

HERITAGE NETWORK



'AUBYNS', 11 The Green, Writtle, Essex

HN816

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

‘AUBYNS’
11 The Green, Writtle, Essex

Project ref.: HN816
Site Code: WRAU09
Planning ref.: 04/02340/FUL

Archaeological Monitoring

Prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs M. Readman

by

Helen Ashworth, BA AIFA

Report no. 606

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The cover photograph shows a view of the house looking south-east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson. The bricks were examined and dated by Tom Doig and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mr & Mrs Readman; Paul Scott, Paul Scott Associates; and Teresa O'Connor, Historic Environment Management Team, Essex County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Aubyns, 11 The Green, Writtle, Essex, CM1 3DT		
County:	Essex	District:	Chelmsford
Village/town:	Writtle	Parish:	Writtle
Planning reference:	04/02340/FUL	NGR:	TL 677 062
Client name and address:	Mr & Mrs M Readman, c/o Paul Scott Associates, The Gate House, 116 Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2QL		
Nature of work:	New range	Current land use:	Existing building
Site Status:	Grade I listed building	Reason for investigation:	Direction of LPA (PPG16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	36.28m ²	Size of area investigated:	36.28m ²
Site code:	WRAU09	Other reference:	HN816
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Archaeological monitoring	Archive recipient:	Chelmsford Museum
Start of work:	28/09/2009	Finish of work:	20/10/2009
Related HER nos:	30937	Periods represented:	Post-medieval
OASIS UID:	Heritage1-61853	Significant finds:	Brick
Monument types:	House		
Physical archive:	Brick		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

‘Aubyns’ is a Grade I listed timber framed building, thought to date to around 1500. The present project proposed the demolition of the existing cross range, which was built in the 1930s following a fire that destroyed the original cross range, and its replacement by an extended cross range on the footprint of the original structure. The Heritage Network was commissioned by the property owners to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the demolition works and the associated groundworks.

No evidence for architectural features or structural elements relating to the earlier cross range was noted during the demolition. Ground reduction for the new extension revealed several features associated with the earlier structure, including the remains of a brick surface and the foundations for a brick plinth to the earlier north elevation. No other features, deposits or artefacts were identified that pre-dated the 1930s rebuild.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of *P.A. Scott Associates*, acting on behalf of *Mr and Mrs M. Readman*, as a part of a programme of archaeological works carried out in association with development works at 'Aubyns', 11 The Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex.

1.2 The investigation was a requirement of the planning consent granted by Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC) (ref. 04/02340/FUL), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the work was defined in a *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring* prepared by the Historic Environment Management Team (HEMT) of Essex County Council acting as archaeological advisers to CBC. A full specification for the work carried out is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated July 2009.

1.3 'Aubyns' is a Grade I listed building thought to have been built c.1500, and centred on NGR TL 67725 06215. The house has been considerably restored in places, including the central range, which was destroyed by fire in the 1930s and rebuilt in a single storey on a narrower footprint. The original house is timber framed and a number of impressive features and fixtures survive. The development proposed the part demolition of the central range and construction of a two storey replacement on an extended footprint, matching the original structure.

1.4 The aim of the present project has been to record any architectural features and structural elements which might have been revealed in the course of the demolition works, and any below ground features and deposits exposed in the course of the groundworks. It was considered that the fieldwork had the potential to contribute to an understanding of the origins and development of 'Aubyns'.

1.5 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with Chelmsford Museum, to complete the requirements of the planning authority.

2 Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area lies on gently sloping ground on the eastern side of the valley of the River Wid. The drift geology of the area consists of a mixture of gravel, sand and clay above London Clay (British Geological Survey).

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Hornbeam 3 association (582d), described as

'Deep fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils.' (SSEW 1983).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's development schedule. A number of site visits were made to monitor the groundworks associated with the construction of a two storey replacement to the central range. The demolition works were restricted to the modern structure and did not expose any architectural features or structural elements pre-dating the 1930s.

2.4 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IfA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.5 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Ground Reduction

2.6 The footprint of the new extended cross range matches that of the original cross range and comprises the existing structure, erected in the 1930s, and the area to the north (Figure 3). The open area to the north of the existing cross range was formerly occupied by a flowerbed.

2.7 The reduction of the ground to the north of the present cross range revealed a number of features (Figure 3).

2.7.1 The northern exterior wall of the west range has been underpinned by a concrete plinth extending 0.10m beyond the face of the elevation. Two modern drains, including a plastic rainwater drain, were noted immediately to the east of the plinth (Plate 1).

2.7.2 The irregularly shaped remains of a brick surface [001], composed of red and white paviers, was recorded immediately to the east of the stormwater drain. This measured approximately 1m in length and had a maximum width of 0.48m (Figure 4; Plate 1). The white bricks measured 9½" x 4½" x 1⅞" (235mm x 110mm x 42mm). None of the red bricks was complete, but the recovered fragments indicate that they were approximately the same size. A layer of

charcoal covered the brick surface and extended eastwards for approximately 2m. This may have been derived from the fire in the 1930s that destroyed the original cross range.

- 2.7.3** The line of a brick plinth [002] was recorded on the northern edge of the reduced area. This ran on an alignment linking the north-east corner of the west range with the north-west corner of the east range (Figure 5; Plate 2). The plinth, which survived to a maximum depth of 3 courses (0.20m), was formed of thin red bricks, laid randomly and bonded with a hard coarse lime mortar. A possible break in the wall, measuring 0.46m in length and located centrally between the two ranges, was noted. Two sample bricks were recovered, these measure 9½" x 4½" x 1½" (236mm x 115mm x 44mm). This feature has been interpreted as a foundation for the northern elevation to the earlier cross wing.
- 2.7.4** Wall [002] was largely dismantled in the course of the works, exposing its foundation, which consisted of two layers of tile, contexts (005) and (007) sandwiching flint pebbles bonded in firm yellowish brown clay, context (006) (Figure 4). Beneath the wall, exposed in a trench excavated to accommodate the toe to the proposed concrete raft, was a layer of clean mid-grey silty clay and gravel, context (004) (Plate 3). This may be natural, but is different to the anticipated natural of mid-yellowish brown clay.
- 2.7.5** A line of 12 brick headers, [003], 3.95m in length, was observed below the present brick paving to the north of wall [002] (Figure 3; Plate 4). A shaped brick was recorded at either end, resting on the surface of the end bricks. This feature has been interpreted as the possible foundation to a former porch.
- 2.7.6** The area between the existing cross range and wall [002] was occupied by a mixed deposit including lenses of orange sand, mortar, charcoal and clay.

2.8 Section 1, on the western side of the baulk, retained to support the brick path giving access to the existing front door, revealed a layer of mixed material, 0.20m deep, which consisted of frequent tile fragments, frequent charcoal flecks and fragments, occasional lenses of mortar and occasional animal bone fragments, within a matrix of dirty redeposited natural clay (Figure 5; Plate 5). At the southern end of the section, 0.87m from the north wall of the present cross range, a cut was observed sloping down at 45° towards the wall. It contained broken tile and mortar fragments and a very high concentration of charcoal in a redeposited clay matrix. This feature has been interpreted as the foundation trench for the existing cross wall.

2.9 The floor on the interior of the existing cross range was lifted, exposing concrete and brick foundations to the northern and southern walls. The fill between the walls was similar to that noted on the exterior, comprising a mixed deposit containing burnt wood, charcoal, brick rubble, sand and mortar (Plate 6). This is almost certainly contemporary with the 1930s rebuild.

2.10 A pipe trench and a soakaway were excavated to the rear (south-east) of the existing cross range (Figure 6). The pipe trench, [011], which measured 3.97m in length, 0.35m in width and 0.45m in depth, ran on a north-west to south-east alignment across the rear patio. The patio is laid in a herringbone pattern and is formed of handmade frogged bricks of various sizes, some of which are stamped BEACH. The make up for the patio, which consisted of mixed rubble, including broken bricks, tile fragments and lumps of concrete, in a dark brown

sandy clay matrix, was observed in the trench (Plate 7). A ceramic drain was observed crossing the trench on an east – west alignment.

2.11 The soakaway, which measured 1.30m square and 1.20m in depth, was dug through the rear lawn (Figure 3). The sections were similar and revealed a layer of topsoil and turf, 0.15m in depth, above context (010) a dark brown silty sand humic layer, 0.30m in depth, which contained frequent small and medium stones, occasional tile fragments and much root activity (Figure 6; Plate 8). Below this was context (009), a layer of compact flint and gravel in a dark yellowish brown silty sand matrix, 0.18m in depth, which contained occasional tile fragments. This lay above context (008), a layer of compact gravel in a dark yellowish brown silty sand matrix, 0.30m in depth. Below this was the natural mid yellowish brown clay, with lenses of mid yellowish brown sand.

FINDS ASSESSMENT

Concordance

Context	Brick		Tile		Mortar		Stone	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
001	6	5465						
002	2	4105	7	435	5	290		
005			23	1680				
006							7	1975
007			21	2210				

Brick

2.12 Six sample bricks were collected from the brick surface, context [001]. One was in white clay and was fairly complete. The fabric comprises a sandy off-white matrix, tempered with moderate amounts of flint, small pebbles and crushed red brick fragments. It measured 9¼” x 4¾” x 2⅞” (235mm x 110mm x 45mm) and has been dated to the mid 1800s (T. Doig, pers. com.). A ridge is visible along the centre of the stretchers, indicating that it was dried in a stack.

2.13 Five part bricks were also collected. These were similar in fabric and size, suggesting that they came from the same source, probably fairly local. Although their full length could not be ascertained they measure approximately 4” wide by 1½” deep (35mm x 105mm). They are in a friable sandy dark red fabric, tempered with grog and fine sand. They have been dated to the mid to late 1800s (T. Doig, pers. com.).

2.14 Two bricks were collected from wall [002]. They are similar in fabric and size indicating that they are from the same, probably fairly local, source. The fabric consists of a coarse sandy red matrix, tempered with crushed shell. The bricks, which measure 9½” x 4½” x 1⅙” (240mm x 115mm x 45mm), were made in a collapsible mould and have been dated to the period 1740-1780. Both have mortar of a later date still adhering to their surfaces, indicating that they are from an earlier structure and have been re-used.

Recommendations

2.15 As this is a small assemblage, and a reasonable amount of information has already been obtained, no further work is proposed.

Tile

2.16 A total of 51 tile fragments, weighing 4325g, was collected from three stratified contexts during the present project. All the examples are associated with wall [002].

2.17 The assemblage consists of fragments of broken handmade peg tile, of early 18th century date, in a coarse red sand-tempered fabric. Some of the examples appear to have been overfired, others show rough wiping marks across their surfaces. A number show some evidence of maker's marks or imprints (T. Doig, pers. com.).

Recommendations

2.18 As this is a small assemblage, and a reasonable amount of information has already been obtained, no further work is proposed.

Mortar

2.19 Five sample fragments of mortar, weighing 290g, were collected from wall [002]. It is a hard, coarse lime mortar, tempered with sand and small quartz pebbles.

Recommendations

2.20 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Stone

2.21 Seven sample stones, weighing 1975g, were collected from context (006), part of the foundation to wall [002]. The stones comprise a mixture of flint and quartz pebbles of varying sizes. Two appear to have been roughly cut to size, whilst the remainder do not appear to have been worked.

Recommendations

2.22 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

3 Discussion

3.1 The present site comprises part of a Grade I listed building, thought to date to around 1500, located in the centre of Writtle. The house has been considerably restored in places, particularly the central range, which was rebuilt after a fire in the 1930s. The original house is timber framed and a number of impressive features and fixtures are believed to survive in parts of the structure.

3.2 The 1st edition OS map of 1874-6 shows that the present house was divided at that time into at least five smaller properties forming an inverted L-shape (Figure 7). Since that time, the properties facing Church Lane have been significantly altered, with the southern structure largely demolished.

3.3 The site also lies in a wider archaeological landscape with sites and findspots recorded on the Essex HER (Historic Environment Record) within a 500m radius of the present site which date from the Palaeolithic period onwards. These include:

- Remains of prehistoric date consist of a Palaeolithic levallois flake (SMR 813); a prehistoric flake found during an evaluation at Writtle Agricultural College (SMR 14587); Mesolithic cores and tranchet axeheads found at Beech's Pit (SMR 788); and prehistoric flint flakes found at King John's Hunting Lodge (SMR 18580).
- Remains of Roman and early medieval date consist of the supposed site of a temporary Roman camp in Writtle (SMR 18584); Roman pottery found at Rectory Road (SMR 18581); Roman brick, tile and pottery observed in the walls of All Saints Church (SMR 705); Roman burials from the green of Writtle Bowling Club (SMR 711); and the early medieval Church of All Saints (SMR 706).
- Remains of medieval date consist of a series of church monuments at All Saints Church (SMR 707); the Chapel of St Mary the Virgin (SMR 709); an aisled barn at King John's Palace (SMR 658); vessels and post-medieval brick and tile uncovered during an evaluation at Writtle Agricultural College (SMR 14588); a ditch and pottery recovered from Correll's Garage (SMR 868); and Rollestons mill mound (SMR 857).
- Post-medieval remains in the area consist of post-medieval church monuments at All Saints Church (SMR 708); a pit and post hole encountered during an evaluation at Writtle Agricultural College (SMR 14589); pottery recovered from Correll's Garage (SMR 869); a date stone, drain and well encountered at 89 Lodge Road (SMR 873); linear features and post holes uncovered during an evaluation at Kitts Croft, Lordship Road (SMR 18174)
- Modern remains in the area consist of a First World War landing ground, located to the south of Writtle College (SMR 19365); Second World War anti aircraft rocket emplacement (SMR 20126); the site of the Marconi factory at Guys Farm (SMR 15938); and a series of modern features encountered during an evaluation at Writtle Agricultural College (SMR 14590)
- Remains of unknown date include the site of an undated stone cross near All Saints Church (SMR 17688); and an undated pit and posthole encountered during an evaluation at Writtle Agricultural College (SMR 14591).

3.4 The demolition works were restricted to the existing central range, which was erected in the 1930s, and did not expose any historic architectural features or structural elements.

3.5 Observation of the ground reduction to the north of the existing cross range revealed a number of features associated with the earlier cross range, including the remains of a brick surface, [001], formed of bricks of mid-19th century date, and a brick foundation [002], formed of bricks dating to the mid-18th century, supporting the northern elevation of the earlier cross range,.

3.6 A line of 12 header bricks was noted immediately to the north of wall [002]. This is likely to represent the remains of a later porch.

3.7 No other features, deposits or artefacts that pre-dated the 1930s were observed during the course of the project.

Confidence Rating

3.8 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.9 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4 Sources

British Geological Survey: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/>

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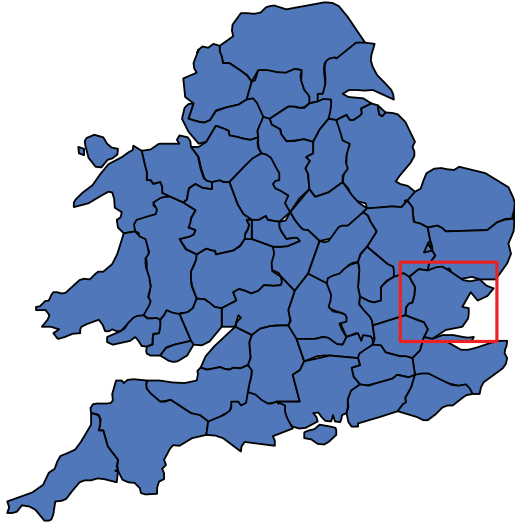
5 Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site layout
Figure 3	Archaeological features revealed during groundworks
Figure 4	Plan [001]; section [002]
Figure 5	Plan [002]; Section 1
Figure 6	Plan rear patio; sample section in soakaway
Figure 7	1 st edition OS map, 1874-76
Plate 1	Concrete plinth & brick surface [001], looking west
Plate 2	Wall [002] looking NW
Plate 3	Deposit [004]
Plate 4	Brick foundation [003]
Plate 5	Section 1, looking east
Plate 6	Interior, showing wall foundations & floor makeup
Plate 7	Section through pipe trench [011], looking E
Plate 8	Soakaway pit, looking N

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Aubyns, 11 The Green, Writtle

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Site Location

Scale 1:1500

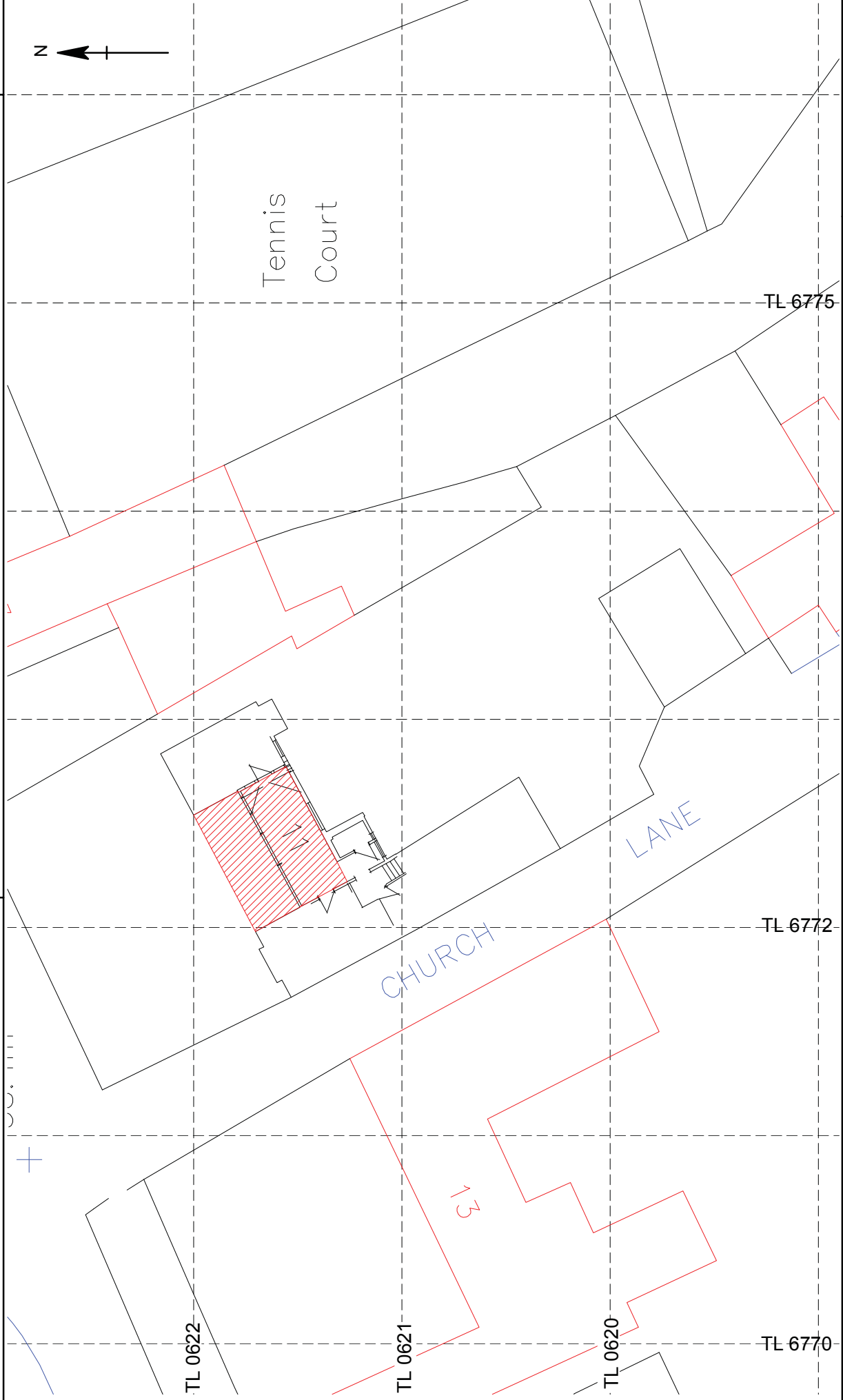
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Figure 1

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Aubyns, 11 The Green, Writtle, Essex

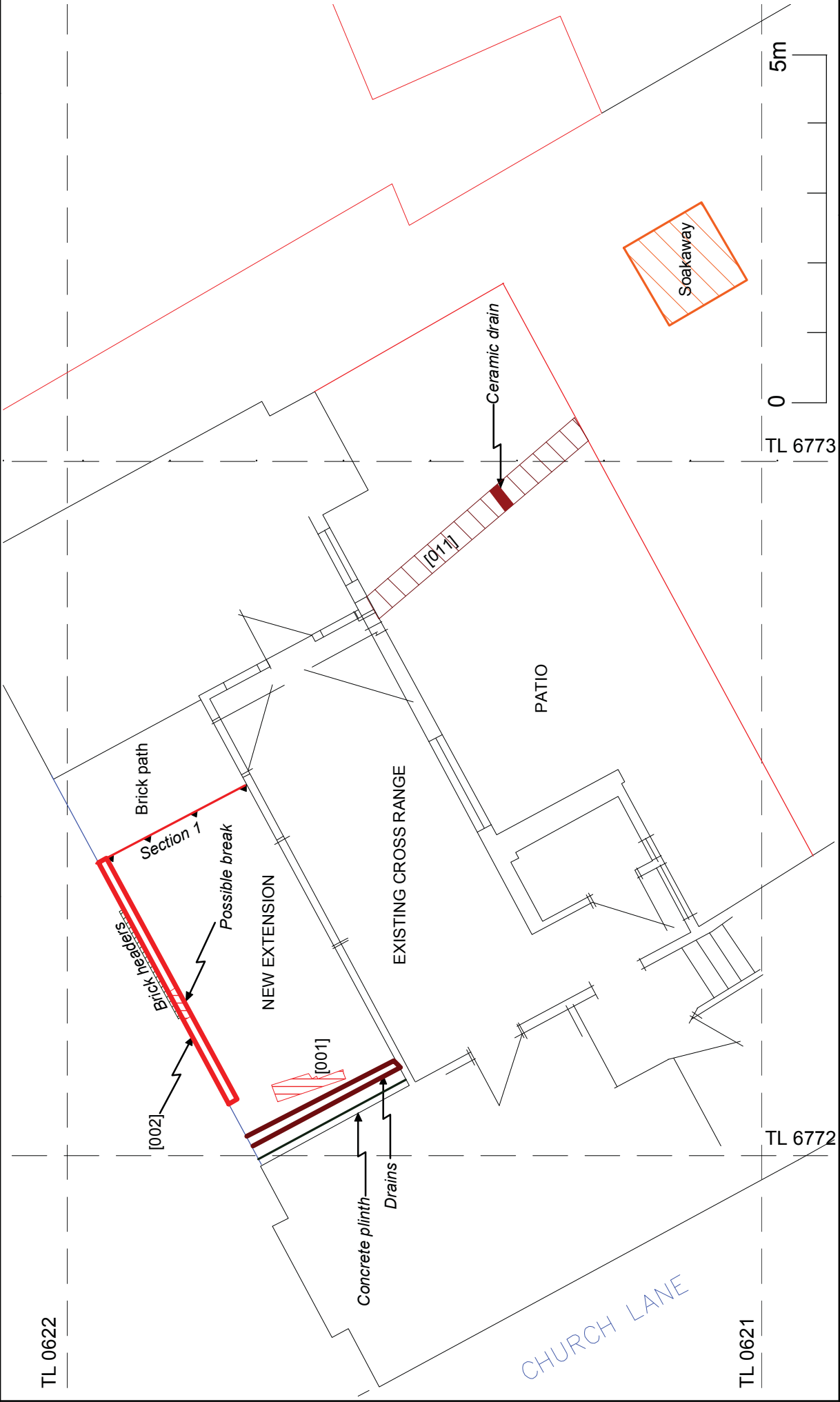
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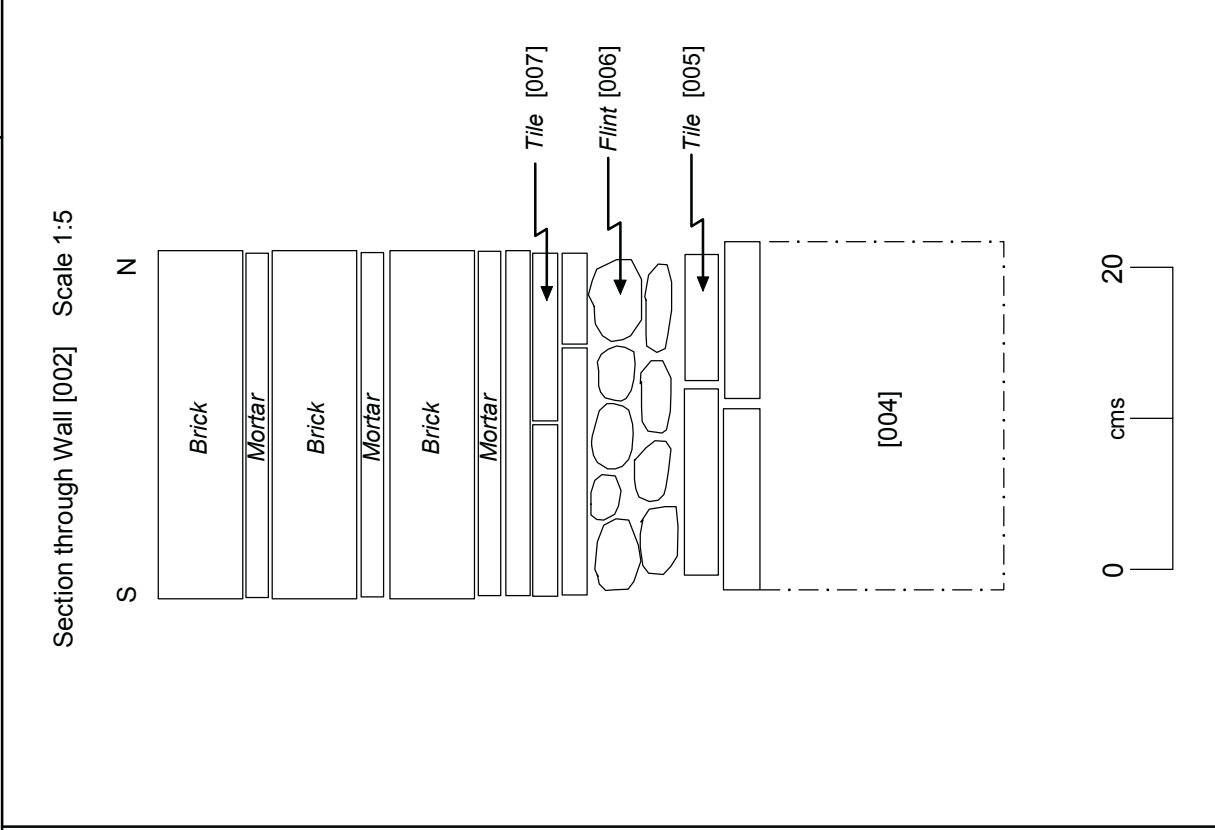
Site layout showing extent of the new cross wing

Scale 1:250

Figure 2

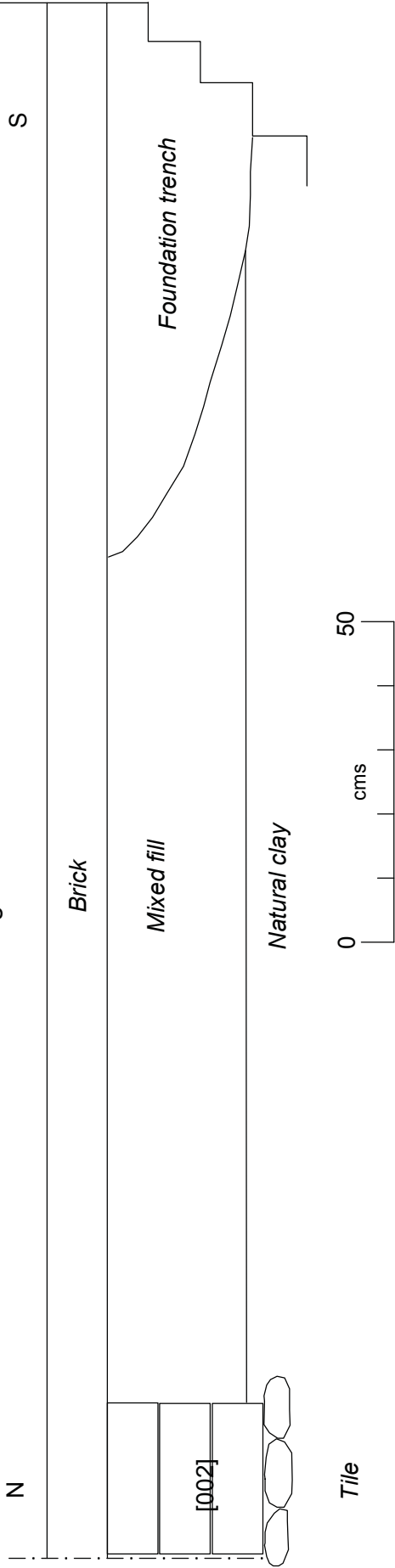


Plan showing the archaeological features revealed during the groundworks

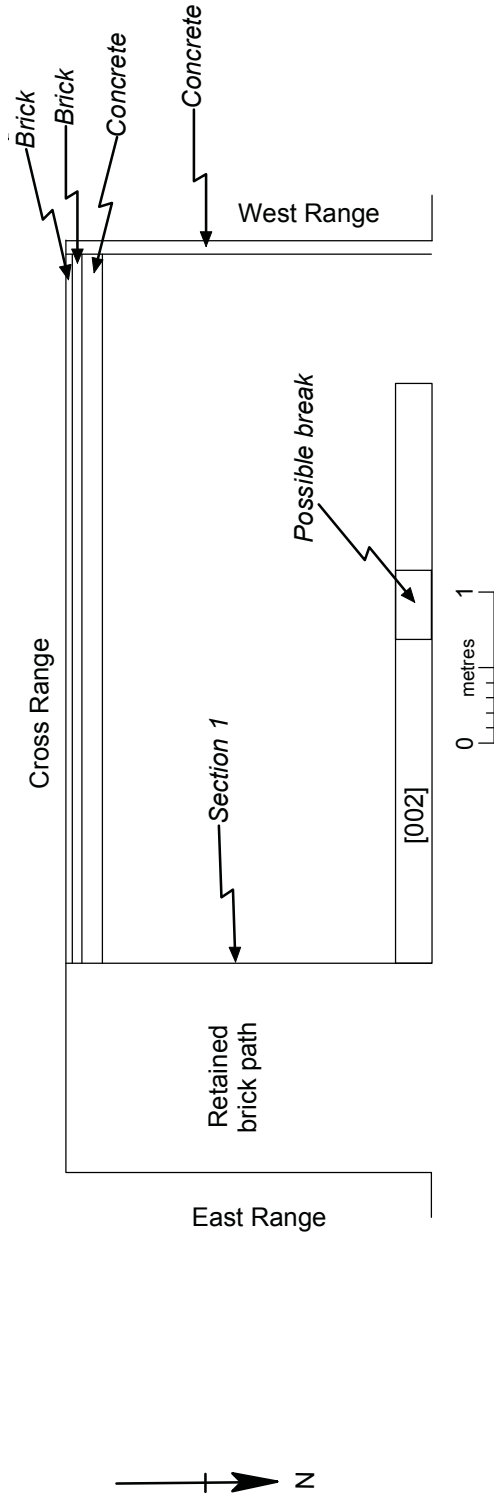


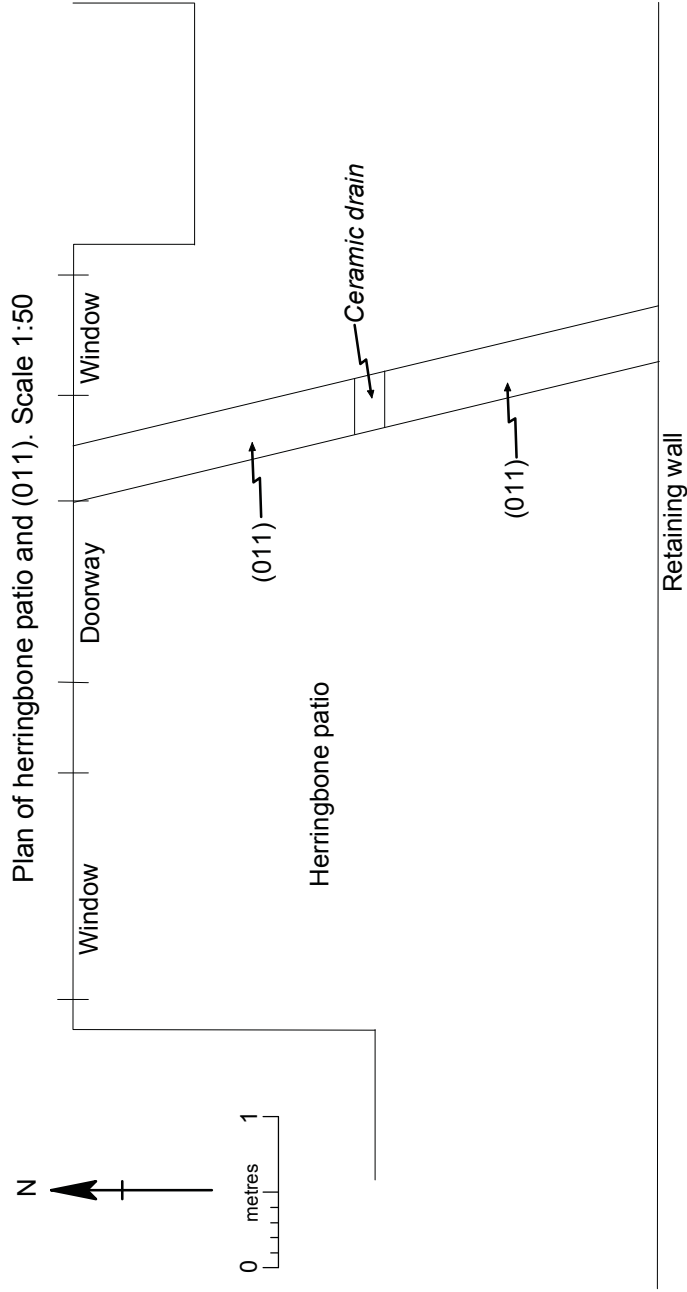
Plan of [001] & Section through [002]

West facing sketch section 1 Scale 1:10

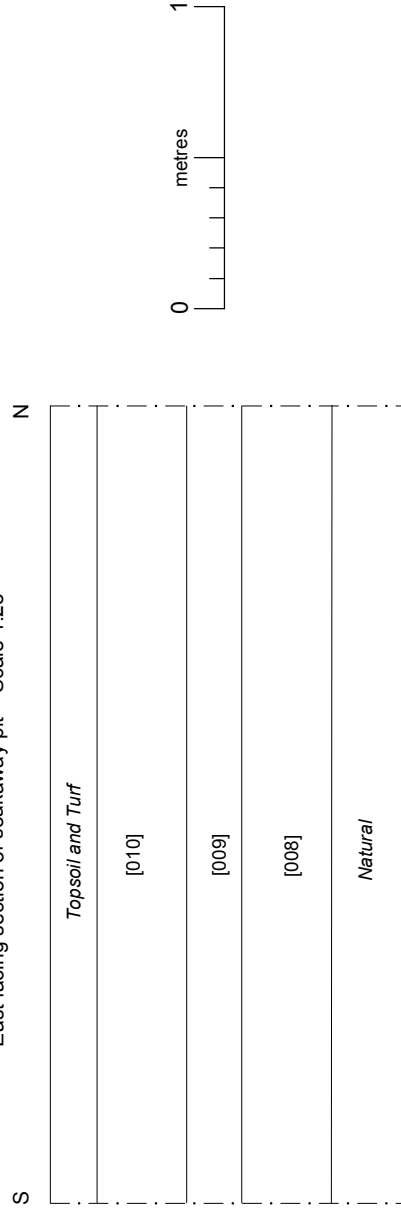


Location of brick wall [002] and section 1 Scale 1:50





East facing section of soakaway pit Scale 1:25

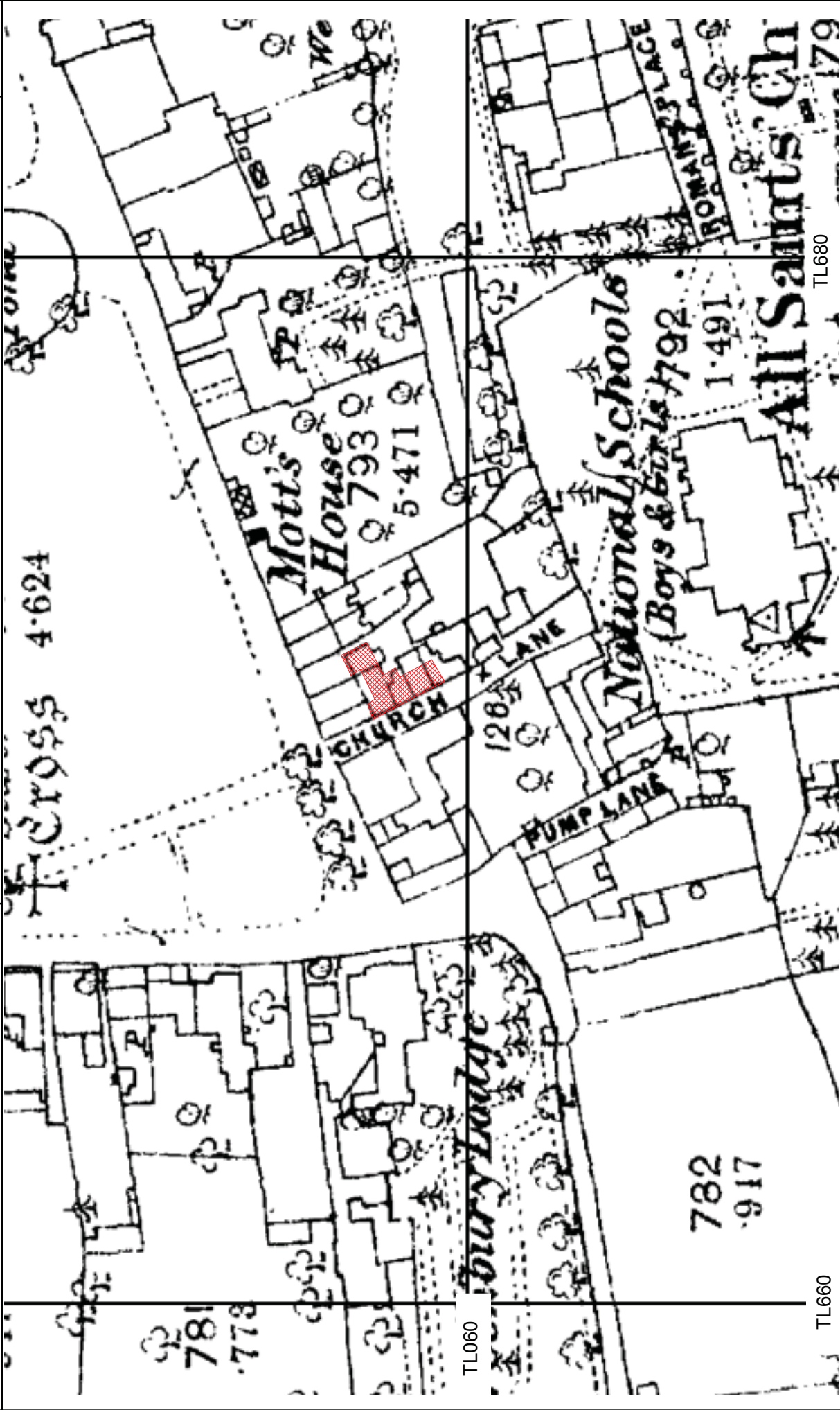


Plan of feature across rear patio & schematic section of soakaway

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1st edition Ordnance Survey plan, 1874-76

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Scale 1:1000

Figure 7



Plate 1: Concrete plinth below existing wall & brick surface [001], looking west



Plate 2: Wall [002], looking north-west



Plate 3: Deposit [004], looking east



Plate 4: Brick foundation [003], looking north



Plate 5: Section 1, looking east



Plate 6: General shot of interior showing wall foundations and floor makeup



Plate 7: Section through pipe trench [011] across the rear patio, looking east



Plate 8: Soakaway pit, looking north

Appendix

Oasis Summary Sheet

<i>OASIS ID: heritage1-61853</i>	
Project details	
Project name	Writtle, Aubyns, 11 The Green, Chelmsford
Short description of the project	Aubyns is a Grade I listed timber framed building, thought to date to around 1500. The present project proposed the demolition of the existing cross range, which was built in the 1930s following a fire that destroyed the original cross range, and its replacement by an extended cross range on the footprint of the original structure. The Heritage Network was commissioned by the property owners to undertake the archaeological monitoring of the demolition works and the associated groundworks. No evidence for architectural features or structural elements relating to the earlier cross range was noted during the demolition. Ground reduction for the new extension revealed several features associated with the original structure, including the remains of a brick surface and the foundations for the original north wall. No other features, deposits or artefacts were identified that pre-dated the 1930s rebuild.
Project dates	Start: 28-09-2009 End: 20-10-2009
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Assoc. project codes	WRAU09 - Sitecode
Assoc. project codes	HN816 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	HOUSE Medieval
Monument type	HOUSE Modern
Significant Finds	BRICK Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	ESSEX CHELMSFORD WRITTLE Aubyns, 11The Green
Postcode	CM1 3DT
Study area	36.28 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 677 062 51.7288981130 0.428571393975 51 43 44 N 000 25 42 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design author	Heritage Network
Project director	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	David Hillelson
Type of funding body	Developer

Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Chelmsford Museum
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Diary','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Aubyns, 11 The Green, Writtle, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ashworth, H.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.606
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts
Description	A4 comb bound booklet, green cover, 10 pages text, 6 figures, 8 photographic plates