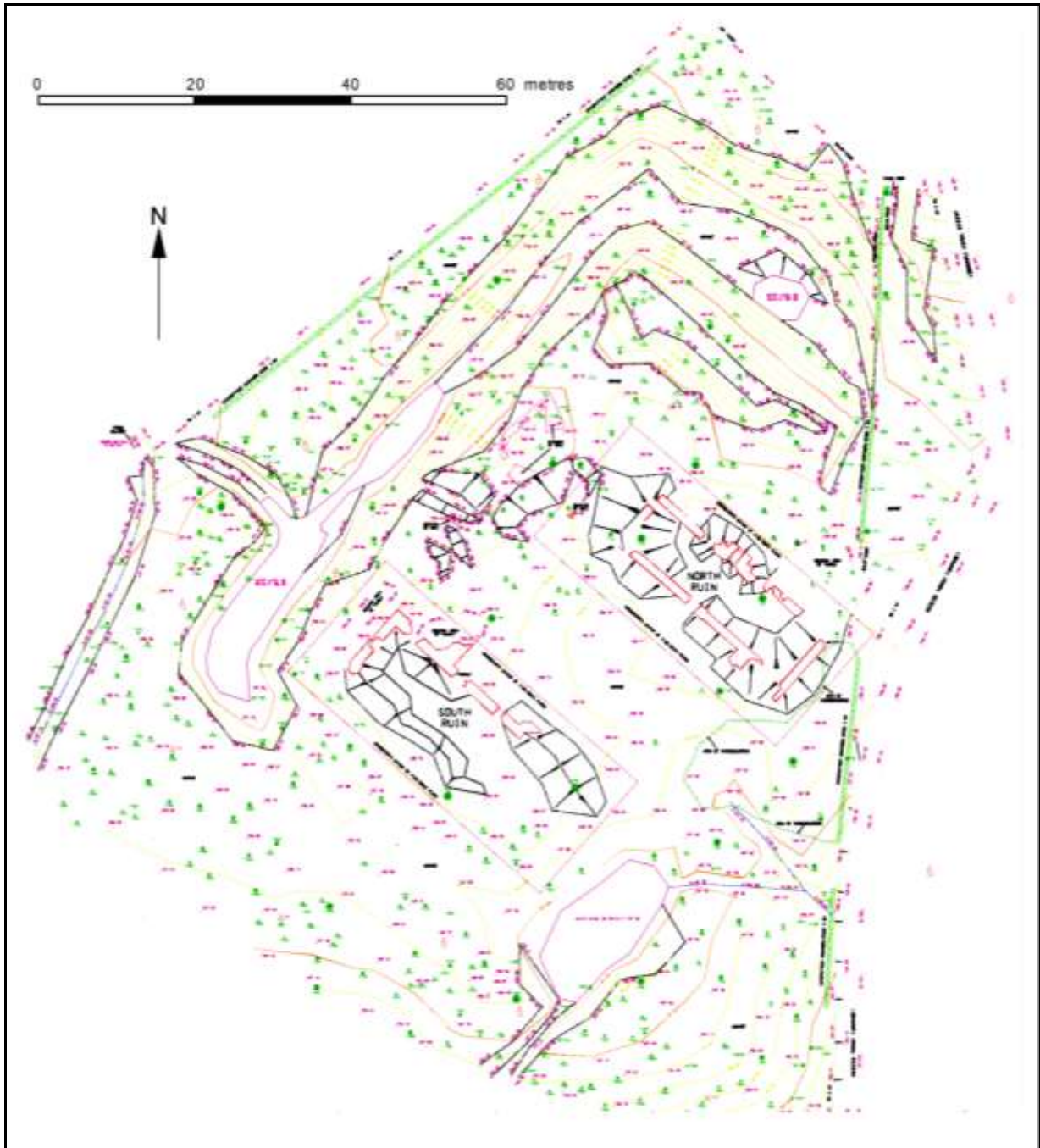
#### **Durham County Council HER Entries:**

- *H7815 Langley Deserted Settlement*: Evidence for the deserted medieval village of Langley, located by the Medieval Village research Group next to Langley Hall
- *H1319: Langley Hall*: Description of the remains of the hall including photographs, drawings and list of sources. Much is from Ryder 2006
- *H1320: Langley Old Hall Moat*: Description of the earthwork of the moat ditch
- *H35281: Langley Hall, Langley Lane*: A description of the hall largely from Mackenzie and Ross 1834 (230-231). Same site as H1319 but different material
- *H1314: Langley Park, House (East)*: A sub rectangular elongated enclosure of probable prehistoric date



## APPENDIX 1: PHOTARC SURVEY OF LANGLEY HALL

Metric and photographic survey of the structural ranges and topographic survey of the surrounds of Langley Hall were carried out by Photarc Surveys Ltd, Beech House, Beech Avenue, Harrogate, HG2 8DS in March 2011 as a requirement of the current project. The following figure shows a contour survey of the site prepared from total station data which includes data for the required tree survey.



*Photarc Topographic Survey of Langley Hall and Adjacent Earthworks 2011*