

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No.766

**Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Catton Hall, Catton Hall Park,  
Old Catton, Norfolk**

8131 CTN

Michael J Boyle  
August 2003

© Norfolk Archaeological Unit



Location: Catton Hall Park ,Old Catton, Norfolk  
Grid Ref: TG 230 122  
SMR No.: 8131 CTN  
Date of work: 22nd to 25th October 2002

---

## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Catton Hall, Old Catton during groundworks for an extension to Catton Hall. No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Catton Hall is situated within an historic park off St. Faiths Road in the village of Old Catton immediately to the north of the city of Norwich (Fig. 1). The Hall was built in 1780 for Jeremiah Ives, twice mayor of Norwich. The south-facing front of this three storied building has three bays flanked by full height bay windows. A large, cast-iron, cruciform conservatory was added to the south west of the main façade between 1852 and 1866 (Pevsner and Wilson 1997). The extensive grounds were laid out in 1788-90 by Humphry Repton and are his earliest known commission. His plantations survive to the north-west, west and south-east boundaries round the open parkland. The Hall presently acts as a residence for the owners with part of the building given over to individual apartments.

Norfolk Archaeological Unit was contracted to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for an extension to the western end of the Hall (Fig. 2) The work was commissioned by David Marris, architect, on behalf of his client.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology supplemented by a Method Statement for watching briefs prepared by Norfolk Archaeological Unit.

The watching brief was necessary due to the discovery, in the near vicinity of the site, of a host of artefacts from the Palaeolithic to post-medieval periods, several of which were within the boundaries of Catton Hall Park itself. These include a flint awl of Neolithic or Bronze Age date (HER 33113), and, found whilst fieldwalking on the east side of the park, a flint flake, a Thetford ware rim, a medieval cooking pot rim and bowls sherds and rim, prehistoric flint flakes and a scraper, a scatter of many Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints and numerous sherds of medieval pottery (HER 16758).

These finds, together with others from in and around Old Catton area, raised the possibility of archaeologically significant features and finds being present on the site.

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

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the excavation of foundation and service trenches for an extension to the western extremity of Catton Hall. The Brief required that an archaeologist be on-site during all groundworks.

The contractors initially stripped the topsoil within the bounds of the footprint of the extension prior to excavating numerous foundation and service trenches in preparation for building the extension.

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.

Access to the site was limited to an entrance at the northern end of the site which inevitably resulted in plant tracking over it during groundworks. There was, however, time to inspect the exposed surface of the stripped area prior to this becoming obscured. A small area of the site was programmed for monitoring later in 2003, however this part of this scheme did not take place and therefore monitoring was not required.

## **2.0 Observations**

On arrival at the site the contractors had removed the topsoil, a humic dark brown sandy silt of between 0.15m and 0.25m depth, to reveal the surface of a medium brown fine silty sand sub-soil containing occasional evenly distributed flint pebbles (0.05m average diameter). The topsoil had been placed in a heap at the edge of the trench and was subsequently searched for finds using a metal detector. A quantity of pottery was recovered together with several metal objects.

A careful scanning of the exposed sub-soil resulted only in the discovery of natural features such as the rotted remains of shrubs and trees. Anecdotal evidence revealed that up to the present day the area had been a lawn and shrubbery and that prior to this it was the site of a kitchen garden which had been created by the importation of a large amount of topsoil from an unknown source.

The foundation trenches were dug through the sub-soil and were of slightly varying depth as the terrain sloped very gradually from south to north. Mean depth was approximately 0.60m. The trenches were approximately 0.70m in width.

Observation of the foundation trenches showed the sub-soil to be an average of 0.30m deep, sealing a natural fine yellow brown sand containing lenses of gravel (max. 0.04m diameter). No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed in either the sections or bases of the foundation trenches.

## **3.0 Conclusions**

Although a quantity of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery and several metal finds including a lead cloth seal were recovered from the top soil on the site the seemingly reliable anecdotal evidence concerning its importation from an unknown source would have to render it unreliable as dating evidence for any activity that may have taken place at this site. As no other archaeologically significant material was recovered or features observed no evidence as to land usage prior to it being the kitchen garden to Catton Hall was obtained.

### ***Bibliography***

Pevsner, N. and Wilson, B. 1997 The Buildings of England, Norfolk 1: Norwich and North East, Penguin

### ***Acknowledgements***

The fieldwork was carried out by Michael Boyle and the finds analysed by Richenda Goffin and Lucy Talbot of Norfolk Archaeological Unit. SMR information was provided by Jan Allen of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. Illustrations and production were by Maggie Footit and the report was edited by Andy Shelley



## **.Appendix 1: Finds**

### **Clay tobacco pipe**

The site produced a single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem [0.003kg, unstratified].

### **Small finds**

Although ten unstratified metal artefacts were recovered, only two small find numbers were allocated. These were given to a crushed, post-medieval cloth seal, impressed with the letters LLK [SF1] and a post-medieval iron harness buckle frame [SF2]. The remainder of the assemblage consists of late post-medieval or modern artefacts. The copper alloy objects include a complete teaspoon, three shotgun cartridge cases and caps, a watch part and two spent bullets. A single piece of lead waste was also recovered.

### **Glass**

The site produced three fragments of post-medieval wine bottle [unstratified].

## **Appendix 2: Finds by context**

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>
U/S	RPOT/ MPOT/ PPOT	12	317
U/S	CPIPE	1	3
U/S	SF's 1 & 2	2	-
U/S	COPPER ALLOY	7	-
U/S	LEAD	1	-
U/S	BOTT	3	-

### **Key:**

RPOT	Roman pottery
MPOT	Medieval pottery (Late Saxon-medieval)
PPOT	Post medieval pottery
CPIPE	Ceramic tobacco pipe
BOTT	Post-medieval bottle glass

### **Small finds appendix:**

<b>Small find Number</b>	<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>X-Ray No.</b>
1	U/S	1	PMED	Lead	Cloth Seal	Impressed 'LLK'	N/A
2	U/S	1		Iron	Buckle	Frame only	N/A
N/A	U/S	1		Copper alloy	Teaspoon		N/A
N/A	U/S	3		Copper alloy	Cartridge	Cases and caps	N/A
N/A	U/S	1		Copper alloy	watch	Part	N/A
N/A	U/S	2		Copper alloy	Bullets		N/A
N/A	U/S	1		Lead	Waste		N/A





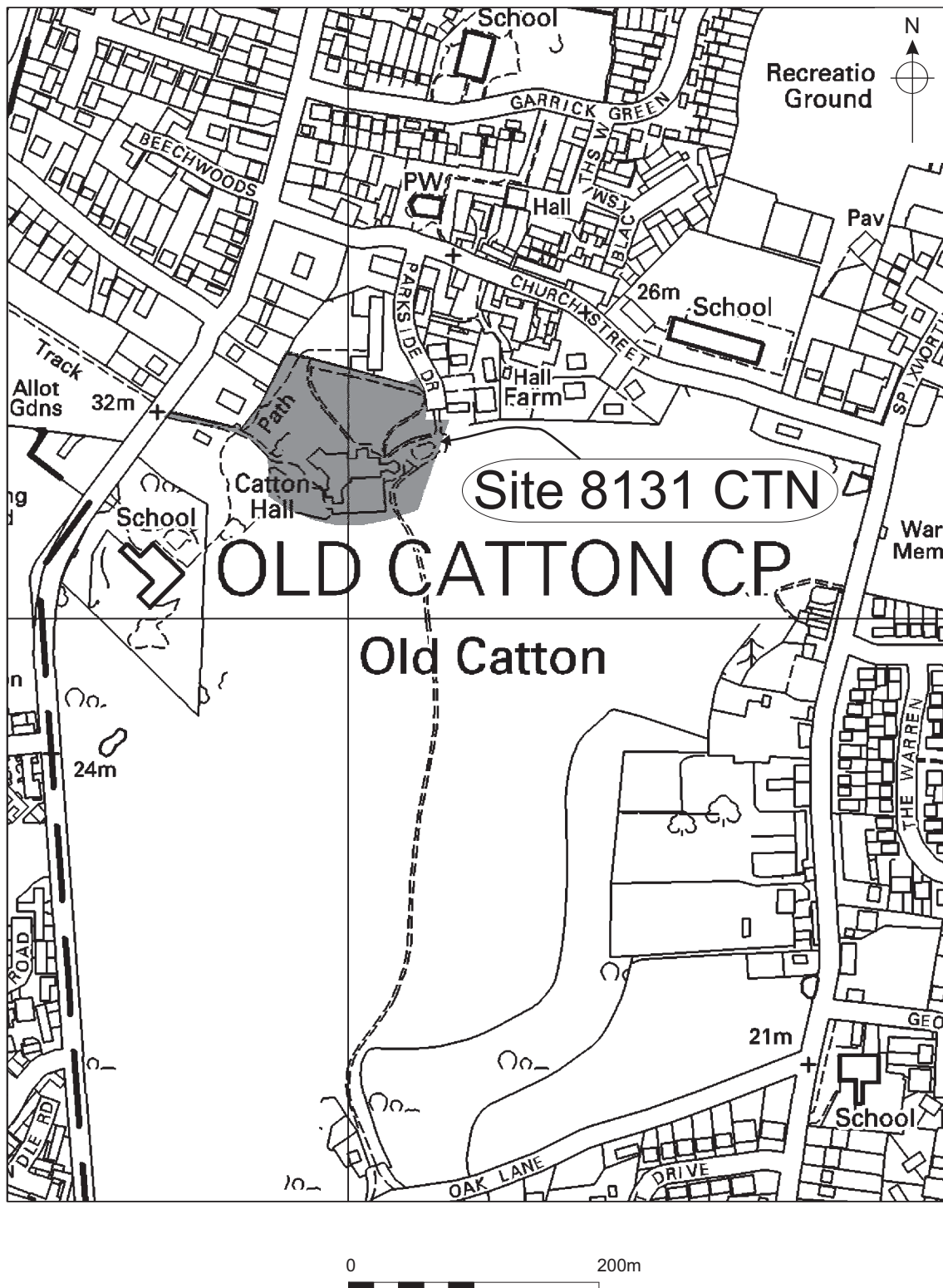


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

Local Authority No.076759

Fig.1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (28/10/2002). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

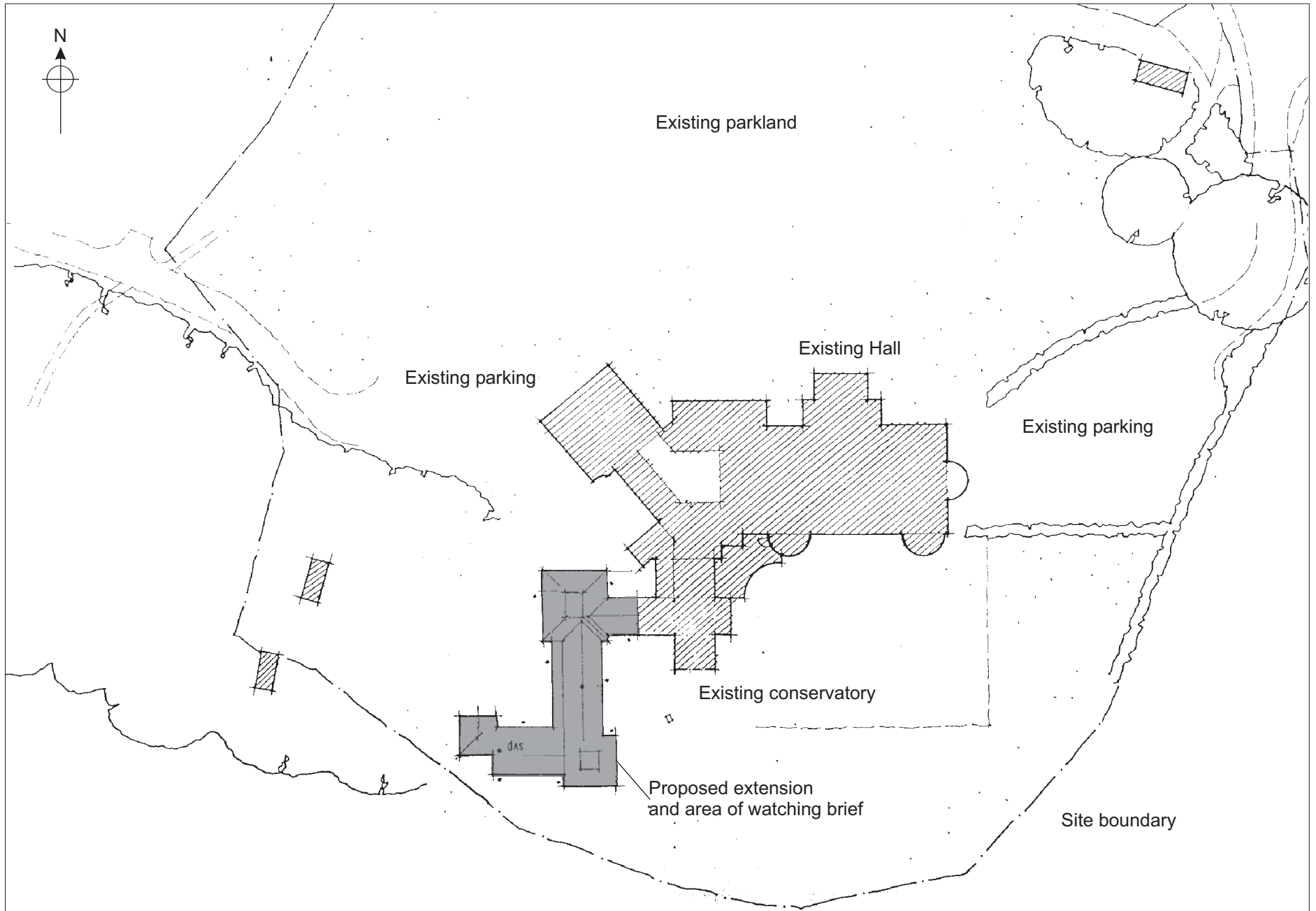


Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:1250