

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Nevill Holt Hall, Nevill Holt,
Leicestershire
(SP 816 937)**

Sophie Clarke

For David Ross Esq.

Checked by Project Manager

Signed: [Signature] Date: 17.6.04

Name: RJ BUCKLEY

**University of Leicester
Archaeological Services**

Report No. 2004/094

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Nevill Holt Hall, Nevill Holt, Leicestershire (NGR SP 816 937).

Summary

An archaeological watching brief on groundworks associated with the residential conversion of Nevill Holt Hall, Nevill Holt, Leicestershire, was carried out by ULAS over the course of a 12 month period between August 2002- 2003. Groundworks undertaken within the former Dairy block (Room 11) revealed the remains of a mortar surface, which was removed to reveal a number of stakeholes and post-holes, which may be interpreted as evidence of earlier structures existing beneath the present building. Gravel stripping undertaken in the vicinity of the present driveway, to the south of the Great Hall, revealed a series of cobbled surfaces that appear to correspond with the main Courtyard that appears on the 1661 plan of Nevill Holt. A substantial segment of sandstone walling revealed in a drainage trench located to the southwest of the Hall may represent the remains of a structure associated with the 'Blew-Gates', also noted on the plan of 1661, whilst a second wall revealed in a trench to the north of the Cloisters may relate to the Orchard boundary recorded at this time. Brick and stonework foundations recorded within gardens to the rear of the Kitchen, may represent the remains of recently demolished, late 19th century greenhouses. The site archive, consisting of site notes, records, colour slides and finds will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services under the Accession Number X A132.2002.

1. Introduction

1.1 Nevill Holt is a small village set in gently undulating countryside, in southeast Leicestershire (Fig. 1). The Hall and church, both dating from the 13th century, stand on a hilltop, dominating the cluster of houses that make up the village. The Hall itself is a complex building, covering many periods.

1.2 As part of the planning procedure associated with the residential conversion of Nevill Holt Hall (PA 00/1034/3), an archaeological evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS 2000-157), in order to assess the archaeological potential of those areas to be directly affected by the groundwork proposals. The evaluation revealed a number of archaeological deposits present within the application area, including the remains of an earlier floor surface and a large post-hole, located beneath the present flagstones of the Great Hall. Test pits within the Inner Hall revealed further evidence for earlier structures, in the form of a beaten earth floor and the remains of a stone wall, with traces of plaster.

1.3 Following the results of the archaeological evaluation, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Service Section, acting as archaeological adviser to the Planning Authority, requested that the groundworks associated with the Nevill Holt Hall conversion, including the excavation of service trenches and the removal of existing modern overburden, should be carried out under archaeological supervision. The archaeological watching brief was requested in accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning)

para. 30, in order to fulfil the planning conditions required by Harborough District Council.

1.4 This report comprises the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out during the groundworks undertaken as part of the Nevill Holt Hall conversion. The archaeological watching brief was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services, during the course of 2001-2003 and followed the *Design Specification for Archaeological Work at Nevill Holt Hall, Nevill Holt, Leicestershire* (©ULAS 8.8.2002).

2. Geology and Topography

2.1 The site lies on a hill overlooking the River Welland to the south, at a height of approximately 140m OD. The underlying geology consists of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, below clays (O.S. Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 170).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 The early origins of the village of Holt are obscure. It is not mentioned in the Domesday Book and it is thought that settlement may have begun in the 12th and 13th centuries, with the clearing of the woods from which the place-name 'Holt' is derived (Hill, 1999, 246). The prefix of 'Nevill' derives from the Nevill family, occupants of the Hall for nearly 400 years, from the late 15th century until 1868. Nevill Holt Hall is an extensive and complex country house on an east-west orientation (Fig. 2). It appears to have its origins in the 13th century and documentary evidence suggests that there was a considerable establishment of buildings at Holt by 1302 (Hill 1997, 37). The earliest identifiable fabric comprises the stone-walled, medieval hall of c.1280 in the centre of the building, which retains the original timbers of its open roof. The hall was flanked by a service range and solar block to the east and west respectively and by 1400 the main structure comprised an elongated series of buildings, including the Hall, Solar Crosswing, Inner Hall, Service, Service/Corridor Gallery and the church, probably with a number of outbuildings (Hill 1997, 38). The phase plan produced by N. Hill (Fig. 2) illustrates the many later additions to the medieval core in the 15th-19th centuries, which created an imposing south elevation of some 100m in length (Hill 1999, 246).

3.2 A buildings assessment been undertaken by Traveller Research Projects (2000) and an evaluation has been carried out within the building by ULAS (Report 2000-157).

4. Aims

4.1 Through archaeological observation of existing overburden stripping and, if necessary, foundation and service trench excavation by the client's contractors:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks.
3. To record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

5. Methodology

5.1 All groundworks undertaken during the conversion of Nevill Holt Hall were carried out under the supervision of a professional archaeologist, working in co-operation with the on-site contractors, Marriot Construction.

5.2 All archaeological deposits located were hand cleaned and recorded as appropriate. Measured drawings of all archaeological features were prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100.

5.3 Archaeological deposits were excavated and recorded as appropriate, to establish the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of the deposits, to aid in the recognition of structural material and to recover economic, artefactual and environmental evidence.

5.4 All work adhered to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, in addition to the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

6. Results

6.1 Internal Trenches (Fig. 3)

6.1.1 Room 44 (Family Room) - Trenches 38, 40, 41, 47-51, 54-56, 60

The removal of the existing modern concrete and wooden flooring was carried out prior to the commencement of the watching brief, revealing a layer of mortar and sand rubble (context 56), containing brick and stone fragments. This was removed by hand, down to a level of consolidated yellow sandy clay with ironstone and mortar patches, to reveal a series of linear, brick plinths, aligned east/west across the room. A small area of loose charcoal pieces, mixed with burnt bone (context 57), material consistent with fire-rakings, was located adjacent to the southern entrance to the room.

Trench 38 was located along the eastern side of the room, measuring 2m in width at the southern end and 1m wide to the north. The excavation consisted of the reduction, by approximately 0.4m, of the existing ground level, revealing possible evidence of an earlier floor surface, in the form of two stone slabs, located beneath a blocked doorway apparent in the eastern wall. Adjacent to the south wall, was a spread of compacted brown clay (80), reminiscent of a beaten earth surface, found to contain brick fragments and an undated metal token. A shallow depression within (80) contained dark brown, silty clay (83), with charcoal flecks and yielding two fragments from a single vessel, dating to c.13th-14th century.

Beneath context (80) was a thin layer of decayed ironstone (81), which was removed to reveal a spread of yellowish brown, sandy clay, with occasional charcoal flecks (82).

Trenches 40 and 41 were located in the northern part of the room, on an east/west alignment and were excavated for the provision of services, to a depth of 0.05m. No archaeological deposits were noted during these excavations.

Trenches 47-51, 55-56 and 60 were excavated as part of the underpinning procedure for the western wall of Room 44. Each trench measured approximately 0.6m wide x 1.4m long and 0.9m deep, and was hand-dug to undermine the western wall, before being backfilled with concrete. The excavations revealed that the wall had been originally constructed directly upon the natural yellow, sandy clay and ironstone, with no evidence of footings or a foundation trench. The east facing section of each trench showed a layer of greyish brown, silty, sandy clay (84), measuring c. 0.3m deep, lying beneath rubble layer (56) and above the natural substratum.

6.1.2 Room 46 (Kitchen) – Trenches 9, 18.

The present kitchen was added at some point in the 18th century (Hill 1977, 78). Trench 9 was located towards the northern part of the room, aligned northeast/southwest as a continuation of Trench 8 in Room 49. The trench measured 3.4m long by 0.55m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.66m, through a 0.05m layer of mortar, overlying a 0.2m layer of ironstone rubble. Below this was a layer of orange brown, sandy clay (6), possibly the same material recorded in Room 49 as context (4), located within Trenches 5, 7 and 8.

Trench 18 was excavated across the length of the kitchen, to a depth of 0.6m through natural ironstone and orange sandy clay. Inspection of the southwest facing section revealed an area of disturbance within the natural ironstone, thought to represent the remains of a possible pit, containing dark brown, silty clay fill (18) and yielding seven sherds of medieval pottery.

6.1.3 Room 49 (Scullery) – Trenches 5, 7-8.

Trench 5 was a north/south pipe trench traversing through the centre of Room 49 and continuing through to the adjacent room to the south, measuring 3.9m in length by 0.45m wide. The excavated trench section showed the concrete flooring material to be 0.16m deep, overlying a 0.05m layer of flat ironstone pieces. Beneath the stones was layer (4), consisting of orange brown, sandy clay, containing an abundance of fragmented animal bone. The remainder of the trench was excavated through natural orange/brown ironstone and clay, to a maximum depth of 0.64m from the ground surface.

Trench 7 was a small pipe trench measuring 3m long by 0.35m wide, leading from Trench 8 down to the southwest corner of the room. Trench 8 was the northeast continuation of Trench 9, recorded in Room 46. Both trench sections revealed make-up layers similar to those observed within Trench 5, including a continuation of layer (4).

6.1.4 North of Room 41 (Housekeeper's Room) – Trenches 29-30

Groundworks in this room included the removal of the existing wooden floorboards and the excavation of two service trenches. Trench 29 was located in the northeastern corner of the room and measured 1.7m long by 0.5m wide. The excavation consisted of the removal of modern overburden and backfill of an earlier pipe trench, down to a layer of possibly natural orange/brown clay with ironstone fragments. Trench 30 was located to the south of Trench 29, measuring 1.7m long by 0.4m wide and divided centrally into two parts by a concreted covered drainpipe. Each half of the trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m. Within the eastern part of the trench, the north facing section revealed a 0.04 skim of mortar, overlying a layer of sand and ironstone rubble 0.2m deep, which lay directly over the yellow clay and ironstone natural.

6.1.5 Room 25 (Great Hall) – Trenches 36-37, 39, 46.

The Great Hall is acknowledged as the earliest standing phase of Nevill Holt Hall, and has been dated to *c.*1280 (Hill 1990). The present flooring material consists of stone flags, of probable post-medieval or modern origin beneath which there is thought to be some potential for the survival of archaeological deposits relating to earlier phases of the present building.

Trench 36 was located in the south-western corner of the Great Hall, aligned north/south against the west wall. Following the removal of four stone paving slabs, a narrow channel, measuring 2.4m long by 0.3m wide, was hand dug through 0.03m of orange mortar and sand, thought to be a base material for the present stone flooring. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation, although the trench gave some evidence of the techniques used in the construction of the Great Hall, as the stones of the western wall appeared to be lying directly upon the orange/ brown clay base, with no trace of foundations or construction cut.

Trench 37 consisted of a hand excavated pipe trench leading from the southern wall to an existing conduit on the western side of the Great Hall, measuring 1m long by 0.2m wide. A sub-circular area of loose, brown, sandy material, containing mortar and stone fragments, in addition to mussel shell and fragments of animal bone (73), may have been the back fill of a post-hole [74], but was greatly disturbed by the construction cut for the modern conduit and was unexcavated due to contamination.

Trench 39 was located in the northeastern corner of the Great Hall, aligned northwest/southeast. Three stone slabs were removed and a shallow pipe trench was excavated to a depth of 0.09m, through a 0.04 layer of hardcore/mortar mix and through 0.05m of yellowish brown clay, with ironstone fragments, thought to be the natural geological substratum. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation.

Trench 46 was located immediately to the west of Trench 39, adjacent to the northern wall of the Great Hall. Following the removal of six stone slabs, a trench measuring 0.25m wide by 2m long was excavated from east to west, with a 0.9m 'dog-leg' extension of the western end, angled towards the northwest. The stone slabs were

found to rest upon a 0.06m layer of yellow sandy make-up, which lay over the top of compacted yellow sandy clay, with ironstone fragments, elsewhere identified as the possible natural geological substratum. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation.

6.1.6 North of Wine Cellar (Dairy) – Trenches 14, 32a, 33.

The first stage of groundworks within the former Dairy involved the removal of the existing concrete floor and ground reduction to a level 0.17m below the original threshold, revealing an undulating mortar surface, with clay and ironstone fragments, spread across the room.

Trench 32a was located in the northeastern corner of the room, leading into the adjacent eastern alcove beneath the stairs of the Great Hall (Fig. 3). The ground level was reduced by approximately 0.44m from the existing threshold, revealing a uniform layer of orange/ brown ironstone and clay beneath the mortar surface located by the initial phase of ground reduction.

In order to accommodate a network of service pipes, a second stage of ground reduction was subsequently carried out, necessitating the removal of the mortar surface, to a depth of 0.22m below the original threshold level. The new level consisted of orange/brown sandy clay and ironstone, through which a series of squarish stakeholes (22) – (27) were observed to cut (Fig. 4). Each stakehole varied in dimension, ranging from 0.06m to 0.11m in depth, and was filled with orangey clay, containing coal-like material. A second cluster of five stakeholes further to the northwest demonstrated rather more circular plan forms, ranging from 0.03m – 0.06m in diameter and averaging 0.13m in depth. No dating evidence was produced from the stakeholes and although they appear to be divided into two groups (Fig. 4), this spatial arrangement does not suggest any coherent pattern.

To the east of the stakeholes were three post-holes (30), (32) and (33), containing fills of greenish/grey, sandy silt. Post-hole (30) produced a single sherd of c.14th-century Green glazed pottery.

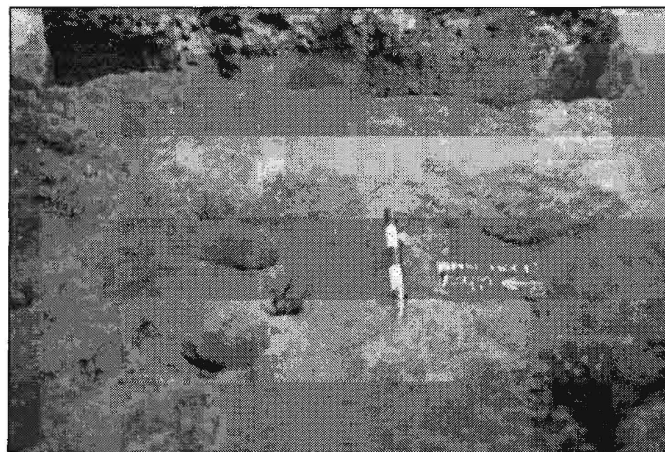


Plate 1: Post-holes in Former Dairy

Context (34) consisted of a shallow depression filled with brown silty clay, containing fragments of glass and animal bone, thought possibly to represent the remains of a pit. Two more pits were located to the south; pit [40] was sub-circular in plan, measuring c. 0.55m in diameter and covered by (36), a material described by the excavator as beaten earth, possibly representative of the remains of earlier flooring material. The uppermost fill of the pit (37) consisted of yellow mortar and sand, beneath which was a charcoal-rich layer of sandy clay (38). A layer of reddish brown clay and ironstone, containing a fragment of Collyweston slate roofing tile (39) was found to overlie a large sandstone block located in the base of the pit.

The final stages of groundworks within the room involved the excavation of six boxes, measuring 0.25m wide x 0.20m long x 0.20m deep, for the accommodation of central heating pipes. Boxes 1 – 4 were located against the western wall of Room 11 and the exposed sections revealed a ground make-up consisting of yellowish brown clay, containing ironstone and brick fragments, with natural yellow clay and ironstone apparent at base level. Each east facing section showed a layer of loose stones beneath the upstanding wall, which was thought to represent a rubble foundation for the construction of the western wall. Boxes 5 and 6 were located against the southern wall, excavated through similar yellowish brown clay and ironstone, although the natural substratum was not reached and the footings for the southern wall were not revealed.

Trench 14 was located just beyond the western doorway leading into the room, measuring 3.3m long by 0.74m wide. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.29m through the modern concrete floor, which had been laid upon layers of reddish brown sand and compact reddish brown sandy clay with ironstone fragments. None of the make-up layers contained any dating evidence and no deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the excavation.

Trench 33 was located on the eastern side, within an alcove beneath the stairs leading up from the Great Hall. Groundworks consisted of the excavation of a small channel, measuring 1.55m long by 0.33m wide and 0.25m deep. Beneath the concrete floor, were a series of roughly squared, unmortared sandstone blocks, contained loosely within a matrix of orange/brown sandy clay and lying above the natural geological substratum. No dating evidence was found in association with the stones, which may represent the remains, or the demolition of an earlier wall.

6.1.7 Room 18- Trench 15

Trench 15 was located to the south of the cloister and measured 4m long by 0.75m wide and 0.3m deep. The south facing section revealed modern make-up layers through the full extent of the trench and no archaeological deposits were revealed during the excavation.

6.2 External Trenches (Fig. 5)

6.2.1 Glazed Link – Trenches 45, 52-53, 62-67

Trench 45 consisted of a foundation trench for the construction of a new glazed link adjacent to the dining room, measuring 2.5m long by 0.6m wide and 1.4m deep. The trench was aligned north/south and showed the dining room wall to have been built directly upon the ironstone and yellow sandy clay natural. No archaeological deposits were revealed within this trench.

Trenches 52 and 53 consisted of drainage trenches linking Room 46 to a central chamber (IC10), located to the west. Each trench measured approximately 1.3m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.6m through layers of modern overburden, showing considerable disturbance by ceramic service pipes. Natural ironstone was reached at a depth of c.0.6m from the ground surface and no archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation.

Trenches 62-67 consisted of a series of interconnecting drainage trenches located to the north of the new glazed link. Trench 62 was 1m wide, measuring 1.5m deep at the northern end, revealing a modern drainpipe, to which the new pipe work was to be connected. Towards the southern end, a series of modern heating pipes and blackened bricks were located above stone slabs and heavily mortared bricks. These were removed by mechanical excavator, revealing an area of green/greyish clay, with patches of brown loam and a layer of rubble, (92), associated with earlier underpinning works, found to contain fragments of moulded alabaster. Trenches 63-67 measured 0.6m wide and averaged 0.6m-0.9m deep, revealing a thin skim of modern overburden spread across the area, overlying the natural ironstone substratum. No archaeological deposits were revealed during the excavation of these trenches.

6.2.2 North of Room 22 – Trenches 3-4, 22-22a, 23

Trench 3 was located beneath the windows of Room 22, measuring 3.5m long by 1.47m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.2m, revealing 0.7m of wall footings built onto the natural ironstone and sandy clay. Trench 4 consisted of a drainage trench leading off from Trench 3, aligned north/south, and cut through an earlier, modern pipe trench, containing redeposited natural ironstone and sandy clay (3), which yielded two sherds of 14th century pottery.

Two phases of ground reduction were carried out to the north of Trench 4. Trench 22 was located to the northeast, measuring 8.6m long, by 3.8m wide and 0.5m deep. Removal of topsoil and a layer of yellowish brown, sandy clay, revealed the foundations of an ironstone wall (21), running east/west across the southern side of the trench. The wall measured 0.5m wide, with a thin mortar layer on top of the stones, with a turn towards the south at 1.7m from the eastern garden wall. The base level of the remainder of the trench consisted of the remains of a possible mortar floor surface, with fragments of brick within. No dating evidence was located in association with the wall or the surface material.

Trench 22a was located just to the west, separated from Trench 22 by a narrow, raised baulk. The foundations of a brick wall were located 0.37m from the eastern baulk

edge, consisting of modern bricks laid side-by-side, measuring one bricks' width (0.23m) and aligned north/south. A second brick wall foundation was located at the southern end of the trench, aligned east/west, but did not appear to be tied into the first brick wall. It was suggested by the contractors that the foundations may have related to greenhouses that formerly stood in the garden area.

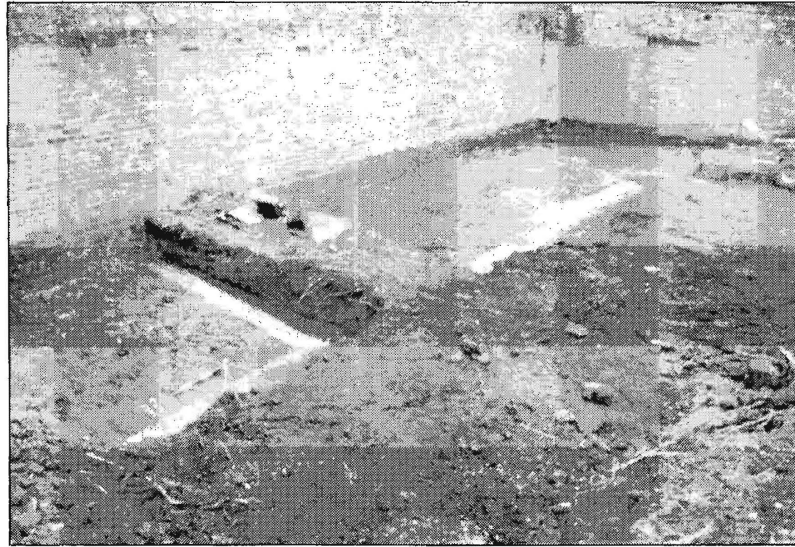


Plate 2: Trenches 22 and 22a. Facing northeast.

Trench 23 was located to the south of Trenches 22 and 22a, spanning the width of the garden and measuring 2.6m wide. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.02m, revealing a stretch of ironstone wall (45), aligned north/south, located at the eastern end. A slot excavated alongside the wall (Fig. 6) revealed three courses of roughly hewn, ironstone blocks with mortar bonding, lying above a layer of yellowish brown, silty clay, containing frequent charcoal flecks and coal fragments (46). A dark patch of burnt material (47), containing charcoal and coal ash, in addition to fragments of animal bone, was located within context (46). In the base of the trench was context (49), a yellowish brown clay layer, with occasional charcoal flecks.

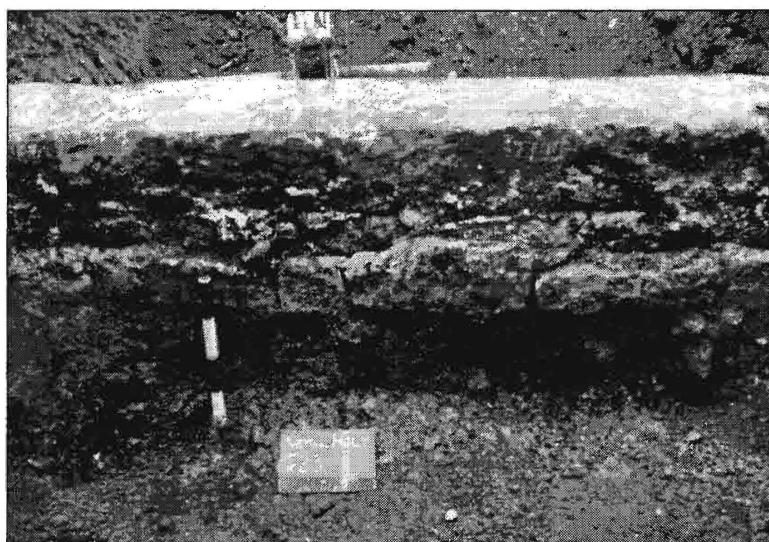


Plate 3: Wall (45) in Trench 23. Facing west.

6.2.3 East of Room 43 – Trenches 42-44.

Trenches 42- 44 were excavated for the provision of new drains beneath the courtyard located to the east of Room 43. Groundworks consisted of the removal of the existing slabs to reveal a network of ceramic drain-pipes, cut through dark grey, silty sand, containing building debris. Trench 42 consisted of a square pit excavated against the south wall of the courtyard, revealing sandstone block wall footings to a depth of 0.7m below the ground surface, built onto the natural clay and ironstone substratum. Trench 43 was a drainage trench measuring 2.6m long and 0.6m wide, measuring 0.34m deep at the western end and 0.7m deep to the east. The trench followed the line of an earlier pipe trench and was cut through redeposited natural clay and ironstone. Trench 44 was a second drainage trench leading from the southwest corner of the courtyard and running for 5.85m towards the northeast. This trench was also cut through disturbed ground and no features of archaeological significance were noted during the excavation.

6.2.4 The West Wing – Trenches 10, 11, 31, 34, 61.

Trenches 10, 11, 31, 34, 61 were linked together to provide drainage around the external perimeters of the west wing of Nevill Holt Hall.

Trench 10 was located to the south of the building, aligned east/west and excavated to a depth of 0.95m through modern make-up layers consisting of gravel and tarmac, overlying a layer of orange/brown sandy clay (7), containing ironstone and yielding fragments of animal bone and brick. Beneath context (7) was a thin layer of lime mortar (8), thought to represent spillage of building render limewash. Context (8) proved to be quite inconsistent and patchy, and contained fragments of brick, in addition to two fragments of 13th century ridge tile. Overlying the natural yellow sandy clay substratum to a depth of 0.57m below the ground surface, was context (9), similar in nature to context (7), but containing less ironstone fragments.

At the western end of Trench 10 were the remains of what appeared to be three distinct walls. A 1.2m stretch of wall, measuring c.1.3m wide and aligned roughly northeast/southwest, was exposed during excavations at the junction between Trenches 10 and 11. Wall (10) consisted of ironstone blocks, apparently faced on the southern edge and bonded with brown silty clay, which yielded sherds of 13th/14th century pottery upon investigation (Fig. 7).



Plate 4: Wall (10) in Trench 10. Facing east.

Walls (11) and (12) were located further to the west and were visible only in section, being less substantially constructed than wall (10). Wall (11) in particular, consisting of large ironstone blocks with mortar adhesions, appeared to represent the demolition of a wall, rather than a consolidated structure, with the blocks contained loosely within orange/brown, sandy clay. Wall (12) was somewhat more substantial, apparently aligned north/south, consisting of roughly hewn ironstone blocks, but with no evidence of bonding material between them. No dating evidence was obtained for either of these deposits.

Trench 11 was aligned north/south, running along the western wall of Room 16. Due to the instability of the surrounding made-up ground, shoring had been placed within the trench prior to archaeological inspection, although elements of stonework, consisting of roughly hewn ironstone blocks, with traces of mortar bonding, were visible in the east facing section. Although the remains were suggestive of an east/west wall structure, this was not seen to continue within the western face of the trench.

Trench 31 was a drainage trench running from the mid-point junction of Trench 11, towards the southwest entrance gate to the Hall. The trench measured 0.5m wide, and was excavated to a depth of 0.65m, through apparently made-up ground, consisting of turf and topsoil, overlying a redeposited, dark brown silty clay (68), containing stone, oyster shell and brick fragments.

Trench 34 was a drainage trench following the eastern wall of the Meeting Room, linking Trenches 58 and 10. This was excavated to a depth of 0.70m from the ground surface, through a modern gravel footpath. Beneath the gravel was a 0.2m deep bedding layer of pebbles and limestone rubble, overlying loose, brown silty clay to maximum depth. No archaeological deposits were noted in this trench.

Trench 61 consisted of the excavation of a drainage chamber, located at the northeast corner of the Meeting Room to link Trenches 10, 13 and 34. The chamber measured 2m long, by 1.7m wide and was excavated to a depth of 2.5m, through layers of topsoil, containing fragmented building demolition rubble; the natural geological sandy clay and ironstone substratum at c. 0.55m depth from the ground surface, and finally through solid ironstone bedrock, reached at 0.95m depth.

6.2.5 South of Great Hall – Trenches 58 – 59, Gravel Stripping.

Trench 58 was located to the south of the Great Hall, aligned east/west to connect with Trenches 34 and 59. The trench measured 0.83m wide and 0.36m deep at the eastern end, sloping down to 0.58m at the west. Ground make-up consisted of a layer of gravel overlying a 0.26m depth of brown sandy clay, with occasional stone and brick fragments. The natural geological substratum consisted of orange/brown ironstone and clay and was reached at 0.34m below the ground surface. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation of this trench.

Trench 59 was aligned northeast/southwest, leading from the western end of Trench 58 towards the corner of Room 8. The excavated trench section showed a similar ground make-up to Trench 58, with a single layer of cobbles visible below the brown sandy clay, on a bedding of yellow sand, above a charcoal-rich, brown silty clay (93), which contained fragments of building material and a clay pipe-stem.

Further groundworks to the south of the Hall included the stripping of gravel from the existing driveway, reducing the ground level by 0.15m, to reveal the remains of a variety of cobble yard surfaces, consisting of areas of medium sized, rounded cobbles, apparently separated from areas paved with tightly packed, narrow limestone blocks, by a series of linear courses of limestone (Figs.8, 9, 10, 11). No dating evidence was located in association with the surfaces.



Plate 5: Aerial shot of cobbled surfaces. Facing south-east.

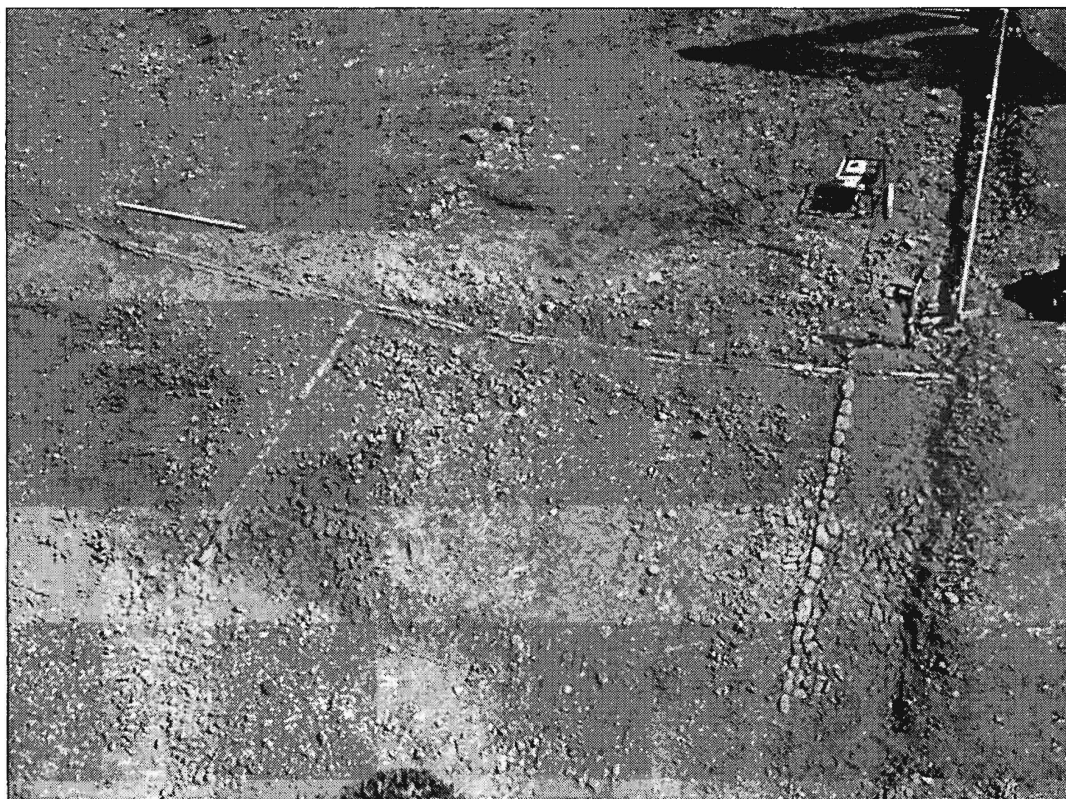


Plate 6: Detail of limestone divisions. Facing south.



Plate 7: Plan 21 of cobble surface. Facing east.

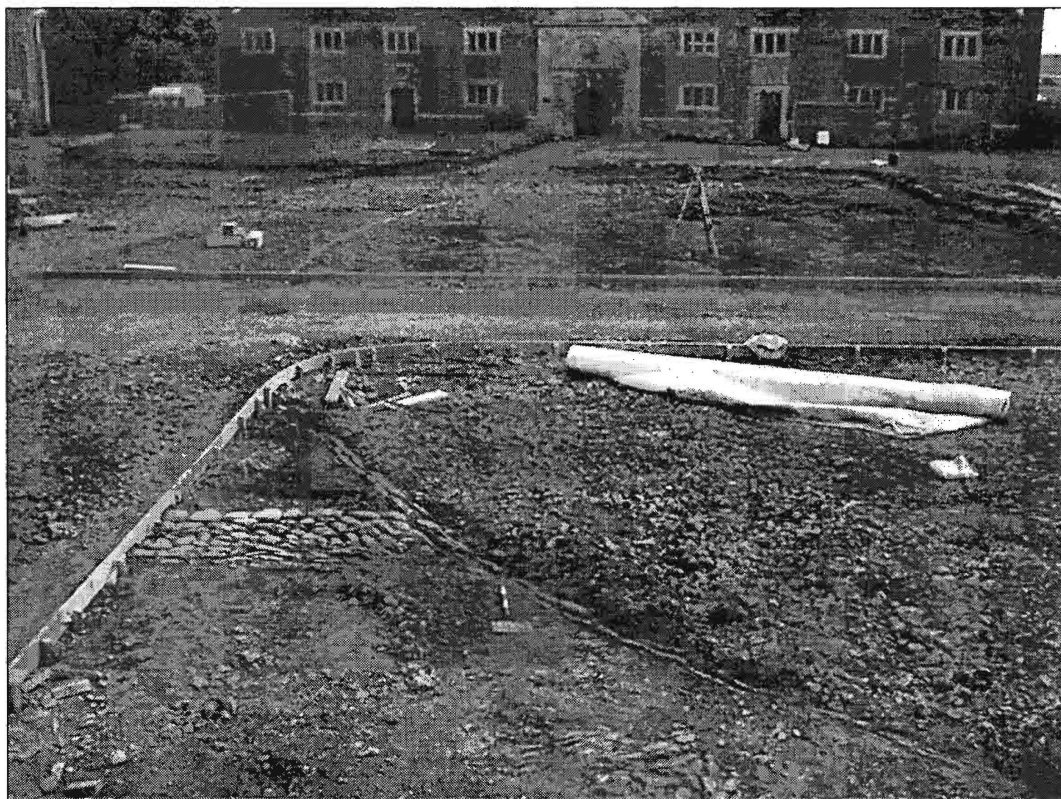


Plate 8: Cobbled surfaces. Facing east.

6.2.6 Stable Block Pond Area – Trench 56

Trench 56 consisted of the removal of a backfilled concrete pond, in addition to some ground reduction, located in front of the stable block, to the south of the church. A layer of topsoil located beneath the turfline consisted of dark brown loam (85) and contained a patch of burnt material, containing charcoal (87), with some scorched reddish brown silty clay surrounding (86). Below the topsoil layer was a layer of yellowish brown, sandy, silty clay subsoil (89). None of the layers observed during the ground works provided any dating evidence.

6.2.7 North of Hall- Trenches 6, 35, 16-17, 20-21, 19, 24-26.

Trench 6 consisted of a manhole excavation, measuring 2.50m square. Visible at the northern end, immediately beneath the topsoil layer were the remains of a wall, aligned east/west and consisting of three courses of ironstone and sandstone blocks (Figs. 12a & 12b).

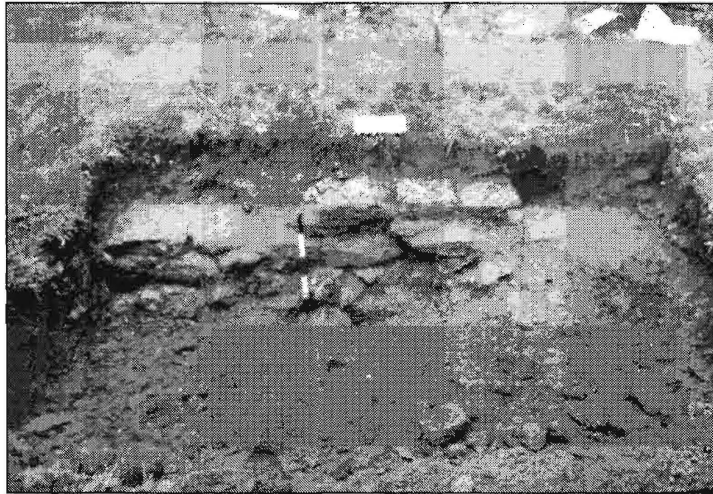


Plate 9: Trench 6. Facing north.

The wall appeared to have been solidly built, although the construction was haphazard and it was thought that the remains might represent a retaining garden wall, rather than anything more substantial. Although the wall itself yielded no dating evidence, a single sherd of early medieval pottery was recovered from the sandy clay layer (5), located immediately below. Subsequent extension of the trench showed no continuation of the wall in either direction, with early demolition indicated by quantities of loose stone rubble in the removed spoil.

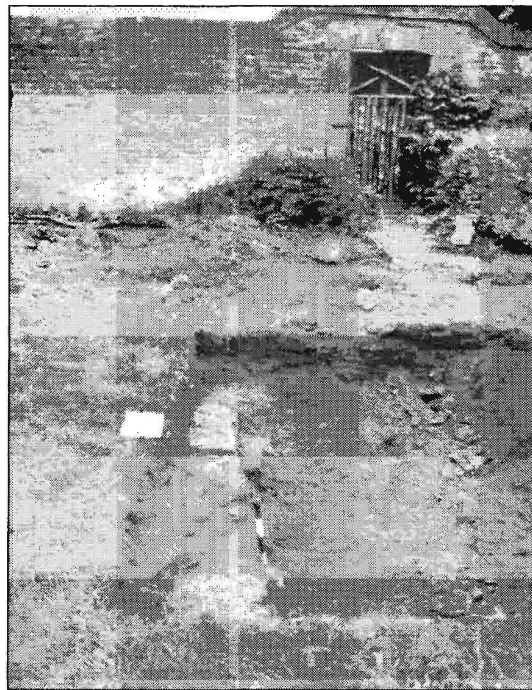


Plate 10: Trench 6. Facing east.

Trench 35 comprised the northern extension of Trench 6, measuring 3.7m long by 3.2m wide and excavated to a depth of 3m. Examination of the trench sections showed a layer of topsoil measuring 0.4m deep to be directly overlying the natural orange brown sandy clay and ironstone. No archaeological deposits were noted in this trench.

Trench 16 consisted of a drainage trench, leading from the Trench 6 manhole towards the southwest and joining up with Trench 11 on the western side of the Hall. Immediately below the turfline, located to the north of Room 33 (the laundry), were the remains of a wall (16), constructed of ironstone and sandstone rubble, within a matrix of brown clay, with charcoal flecking (15). The wall was of very loose construction and appeared to be aligned east/west, with natural ironstone and clay to the south side and similar material to context (15) to the north, which yielded a single sherd of medieval pottery upon examination.

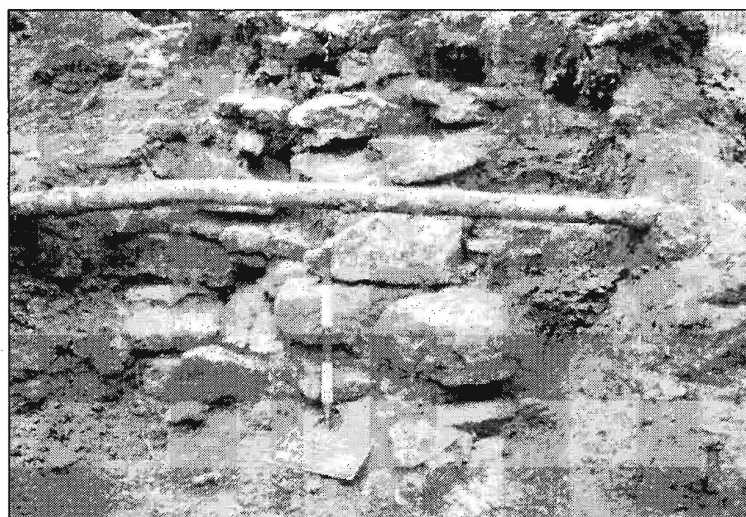


Plate 11: Wall (16) in Trench 16. Facing north.

A second section of wall (17) was recorded further along to the southwest, within the Trench 16a extension. Wall (17) had suffered some machine damage during the excavation, but appeared to be of fairly substantial construction, measuring 0.55m wide and consisting of two courses of mortared sandstone and limestone, built above a rubble foundation layer. On each side of the wall, the outer faces of the stone blocks appeared to have been dressed, with an infill of roughly hewn stone and rubble in between.

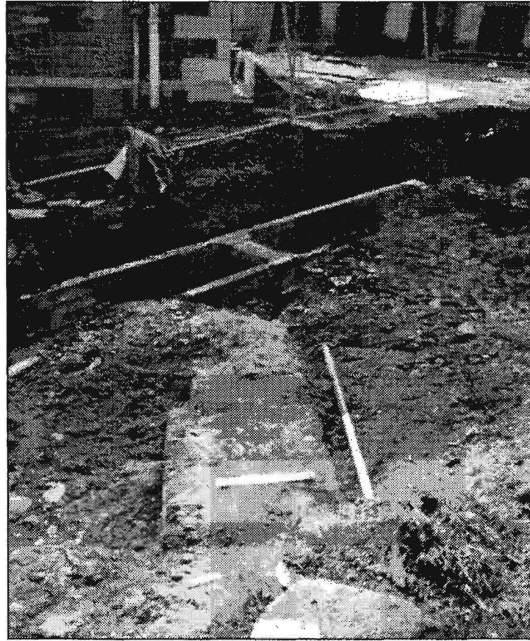


Plate 12: Wall (17) in Trench 16. Facing southeast.

The wall appeared to be aligned northwest/southeast, with the possible remains of a second wall, located at the northwestern end, abutting wall (17) at a 90° angle. This second wall comprised heavily mortared limestone blocks, with some brickwork located on the northwestern side, although the whole had been significantly disturbed during machining and it was not possible to ascertain any true dimensions for the remains.

Trench 17 was a drainage trench leading from chamber IC14F dividing Trenches 16 and 16a, running towards the southeast, measuring 1.2m wide. Examination of the trench sections, prior to shoring, revealed a layer of topsoil c. 0.25m deep, overlying an orange/ brown, sandy clay subsoil layer of c. 0.27m depth, before reaching the natural ironstone below. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation of this trench.

Drainage Trenches 20 and 21 led from IC14F running southwards towards the laundry. The sections of both trenches revealed a ground make-up consisting of dark greyish brown loamy topsoil of c. 0.20m depth, overlying a layer of yellow brown silty clay subsoil. No archaeological deposits were located within these trenches.

Trench 19 led from the Trench 6 manhole, running south towards the north wall of Room 46. Located approximately 4m away from Room 46, beneath top and subsoil layers, at a depth of c. 0.6m from the ground level were the remains of a burnt floor surface (19), consisting of a covering of loose, blackened coal-like material, overlying compacted yellowish brown, silty clay, mixed with mortar and brick fragments. Beneath this layer were some reddened, possibly scorched ironstone pieces, however it was not possible to excavate through these layers as the working level had been reached.

Further to the north, located approximately 10.8m from the north wall of Room 46 were a number of ironstone slabs, overlain on the eastern side by smaller ironstone blocks, bound by a matrix of yellow clay (20). The area to the east of the

stones was more disturbed, with the ironstone becoming increasingly fragmented and loosely mixed within dark brown silty clay. Some evidence of burning was present in the form of charcoal patches and scorching on stones. It was thought that the stones might represent the remains of a surface, although it is not known if there is a relation with surface (19) seen further to the south.

Trench 24 was a large service trench located to the west of Trench 19, aligned northeast/southwest. Located towards the southwestern end was a brick-built well, measuring c. 1.30m in diameter and 5m deep. The well was surrounded by concrete and partially covered by two limestone slabs. No other features were located during the excavation of this trench.

Trench 25 was a linear drainage trench located to the north of the dining room, aligned east/west and excavated to a depth of 1.20m, through heavily disturbed ground, cut through by numerous land drains and service pipes. Located in the centre of the trench was a hole, measuring 0.28m square and 0.80m deep, lined with ironstone and apparently associated with a stone drain, which passed over the top of the hole.

Trench 26 was a drainage trench, excavated to link trenches 19 and 26, aligned northeast/southwest, partially revealing the remains of a brick-built well, into which two ceramic pipes were observed to lead. The ground make-up proved to be very loose, causing collapse within the trench, which rendered further recording impossible.

6.2.8 North of Cloisters – Trenches 2, 11a, 12, 57.

Trench 2 was excavated to locate a drain junction to the northwest of the Hall and measured 2.75m long, by 2m wide and 2m deep. Examination of the trench sections showed the ground make-up to consist of a 0.5m deep topsoil layer, overlying orange/brown, sandy clay with ironstone fragments (2). A thin layer of stone 'chippings' (1) was located within context (2), and produced brick fragments upon investigation. The natural geological substratum, consisting of orange/ brown clay and ironstone, was reached at a depth of 1m below the ground surface. No archaeological deposits were located within this trench.

Trench 11a was an east/west drainage trench, located immediately to the north of the Cloisters, measuring 1m wide and 1.9m deep. The trench sections revealed the ground make-up to consist of a 0.5m layer of topsoil, overlying a layer of orange brown clay and ironstone to the maximum depth. No archaeological deposits were located during the excavation of this trench.

Trench 12 consisted of an excavation for a manhole, located to the northeast of the Cloisters. The trench section revealed a thin layer of dark, greyish brown topsoil, overlying subsoil consisting of orange/brown sandy clay and measuring 0.5m deep. Beneath the subsoil was a layer of mortar (14), approximately 0.2m deep, containing fragments of slate, which overlay a layer of possible demolition rubble (13), consisting of brick and stone fragments in a gritty, reddish brown, silty clay matrix. No dating evidence was located in association with these contexts.

Trench 57 consisted of an area of ground reduction, located to the west of the Cloisters. The existing level was reduced by 0.25m, involving the removal of modern overburden to reveal heavily disturbed ground, cut through by earlier trenches and services.

6.2.9 Road in Village – Trenches 28, 32.

Trench 28 consisted of a long drainage trench, linking the Nevill Holt services to a treatment tank located to the west of the Hall, following the line of the road to the west of the church. The trench measured 0.64m wide and was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.83m and the trench section revealed a layer of tarmac and base hardcore, of c. 0.20m depth, overlying a layer of orange/brown sandy clay, with ironstone fragments. At a distance of 10m to the south of the junction of Trench 28 with Trench 27, a layer of dark brown clay containing ironstone fragments, small rounded pebbles and charcoal flecking, measuring 0.10m deep was observed to overlie the orange/brown sandy clay, running for approximately 7m towards the south. No finds were obtained from this layer.

Trench 32 was excavated for the provision of telephone cables and was located to the northeast of the Hall, aligned east/west. The trench measured 0.4m wide and was excavated to a depth of c. 0.55m. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation.

6.2.10 North of Barn – Trench 1.

Trench 1 was located to the east of Nevill Holt Hall and consisted of a trial trench, excavated adjacent to a barn, measuring approximately 6.1m long, by 3.1m wide and 0.95m deep. The trench sections revealed the ground make-up to consist of a 0.55m deep layer of dark brown, silty clay topsoil, overlying 0.25m of yellowish, orange/brown, silty clay subsoil. The natural substratum consisted of yellow clay, with grey mottling. No archaeological deposits were noted during the excavation.

7. Discussion

Room 44

Room 44, formerly the servants' hall, is thought to have been constructed around 1600 (Hill, 1990, 275). Although the modern floor level consisted of a concrete base for wooden flooring material, the presence of an earlier flagstone floor, as indicated by the recovery of a large flagstone from Test pit 10 of the evaluation, was further suggested by two stone slabs located beneath a blocked doorway apparent in the eastern wall of the room, revealed during the excavation of Trench 38. The series of brick plinths located during the initial phase of ground reduction, are likely to be a continuation of the brick walls seen during the evaluation, which were identified at this time as supporting sleepers for the flagstone flooring. The remains of a possible beaten earth floor (80) located beneath the level of the flagstones, may represent an earlier phase of the present building.

Rooms 46 and 49

Two trenches excavated within Room 46 failed to locate further evidence of the low-level walls located within Test-pit 4 of the evaluation, which were thought to have served as a means of raising the floor surface and preventing ground damp in this former kitchen area. Medieval pottery located within a possible pit, cut through the natural ironstone (Trench 18) is possibly representative of domestic activity predating the present build, which was added during the 18th century (Hill 1977, 78).

Three pipe trenches excavated within Room 49, the former scullery located to the east of the kitchen, revealed a layer of sandy clay beneath the modern concrete flooring, which was evident across the room, yielding fragments of animal bone.

Room 25 (Great Hall)

The Great Hall is acknowledged as the earliest standing phase of Nevill Holt Hall, and has been dated to c.1280 (Hill 1990). The present flooring material consists of stone flags, of probable post-medieval or modern origin beneath which there was thought to be some potential for the survival of archaeological deposits relating to earlier phases of the present building, although the results of the evaluation concluded that such deposits may have suffered disturbance due to the presence of previously excavated service trenches and heating ducts. However, the full extent of such disturbance is not known and it is likely that important archaeological deposits, relating to the development of one of the earliest surviving medieval halls, may survive intact in areas which have not been previously disturbed. In the light of this, following discussions with the on-site contractors, it was agreed that groundworks within the Great Hall should be kept to a minimum.

The groundworks undertaken within the Great Hall were therefore limited to four narrow trenches, excavated to very shallow depths and as such did not offer an adequate window into the presence/absence of archaeological deposits, revealing instead a ubiquitous sand and mortar layer, thought to be bedding material for the flagstone flooring. A possible post-hole seen within Trench 37 may be taken as early structural evidence; however, given the absence of any datable material from the deposit and the high level of disturbance caused by a modern heating duct, the reliable interpretation of this feature is difficult.

Room North of Wine Cellar (Dairy)

Ground reduction within the former Dairy revealed evidence of an earlier mortar floor surface, overlying a layer of sandy clay and ironstone, through which a number of post-holes and stakeholes were observed to cut. Although only one of the cut features, post-hole (30), produced dating evidence, in the form of medieval pottery, it seems likely that these truncated deposits represent the remains of earlier structures within the former dairy. The form or function, however, of any structure that these deposits may represent is not clear- although they appear to fall into clusters, the spatial arrangement of the post-holes does not suggest any coherent patterning (Fig. 4).

Glazed Link

A number of trenches excavated in advance of the construction of a new glazed link between the Dining Room and Kitchen revealed no evidence of archaeological remains within this area, which proved to have been previously disturbed by a number of services and earlier groundworks associated with the underpinning of external walls.

North of Room 49

Ground reduction to the rear of the Kitchen and Scullery revealed a series of wall footings that were thought to represent the remains of lean-to green houses that were believed to have been demolished in recent times. No dating evidence was obtained from either the wall footings, nor from the traces of a mortar surface that was apparently associated with them, although greenhouses still standing within the rear gardens, of probable Victorian or Georgian date, demonstrated a similar layout to the remains found.



Plate 12: Surviving lean-to greenhouse within rear garden.

An isolated stretch of ironstone walling, located further to the south (45; Trench 23), appeared to be unrelated to the probable greenhouse footings, representing instead, perhaps, an earlier retaining garden wall, reflecting a change in the past layout of the rear gardens.

The West Wing

Drainage trenches located around the southern perimeter of the west wing located a number of walls that were thought to represent the remains of early garden walls. The most impressive of these was Wall (10), which was revealed during the excavation of the junction between Trenches 10 and 11 and, measuring 1.3m in width, would appear to represent the remains of a fairly substantial structure. The 1661 plan of Nevill Holt (Fig. 13), depicting an earlier layout for the west wing, indicates the presence of a gatehouse structure, noted as the 'Blew: gates', in the vicinity of the remains found. Although the plan does not provide any detail about the actual form of the structure

present at this time, it is interesting to note that Wall (10) is apparently on the same alignment as the gatehouse depicted and at an angle of 90° to the estate boundary (Fig. 14). However, given the limitations of the excavated trenches, it is not possible at this time to establish a relationship between the wall located and any remains of a gatehouse structure which may survive further to the west.

South of Great Hall

Extensive remains of cobbled surfaces were located during the stripping of gravel to the south of the building, in front of the main entrance to the hall (Figs. 8-11). Although no dating evidence was produced during the cleaning of the surfaces, the plan of 1661 shows a series of court and stable yards (Figs. 13 & 14), which would presumably have been cobbled, to have existed within this area at that time. Cobble divisions within the surfaces found may have been put in place for purely aesthetic purposes, or they may represent sub-divisions in the use of the courtyard areas. They do not appear to correspond, however, with the courtyard boundaries depicted on the early plan which are likely to represent more substantial wall structures and may represent instead the divisions between, for example, footpaths and vehicular trackways.

Northwest of Hall

A surviving segment of a demolished wall, aligned east/west and yielding no dating evidence, was located within Trench 6 and was thought to represent the remains of a retaining garden wall.

The substantial wall remains (17) located within Trench 16a, to the north of Room 33 appear to correspond exactly with the boundary wall shown on the plan of 1661 (Figs. 13 & 14), leading northwards from the former laundry to enclose an orchard to the rear of the Cloisters. The remains located consisted of two courses of mortared sandstone and limestone, built upon a rubble foundation, but had suffered considerable damage during machining and it was not possible to establish the true dimensions of the remains found, nor indeed the alignment of the wall represented by the remains. Although no dating evidence was obtained, it seems likely that Wall (17) does represent the remains of the 1661 orchard boundary.

The remains of two possible surfaces, (19) and (20) were located during the excavation of Trench 19. These may relate to the former Brewhouse, which is marked on the plan of 1661 and was not demolished until the 19th century (Hill, 1999, 275).

8. Archive

8.1 The archive consists of site notes, trench recording sheets, context sheets, colour slides, monochrome prints, digital survey data and two boxes of finds and will be held by the Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services Section under the accession number X.A132.2002.

9. Conclusion

The programme of groundworks finally undertaken during the refurbishment of Nevill Holt Hall, proved to be far more extensive than was initially indicated during the primary planning process, affecting areas that were not subject to archaeological evaluation prior to disturbance. Although the groundworks caused mainly localised disturbance within the immediate vicinity of the trenches excavated, the lack of any prior archaeological evaluation renders the interpretation of the archaeological evidence encountered very difficult. The results of the watching brief have, however, served to provide some baseline data on the nature of the deposits present, within and around the building, which may be used to inform any future planning decisions.

10. Publication

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

11. Bibliography

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12. Acknowledgements

12.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Sally Anne Smith, with further visits made by Jennifer Browning, Sandie Bush, Sophie Clarke, Meredith Collins, Vicki Priest and Gavin Speed. The project was managed by Richard Buckley. Thanks to David Ross, to Bob Grinstead, Dermot, Mark and Chris (of Marriot Construction) and to Michael Slaney and David Lenehan (of HNW construction) for their assistance and co-operation during this project.

Sophie Clarke
University of Leicester Archaeological Services,
School of Archaeology and Ancient History,
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester,
LE1 7RH.

Tel: 0116 2231848
E-mail: sjc46@le.ac.uk

Appendix I: Location of Trenches

Trench No	Contexts	Location
1		Orchard area c.5m n of barn
2	1, 2,	North of cloisters
3		North of Room 49 - exterior
4	3	"
5	4	Room 49 and adjacent room - interior
6	5	North of Hall- Inspection chamber 6B
7		Room 49 – interior
8		"
9	6	Room 46
10	7,8,9,10 (wall), 11(wall?), 12(wall?)	In front of Room 8 – exterior
11		West wing
12	13, 14(mortar)	In front of cloisters – exterior
13		South & west of west wing
14		Room to east of cloisters – interior
15		"
16	15(surrounds wall), 16(wall)	North of Hall –joins Tr.6 to Tr.11
16a	17 (wall)	"
17		North of dining room – joins to IC10?
18	18 (pit?)	Room 46
19	19(burnt), 20(wall)	North of Room 46 – exterior
20		North of Room 34 – IC14F to tower
21		North of Room 33 – IC14F to wall
22	49	North of Rooms 49, 46 – kitchen gdn
22a		"
	21(wall),22(fill),23(fill),24(f) 25(f),26(f),27(f),28(f),29(f), 30(f.of p/h),31((f),32(f.of p/h),33(f.of p/h),34(f.of pit) 35(f),36(floor),37(f?),38(f), 39(f),40(cut p/p),41(cut pit) 43(f),44(f),75(f),76(f),77(f), 78(f),79(f)	Former Dairy
23	45(wall),47(burnt),48,50,51, 52,53,54,55	Kitchen garden
23 ext	67,69(footings)	"
24	42,46	North of Room 46 – joins Tr.23 to 25
25		North of dining room– joins Trs.19,24
	56,57(burnt)	Room 44
	58,59,60,61(mortar)	Room 23 – library
	62,63,64(culvert),65(floor), 66(fill?)	Link 43
	72(fill/clean)	Gt.Hall
	84,92	Glazed Link

26		Links Trs.25 to 19 North of Room 46
27		North of boiler room-joins Tr.23
28		Road in village
29		North of Room 41
30		"
31	68	West side of Hall-exterior.Joins to 11
32		Road crossing north of Hall
32a		North of Wine Cellar
33		Below staircase in Gt.Hall
34	70,71,94(mortar)	East of west wing
35		North of Hall and Tr.6
36		Gt.Hall – west wall
37	73(f.of p/h),74(cut)	Gt.Hall – south wall
38	80,81,82,83(pit?)	Room 44
39		Gt.Hall – east to north wall
40		Room 44
41		"
42		Courtyard north of Room 41 – exterior
43		" - east to west
44		" - southwest to northeast
45		Glazed Link – exterior
46		Gt.Hall north wall
47		Rooms 44,46 – underpinning
48		"
49		"
50		"
51		"
52		Room 46 west wall nw to IC10
53		North of dining room IC10 to se
54	84	Underpin – joins Trs.47 to 49
55		" joins Trs.48 to 50
56	85,86(burnt),87(burnt),88	Stable block pond area
57	Sect.78	North of Room 16, W.of cloisters
58		South of Oriel window, west of porch
59	93 (S.79 sheet 29)	Front drive, joins to Tr.58
60	Sect.80	Glazed link area
61	Sect.81	South of west wing, front drive
62	Plan 24, sheet 34	Glazed link
63	92 (Plan 25, sheet 34)	Glazed link
64	Page 96	Glazed link
65	"	"
66	"	"
67	"	"
68	Plan 26, Sect.83, Sheet 35	" ground reduction
	89, 90(f), 91,	Front drive
	95(core of wall)	Rooms 17/18

Appendix II : List of Contexts

Context No.	Above	Below	Trench/Room No.	Description	Finds
1	Within	2	Tr.2	Stoney layer	CBM EA Brick
2	Nat.	topsoil	Tr.2	Orange/brown slightly sandy clay & ironstone	
3	Nat.	Mod.	Tr.4	Yellow/O/brown sandy clay	Med.pot 14th c, bone
4		Floor	Tr.5 Room 49	Orange/brown sandy clay	Post-med pot, bone
5		Wall	Tr.6	Yellowish brown clay	Late Saxon pot
6		Rubble	Tr.9 Room 46	Orange/brown sandy clay	Bone
7	9	Drive	Tr.10	Orange/brown sandy clay	Bone,EA brick
8	9	7	Tr.10	Lt.Brown/cream mortar	EABrick, ridge tile13th C, mortar
9	Nat.	8	Tr.10	Orange/brown sandy clay	
10			Tr.10	Wall with brn loam	Med.pot 13/14th c
11		O/Bclay	Tr.10	Wall? Tumble	
12		Mod.	Tr.10	Poss.wall	
13	Nat.	14	Tr.12	Rubble	EA brick
14	13	Sandy clay	Tr.12	Mortar layer below sandy clay below top.	
15			Tr.16	Brown clay surrounding stones to wall (16)	13/14th c pot
16		15	Tr.16	Ironstone wall, loose, not mortar	
17			Tr.16b	Wall	
18			Tr.18 room 46	Poss.pit fill brn/yellow clay, charcoal,ashy	Roman pot, bone
19	Stone floor		Tr.19	Burnt black coal-like layer	Glass, bone
20			Tr.19	Wall	
21			Tr.22	Wall	EA mod Pot glass, CBM, clay pipe, mortar
22			Dairy	Stakehole filled with O/B clay, occ.coal	Bone, clay pipe
23			Dairy	Stakehole filled with orange brown clay & coal	
24			Dairy	Stakehole filled with coal frags & clay	Coal bitumous
25			Dairy	As above	
26			Dairy	Stakehole containing decayed wood	

27	41		Dairy	Stakehole filled with coal and clay	
28	29		Dairy	Brown, burnt clay & ironstone.	
29	41		Dairy	Red/brown decayed wood	
30			Dairy	Posthole fill green/grey sandy silt, occ.charcoal	Green glazed pot c.14th C, bone
31			Dairy	Burnt red patch sandy silt. Shallow depression	
32			Dairy	Posthole fill greenish grey sandy silt	Bones
33			Dairy	Posthole fill greenish grey sandy silt	
34			Dairy	Pit? fill brown clay shallow depression	Bones, glass
35	40		Dairy	Post-pad/pit fill orange brown ironstone and clay, soft, loose	
36	40	37	Dairy	Floor, beaten earth covering pit [40].	
37	38	36	Dairy	Cream coloured decayed stone.	
38	39	37	Dairy	Post-pad fill[40] burnt layer contains wood	
39	Slates	38	Dairy	[40] fill reddish brown clay & stone occ.burnt	
40		44	Dairy	Cut of post-pad.	
41		28,29	Dairy	Cut of pit	
42	Burnt bricks	Brown clay	Tr.24	Brown clay & burnt material.	Glass
43	44	39	Dairy	[40] 2 roof slates as layer in post pad.	Roof slates
44	40	43	Dairy	[40] stone slab in base of post pad	
45	46		Tr.23	Wall (ironstone). Freq.charcoal	
46	47	45	Tr.23	Yellow/brown clay, charcoal, coal frags.	
47	48	46	Tr.23	Black burnt ashy layer within (48)?	Bone, shell brick
48	49	47	Tr.23	Yellowish brown clay, charcoal	
49		48	Tr.22	Yellow brown clay, charcoal	
50			Tr.23	Compacted stone & brick layer -- burnt?	
51	O/Brn	Dk.g/brn	Tr.23	Platey stone layer nr.wall	Tile?

52	46	51	Tr.23	Yellow brown clay, charcoal, brick, mortar	Y
53		54	Tr.23	Grey/brn silty clay, charcoal	Shell, bone
54	53	52	Tr.23	Yellow/brn silty sandy clay, brick, mortar, charcoal, ironstone	Med.pot/tile with green glaze
55	46	Stone mod.	Tr.23	Yellow/brn slightly sandy clay, mortar, charcoal, brick	Tile, glass
56	57	Floor	Room 44	Brown sandy rubble	Leather?
57		56	Room 44	Black charcoal lumps, rakings?	Bone, slag?
58			Trench 29/30	Dk.grey silty sand, mortar, charcoal	
59		60	Trench 29/30	Orange/brn clay	
60	59		Trench 29/30	Rubble, wood, mortar, plaster, mod.	
61	59	58	Trench 29/30	Mortar layer	
62		Floor	Link 43	Rubble	Glass, shell, pot
63	64		Link	Brown sandy rubble inside culver	Glass
64		65	Link	Brick culvert (large) beneath floor in link	
65	64	62	Link	Beaten earth floor y/b clay.	Shells
66	65	62	Link	Fill of beam slot	
67			Tr.23 ext	Clean up layer	Y
68			Tr.31	Dk.brown loam, burnt. Charcoal, roots, stone	Shell, brick
69			Tr.23 ext	Orange/brn clay & stones – footings	
70		71	Tr.34	Brown silty sandy clay. Brick, mortar, stone	Glass
71	70	Topsoil	Tr.34	Brown silty, slightly sandy clay. Plaster /mortar	Flint, pot
72	Pipeduct	Floor	Gt.Hall	Rubbly layer inside brick pipe conduit	3 old pennies
73	74	Floor	Gt.Hall	Post-hole fill - brown sandy loam, mortar, stone,	Bone, shell
74	Duct	73	Gt.Hall	Cut of post-hole	
75				Stakehole fill – black coal & brn clay.	
76			Dairy	Stakehole fill – degraded limestone	
77			Dairy	Stakehole fill – black coal & brn clay.	
78			Dairy	Stakehole fill – black coal, solid	

79			Dairy	Stakehole fill –dk.red brn wood	
80	Degraded stone	Rubble floor	Room 44	Brown slightly sandy clay.charcoal brick,stone,mortar.	Smf 1 – metal token
81	82	80	Room 44	Degraded ironstone	
82		81	Room 44	Yellowish brn sandy clay. Charcoal	
83		80	Room 44	Poss.fill of pit.dk.brn clay slightly silty, cess?	Pot,bone, flesh?
84	Nat.		Glazed link	Grey/brn sandy clay, occ.stones,brick,mortar	
85	88	Turf	Tr.56 (pond)	Dk.brown loam, topsoil contains (86+7)	
86		Turf	Tr.56	Burnt red patch	
87	88	Turf	Tr.56	Burnt blk patch	
88		85	Tr.56	Subsoil covering area below concrete pond	
89		Concrete	Footpath nr stableblock	Yellow/brn silty clay, bricks,ironstone,limestone	Pancheon
90			Front drive	Fill of drain-orange/brn sandy silt, ironstone, charcoal	Animal bone, shell, tile
91			Front drive	Rubble overburden – orangey brown	Glass,pancheon Bone, china
92			Glazed link	Backfill from under – pinning.mortar,plaster,brick Charcoal.	Alabaster? moulding
93		Cobbles	Front drive	Brown silty clay. Charcoal	Finds
94	Yb clay	Yb clay	Tr.34	Mortar layer. Brick frags	
95	Wall	Wall	Room 17/18	Core of wall	Finds

Appendix III: The pottery, ridge tile and miscellaneous finds from a series of watching briefs at Nevill Holt Hall, Leicestershire.

D. Sawday

The ceramic finds from the watching briefs comprised sixty sherds of pottery, weighing 1.803 kg., eleven fragments of medieval ridge tile, weighing seven hundred and sixty nine grams and a fragment, weighing seventy six grams, of what is thought to be a post medieval curved roof tile. Whilst some modern material was discarded, twenty eight pieces of coarse building material, predominantly brick, weighing 1.164 kg, were also recovered from the site.

The Pottery and Ridge Tile

Both the pottery and medieval ridge tile was examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999), and the results are given below (tables 1 and 2).

Fabric/Ware	Sherd Nos.	% by no.	Weight Grams	% by weight	Av. Sherd Weight
Roman					
MO – Mortarium ware	1		16		
Sub Total	1	1.6	16	0.8	16.0
Late Saxon					
ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	1		7		
ST1 – Developed Stamford ware	1		14		
Sub Total	2	3.3	21	1.1	10.5
Medieval/Early Post Medieval					
LY1 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 1	17		671		39.4
LY4 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 4	7		243		34.7
TG – Tudor Green type/Surrey Whiteware	1		3		3.0
FR/CL – Frechen/Cologne Stoneware	2		84		42
Sub Total	27	45.0	1001	55.5	37.0
Post Medieval/Modern					
EA2 – Earthenware 2/n	11		528		48.0
EA5 – Imitation Mottled ware	2		8		4.0
EA6 – Blackware	1		1		1.0
EA7 – Slipware	1		2		2.0
EA9/EA10/EA – Modern & Unclassified Earthenwares	12		84		7.0
SW5/SW – Modern & Unclassified Stonewares	3		142		47.3
Sub Total	30	50.0	765	42.4	25.5
Totals	60	99.9	1803	99.8	

Table 1: The pottery totals by fabric, sherd numbers, and weight (grams).

The Stratigraphic Record

The earliest pottery, from the fill of a pit, context 18, is a fragment from the base of a Roman mortarium, and is possibly a Nene Valley product, dated from the second to the fourth century AD. Two sherds of late Saxon Stamford ware were found in the wall, trench 6, context 5 and in topsoil, context 85.

The sherd from the latter context and the Roman fragment are both residual in contexts which also contained Stanion Lyveden type ware dating from the 13th or 14th centuries. Stanion Lyveden type ware pottery or ridge tile with a similar date range was also identified in the wall, trench 10, contexts 10, and contexts 15 and 51 also associated with walls in trenches 16 and 23, and contexts 80 and 83 in room 44. A residual sherd of pottery in the same fabric was found in context 54

The fill of the post hole in room 11, context 30, produced a sherd of Tudor Green type ware or Surrey Whiteware dating from *circa* 1400, whilst the topsoil in trench 34, context 71 and the core of the wall associated with rooms 17 and 18, context 95, contained fragments of Rhenish Stoneware, probably Frechen or Cologne, dating from the 16th century. However, the latter is apparently residual in a context which also produced a fragment of bottle glass probably dating from the later 17th or 18th centuries. Possibly residual ridge tile, dating from the mid 13th century or later, in a Medieval Sandy ware, occurred in contexts 8 and 90 together with post medieval pottery or coarse building material. Four sherds of unclassified pottery, probably post medieval or modern in date, occurred in contexts 47 and 52.

The Pottery Record

Although only a small sample, the range of late Saxon and medieval pottery and ridge tile fabrics and forms present is typical of this part of the country. The fabrics reflect the essentially local nature of pottery and tile production and distribution during this period, both Stamford and the Stanion Lyveden kilns represent major centres for the production of ceramics during the late Saxon and medieval periods respectively.

Conclusions

The two late Saxon sherds are evidence of activity in the vicinity, and may be associated with the manor house which is known to have existed on the site by 1302 (Pevsner 1984, 330). The relatively large average sherd weight of 37.0 grams for the medieval and early post medieval pottery, much of which dates from the 13th or 14th centuries, suggests that at least some of this material is primary refuse, notably from the fill of two pits, contexts 18 and 83, evidently associated with the core of the present house, the hall, which is thought to date from the 14th century (*ibid.* 1984). Whilst medieval pottery is not generally a sensitive indicator of status, and the vessel forms recorded here are typically domestic in nature, one interesting fragment, a continental import in Rhenish Stoneware, dating from the early to mid 16th century, with applied botanical relief decoration, (Hurst *et al* 1987, 208-209) was recovered from the topsoil.

Fabric/Ware	Fragment Number	Weight Grams	Average Fragment Weight
LY1, LY - Stanion Lyveden type ware 1 & Unclassified	5	462	92.4
MS – Medieval Sandy ware	6	307	51.1
Totals	11	769	69.9

Table 2: The medieval ridge tile totals by fabric, fragment numbers, and weight (grams).

The Miscellaneous Finds

Also present were eleven pieces of clay pipe, predominantly stem fragments, but two pipe bowls, thought to date from the later 17th century were also identified in unstratified contexts associated with room 17 and the front drive.

Sixty fragments of glass were also recovered, the identifiable pieces included several wine bottles of later 18th or 19th century date from context 91, whilst unstratified contexts in rooms 11-12 contained fragments of possible onion or mallet shaped wine bottles dating from the later 17th or 18th century, (Banks 1997). A single bottle fragment, from the core of the wall adjacent to rooms 17 and 18, may be of a similar date.

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Pottery Catalogue

Site/Parish: Nevill Holt Hall, Leics. Accession No/ Doc Ref: XA132 2002/nevillholt1 Material: pot & misc. finds Site Type: manor house/hall	Submitter: S. Smith Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Id: 26.08.03 Method of Recovery: watching briefs
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context	fabric/ware	sherd nos.	weigh t grams	comments
POTTERY				
T4 3	LY1 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 1	2	75	Joins, simple, everted, jar rim, 14th C.
R22 4	EA2 – Earthenware 2	1	68	Right angled bowl rim, glazed, later 17th/18th C.
T6 5	ST1 – Developed Stamford ware	1	14	Body sherd, light sooting ext., splashes of thin lead glaze, outer surface broken off & abraded, and heavily sooted, 1150-1250.
10 wall	LY1	1	19	?jug body, decorated with applied white clay strips under glaze, 13th – 14th C.
T16 15 wall	LY1	1	11	Squared bowl rim, with inscribed wavy line decoration on int wall & vertical outer edge or rim, 13th – 14th C.
T18 18 pit	MO – Mortarium ware	1	16	Roman, base with foot ring, possibly Nene Valley, 2nd – 4th C. AD.

T18 18	LY4 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 4	6	234	Two sherds join, all hand made & sooted ext. Two jars with everted and inturned rims, one bowl with double ribbed rim. The latter is dated at Stanion (Bellamy 1983, fig.4, 33,35) from the later 13th or 14th C.
21	EA - Earthenware	2	4	Modern
30	TG – Tudor Green ware or type ware/Surrey Whiteware	1	3	Thumbed handle base, 1400+
47	EA	2	8	Fine sandy fabric, ?post medieval/modern
52	EA	2	20	As 47.
54	LY1	1	8	Glazed, 13th – 14th C.
54	EA2	1	22	Post med/modern
62	SW5 Brown Salt Glazed Stoneware	1	50	Lid, modern
T23 ext. 67	EA2	2	163	Wide mouthed bowl or pancheon, post med or modern
71	?FR/CL – Frechen/Cologne Stoneware	1	7	With applied botanical relief dec in the form of acorns (Jennings 1981, fig.48.784 & 785), ?early to mid 16th C (Gaimster 1987), (Hurst <i>et al</i> 1986, 208-209).
R44 83 pit	LY1	10	518	Profile, upper half of green glazed jug, with simple upright rim & stabbed rod handle, finger or stick pushed out lower wall to affix handle base to body, 13th – 14th C.
T56 85	ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	1	7	Knife trimmed & sooted ext., 1050-1200.
89	EA2	3	82	Post med/modern
89	SW5	1	40	Modern
90	EA2	1	66	Bowl rim, post med/modern
91	EA2	2	95	
91	EA7 - Slipware	1	2	Press moulded dish, 17th – 18th C.+
91	EA10 – White Earthenware	1	6	Modern
95	CL – Cologne Stoneware	1	77	Wire cut jug base,

				diameter 120 mm, 16th C.
T4 U/S	EA	3	20	Join. Fabric as 47 and 52 above, but internally glazed brown
T4 U/S	EA10	1	18	Profile cup or bowl, ?first half of 19th C.
T5 U/S	LY1	1	6	Green glazed
T6 U/S	LY4	1	9	Sooted ext.
T16 U/S	EA2	1	32	
T16 U/S	SW - Stoneware	1	52	?post medieval, probably English, brown salt glazed
T23 U/S	EA5 - Imitation Mottled ware	2	8	Post med.
T23 U/S	EA6 - Blackware	1	1	Post med.
T54 U/S	?LY1	1	34	Unusually pale buff sandy fabric, upright, simple jug rim, with horizontal iron rich strip applied just under rim top, firing brown under green glaze.
T56 U/S	?EA9 - Pearlware	1	8	Modern
MEDIEVAL RIDGE TILE				
T10 8	MS - Medieval Sandy ware	2	7	Brown glaze, fine sandy, similar to r. tile from 90 below.
51, near wall	?LY	1	78	Green glazed, ?red iron ore & sparse white inclusions
R44 80	LY1	3	350	'join' - green glazed
85	LY1	1	34	Green glazed
90	MS	1	25	Evidence of glaze, quite highly fired, angular quartz and ?red iron ore ?later med.
T4 U/S	MS	1	65	Green glazed, fabric similar to the above.
T11 U/S	MS	1	126	Very fine sandy fabric, glaze spots
T23 U/S	MS	1	84	'Metallic' brown glaze, highly fired coarse sandy ware
?CURVED ROOF TILE				
T28 U/S	EA	1	76	Unusually thick for a roof tile, one inch (24 mm) thick, sandy fabric, metallic black glaze, possibly a late Bourne type ware, 1450-1650.
COARSE BUILDING MATERIAL				

T2 1	EA - Earthenware	1	118	Brick
T12 7	EA	1	13	
T10 8	EA	3	30	
T12 13	EA	1	315	Brick, 2 ¾ inches (68 mm) thick
21	EA	1	52	
47	EA	2	27	
50	EA	2	56	
53	EA	1	6	
57	EA	1	68	
68	EA	4	240	Brick
86	EA	2	10	(+ mod – not kept)
89	EA	1	13	
T59 93	EA	2	22	
T34 94	EA	2	132	Bricks
T6 U/S	EA	1	16	
T10 U/S	EA	1	12	
T47 U/S	EA	1	22	
T57 U/S	EA	1	12	
CLAY PIPE				
21	China clay	1		Stem
22		1		Stem
57		1		Stem
62		1		Stem
T56 86		1		Stem, unusual fabric with lumps of ?red iron ore
T56 87		1		Stem
T 59 93		1		Stem
T22 U/S		1		Bowl and stem with raised scalloping on bowl and on spur, 19th C.
R17 U/S		1		Fragment of bowl, ?late 17th C.
R44 U/S		1		Stem
Front drive U/S		1		Bowl and stem, late 17th C.
GLASS				Probably mostly Victorian
T19 19		1		
21		3		Includes the rim of a 19th – 20th C. mineral water bottle.
34		1		
42		1		
47		1		
57		3		Blown bottle rim, with string rim and neck, 19th C.

62		8		
63		1		Undecorated goblet base
70		2		
T48 84		1		
T56 85		1		
T56 86		4		
T56 87		1		
90		1		
91		2		Blown cylindrical wine bottles in a thick walled, dark yellowish green glass, with pronounced kick ups in base, and one with pontil marks. ? Later 18th – 19th C.
91		1		Moulded base
95		1		Bottle glass, 4-10 mm thick, yellow green, ?Later 17th -19th C.
Near T3 U/S		1		
T4 U/S		1		
T10 U/S		2		Thick bottle glass, ?later 18th-19th C.
T11 U/S		1		Bottle base with kick up, 17th C.
T23 U/S		1		
T47 U/S, under pinning		1		Window glass with rolled edge, 2 mm thick
T54 U/S		1		?bottle glass base, square in plan, possibly an 18th or early 19th C cased gin (Hedges 1988, 8-9).
T60, foundation trench		1		Bottle glass, ?later 18th-19th C.
R11-12 U/S		10		Bottle glass, including two bases with kick ups, possibly from later 17th or 18th C. onion or mallet shaped wine bottles and a wine bottle rim, probably of a similar date (Banks 1997). Possible pontil marks obscured by mortar.
R17 U/S clean up		1		Bottle glass with kick up
R17 U/S		1		Bottle rim & neck with

				cork, Victorian
R17 U/S		4		
R44 U/S		2		
MISC				
U/S		1		slate

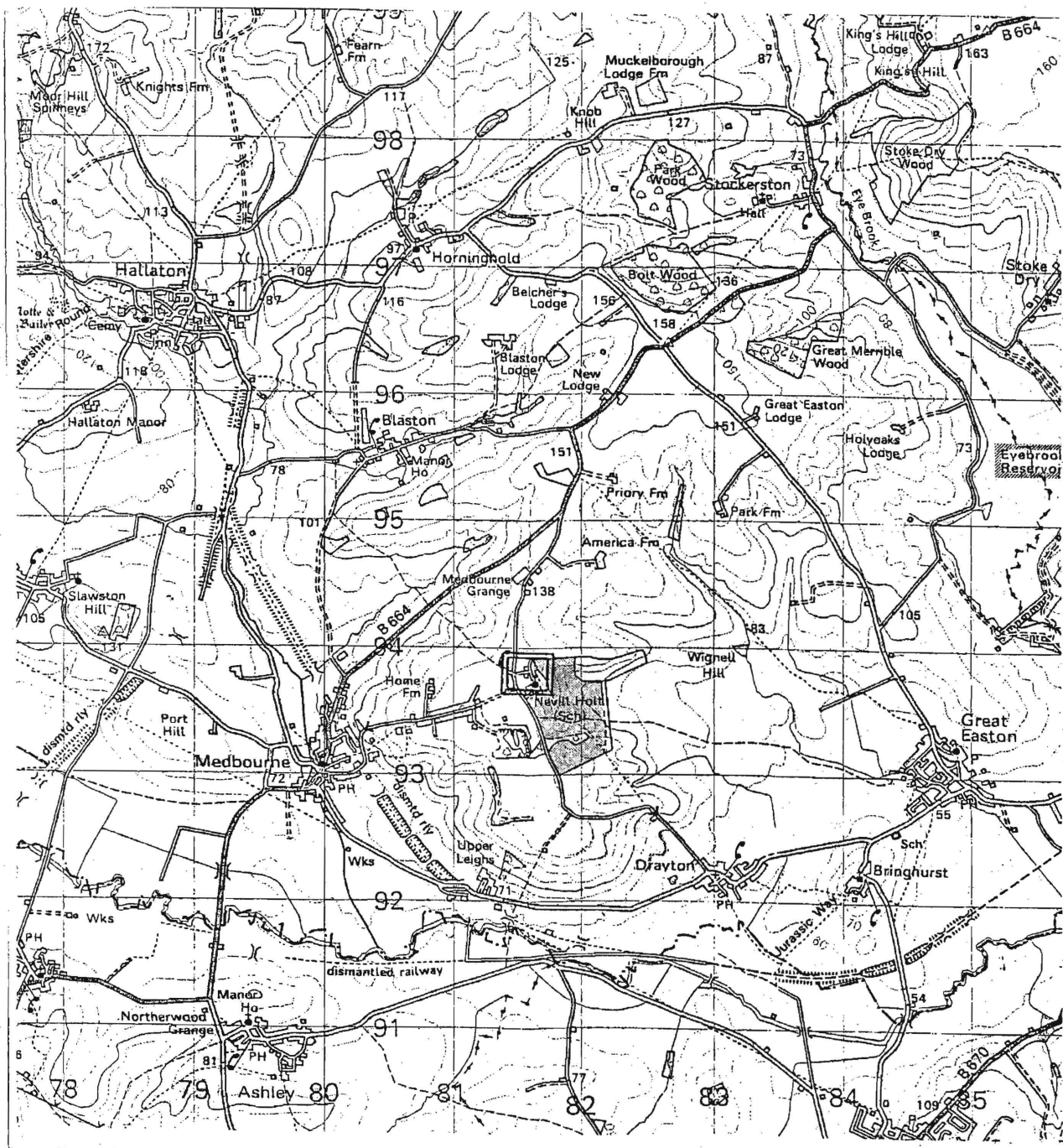


Figure 1. Location of Nevill Holt Hall. Scale 1:50000

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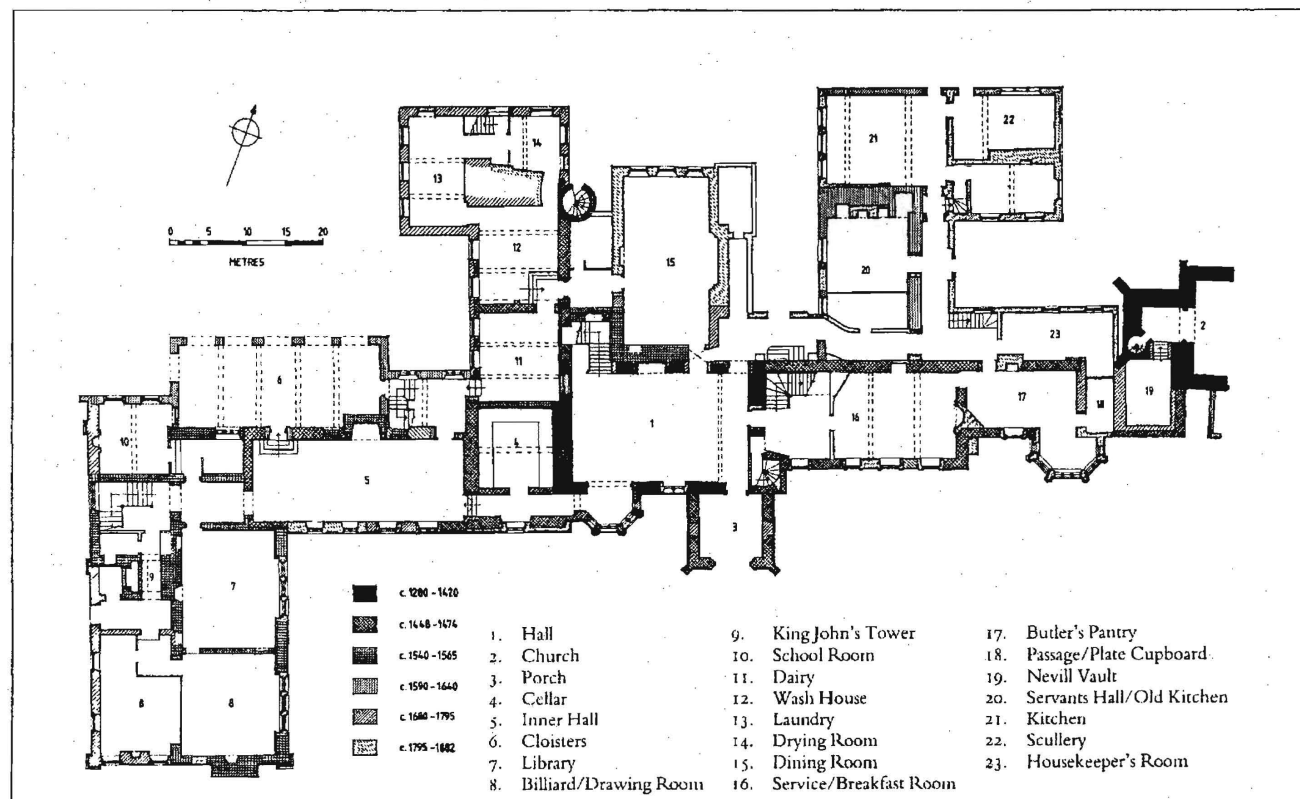


Figure 2. Ground floor plan (after N. Hill 1999, 247).

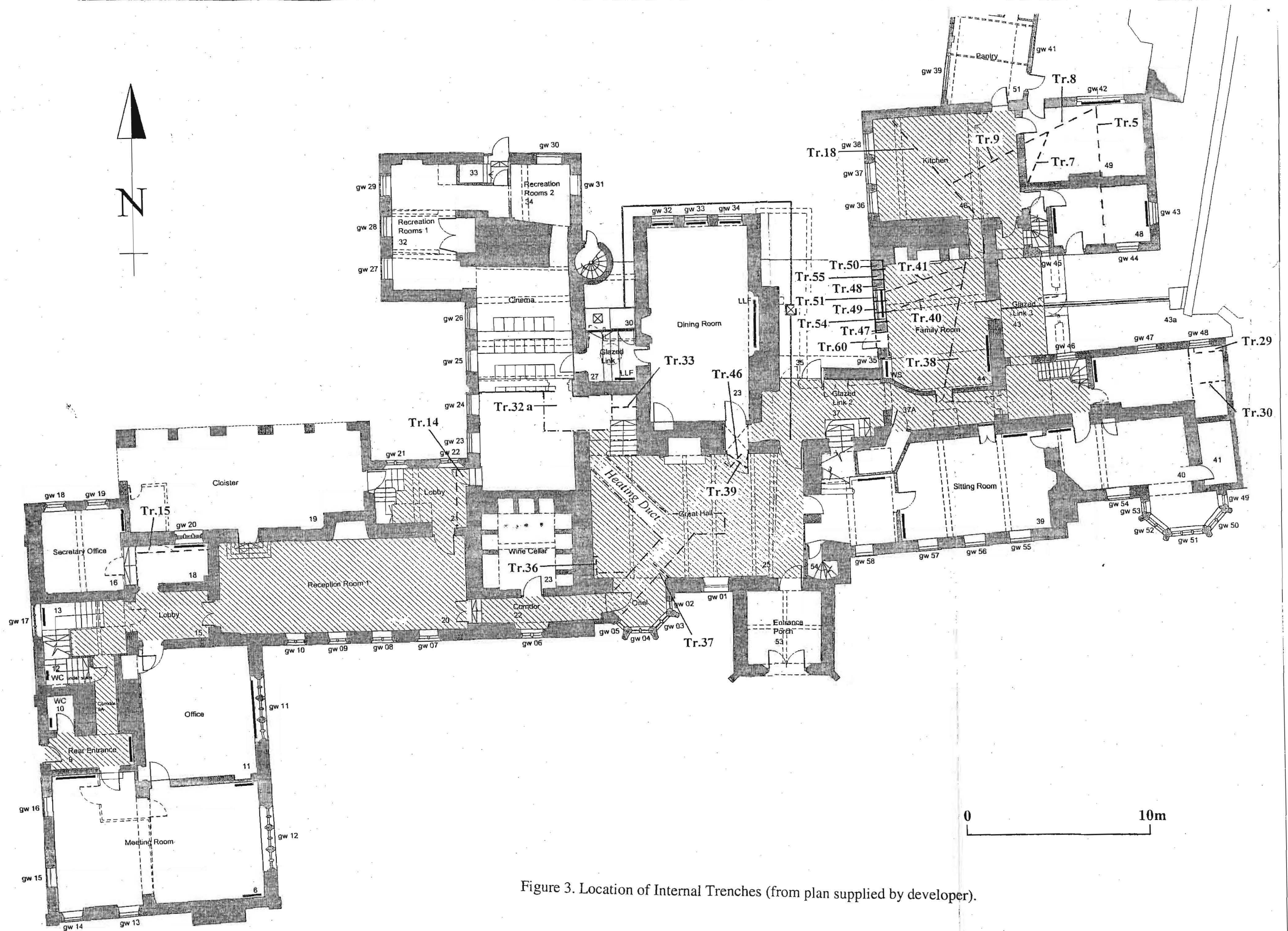


Figure 3. Location of Internal Trenches (from plan supplied by developer).

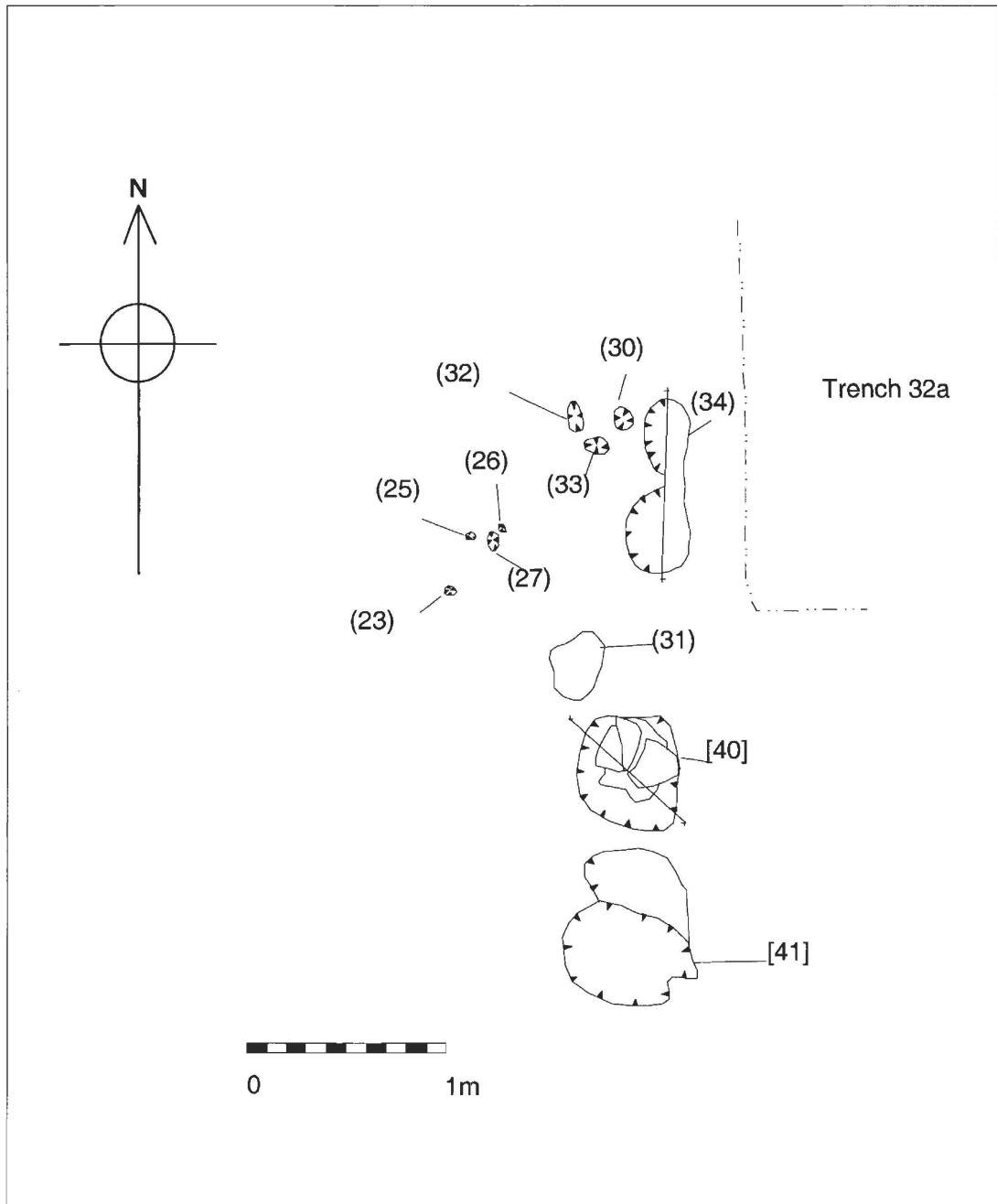


Figure 4. Plan of features located within former Dairy

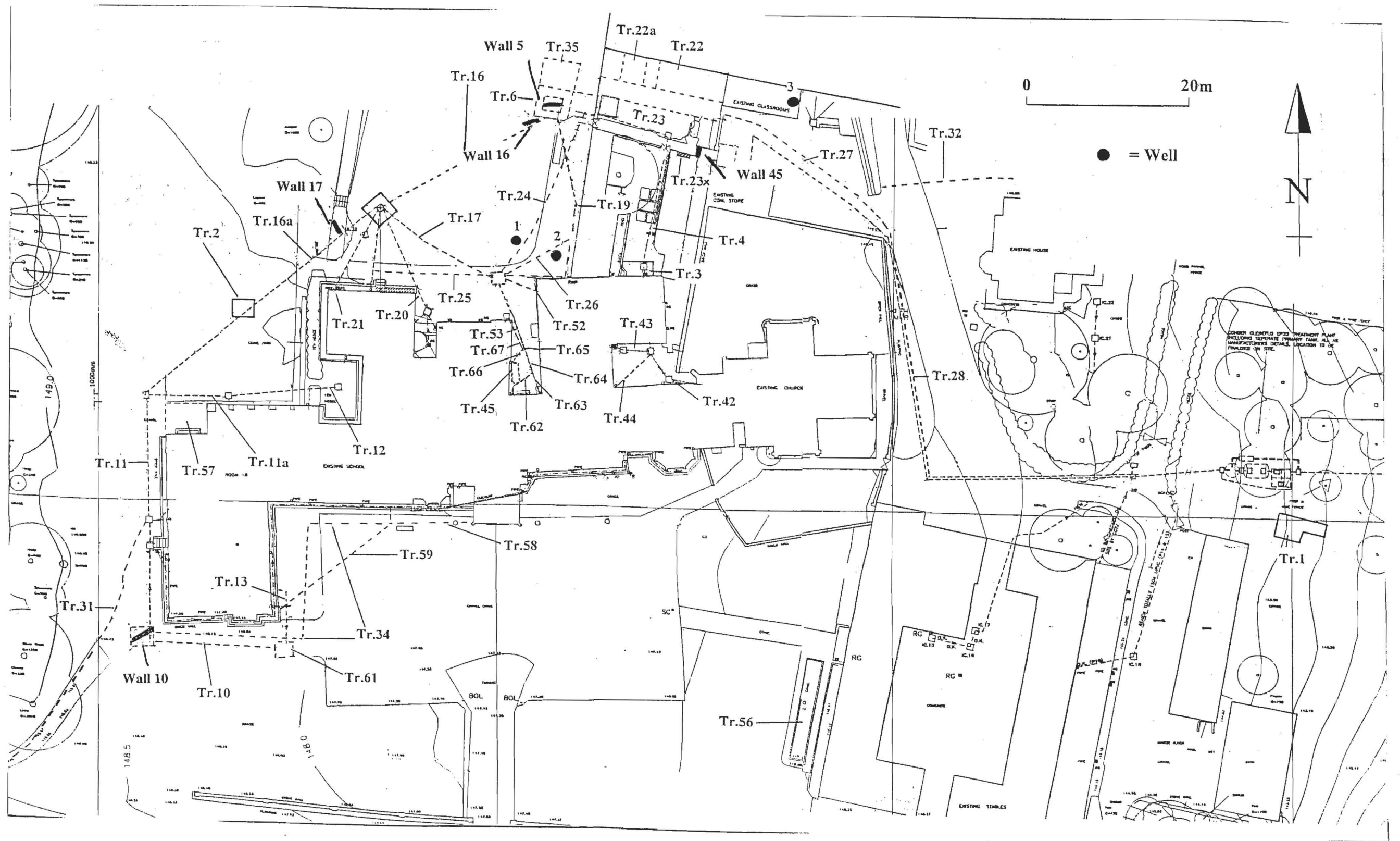


Figure 5. Location of external trenches, showing selected wall remains.
(From plan supplied by the developer)

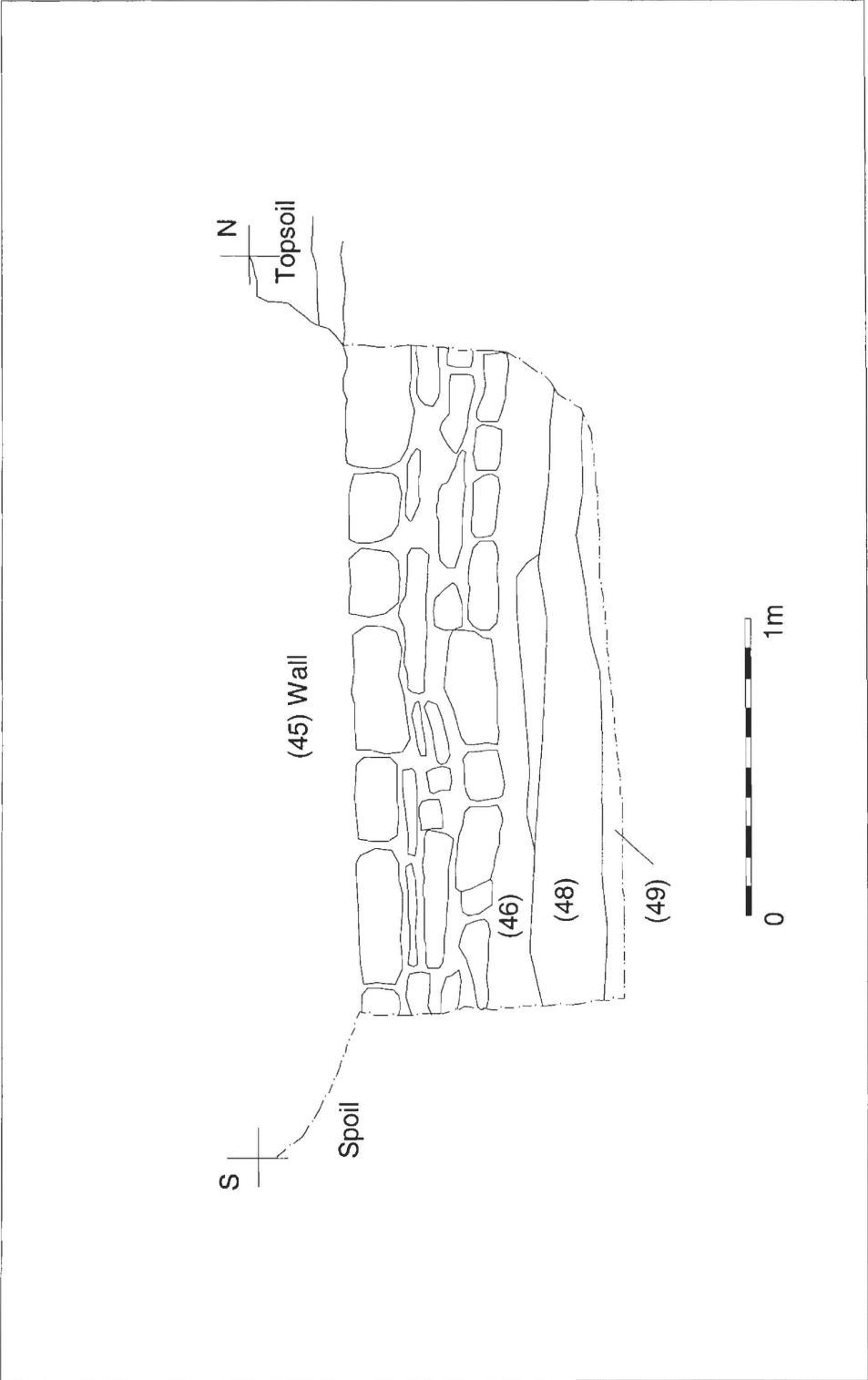


Figure 6. Elevation of Wall 45.

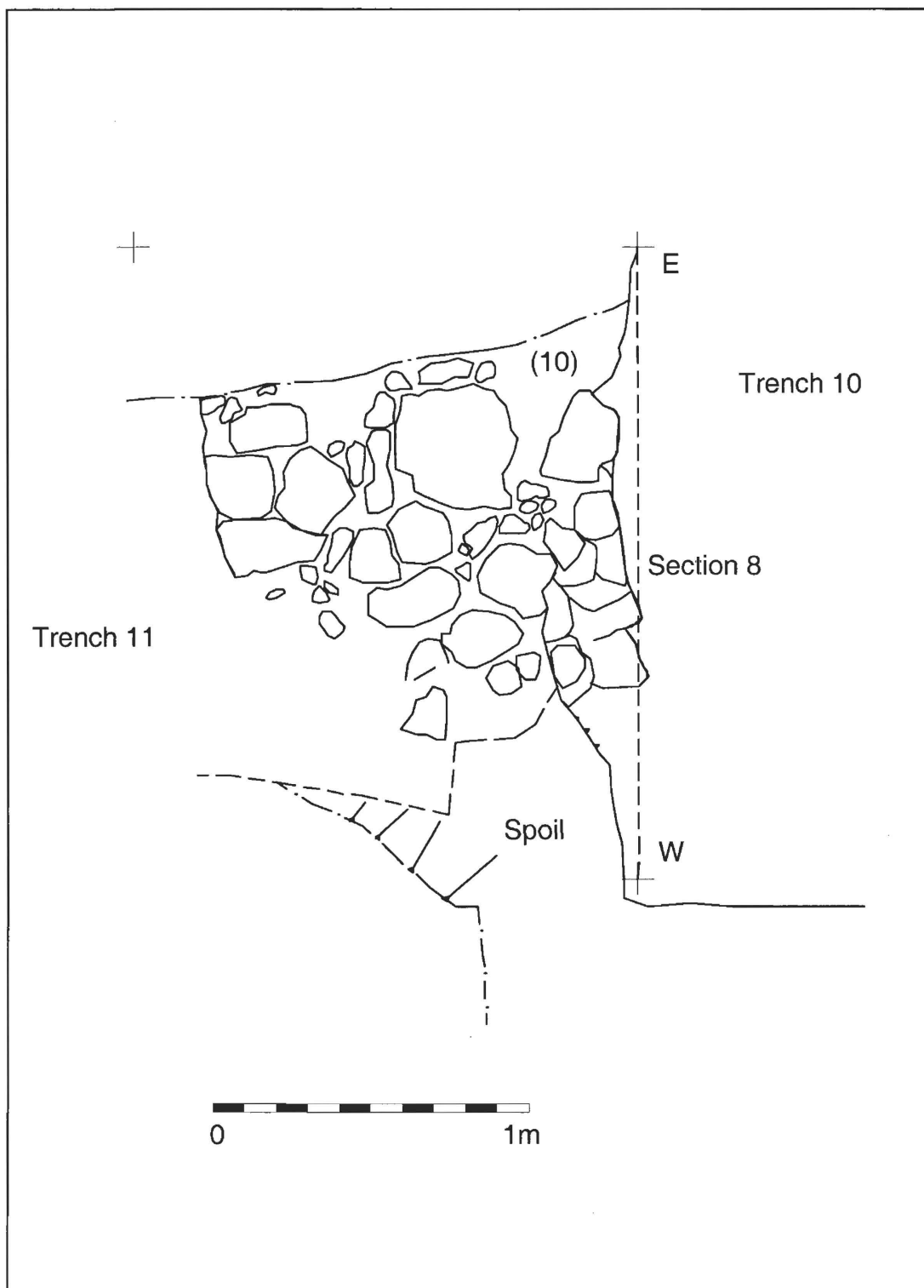


Figure 7. Plan of Wall 10.

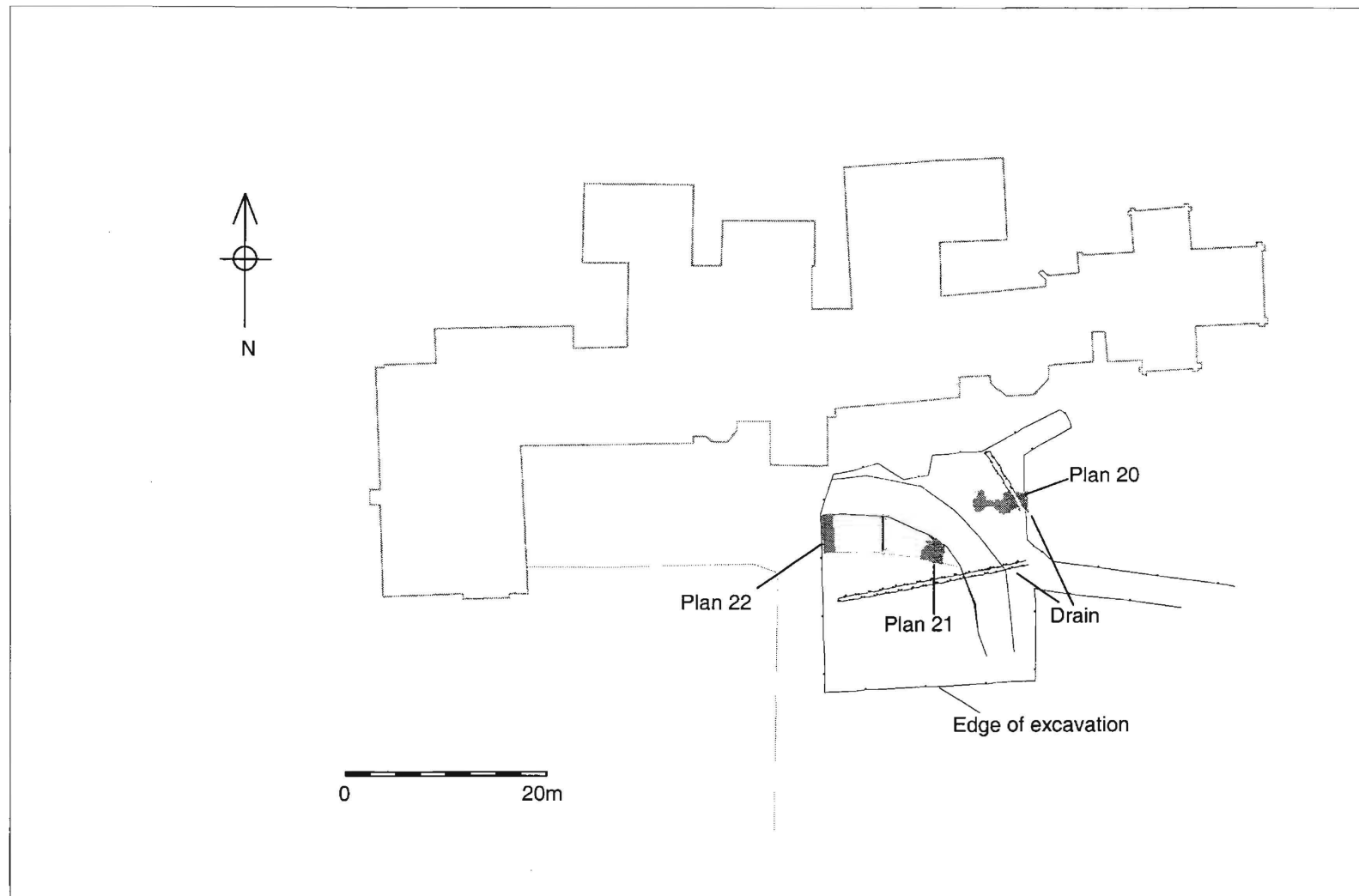


Figure 8. Location of Cobbled Surfaces.

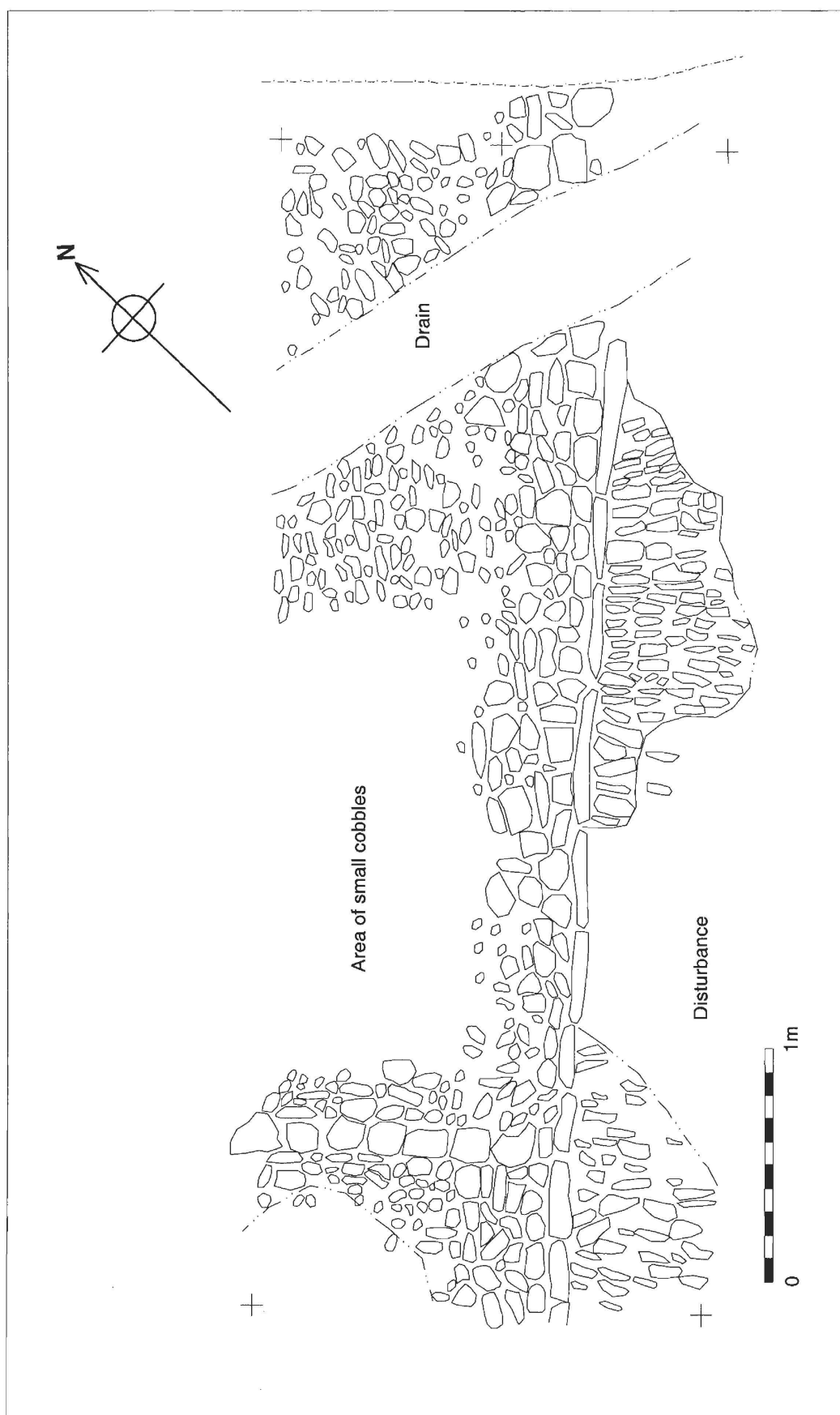


Figure 9. Plan 20 of Cobbled Surface.

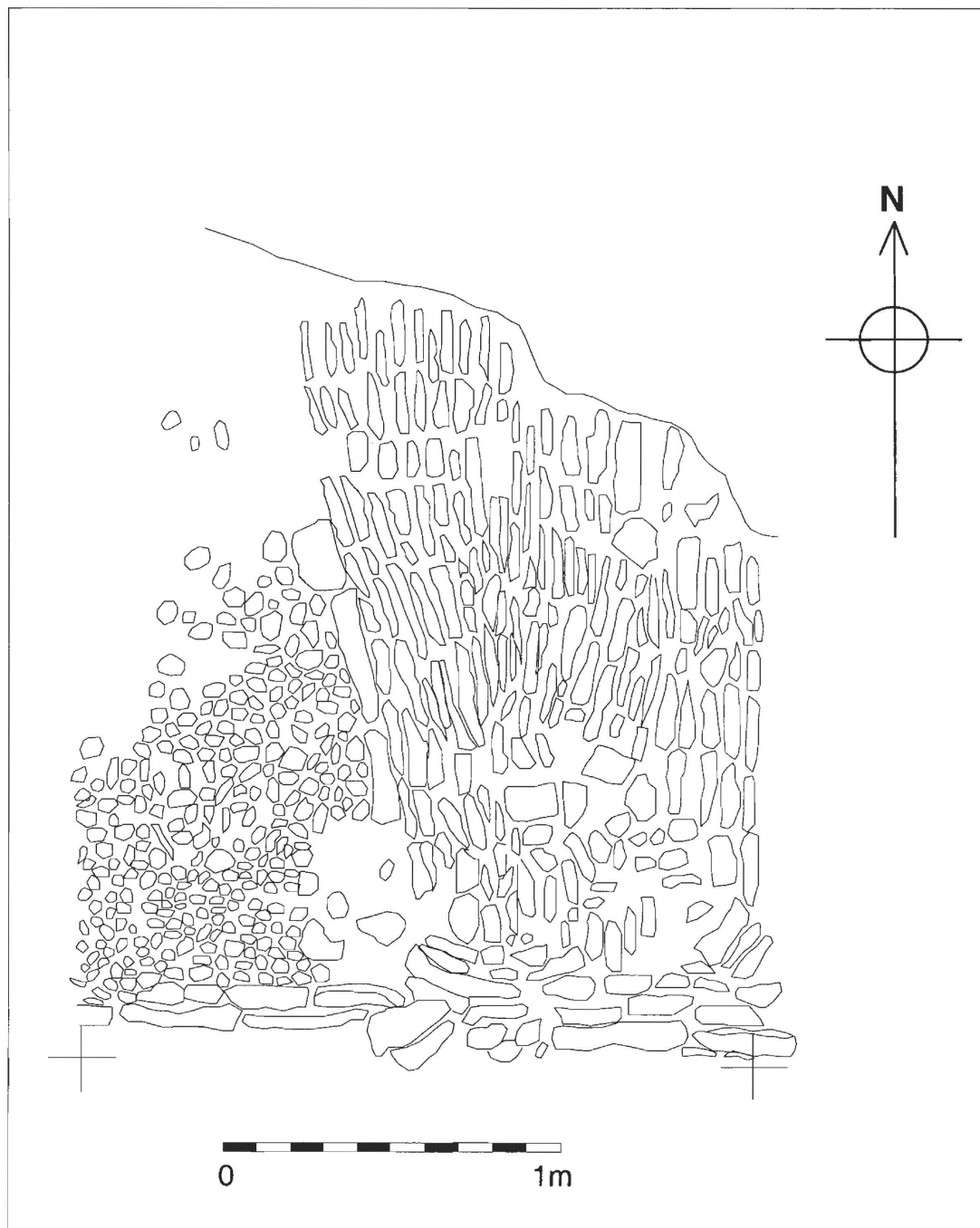


Figure 10. Plan 21 of Cobbled Surface.

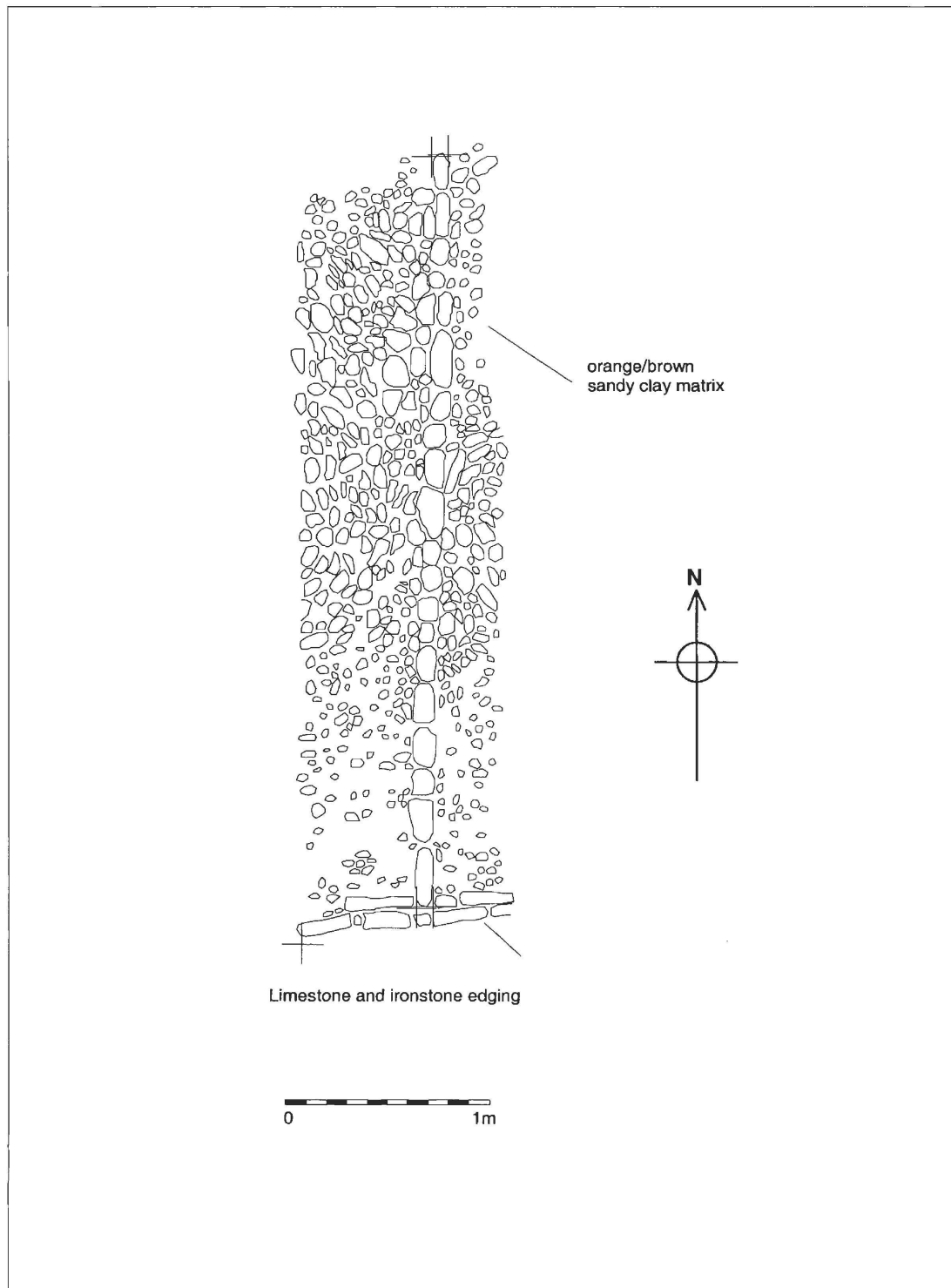


Figure 11. Plan 22 of Cobbled Surface

Figure 12a. Plan of Wall 5 in Trench 6.

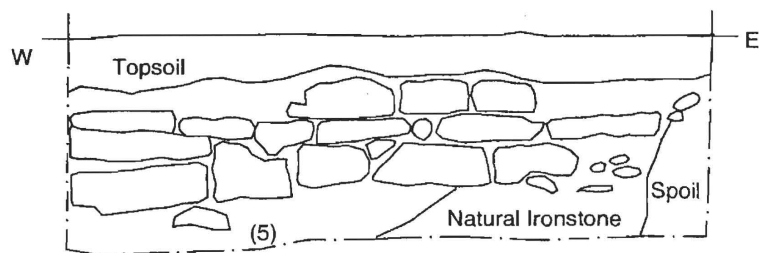
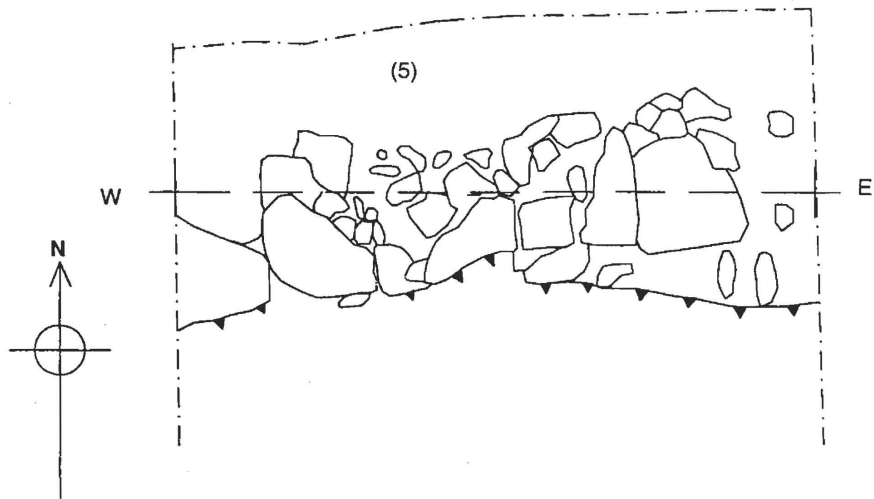


Figure 12b. Elevation of Wall 5 in Trench 6.



