

CROSTWIGHT HALL

by Edwin J. Rose

SUMMARY

Excavation and detailed examination of the ruined hall at Crostwight, Norfolk, have produced evidence suggesting that this is a mid-16th century building constructed with quantities of re-used ecclesiastical stonework. After extensions in the 17th century, an apparent attempt at medievalisation in the late 18th century may have led to the building's abandonment soon afterwards. An examination was also carried out of the surrounding service buildings which form a rare survival.

Introduction

Crostwight Hall is situated in north-east Norfolk in the civil parish of Honing, between North Walsham and the coast at Happisburgh (site 8201; TG 3406 2969). It stands in an isolated position 600 metres south east of the parish church.

The original hall is in ruins, and is basically an H-plan building. To the east stands the New Hall, former service buildings converted to a residence at a later date but until recently also derelict; other buildings including barns, outbuildings and cottages form a complex to the south and east. To the north is a large walled garden.

The layout of the buildings when complete is shown on a 19th century copy of a map of around 1740 now at Honing Hall estate office, entitled 'An exact survey of the MANNOR and PARISH of CROSTWIGHT belonging to Rt. Hon. Robert Walpole Esq Lord of the said MANNOR'. Robert Walpole acquired the property in 1720 and was ennobled in 1750, thus dating the map.¹ It is reproduced as Plate I. The extensive gardens, water features (decoys?) and landscape modelling, of which no trace now remains, should be noted.

The tithe award map of 1838 shows the hall ruinous and roofless, and as such the representation is not very accurately drawn; it is described on the apportionment as 'yards'.

(i) The standing buildings

A detailed written and photographic record of the standing remains, of which a summary is included in this report, was carried out and has been placed in the County Sites and Monuments Record.

The Hall (Figs 1-2, Fig.3 'A', Plate XVI)

The remains of the Hall as they stood in 1986 consisted of the south facade wall of an irregular H-plan house, with an off-centre porch tower set between two projecting wings. Of the east wing, only the south end remained above ground level, with an addition of two builds on its east side. The west wing retained its north and east walls as well as the south projection, though only the latter remained to full height. A few stubs of walling marked the north wall of the central block.

The south wall of the main block, to the west of the porch (Plates II and III), stands to first floor height. The core of the walling is of brickwork, covered by an outer skin of flint with galletting and random brick. Two tall and narrow windows have outer jambs of brickwork, formerly rendered, and splayed inner embrasures. The brickwork of the jambs differs from that in the west wing windows. The western of the pair cuts a blocked opening of 'long-low' type,

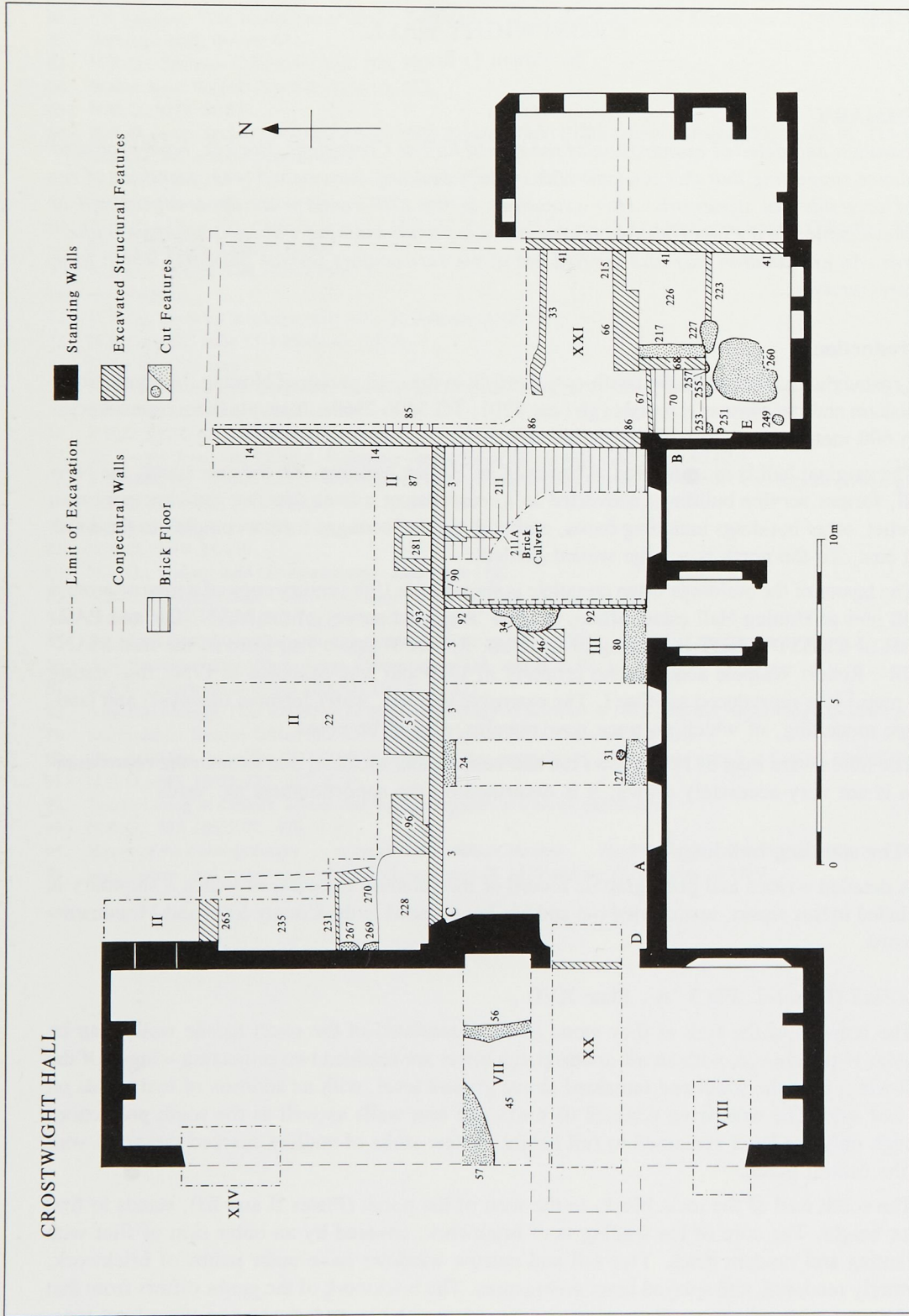


Fig. 1
Crostwight Hall; excavation plan. Scale 1:200. Drawn by S. White.

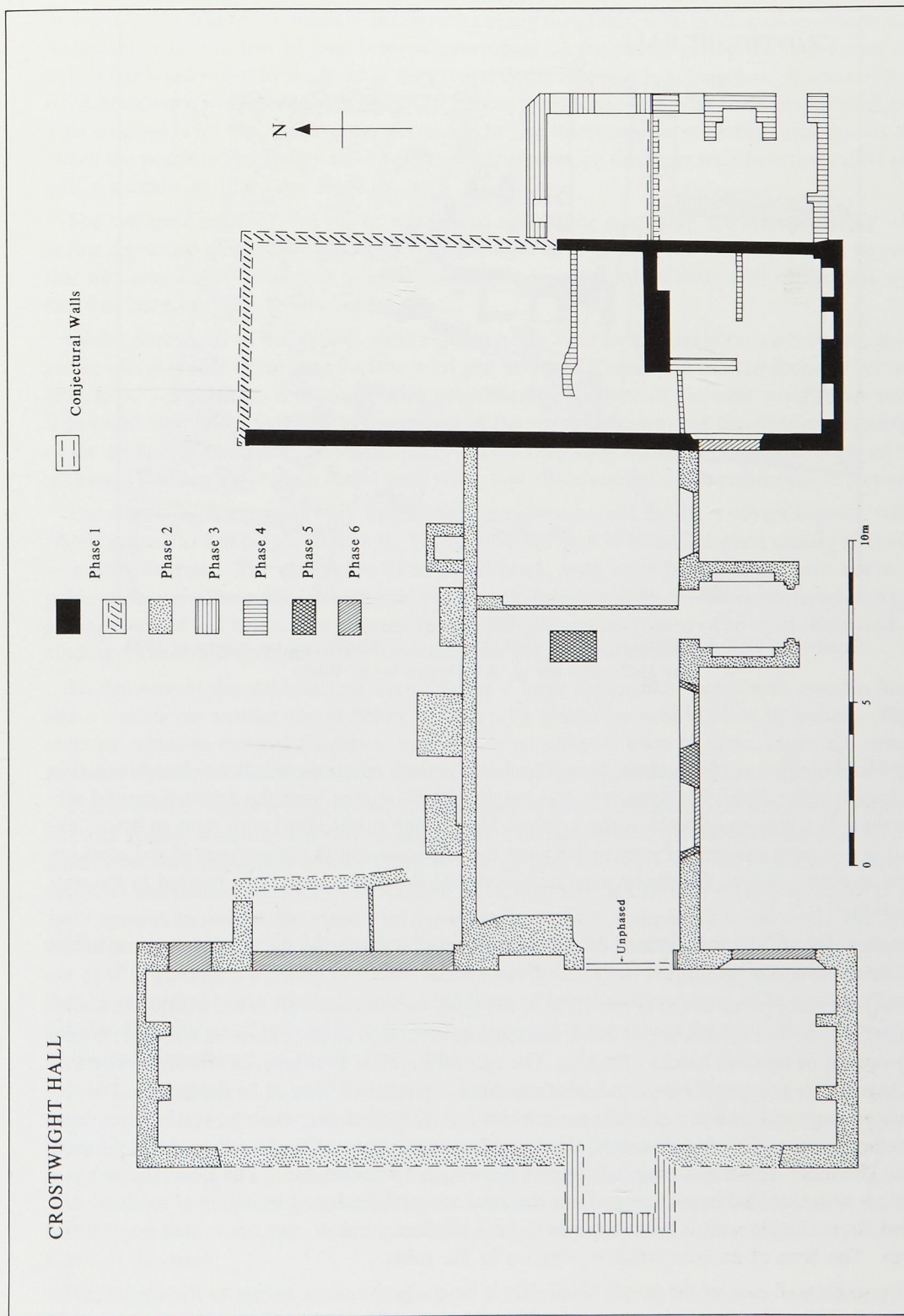


Fig. 2
Crostwight Hall; phase plan. Scale 1:200. Drawn by S. White.

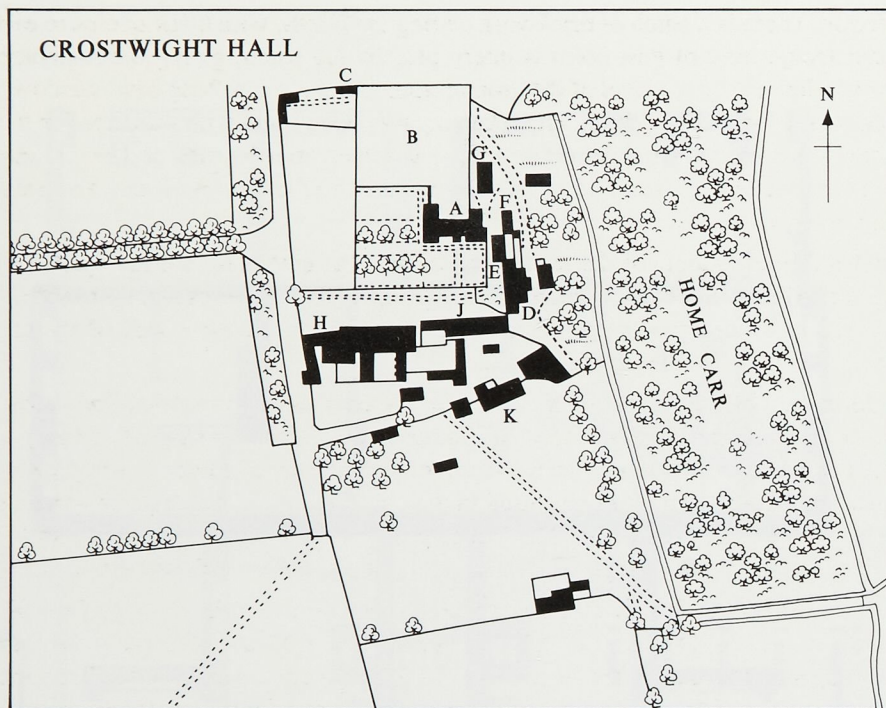


Fig. 3

Crostwight Hall outbuildings; layout plan at scale of 1:5000 based on a map of 1923. The Hall ruins are at 'A'. Drawn by S. White.

only visible in part on the internal face (Fig.1, 'A'). Both windows are themselves blocked in brickwork of the 18th/19th centuries. At a height of 2.80 metres from the external ground surface there is a change of build in the external face; rough pebble flint with random bricks extends across both the pier of walling between the windows and the upper part of the blocking of the eastern window. On the internal face medieval floor tiles have been re-used in the construction.

At the level of the upper floor of the porch, between the porch and the windows, are an offset and several vertical slits.

The projecting porch tower (Plate II) is of the same build as the wall to the west, with a continuous plinth. The quoins are of brick rendered to resemble stone, except at the base, where they consist of massive blocks of ashlar. The entrance arch is four-centred with two orders of shafts on high polygonal bases and with moulded capitals, all formed of limestone. The entrance passage retains a barrel vault; to each side are blank arches containing seats. These have some indications of having contained windows, but there is no external evidence of such openings. The inner doorway to the hall retains the original wooden door. The floor above has a window with moulded brick frame above the entrance, and rendering imitating a 'toothed' surround. In each side wall is what appears to be a blocked window, yet again with no external traces. The base of an attic window remains in the gable.

The south wall east of the porch (Plate III) is basically the same as that to the west. Yet in this section there is a greater amount of pebble flint as well as knapped, and the workmanship

seems inferior. There is a patch of brickwork cutting the plinth, with brick quoins to each side; on the inner face, a row of joist holes is interrupted by the patch, giving the impression of a half-cellar window cut by the level of the ground floor. Above it is a 'long-low' window, blocked in brickwork which has partly fallen, retaining a wooden lintel with mortises for mullions. This window is set hard against the porch and in fact interrupts the rendered brick quoins that attach the porch to the main wall. There are slight traces on the inner wall face that might suggest a window at first floor level.

The rendered brick quoins of the south wall against the east wing are interrupted by what at first appears to be a small window cut by the wing (Fig. 1, 'B'). It seems more probable however that this was a splay designed to give light to the window in the west wall of the east wing that has been overlaid by the central block.

Of the north wall of the central section, only a few courses of flintwork were visible above ground level before excavation. At the west end however a jamb of a shafted archway remains (Fig. 1, 'C') attached to a flint and brick projection on the rear of the west wing's east stack. It has ashlar colonettes similar to those used in the porch entrance, but the remaining springer of the arch is of plastered red brick. The Walpole map shows a large projection north of this archway, infilling the angle with the west wing, and also a smaller north projection further east.

The west wing survives in very fragmentary condition except for the south gable wall, which stands almost to full height (Plates II, V). Its external face is blank, of good quality flintwork — mostly knapped. The quoins are of rendered brick, with stone blocks at the base and at the gable springers. The gable is composed of alternate bricks and flints. The inner face has a projecting stack of red brick. The internal face of the gable is composed of re-used stonework including colonette fragments, above mortises for joists of an attic floor.

To the west of the stack at first floor level is a large rectangular recess with wooden lintel, and a similar but smaller recess below it, both with plastering held in place by battens. These recesses resemble blocked windows, but there is no external trace of them. From the smaller rectangle a plastered shaft descends to a narrow internal opening with shaped jambs at ground level.

The east wall, where it projects south of the central block, has a blocked window in a moulded brick frame, with external surrounds rendered, on both levels. To the north the wall formed a partition with the centre block. There is a large gap, the south side of which is formed by the jamb and part of the arch of a rendered brick archway in Classical style (Fig. 1, 'D'). The jamb appears to overlie the plaster on the inner face of the main block south wall. The north side of the gap consists of a stack with fireplace to the wing; the south side of the stack is hollowed out as if to contain a winding staircase. To the north is a short length of pebble flint walling, then brick quoins begin a long section of blocking of late date, consisting of bricks set on end, flints and fragments of re-used stone. This corresponds to the side of the projection in the angle of the building shown on the Walpole map.

The west wall survives only as stubs at the north and south ends. The northern stub has an external face of brickwork laid in English bond with traces of diaperwork, above a flint plinth topped with shaped bricks. The north-west quoins are of rendered brick. The splayed jamb and rendered surround of a ground floor window form the present south end of the remaining wall. The southern stub is identical, including the window jamb at its present north end — the fact that it is a window and not a doorway is demonstrated by the plinth continuing a short distance north of the jamb.

The Walpole map shows a small projection, perhaps a porch, in the missing section opposite the arch to the centre block.

The east wing is of a construction very different from the centre block and west wing. The west wall of the south projection has no plinth; its base below a blocked window of 'long-low' type is a mixture of flint with galletting, and some brickwork. This build also forms a pier of walling between the window and the south-west quoins, to the full remaining height of the wall. Above, the walling is of pebble flint and random brick. Brick quoins forming a junction between the wing and the centre block occur only above the level of the window, not below it.

The excavation of foundation trenches for the reconstruction of this wing in December 1987 revealed that the south and former east walls of the wing had virtually no foundations below present ground level. The west wall however from level with the centre block south wall to a distance of 1.5 m to the south descends to a minimum depth of 1.10 m (the base of the trench) and contained an apparent blocked doorway (Fig. 1, 'E'). Its north jamb, level with the main block, was square-cut; its south jamb was formed of chamfered bricks splayed inwards. Its width was 70 cm. The inner wall face below ground level was rendered. There was however no disturbance of the natural ground within the wing to indicate that any kind of cellar had been situated here.

The wing's south wall (Plates III, VI) is composed of large flint pebbles with galletting and random bricks. The external quoins are of thick yellow bricks, unlike any others in the building, but the inner quoins are of a pale-red brick of different fabric, with some re-used stone fragments at the top of the surviving height. The outer face of the base of the wall is blank, but on the interior are three broad niches or recesses with low pointed tops.

Before excavations, only stubs of footings marked the continuation of the west wall of the wing northwards, and the line of the former east wall. The Walpole map shows only a very short projection to the north of the line of the centre block, but projecting further north than the eastern extensions.

The eastern extensions comprise buildings of two phases, both of rectangular plan. Both now lack a west wall, which would have been the original east wall of the east wing. The northern section had a semi-basement. The internal face of the north wall (Place VII) is of random flint and brick with brick quoins; those on the north-west are worn smooth to a height of 2 metres, indicating a doorway to the east wing. The exterior of this wall is faced in regular rows of pebble flint. The north-east corner (Plate VIII) is externally of brick, and chamfered off to first floor window level. The east wall (Plates VIII, IX) is of the same build as the north.

A projecting stub remains of the wall that formerly divided the two sections of the extension; it retains at second floor level a fragment of an attached colonette in ashlar. It is clear from the structure that the southern section was added against a pre-existing wall; the southern portion does not appear to be marked on the Walpole map, but at the scale this is difficult to judge. The outer face of the east wall has been carefully blended so that no trace of a join is visible on this side. The internal face of this wall, in the southern section, is by contrast to the northern, of red brick with very little flintwork.

The south wall of the southern section (Plate III, VI) is composed of flint pebbles with galletting on a brick plinth and with rendered brick quoins. The inner face, of random bricks and flint pebbles, has a broad pier of brickwork where it abuts on the east wing of the main building. There is only a very slight projection of the east wing south of this wall. Beneath the ground floor window on the external face is a set of fossil quoins, which does not continue above it.

(ii) The Excavation (Fig. 1)

In 1986 planning permission was granted for the reconstruction of the hall ruins and the conversion of the other buildings to residential accommodation. In advance of this work, excava-

tions were carried out on behalf of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit by a Manpower Services Commission team under the supervision of Piers Millington-Wallace. The detailed excavation records have been placed in the Sites and Monuments Record.

At the time the interior of the west wing was in use as an extension of the adjoining pasture field; the remainder of the ruins was overgrown with bushes and scrub and in use as an unofficial rubbish dump. After clearance, the topsoil was removed across the site. This topsoil contained, as well as building material fallen from the walls, large quantities of ceramics, glass and metalwork — mostly late 19th century in date but some possibly of 18th century origin. There was also a considerable amount of animal bone. Mixed with this recent material were the base of a small Late Grimston ware jug, a sherd of Late Medieval Transitional ware and a 16th century green-glazed sherd.

Three trenches were then opened across the width of the west wing, and a small exploratory trench on the line of the west wall. It was intended to strip the whole interior of the main block, but the discovery of a recently infilled cellar at the east end, and the lack of finds or features in the remainder, caused work to be concentrated on the line of the north wall. Regrettably the presence of a modern yard wall a short distance to the north, and the necessity to form the spoil heaps on the south side of this, limited the space here available for excavation. The entire area of the east wing south of this wall was uncovered, but danger from falling masonry prevented excavation within the eastern extensions.

West Wing

Three trenches were dug across the width of the wing. Trench VII (Fig. 1) revealed that the fireplace at its east end had been altered, the hearth being raised, but with no dating evidence. A gulley containing three small pits (Context 56) was found cut into the natural subsoil; two of the pits contained animal bones, late post-medieval vessel and window glass, and 18th century porcelain. The presumed line of the west wall was marked by a scoop-like feature (Context 57), adjacent to which on the interior was a possible section of mortar floor (45). Above natural were two layers of demolition or weathering debris consisting of flint, mortar and brick fragments. The other two trenches, VIII and XX produced the same stratigraphy; in these both layers of building debris also contained quantities of late 19th century sherds and an extremely large amount of late 19th-early 20th century ironwork. No trace of the west wall appeared in these trenches.

A small trench, XIV, was excavated at the end of the northern stub of the west wall. More surprisingly, no evidence of the continuation of the wall was found. Above natural there was a layer of building debris containing also 20th century window glass, and in the topsoil above (not previously removed here) a wine bottle possibly of 17th century date.

The archway leading from the wing into the main block was cleared as an extension of Trench XX. A floor of rammed mortar and brick dust supported a late blocking wall footing of flints and bricks, positioned so as to convert the archway into a recess in the main block. In the loose building debris filling the base of the arch a 16th century Flemish green-glazed tile was found.

Main Block

Once the topsoil had been removed it was evident that the eastern third of the block was occupied by a cellar (Plate XII), infilled with sand and portions of corrugated-iron pigsties; it was afterwards found that this backfilling had taken place within the past twenty years (2). The eastern half of the fill was removed. The north, east and south walls of the cellar were formed of brickwork, in the top courses forming a skin on the flint footings of the walls of the building. The cellar window mentioned above in the south wall served to light it. The east wall of the

cellar contained the remains of two triangular-headed niches set symmetrically, towards the top of the wall. The north wall contained the remains of a brick staircase, passing through the wall from the exterior. Adjacent on the west was a wide recess, at the level of the niches in the east wall but without any top remaining. A horizontal slot extended westwards from its base into the unexcavated area. The west wall of the cellar (Context 92) was only exposed for its topmost courses. At its north end, where it joined the north wall of the building, it abutted on a thicker portion of wall. To the east of this a facing of herring-bone brickwork had been applied against the north wall (90). This feature was interpreted by the excavators as a fireplace. Traces of the upper parts of two niches were also seen in the west wall.

The cellar floor, (211) where exposed, was not completely level but was at an average depth of 2 m below the pre-excitation ground level. It was composed of red bricks sloping markedly towards a brick culvert running north into a sink trap (211A), to the west of the remains of the staircase. There was no direct evidence that the trap connected with the brick shaft later found outside the building slightly further west. The floor was covered by a layer of fine grit, below a layer of chalky material, both of which appeared to predate the modern infill.

Trench III exposed the foundation trench for the south (80) wall, cut into natural. Above the natural subsoil between the walls were two layers of sandy silt (77, 81). Set into the upper layer (77) at the centre of the building was a hearth (46) (Plates XIII-XIV), 1 m east-to-west by 1.2 m north-to-south, composed of red bricks laid flat and edged on three sides by bricks set on edge, their upper edges rounded. The unedged side was damaged and was level with the west jamb of the main doorway. The bricks bore considerable evidence of burning. Above the level of the hearth was a layer of sandy silt (75), above this burnt clay and peaty soil (32), and the topmost layer consisted of gravel and brick fragments (46), with lumps of flint adjacent to the north wall, and merging into peaty soil by the south wall. A semi-circular feature (34) containing brown soil, brick fragments and flint lumps had been cut down from this level on the east side of the hearth and may have been the cause of the damage noted.

Trench I was dug to the west. The foundation trenches for the north (24) and south (27) walls were visible; the former contained animal bone, the latter sand and mortar with brick flecks. A posthole (31) filled with sandy loam and clay was adjacent to the south wall. Two layers of sand and gravel (4, 25), with some flints in the upper layer, extended across the buildings.

Apart from those in the topsoil, no finds came from anywhere inside the main block.

The footings of the north wall of the block (3) were uncovered throughout its length, after which the area to the north was excavated as far as the restrictions of the site would allow (Trench II). At the junction of the north wall with the west wing, the west respond of an archway remains *in situ* as noted above; 1.40 m east of this an L-shaped projection of flints and brickwork (96) extended 0.95 m to the north then 2 m to the east, leaving a narrow slot between the north wall of the building and its eastward return (Plate XIII). The upper surface of the projection gave the appearance of having been a floor. Between this projection and the east wall of the wing was a floor of brick dust and mortar (228); the southern 1.5 m of this was not removed, but the northern 95 cm was excavated to reveal a chalky layer beneath, ending at a brick wall footing aligned east-to-west (231). To the east the chalky layer was cut by the foundations of a brick and mortar wall aligned north-west to south-east (270) pointing towards the north-west corner of the L-shaped projection. To the west two shallow holes filled with mortar and flint chippings (267, 269) lay under the footings of the wall of the wing.

North of the brick wall footing a platform or floor of compressed building rubble (235), including large blocks of stonework as well as flints, extended as far north as an east-west wall

footing of brick (265). The latter was of much slighter construction than the more northerly footing. The platform (235) was at the same level as the mortar floor (228) further south.

The east wall of the west wing at this point is a rebuild, as already noted. It rested on foundations of whole flints and blocks of mortar that may be older than the blocking wall, or simply reset, but which themselves are set on top of the rubble platform.

One metre to the east of the L-shaped projection a massive rectangular base (5) projects from the north wall of the building, slightly out of alignment to the wall (Plate XIII). It measured 1.1 m east-to-west by 1.8 m north-to-south and was composed of flints with some re-used stonework; a slight offset surrounds its base. To the north of the projection extended a layer of mortar and building flints (22), also containing a Late Medieval glazed sherd and 18th-19th century sherds and vessel glass. Adjacent to the projection this layer was covered by two layers of loam (18, 50) and a top layer of burnt sand, charcoal and coal (6).

A much-worn brick floor projects from the north wall 1.1 m east of the flint base (93). It had an apparent brick step down to the north and the brickwork impinges on the wall of the building; the 'fireplace' (90) noted on the north wall interior above the cellar is level with its south-east corner. To the east and separated from it only by its construction trench filled with flint rubble was a square-sectioned brick shaft (281), 1 m × 0.9 m and up to 3 m deep (Plate XV). The upper courses of its east wall were of mixed bricks and flints. At its base were drain holes in the north and east walls. The main fill of the shaft, 2.10 m in depth, consisted of sand with brick flecks and a quantity of lead window comes of 17th century or later date, for diamond-paned windows (263). Above this were two layers of building rubble and large quantities of fragmentary peg tiles of 16th-17th century type (245, 246).

In the remaining 2.1 m between the shaft and the west wall of the east wing were traces of a brick construction, apparently the stairwell for the steps noted as passing through the north wall into the cellar. It was filled with building debris, wood and black soil above a basal layer of sand (87).

East Wing

Due to the angle of the modern wall which bounded the site to the north and within which excavation had to take place, part of the west wall (14) of the north projection of the east wing was exposed, but not the east wall of that projection. The west wall had a brick threshold added to the exterior face. On the west side of the wall a layer of sandy loam with brick, mortar and charcoal flecks (240) was covered by a layer of building rubble including many tile fragments (239). On the east (interior) side part of a brick pavement, post-dating the wall, was uncovered (85).

The whole of the interior of the wing was excavated south of a point level with the north wall of the Eastern Extensions and the centre of the Main Block (Trench XXI). The flint footings of the side walls of the wing, forming partitions with the main block (86) and the extensions (41), were uncovered. The east face of the east wall (41), level with the northern section of the Extension, was faced in yellow brick apparently as part of the half-cellar in that section. (The floor of the cellar was later uncovered in the contractors' test holes at a depth of 0.92 m below the surface, and a domed brick culvert was reported as running to the north-east).

At the northern limit of excavation an east-west wall footing (33) of red and yellow bricks, very narrow, had a curving recess facing south at its west end; at its east end was a step down into the Extension. In the small area exposed north of this wall was a sticky loam containing bricks and a sherd of 18th century speckled glazed red earthenware.

1.90 m to the south was another east-west wall footing. The centre of this footing (66) was a mass of flint masonry 0.80 m north-south \times 2.50 m east-west; it was joined to the east wall of the wing by a narrower section (0.40 m north-south \times 1.00 m east-west) of the same build (215), and to the west an offset of 0.23 m to the south, composed of bricks that appeared to be later insertions, joined to a brick and flint wall footing running to the west wall of the wing (67).

The area of the centre of the wing between the two partitions to north and south had a layer of hard mortar lumps (221) above natural, below three layers of building debris and black soil, all containing late 19th century pottery and metalwork, though the top layer also produced very burnt Late Medieval/Transitional ware.

South of the southern partition, the offset continues south for 1.90 m as a wall footing of yellow and red bricks (68), bounding the east side of a yellow brick pavement that extends to the west wall (70). The pavement overlies plaster on the internal face of the latter wall, which has the scar of a partition. It rests on a layer of sand (209), and was covered by a layer of building rubble and soil containing a Westerwald sherd, some 18th century porcelain sherds, and much late 19th century material. The east side of the north-south wall (68) was followed by a gully filled with black soil (217). At its south end another brick wall footing (223) ran east to the east wall of the wing; the area thus enclosed contained patches of black soil and traces of a mortar floor (226). The position of the junction of the north-south wall footing (68) and gully (217) and the footing (223) running east had been removed by a pit filled with brown soil (227).

At the south end of the east wall of the wing (41) a threshold, with marks of two planks that had been set in wet mortar, led down into the unexcavated southern section of the Eastern Extensions.

The south-western angle of the wing's interior was mostly occupied by a large pit-like feature (260), filled with bricks and mortar above a layer of brown clay (261). North of this along the southern edge of the brick pavement were two postholes (255, 257) containing rammed building materials — one with a sherd of Nottingham stoneware — separated by a layer of clay. In the angle of the pavement and the west wall, in a pit cut into natural below the level of the pavement, was a large 18th or 19th century vessel or glazed red earthenware, filled with sand, three sherds of Late Medieval/Transitional ware, and large quantities of late 19th century flower pot sherds and glass fragments (253). A feature (251) of similar form adjacent to the south contained flint and brick fragments. South of the large pit, in the extreme south-west corner of the wing, a posthole contained bricks, mortar flecks and charcoal (249). There was no trace of a footing trench for the south wall of the wing.

The other standing buildings

The Walled Garden and Cottage

The hall ruins stand at the south-east corner of a large rectangular walled garden (Fig.3, 'B'); a central east-west dividing wall forms an inner rectangle to the west of the ruins. The walling is of flint but in the west and the central dividing walls there are horizontal courses, and occasional vertical bonding strips, of re-used ashlar fragments. These include many colonette sections and Romanesque mouldings, encompassing a date range of the 12th to 13th centuries. Occasional fragments also occur in the other walls. In the centre of the west side is a blocked doorway with chamfered brick jambs; in the return of the dividing wall of the north west wing is a pair of stone-framed openings, minus their heads. The inner face of the east wall north of the hall ruins contains a number of brick-arched bee boles.

The north-west angle of the walled garden was destroyed for a new house in 1961. An older cottage stands just outside the former garden area to the north-west, and is shown on the Walpole map (Fig.3, 'C'). It is of two storeys; its north wall now facing on to the public road is composed of flint and random brick. It has a central projecting turret with brick quoins and little cusped lights that appear to be 19th century insertions, and a brick shaped gable. The west wall has basal courses of red and black brick forming diaperwork, but the upper walling and a shaped gable are in more recent brickwork. The east wall is similar except that the basal courses are of flint and there is an external stack of recent date. The south wall, containing the main windows, is all 19th century work.

The New Hall (Fig.3, 'D' and Plate X)

Known in more recent years as the Farmhouse, this building stands to the east of the ruins and is shown on the Walpole map. It is now of three storeys; a photograph in the possession of the architects for the restoration shows the building before the addition of the present top storey, having instead a steeply pitched roof with three dormers. The walling of the lower two storeys is composed of brickwork of the 16th or early 17th century in a rough English bond. The windows are all 18th or 19th century replacements; that on the centre bay of the ground floor has a moulded straight hood.

The blank area of brickwork which separates the northern bay from the remainder contains a blocked doorway, apparently with an arched head. Its blocking, which consists of brickwork similar to the surrounding walling, contains a small window now itself blocked. There are blocked older windows visible in the walling south of the southernmost bay.

The south and east walls have had later additions built against them, before 1880 as they appear on the first edition of the twenty-five inch Ordnance Survey map and also on the photograph mentioned above. Both south and north gable walls show the outline of the steep gables that existed before the late 19th century heightening. The north gable has a blocked opening in its former apex. The east wall is pierced by many 18th and 19th century openings, and also contains one window on the first floor in an original brick surround, but with later inserted frame. There are possible traces of a blocked doorway opposite to that in the west wall and what may have been ventilation slits.

The ground floor layout (before conversion) consisted of two main rooms with a corridor along the east side, and an internal south gable stack; a lobby opposite the door, containing the staircase; and separated from the lobby by a stack, a northernmost room with a raised floor — hence the difference in the level of the windows as noted above. This latter stack is in line with the blocked doorway in the facade (and that of which possible traces remain in the east wall). When stripped down, the wall containing the stack was found to incorporate remains of two pointed brick arches, cut by the raised floor level of the north room. The eastern arch seems to have been blocked at an earlier date than the western; its blocking contained a niche with triangular head. Part of this arch appeared to have been removed when the stack was inserted. A trench excavated in the room south of the lobby by the builders revealed 1 metre of made up ground above an earlier floor or ground level, which would correspond with the projected height of the arches.

The space to the west of the stack, into which the blocked doorway would open, has curved sides as if it once contained a winding staircase. The northern room occupies the full height of the two storeys to the south and has a ceiling beam with chamferstops. In the west wall internal face of this room are what look like the sills of two small windows cut by the added top storey; but no windows in this position appear on the 19th century photograph.

A large stack level with the southernmost bay is shown on the photograph, which has since been removed. Traces of it were visible during the conversion works.

The Walpole map shows a projection from the west wall of the New Hall at its north end, level with the present northernmost bay. No trace of this, or any marks of its attachment, are now visible.

The Brewhouse and St. Ives Cottage

The Walpole Map shows a building a short distance to the north of what later became the New Hall; short walls are shown projecting towards each other from the east wall of this building and of another building further north, with a gap like a gateway between them. By 1880 the west side of the space between the two buildings had been infilled by what is now known as the Brewhouse (Fig.3, 'E').

The Brewhouse only overlaps the gable wall of the New Hall to the south, and that of the cottage to the north, by less than a metre; it projects westwards into the space between these buildings and the Hall ruins. Its south gable wall has clearly been added against the pre-existing New Hall and has no connection with the above-mentioned west projection of the latter shown on the Walpole map. This south wall is of red brick on a flint plinth with a platband at eaves level, and two blocked attic windows above. The west wall of red brick above a plinth of alternate bricks and flints, contains a central doorway with a full height window to each side. The east wall is constructed of various builds of bricks and flints. There are two full-height windows and to the south of these two adjacent blocked doorways of different periods.

The interior is of two storeys at the south end only. It has an internal south gable stack which overlaps one of the blocked attic windows. The main part of the building is open to the eaves, where there were the remains of a ceiling with huge coves (since restored in its entirety). The north wall contains three large fireplaces, the central of these having a segmental arch and the outer ones rounded arches; one of the latter contains a copper. The roof consists of principal rafters rising from tiebeams, with two tiers of butt purlins, collars and straight windbracing. The building was still being used as a brewhouse within living memory² though by 1970 it had for some reason become known as the Chapel.³

St. Ives Cottage (as it was known earlier this century) (Fig.3, 'F') is joined to the Brewhouse by a short length of flint walling — not that shown on the Walpole map as it continues the line of the west, not the east wall. There is a straight join between the wall and the cottage, and there are traces in the wall of what maybe a blocked window, suggesting another building may have occupied the site of the Brewhouse before its construction. The south gable wall of the cottage is very elaborate (Plate XI).

The east wall is continued northwards by a small outshut which contained a blocked seven-light diamond-mullioned wooden window.

The west wall appears to be largely a 19th century remodelling. The present north gable is 19th century and the west side of the outshut is 20th century. It would appear that the east wall of the outshut is part of the original building, which was cut down at this end in the 19th century. The Walpole map shows the building divided into two sections.

The interior has a fireplace on two levels against the south wall, the upper one quite a good example of 17th century brickwork. There are remains of a wood and brick winding stair beside it.

The Stable (Fig.3, 'G')

To the north-west of the cottage, and north-east of the Hall ruins, is a building whose north gable wall is of elaborate black and red brick 'solid' patterning, with a platband. The other

walls have bases of the same type of brickwork, and some flint. The building has been heightened in red brick in the 19th century, given cast-iron windows and fitted out as a stable. It is shown on the Walpole map at the end of a long building, yard, or enclosure.

The Barns

Two buildings are shown on the Walpole map as set end to end, aligned east-west, parallel with the south wall of the Hall. The western of these must be the Great Barn (Fig.3, 'H') constructed of brick and flint. The roof structure consists of six queenpost trusses on arched braces, with windbracing, except for the extreme west end where it is similar to that of the Brewhouse. The eastern building shown on the map is in the same position and alignment as a row of flint farm buildings now converted to housing (Fig.3, 'J'); but these appear to be totally 19th century in fabric. Presumably the earlier building was demolished or adapted. To the south-east of these is shown a building corresponding to the existing second barn (Fig.3, 'K'). This is built of brick, the gables are tumbled and the roof has tiebeams on straight braces, collars and two tiers of butt-purlins, into which the common rafters are pegged.

Tower building (site 16419)

A considerable distance north of the main complex is a ruined building on arched brick foundations, with a polygonal staircase tower surviving at one corner. This is shown on the Walpole map and has been previously published by the writer (Rose 1981).

Discussion

Interpretation of the site must largely be based upon the standing structure, including those portions revealed by excavation; very little can be learned from the excavated layers and virtually nothing from finds. No illustration (other than the photograph above mentioned) or early description of the hall has been traced and detailed documentary research by Mr. A.J. Davison has not revealed any reference to the building in the LeGros or Walpole papers. Passing reference is made in several 19th century guide books to the 'ruins of the 16th century seat of the LeGros family' or similar phrases, based on Blomefield's statement that John and Miles LeGros were the first 'to possess the whole town' in the reign of Henry VIII and that 'their property had an agreeable old seat called Crostwick Hall' (Crostwick here being an alternative spelling for Crostwright) (Blomefield 1819, XI, 9-10). Armstrong (1781) states that 'Crostwick (= Crostwright) hall was the residence of the late Lord Walpole of Houghton but is now out of repair, being occupied by a tenant'. This presumably dates the 18th century conversion of the service building to the New Hall.

Pevsner (1962) described the ruins as those of a 16th century house with a pre-Reformation Perpendicular entrance. The 1987 revision of the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest for the parish, compiled by Dr W. Wilson, dates the ruins to the mid 16th century with a later east wing and alterations; the garden walls are assigned to the 16th-17th century, St. Ives cottage to the early 17th century, the Great Barn to circa 1700, the Brewhouse to the early 18th century, and the lesser barn to the mid 18th. (The New Hall is dismissed as being 'not of listable quality'). Mr. S. Heywood, conservation officer for Norfolk County Council who visited the site with the writer, however, believes that no part of the ruined hall need be earlier than the late 17th century. Mr. N.D. Wright, a postgraduate student at the Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, engaged in a study of Norfolk gentry houses, prefers a 16th century date.

The east wing of the building is markedly different from the remainder; its south wall is of unknapped pebbles with quoins of large crude bricks, only the south projection's west wall hav-

ing knapped flintwork. It had no depth of foundations (except in the short stretch described below the west wall) contrasting with the metre-depth foundations of the remainder. The west window in the wing's south projection has been partly covered by the south wall of the main block, a squint being made to admit light, and the brick quoins at the junction of the main block and the wing occur only above this window. The latter features show convincingly that the east wing predates the main block, rather than post-dating it as Wilson suggested. Some blocks of re-used limestone occur in the walls of the wing.

The three niches in the inner face of the south wall are unusual, but suggestive of a service function; the grouping of two together and one separate suggest the traditional 'buttery' and 'pantry'. The subterranean doorway in the west wall, without any trace of disturbance of the natural ground within the wing, seems to represent an intention to make a cellar beneath the service rooms, a common feature, that in fact was never carried out. The fragments of windows on the upper level provide evidence of an upper floor. The mass of flint masonry (Context 66) in the southern of the two internal partitions presumably represents the base of a stack and may belong to an early phase of the building; but all other features discovered by excavation are late alterations.

The east wing may not however predate the rest of the building by any great length of time; indeed, the evidence of the uncompleted cellar suggests a change of plan during or soon after construction. It is possible that a simple three-cell building aligned north-south was originally envisaged. What remains of the structure of the wing is not closely datable but there is nothing to suggest a medieval date. Indeed the few pre-16th century finds from the site as a whole come from disturbed topsoil and may be of recent importation. A few pieces of re-used limestone that occur in the wing are in positions where they may have been inserted in later repairs.

The plan of the building as a whole is not uncommonly found in the 16th century (except for the variation in length between east and west wings as shown on the Walpole map) and indeed has antecedents of much earlier date. The building was of two storeys and attics in the west wing and the porch, at least two storeys in the east wing, and the main block had an upper storey at least in part — as discussed below, it was probably of two storeys and attics throughout. Opposite the porch entrance, the brick floor (93) uncovered on the exterior of the north wall probably represents a small porch or extension (as shown on the Walpole map). To the east of the porch was a large cellar with niches typical of the 16th/17th century, entered by a staircase through the north wall; by the top of these stairs was a doorway into the east wing. The plan is similar to a screens-passage layout with cellar beneath the service rooms, but here the services already existed in the east wing. The change of plan seems to have caused the removal of the cellar from its planned positions below the service rooms to beneath the room of unknown function in the main block; the fireplace (90) in the north wall of this room is somewhat small for a kitchen. The garderobe shaft (281) is set almost immediately behind this fireplace; the walling did not survive to a great enough height to judge whether this served the upper or the ground floor, or both.

The massive flint projection (5) from the centre of the north wall must surely be the base of a rear-wall stack for the hall, as traces of burning and coal also indicate. The feature in the angle of the main block and west wing, which also is shown on the Walpole map, was entered from the main block by an archway with ashlar colonettes but a brick arch, and also had access to the wing. The L-shaped brick feature (96) is probably an external entrance. The feature is probably a staircase projection, with some sort of room below and behind the stairs. Such projections in this position have an early origin (compare Ightham Mote, Kent; Elsing Hall,

Norfolk). The stairs probably occupied the southern part of the projection where the flint and stone platform (235) is lacking. Despite the fact that the east wall of the projection is out of alignment, the fact that the later blocking of the west wing wall stands on top of the platform indicates that it is an original feature.

The west wing had a fireplace at the junction with the main block, and suggestions of a staircase beside it. The south gable has a central stack, and unusually what appears to be a garderobe shaft in the thickness of the wall beside it, serving both ground and first floors which would presumably have had to have been cleaned out from inside the building. The small projection from the west wall shown on the Walpole map is unexplained — it may have been a porch, perhaps of later date suggesting that this wall was treated as a second facade either originally or later.

Re-used masonry occurs in the south gable of the west wing; the postulated rear stack base; the platform of the staircase extension; the basal quoins of the porch; and in particular the porch entrance and the jambs of the staircase archway. Outside the hall, a much greater quantity of re-used masonry from the 12th century onwards is apparent in the garden walls. The walls themselves are apart from this hardly datable. There is a local tradition that this material came from Bromholm Priory. In support of a late date for the building, Heywood points to the use of material from Bromholm as late as the 19th century⁴ and suggests that the porch and staircase arches are in fact largely if not entirely 17th century imitations of Gothic work. Against this must be set Pevsner's dating of the porch entrance to a pre-Reformation date, suggesting re-use of an entire archway. It is noteworthy that the staircase arch has only the jambs of ashlar, the actual arch being of rendered brick.

It is clear that the south wall of the main block has been refaced, as there is no external trace of the older window cut by the tall 'hall' windows. The present flint facing of this wall is the same as that on the porch and on the east wall of the south projection of the west wing. It differs as stated above from the walling east of the porch, and from the south wall of the west wing; whereas the west wall of that wing seems from what remains to have been of brick chequerwork. It would not be unusual for the main facade of the hall to have been knapped flint and the west wall to have been of brick; the flintwork east of the porch must be original as it surrounds windows of the 16th/17th century type without disturbance. If the porch has been refaced, that might explain the apparent blocked openings in the side walls that have no external traces.

The south gable wall of the west wing, though differing from the south wall of the main block, may also have been replaced if what appear to be blocked openings each side of the stack on the ground and first floor interiors did indeed originally open to the exterior, as do those at attic level. Heywood however suggests that the apparent blocking visible from the interior is simply thickening of the walls of unlit closet rooms, to prevent damp penetration.

The two tall 'hall' windows appear out of place amongst the other features. It has already been noted that the brickwork of their jambs is different to that in the surrounds of the other windows. The indications of an upper floor, that occur west of the porch, are level with the existing top of the ruined wall at the windows, so that it is difficult to determine whether the windows extended to a greater height than this level. There is no trace of a top to either embrasure, but there has been more recent patching here. Heywood suggests that in fact former ground and first floor windows have been combined in a late medievalisation, to form tall windows. The pier of walling between them contains reset medieval or 16th century floor tiles (only their edges are visible) and is mostly of brickwork; it could easily be a rebuild.

This suggestion of a late 'medievalisation' may throw some light on a most unusual feature, the open hearth (46) set against the screens passage. Such a feature is again totally out of place in a building of this type; but it certainly does not belong to an earlier structure, for it is set into the top of two layers which post-date the foundation trenches of the present walls. The brickwork of which it is formed is post-medieval. But if, as was suggested by the excavators, this is a post-ruination feature, showing use of the ruins as a smithy or similar function in the 19th century, its central position where one would expect the hearth in a medieval open hall is a strange coincidence. The edging bricks are more carefully rounded and positioned than one might expect in an industrial context.

The rounded archway of plastered brick from the main block into the west wing overlies plaster on the south wall, and is thus a secondary feature. Heywood suggests that it is 19th century but it is known that the building was in ruins before 1838, and the blocking wall revealed in the excavation shows that the arch remained in use for a length of time. Its style is that of the late 17th century.

Conclusions (Fig.2)

There is therefore good evidence that the construction of the building as a whole followed soon after phase 1 (the east wing) and very probably resulted from a change of plan during construction. The main block, west wing and porch were constructed to form with the east wing an irregular H-shaped house of two storeys and attics (Phase 2). A staircase projection was situated in the angle of main block and west wing; the 'hall' or main ground floor room had a rear-wall stack and was separated by a cross passage from a subsidiary room with a similar stack, set above a cellar entered from the north exterior next to a garderobe shaft and a subsidiary porch. The south end of the east wing retained its service function, with an internal stack to the north.

The details of this plan, together with the brickwork of the original features, indicates to the writer a 16th century date — a period which also fits the remaining wooden door within the porch. It is indeed true that re-use of stonework continued to a late date in this area, but the later periods of re-use tend to be small amounts used in repairs or patching. The amount here in the garden walls suggests an operation of such magnitude as one would have expected to have taken place at the Dissolution. The writer favours Pevsner's dating of the porch entrance; if the staircase arch is a 17th century copy, it is surprising that the jambs alone should have been carved from limestone. A similar re-use of a medieval arch as a porch entrance can be seen at Heydon Hall, Saxlingham near Holt (Rose 1987).

The archway from main block to west wing is likely to be part of a late 17th century remodelling in the more fashionable Renaissance style. This may have been confined to the west wing and included the now-vanished projection to the west (Phase 3).

The suggested 'medievalisation' seems to be the only reasonable explanation for the hall windows which cut an earlier window, apparently contemporary with the building, and may also explain the hearth. It would appear that the upper floor was removed west of the cross passage; no evidence remains of what took place above this level. The refacing of the southern walls must have been contemporary, to hide the resulting scars and traces of older openings. Though such alterations took place elsewhere, they are usually associated with the mid 19th century, after the desertion of Crostwight. However the taste for 'medievalising' buildings began in the late 18th century; the most striking example is perhaps Robert Carr's work at Raby Castle in 1787, when a Gothic entrance hall-cum-porte-cochere was made by raising an upper floor level. As the altered facade of the New Hall is in the style of the 18th century, it may even be that these works affected the solidity of the Old Hall and made abandonment necessary (Phase 5).

The eastern extensions are clearly late, three-storeyed additions to the main fabric. The visible constructional features show clearly that the southern section was built subsequently to the northern (Phase 4), and it may be lacking from the Walpole map though this is not clear. What is clear is that the external east wall face has either been remade subsequent to the addition of the southern section, or else the latter was very carefully faced to blend with it. The southern section's interior is all of red brickwork, by contrast with the flintwork of the northern section. The fossil quoins in the south wall may indicate that a small outshut from the east wing of earlier date was incorporated in the southern section. The style of both sections is that of the late 17th or early 18th century. The brick floors and wall footings within the east wing may date from the addition of the extensions, though it is possible that they post-date them; they are certainly not earlier. Partial blocking of a window in the northern section suggests a later staircase alteration.

The post-1740 history of the building is obscure (Phase 6). The lack of finds below the topsoil is not unexpected from a building of high status that has been kept clean. The rear garderobe shaft was infilled with material that included large quantities of 16th or 17th century pegtiles, and window comes of 17th century or later date. It appeared to have been filled in a deliberate operation; the tiles suggest the hall retained its original roof to the end, but the comes must be from subsequent alterations — perhaps another factor indicating a medievalisation that failed. Yet it appears that the cellar was unroofed and left open until the mid 20th century.

Some repairs to the ruins after collapse or dismantling are evidenced by the rebuilding of the existing top of the south wall of the main block in flintwork that crosses the brick window infill as well as the flint walling. The windows were presumably blocked at ruination — the brickwork is of 18th century to early 19th century type — and the repairs later. The infilling of the east wall of the west wing is presumably, from its construction, of this phase. In 1838 the ruins are recorded as 'yards' but subsequently seem to have become a dumping ground for rubbish from the New Hall and farm. By 1880 trees were growing inside the walls. The large earthenware vessel filled with potsherds (253) found in the east wing may have been intended to serve as some sort of soakaway in a garden feature — use of a ruined hall as a walled garden is again paralleled at Saxlingham (Rose 1987). The edge of the adjacent brick floor (70) and the vanished partition overlapped the edge of the pot and the evidence did not indicate whether the pot had been placed under the edge of the pavement from the side, or whether the pavement post-dated the deposit. As the pot contained late 19th century sherds, if the latter is the case then the pavement also may belong to some sort of garden building.

The New Hall, disregarding the top storey added around 1870, is externally a building originally of two storeys and attics and composed of brickwork of 16th/17th century type. The present windows are in the style of the 18th century. Towards the north end is an apparent cross passage from which two pointed brick arches open, later converted to a lobby entrance by the insertion of a stack. No work is visible which can with confidence be assigned a pre-16th century date (despite the early appearance of the arches) but the building has been much altered, and was not totally stripped down during renovation work. Mr. J. Denny, conservation officer for the North Norfolk District Council, suggests that the building may have originally had two-storeyed living accommodation north of the cross passage, where there are apparent windows cut by the present ceiling of the ground floor room, and an agricultural function to the south, citing the ventilation slits. Several of these dual-purpose buildings are known in the county but none to the writer's knowledge have a cross passage. The blocked windows in the facade and the one remaining pre-18th century window opening in the rear wall could belong to either the first phase of the building, or to subsequent alterations when the lobby-entrance was formed; one presumes this took place in the 17th century. But if the southern section of the building had

been used as a barn or stable one would have expected traces of larger openings to have been visible. The original function of this building is therefore still a matter for conjecture, but it does appear to be some sort of contemporary outbuilding of the old hall, and became the New Hall in the late 18th century.⁵

The cottage to the north-west of the walled garden seems to have been 16th or early 17th century in date but was mostly rebuilt in the 19th century. The tower building isolated to the north has 16th century parallels (Rose 1981). St. Ives Cottage is in the 17th century style and was once part of a larger building; unglazed windows such as that which remained until recent years occur well into the 17th century in service buildings in Norfolk. The Great Barn is also of 17th century type, but apparently extended or partly rebuilt in the 18th. The Stable is of c.1700, altered in the 19th century. The Brewhouse is shown by the Walpole map to be an insertion of after 1740, but from its construction it is unlikely to have been built many years later. The smaller barn is of 18th century date.

The group of outbuildings as a whole is a most valuable survival of a group of service buildings dating from the late 16th to the early 18th centuries.

The importance of the information gained from the excavation lies therefore in the structure of the building. The lack of artefacts was in one sense a disappointment, but a reminder that a building constructed and abandoned at definite dates and continuously inhabited is unlikely to yield large amounts of occupation debris. No evidence of pre-16th century occupation of the site was found. The hall was shown to be an example of a building type lying between the medieval hall and the Elizabethan mansion, a form not common in the county; and in addition has later alterations of great interest. It is therefore of great value that it was possible to make a detailed record before alterations were commenced.

July 1989

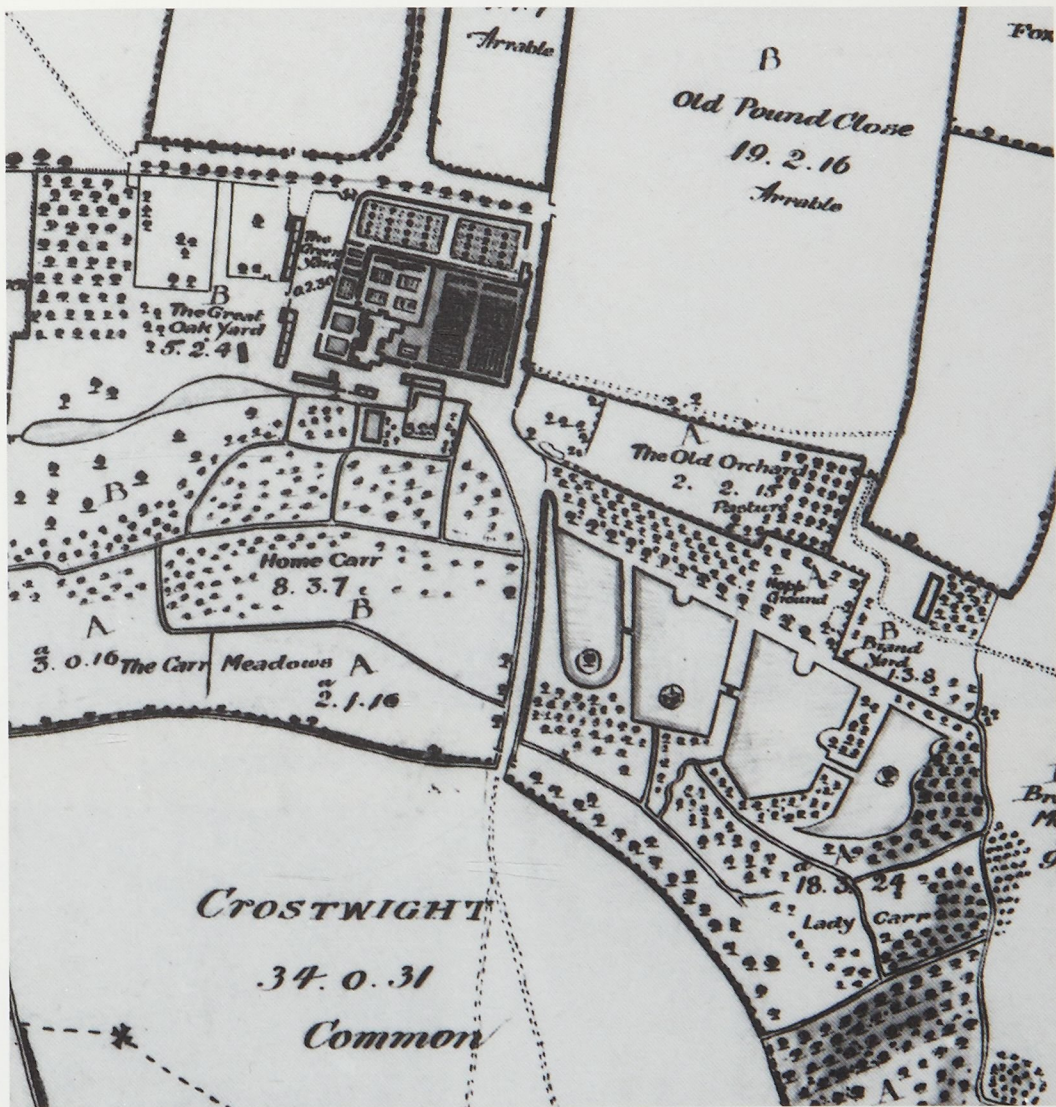


Plate I

The Walpole map of Crostwight Hall, circa 1740.

(Photo by Norfolk Record Office by permission of Mr. T.R. Cubitt)

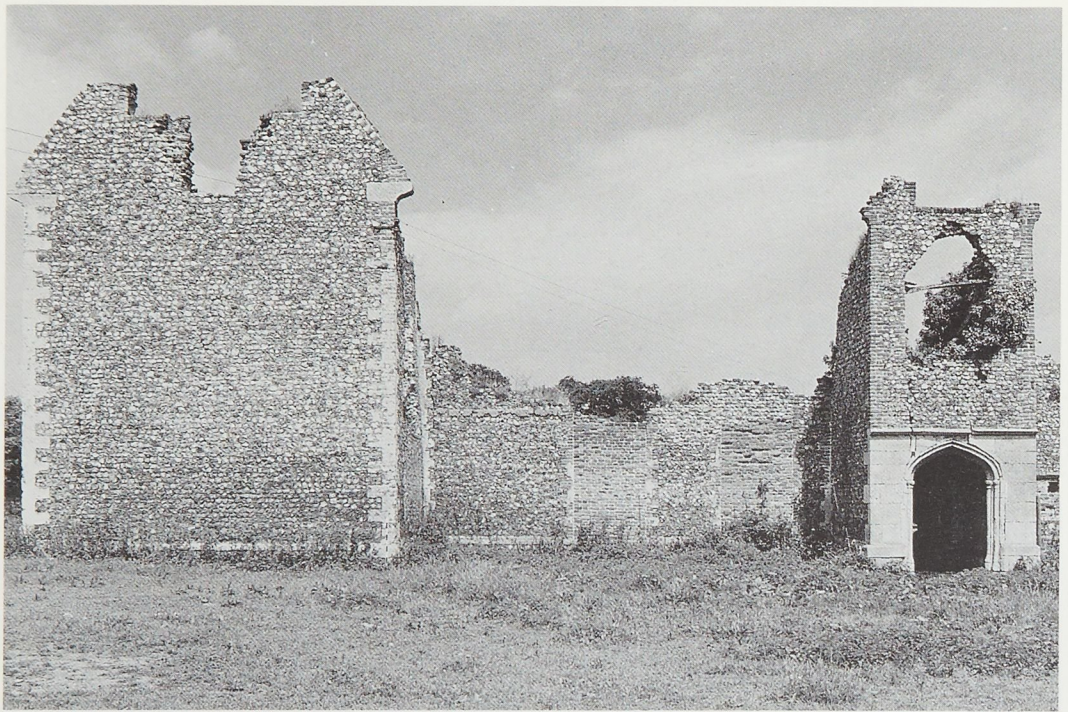


Plate II

The south face of the west wing, hall, and porch tower. (Photo by Peter Fox)

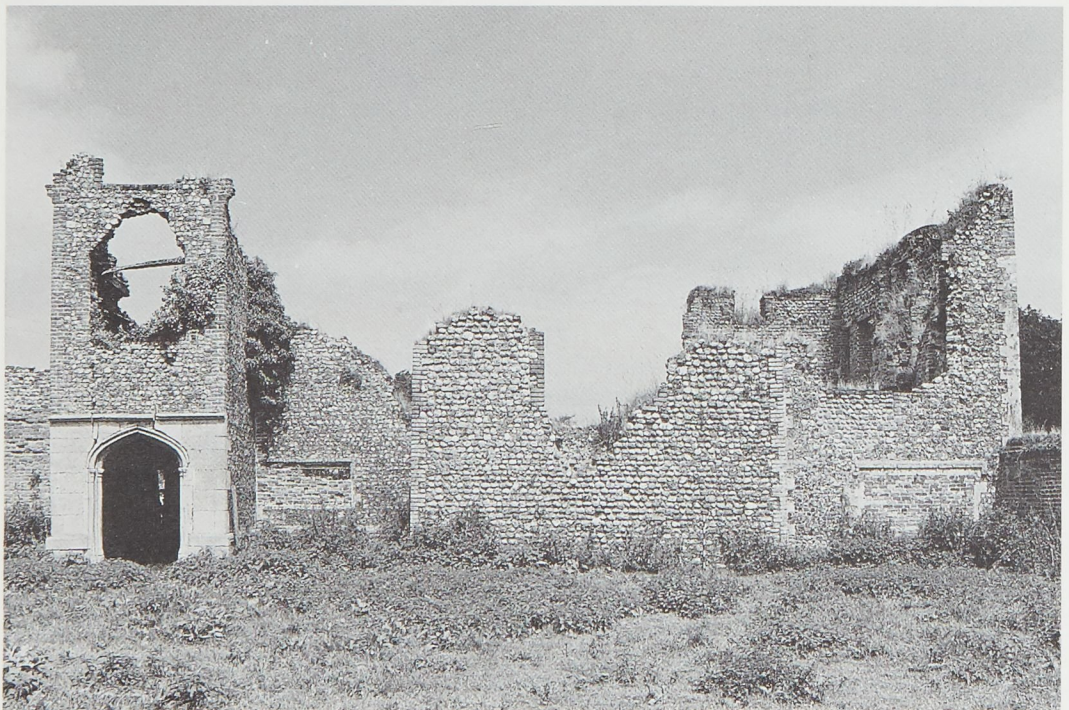


Plate III

The south face of the east wing, eastern extension and main block east of the porch. (Photo by Peter Fox)

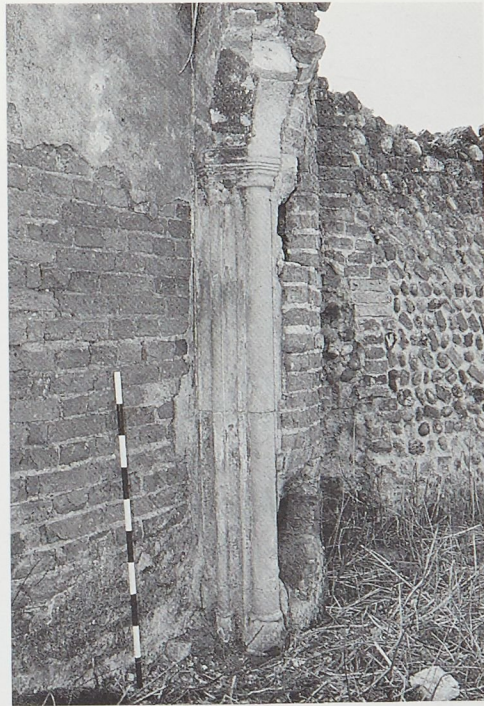


Plate IV

The surviving section of the rear archway of the hall. (Photo by Peter Fox)



Plate V

The inner face of the south wall of the east wing. (Photo by Peter Fox)



Plate VI

The inner face of the south wall of the east wing. (Photo by Peter Fox)

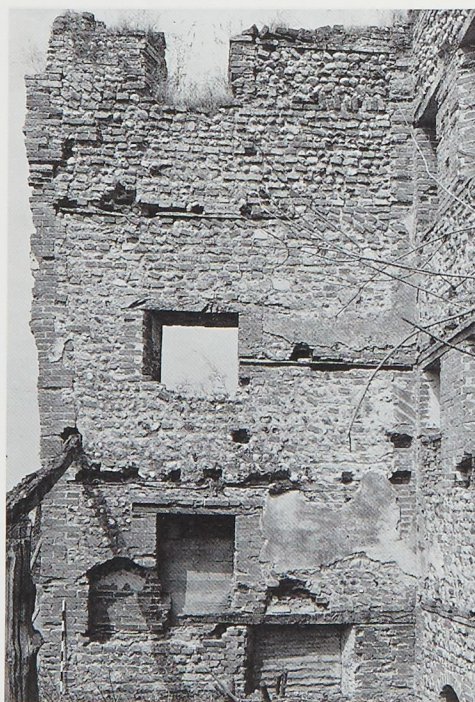


Plate VII

The inner face of the north wall of the eastern extension. (Photo by Peter Fox)

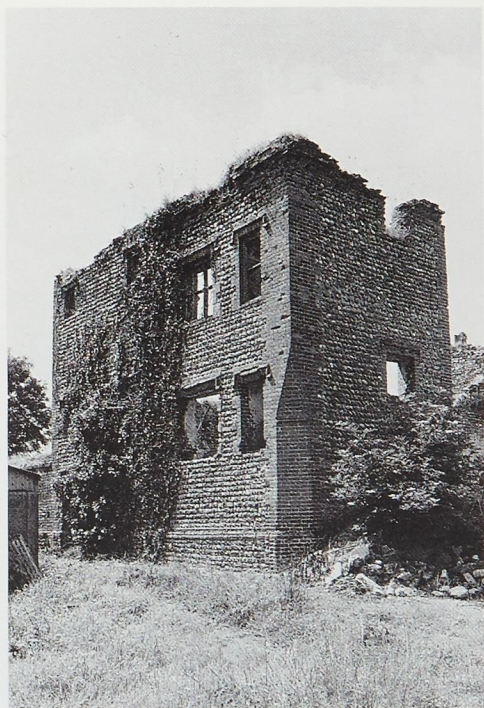


Plate VIII

The eastern extensions from the north east. (*Photo by Peter Fox*)



Plate IX

The inner face of the east wall of the eastern extensions. (*Photo by Peter Fox*)



Plate X
The New Hall. (Photo by E. Rose)



Plate XI
St. Ives Cottage. (Photo by E. Rose)



Plate XII

The cellar as excavated, looking north. (Photo by D. Wicks)

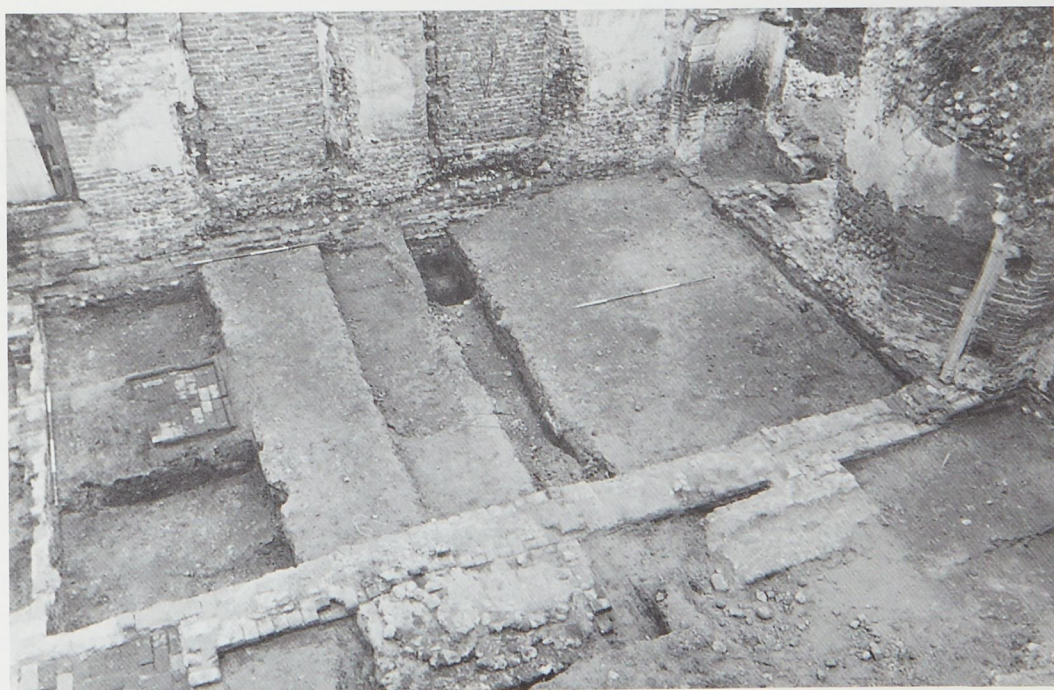


Plate XIII

The interior of the main block after excavation showing the projections from the north wall, and the hearth. (Photo by D. Wicks)



Plate XIV
The hearth. (Photo by D. Wicks)



Plate XV
The brick shaft. (Photo by D. Wicks)

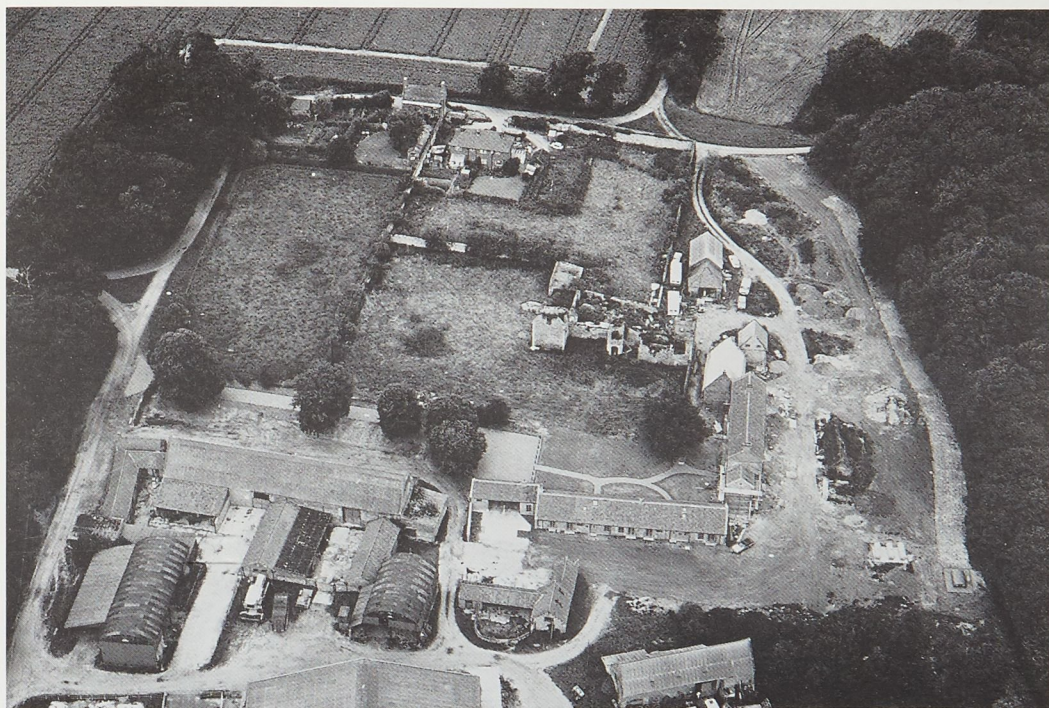


Plate XVI

Aerial view of the site under excavation. (Photo by D. Edwards, NAU reference TG3429/A)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would especially like to thank Mr John Williams, the architect for the rebuilding, and the staff of Mace Brothers Ltd; Mr T.R. Cubitt and the staff of the estate office; and Mr D Harvey. He is also grateful for the help of Stephen Heywood, Andrew Rogerson, Alan Davison, Nigel Wright, Bill Milligan and Mr D. King; and by no means least, the members of the MSC excavation team.

1. A copy is now in the Norfolk Record Office ref. MF/RO 389/17. I am grateful to the Norfolk Record Office for dating the map, and to Mr. Cubitt for permission to publish it.
2. Information from Mr. D. Harvey, Crostwight Common.
3. Information from Mr. Alstone, former tenant.
4. Samuel Woodward recorded in 1834 that Colonel Wodehouse was using the priory as a 'quarry for agricultural buildings and edifices' (Woodward Correspondence for 1834, folio 59 verso, in Norwich Castle Museum).
5. Chaucer House, Bawdeswell, is a 16th-century timber framed and jettied house which has two pointed arches of brick, apparently original and similar to those at Crostwight, leading into the main building from a former carriage arch. This is the only local parallel to the arches known to the writer, but the remainder of the building has no similarities to Crostwight.

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