

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

Local Authority No.100019340

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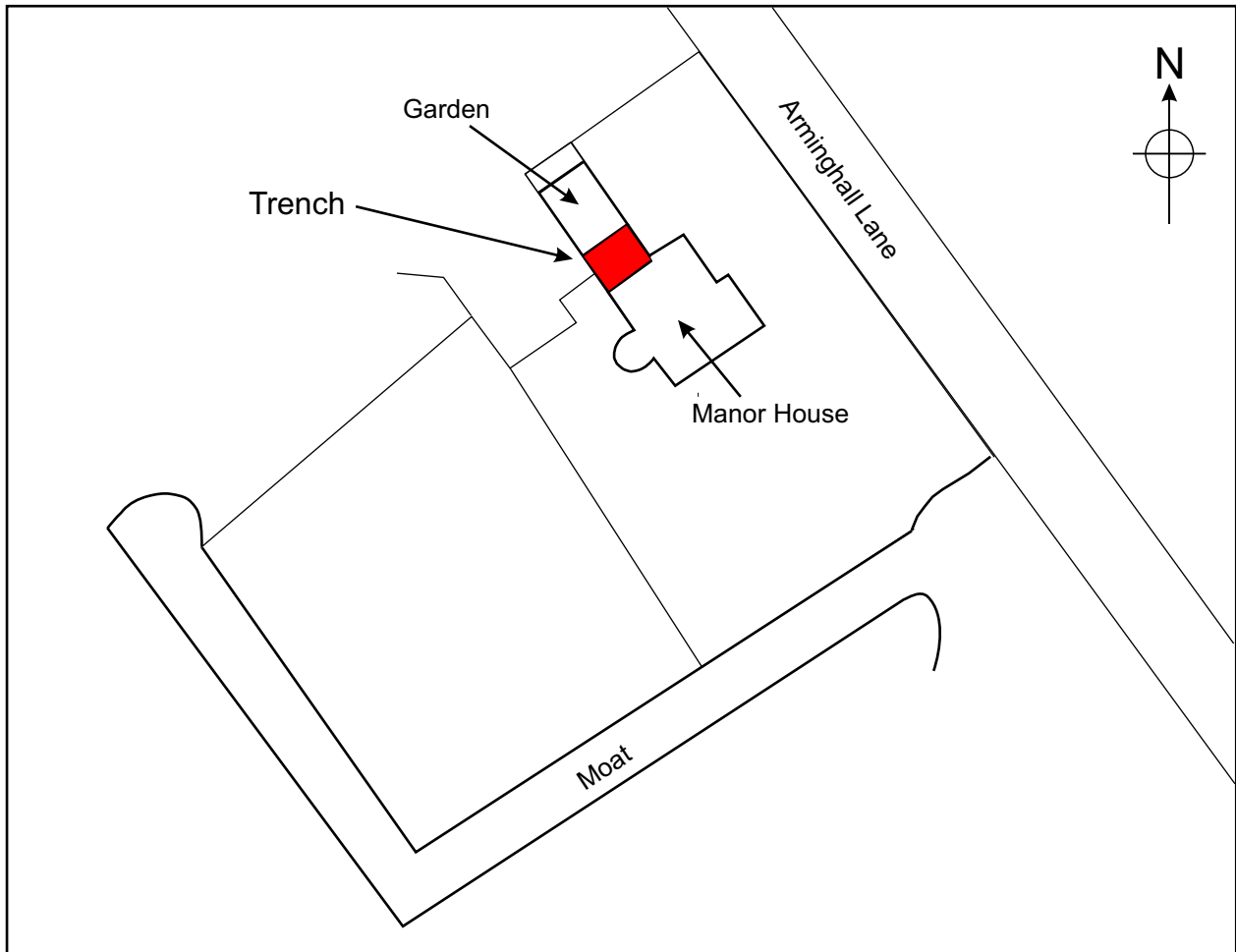
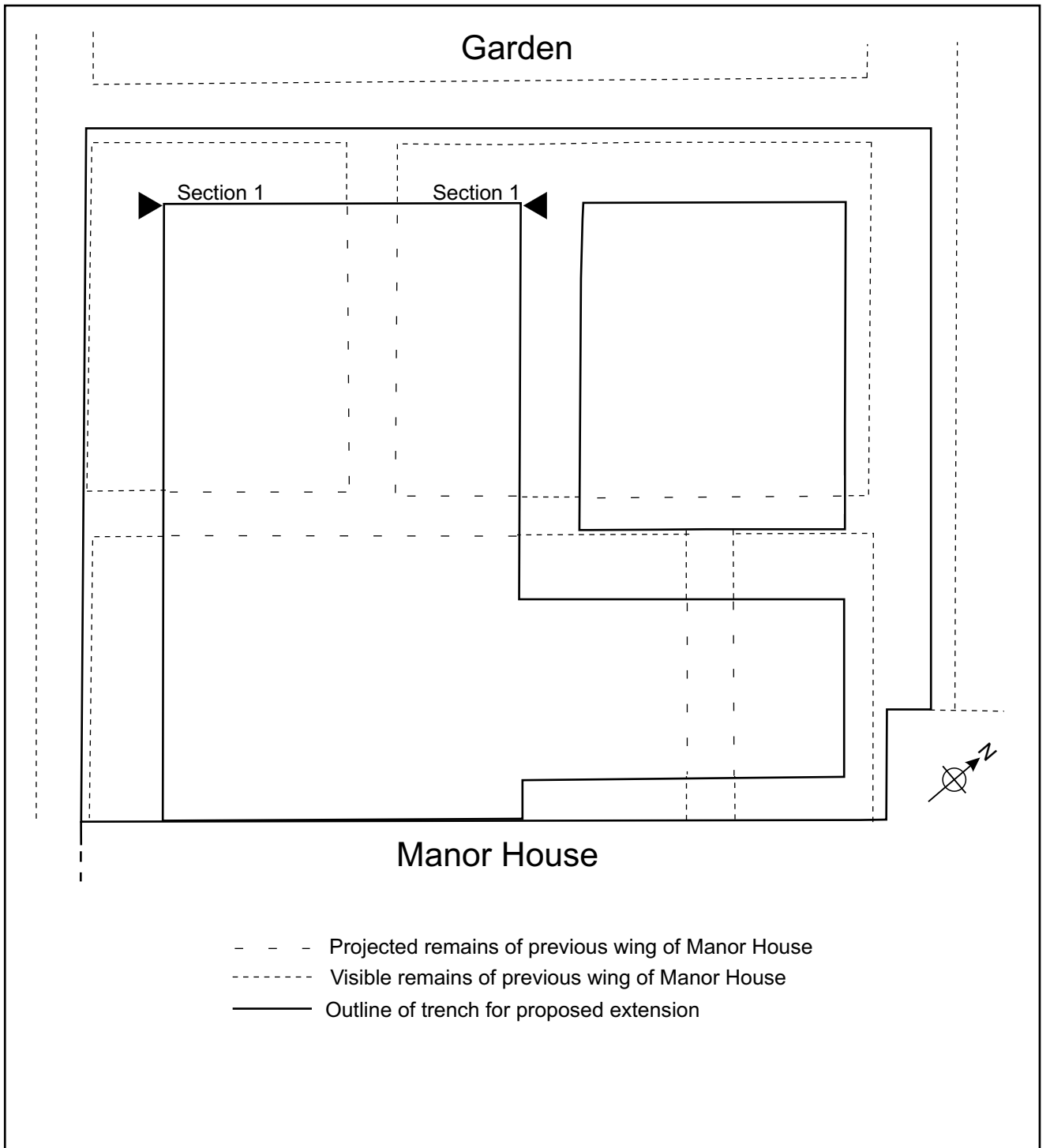


Figure 2. Location of trench. Scale 1:1000



0 5m

Figure 3. Plan of the new footing trenches in relation to the remains of a demolished wing of the Manor House

Scale : 1:50

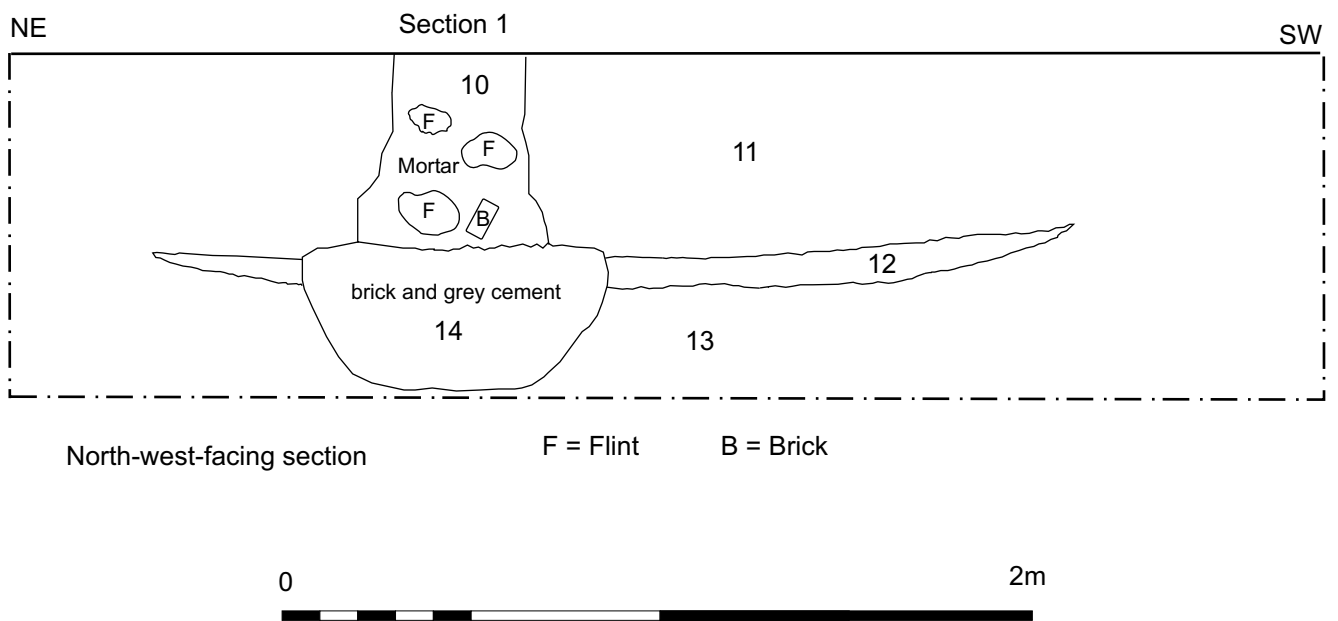


Figure 4. Flint and mortar wall with brick and concrete foundations. Scale 1:20



Plate 1. North-west-facing section.

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 1043

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Manor House,
Bixley, Norfolk**

9763 BXY

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Location: Manor House, Bixley, Norfolk
District: South Norfolk
Grid Ref: TG2481 0481
SAM No.: 30545
HER No.: 9763 BXY
Date of fieldwork: 12th to 14th January 2005

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with a proposed extension to the north-west side of the 19th-century Manor House, Bixley.

Remains of flint and mortar walls were recorded which have been interpreted as a demolished wing of the present Manor House. The foundations and a thin layer of crushed chalk were also observed which could be associated with the original medieval manor house.

No artefacts were recovered from the excavated trenches or its spoil.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

The Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) undertook a watching brief on a site immediately adjacent to the north-west of the 19th-century Manor House, Bixley. The proposed extension is to be erected on the same footprint as a previous wing of the Manor House which was demolished c. 30 years ago. The house was built in 1896 close to the original foundations of a moated medieval manor house that burnt down. The site covered an area measuring 7m by 6m (42 sq. m).

This report was commissioned and funded by the Trustees of the Arminghall Settlement No.2.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref: NLA/AH/25.11.04).

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

(Fig. 2)

The site is located in the parish of Bixley which lies in a rich historic landscape. The Neolithic henge monument at Arminghall is located 750m to the north-west (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 230-233), with Bronze Age burial mounds only c. 300m to the north-west (Ashwin and Bates 2000, 9-11, fig 4), the Roman town of *Venta Icenorum* at Caistor St. Edmund 2km to the south-west (Davies 2001) and the deserted medieval village at Arminghall 600m to the south-east (Underdown 2001).

Manor House (Norfolk Heritage and Environment Record 9763) was built in 1896 and stands on the site of a moated medieval manor. Traces of the south-west and south-east arms of the moat survive (Fig. 2). The moat itself is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30545).

3.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during excavations of footings and drainage trenches for the proposed extension to the house.

The Brief required that an archaeologist must be present during all groundworks on site.

Contractors removed a concrete patio in the area of the watching brief, using a tracked mini-digger. Soil was then removed where the new foundations were to be excavated. A combination of a pneumatic hand-held concrete breaker and the mini-digger were used to break up and remove the flint, brick and mortar footings exposed. Nearly all of the new footing followed the route of the old footings.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

4.0 Results

(Figs 3 and 4; Plate 1)

Beneath the concrete patio no areas of topsoil or subsoil survived; they presumably had been removed during previous building works.

Directly beneath the concrete patio a series of flint and mortar walls ([10]) with crushed red brick and concrete foundations ([14]) were revealed. The walls measured an average of 0.34m wide at the top and 0.50m wide at the bottom, while the brick and concrete base measured an average of 0.38m deep by 0.81m wide. Either side of the flint and mortar walls was a light brown silty clay ([11]), 0.52m deep, that constituted an area of made-up ground. Below this (and level with the top of the foundations) was a thin layer of crushed chalk ([12]) measuring 0.07m deep by 2.44m wide, was recorded in the south-western part of the excavated trenches. Below the chalk was a dark silty clay ([13]) measuring 0.38m deep, which extended to a depth of 0.91m (limit of excavation).

No artefacts were observed or recovered during the groundworks.

5.0 Conclusions

The remains of flint and mortar walls have been interpreted as the demolished remains of a previous wing of the Manor House built in the 19th century.

It is possible, however, the foundations (which are of a different character to the surviving wall) and the thin layer of crushed chalk (which may be the remains of an *in situ* floor surface) were possibly related to the original medieval moated manor house.

Acknowledgements

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This report was illustrated and produced by Julie Curl and edited by Alice Lyons.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
10	Masonry	Wall	Post-medieval
11	Deposit	Made-up ground	Post-medieval
12	Deposit	Chalk layer	?Medieval
13	Deposit	Layer	-
14	Masonry	Foundation	?Medieval

