

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 843

**An Archaeological Excavation at Attleborough Hall,
Attleborough**

38229 ATT

Kenneth Penn

2003

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Contents

Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Geology and Topography
- 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background
- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Results
- 6.0 Conclusions

Acknowledgements

Figures

- Fig.1 Site Location
- Fig.2 Trench Location

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(07/08/2003). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: Attleborough Hall, Attleborough
Grid Ref: TM 0504 9627
HER No.: 38229 ATT
Date of Fieldwork: 28th April 2003

Summary

Excavation of foundation trenches and the floor area to formation level for a kitchen extension at Attleborough Hall revealed a network of modern drains within a soil of modern origin. This soil rested directly on the natural subsoil, recorded at the base of the foundation trenches. There were no archaeological features or finds.

1.0 Introduction

The excavation was prompted by a proposed extension to Attleborough Hall, a listed building of late 17th century or earlier origins standing within a moated enclosure of probable medieval date (Fig. 1). The excavation was 3m x 5m in dimension, the footprint of the proposed kitchen extension (Fig. 2).

The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Walker.

This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ARJH 23/04/2003) and a Project Design prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: JB/1587).

The work was designed to define the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

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

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site lies in an area of plateau gravel, within a large tract of Boulder Clay, on a slope overlooking a small stream to the south. The moat is fed from springs.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological and historical background has already been summarised in the Brief and Project Design, which drew attention to the HER record (No 7009) for Attleborough Hall and associated finds. The house stands within a walled moat of later medieval date. The hall appears to be of 17th century date but includes some beams (?reused) of earlier date.

Early reports of finds here include seven gold coins found around 1867, during the making of a road (*Norfolk Archaeology* 7 (1872), 356).

In September 1952, during excavation for drains at the rear of the house, medieval rubble flint walls were exposed (*Norfolk Archaeology* 32 (1960), 166).

4.0 Methodology

The objective of this excavation was to record surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that the extent of the proposed kitchen, 3m x 5m, was reduced by 0.30m, to formation level, with the footings for the foundations taken down to 0.80m below the present surface.

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

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the Norfolk Archaeological Unit's *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

The site lies to the rear of the Hall, in the rear courtyard, with recent gravel surfaces and concrete slabs across much of the area.

5.0 Results

Removal of the overburden was carried out by machine. This revealed a succession of drains and services, resting in a mixed soil clearly of no great age. No archaeological deposits were visible. A record plan was made of the services (Fig. 2).

Excavation of the foundation trenches revealed the natural gravel subsoil, an orange gravel. The mixed soil rested directly on the subsoil, with no surviving archaeological deposits. Two further drain trenches were recorded.

6.0 Conclusions

The provision of services and their replacement over many years had removed any archaeological features and deposits above the subsoil. It may be assumed that much of the courtyard close to the house has suffered from excavation of services.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Ian Walker for commissioning this work and for advice during the work. The writer was assisted on site by Becky Crawford.

The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Jayne Bown.



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

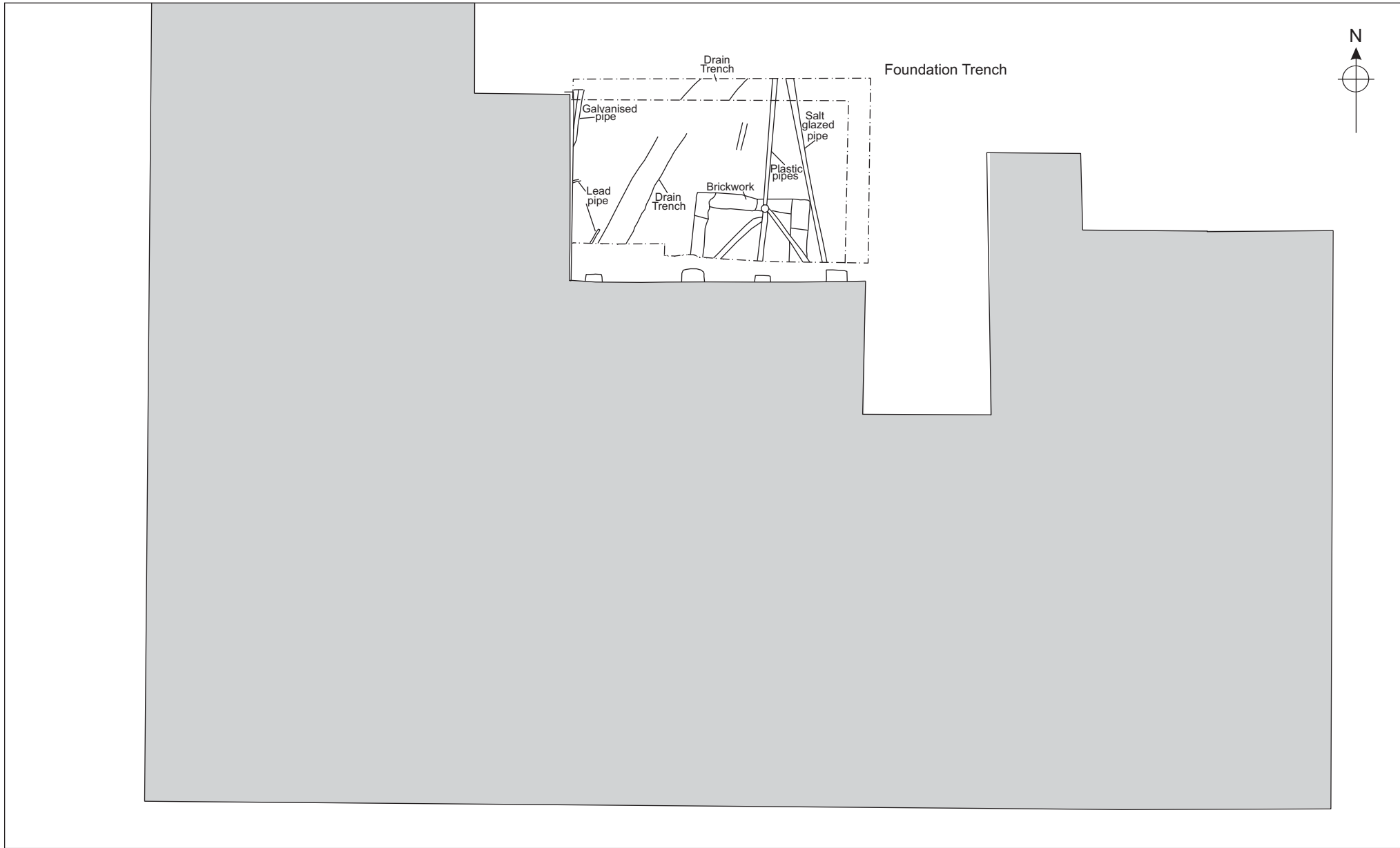


Figure 2. Trench Location. Scale 1:100