

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Historical analysis of the site of  
the former kitchen garden at  
The Old Rectory, Cranford St Andrew,  
Northamptonshire  
February 2007



Joe Prentice

February 2007

Report 07/29

## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Cranford St Andrew, The Old Rectory	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Desk-based assessment and site investigation to establish the date and development of the area known as the walled garden at Cranford St Andrew Old Rectory	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	DBA and building assessment	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	Curtilage of listed building	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Overgrown garden area	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Post medieval garden and walls	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	No	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	The Old Rectory, Rectory Hill, Cranford St Andrew	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	SP 9205 7753	
Height OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation		
Project brief originator	M Flitcroft NCC	
Project Design originator		
Director/Supervisor	J Prentice	
Project Manager	S Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Paul Bancroft Architects	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	<b>February 2007</b>	
End date		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>		
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITE OF  
THE FORMER KITCHEN GARDEN  
AT CRANFORD ST ANDREW OLD RECTORY,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

*Abstract*

*The area under investigation at Cranford St Andrew Rectory appears to have simply been the eastern part of the plot in which the Rectory stands. Though a high brick and stone wall runs along the eastern boundary, there is no evidence from historic maps or from the structure and layout of the area to imply that it was historically a walled garden. The wall is likely to have been built to screen the property from the adjacent road.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The kitchen garden at The Old Rectory, Cranford St Andrew, Northamptonshire, occupies a 0.19 ha (0.47 acre) site to the east of the property adjacent to Rectory Hill (Fig 1, NGR SP 9205 7753). Although it is now in separate ownership from the Old Rectory, the site forms part of the property's curtilage, most recently acting as a kitchen garden supplying the Rectory with vegetables, fruit and flowers.
- 1.2 Planning permission has previously been sought from Kettering Borough Council (KBC) for residential development of the former garden area comprising two dwellings and a new access (Planning reference KE/04/0398, Listed building Consent reference KE/04/0399/LB). Planning permission and Listed Building Consent were refused for the scheme submitted, and a subsequent appeal dismissed. However, during the appeal, the Planning Inspector indicated that the development of the site might be acceptable, providing that the new development was designed to reflect the nature of a working garden and the buildings within it.
- 1.3 KBC have advised that future development proposals for the kitchen garden site should be informed by the results of a historical and archaeological analysis of the site, and that the analysis will be required to support future applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent for works. A brief has been prepared at the request of KBC to set the objectives and strategy for the historic analysis work, the scope of works needed and procedures and standards which are required (Flitcroft 2006).
- 1.4 As a consequence of this request, Paul Bancroft Architects, on behalf of their client The Kitchen Garden Company have appointed Northamptonshire Archaeology to undertake the historical and archaeological analysis of the site.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The Old Rectory dates from the late eighteenth century with nineteenth century additions and alterations (English Heritage 1992). It is considered to

be a building of special historical importance and is statutorily designated as a Listed Building (Grade II). The former kitchen garden is now in separate ownership, but it has been established that the wall which forms the eastern boundary of the site, separating it from Rectory Hill, benefits from protection afforded by the Rectory. The Rectory and kitchen garden site also lie within the Cranford Conservation Area.

- 2.2 The general objectives of this report are to inform the design of new development within the kitchen garden site, enabling new works to reflect the nature of the site and its historical development, and to provide KBC with sufficient information to assess the likely impact of development proposals on the special character of the Old Rectory buildings and the character of the Cranford Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The historical and archaeological analysis comprises two main components:
- Site specific research seeking to elucidate and demonstrate the development of the kitchen garden site at the Old Rectory
  - Thematic research into the types of structure typical of kitchen gardens of similar size and date in order to establish forms of design that would reflect a working garden and the buildings within it
- 2.4 The site specific research covers the former kitchen garden site and the associated Old Rectory, placing them in the context of settlement at Cranford St Andrew. The broader thematic research will focus on similar sites elsewhere in Northamptonshire, although limited examination of small kitchen gardens in a national context will also be undertaken to demonstrate the suitability of future designs and establish a palette of design forms appropriate to this site.
- 2.5 Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) was the primary source utilised for the desk-based assessment. The historic garden references are listed separately in the bibliography.

### **3. SITE SPECIFIC RESEARCH**

- 3.1 Field survey. The garden at Cranford is bordered on the east, and partly on the north and south sides, by a wall built in different phases (Fig 2). The first phase section borders the road on the eastern side of the garden, with a short spur running westwards from the northern end. The Rectory (inner side) of the wall is constructed of red brick, the outer side of dressed limestone, both bonded in lime mortar. The size of the bricks and their consistent form indicates a late nineteenth century date. The upper edge is capped by blue engineering brick coping, again indicating that they can be no earlier than the mid to late nineteenth century in date. At the northern and southern ends of the wall are two square ironstone piers. At the northern end of the wall an additional length has been added to the west end of the first phase (Fig 2). A similar, but longer, addition has been added at the southern end of the original wall and is butt jointed against it. It is not as tall as the original eastern length

and is constructed of ironstone throughout. At the western end of this section the wall curves southwards to a square pier which appears to be the east side of a gateway, though no corresponding western side now remains. The two north and south arms suggest that these acted as screen walls bordering the former drive which appears to have taken the form of a loop allowing access from both north and south leading to the east side of the rectory. There are no indications of former buildings in the area screened by the walls; the present brick shed and glasshouse are both twentieth century. The inner surface of the wall is sparsely peppered with nails which would have been used to tie wall-trained fruit trees into position, though the type of nail indicates that this occurred only in the most recent use of the garden i.e. the second half of the twentieth century.

- 3.2 The garden is divided by paths, now overgrown, into separate areas with fruit trees in the southern part and cultivation beds in the northern part. Remaining plants indicate that this area was used most recently for both vegetables and flowers. The western side is screened from the Rectory by a box (*buxus sempervirens*) and yew (*taxus baccatta*) hedge and the house cannot be seen clearly from the garden. At the southern side of the garden, at the western end a section of beech (*fagus sylvatica*) continues the line of the ironstone wall. Their size indicates that none of the trees are likely to be more than fifty years old, and the hedges are likely to be of a similar date or younger.
- 3.3 Documentary research. The first located map of the site dates from 1782 by William Crosby which shows the Lordship of Cranford St Andrew (Fig 3, NRO map 4446 A-D). Whilst the village, hall and church are easily comparable to the modern layout, the area where the rectory is situated is shown blank. Either the Rectory was not drawn for some reason, which seems unlikely on such a detailed map, or it was built shortly after this map was made, dating it therefore to the very end of the eighteenth century which corresponds with the English Heritage listing which simply calls the building late eighteenth century. The 1810 Surveyors map of the county indicates 'The Parsonage' but the detail is not sufficient to determine what lies in the area currently being investigated (Fig 4). A tithe map dated 1849 and listed in NRO as showing Cranford does not in fact depict the village and has therefore not been reproduced here. The next useful map is that of 1875 which shows the estate of Sir John Robinson, baronet (Fig 5, NRO map 4160). This too shows the village and Hall, and for some reason just shows the southern side of the Rectory building and the outline of the plot in which it stands. No indication is made of any other buildings or features associated with the Rectory, and no indication is made of the wall alongside Rectory Hill or access routes into the plot. The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 shows that the area was subdivided by two sets of paths, roughly quartering the area (Fig 6). Two buildings are indicated at the northern end and the wall alongside the road is probably present, though at this scale it is impossible to distinguish between walls and other boundary divisions.
- 3.4 A large package of plans, elevations and alternative schemes for the re-modelling of the Rectory includes a plan of the house dating to 1885, a further bundle of drawings shows various schemes of alterations proposed in 1901

and further alterations proposed in 1958 (NRO BAP 272). Though these show how the house was changed in considerable detail, unfortunately none of the plans include the surroundings of the buildings and have therefore not been reproduced here. It is possible that the screen wall along the eastern side of the property was built either in 1885 or during the phase of works undertaken in 1901. The Ordnance Survey map of 1950 shows the investigation area to be un-divided with the two buildings remaining in the northern part, though these do not survive today (Fig 7). It is therefore unclear as to their former configuration and purpose, but they are not glasshouses as these are indicated in a cross hatched convention rather than the single diagonal hatching with which they are infilled on the Ordnance Survey maps.

#### **4. THEMATIC RESEARCH**

- 4.1 Until the twentieth century, all houses in rural areas (and some in urban situations) had gardens which were cultivated for the production of food and flowers (Campbell 2006). Even small cottages belonging to lower class workers had vegetable and flower plots and houses such as the Rectory would have had a larger version of the same. However, fewer houses of this size and status had proper, purpose-built walled kitchen gardens due to the expense not only of the initial construction, but also because of the on-going cost of employing garden staff to maintain the site. The map evidence suggests that the Rectory was built in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, and none of the maps or plans studied indicate a walled garden associated with it.
- 4.2 The kitchen garden at Cranford Rectory cannot, therefore, be considered to be comparable to what are generally thought of as walled kitchen gardens associated with small, medium or large country houses as it shares almost none of the criteria by which they are categorised. These are traditionally (by the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries) mostly rectangular plots enclosed by high stone or brick walls on all sides, usually lying with their long axis aligned east-west and preferably on a gentle south facing slope. In view of this, though the brief for this work requires the garden at Cranford to be considered alongside other kitchen gardens of comparable size and date, there appears to be no evidence that the area was historically what might be considered a kitchen garden. The wall along the eastern side, both visually and in its constructional detailing appears to be simply a boundary wall alongside the road with the two short spurs running westwards from it no more than similar screen walls bounding the edges of the former driveway into the property. This wall should therefore be thought of simply as a screen wall protecting the privacy of the Rectory from the road rather than a wall enclosing a kitchen garden.
- 4.3 Though this screen wall would afford protection from north and easterly winds, it would not give any usable south facing walls of any size on which to grow fruit trees, or against which to erect glass houses. The reason for building walls around a garden is to provide a sheltered and controllable micro-climate; the wall at Cranford would not satisfactorily do this, nor would

it provide enough walls to grow crops against as the longest section would not be in the sun for more than half of the day.

- 4.4 The general location is unsatisfactory in that it has to be passed to reach the Rectory; it is standard for the kitchen garden to be hidden from view and closer to the rear part of the house where the kitchens are likely to be located. Though in smaller properties such as the Rectory there was sometimes not the choice of space available on larger land holdings, there appears to have been ample room at Cranford to place a kitchen garden on the west side of the house which would not only have been hidden from view but would have had a south facing slope and been close to the kitchens.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Documentary research indicates that the Rectory was built in the latter part of the eighteenth century. No evidence has been found to indicate that the area now called the kitchen garden was used as such historically. It appears that the area was simply part of the surrounding plot of land in which the Rectory was placed, and the wall along the eastern side is the property boundary wall, built to give the garden some privacy from the adjacent road. This wall is likely to originally date from the latter part of the nineteenth century, with further additions.
- 5.2 As such it is almost impossible to compare the area and buildings within it with “types of structure typical of kitchen gardens of similar size and date in order to establish forms of design that would reflect a working garden and the buildings within it” as required in the brief as it does not appear to have historically been a kitchen garden before the modern period.
- 5.3 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the area currently called the kitchen garden was simply part of the surrounding landscaping of the Rectory and has no historic claim to be considered specifically as a kitchen garden. It is understood from the previous owner that the area was laid out as a kitchen garden approximately forty years ago by his father. There is an indication from map evidence of small buildings in the northern part of the area under investigation but their original form and function cannot be ascertained as they no longer exist.
- 5.4 It is therefore impossible to establish a palette of design forms appropriate to this site as required in the brief from either standing fabric or documentary evidence. It would be misleading to design new buildings in a specifically kitchen garden style as this would imply in the future that this had been the historic use of the area.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Campbell S 2005. A History of Kitchen Gardening

Campbell S 2006. Walled Kitchen Gardens

English Heritage 1992

Flitcroft M 2006 Brief for archaeological analysis of the site

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 The walled garden area

Fig 3 William Crosby map, 1782

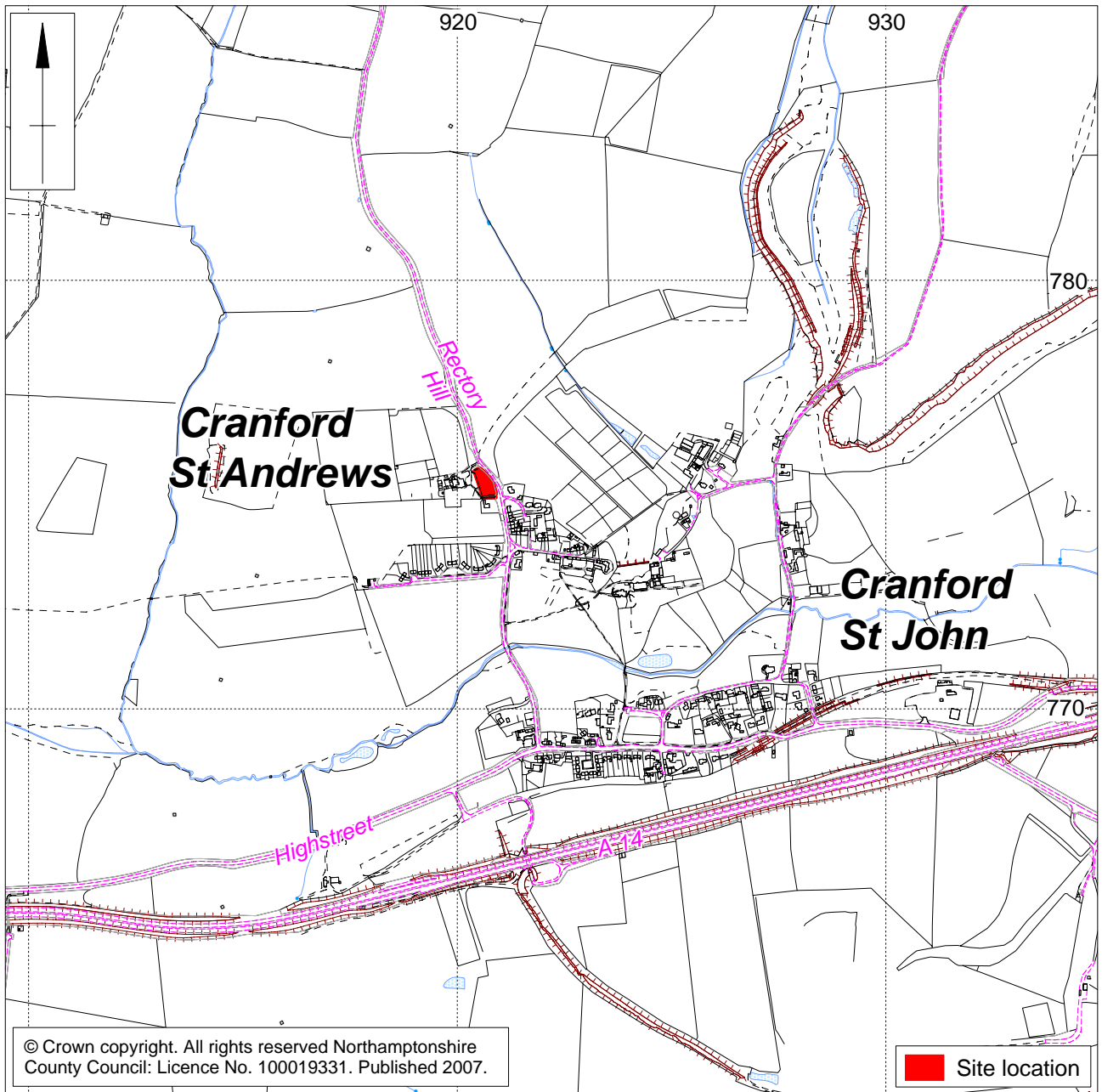
Fig 4 Ordnance Survey surveyors map, 1810

Fig 5 Sir John Robinson estate map, 1875

Fig 6 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1885

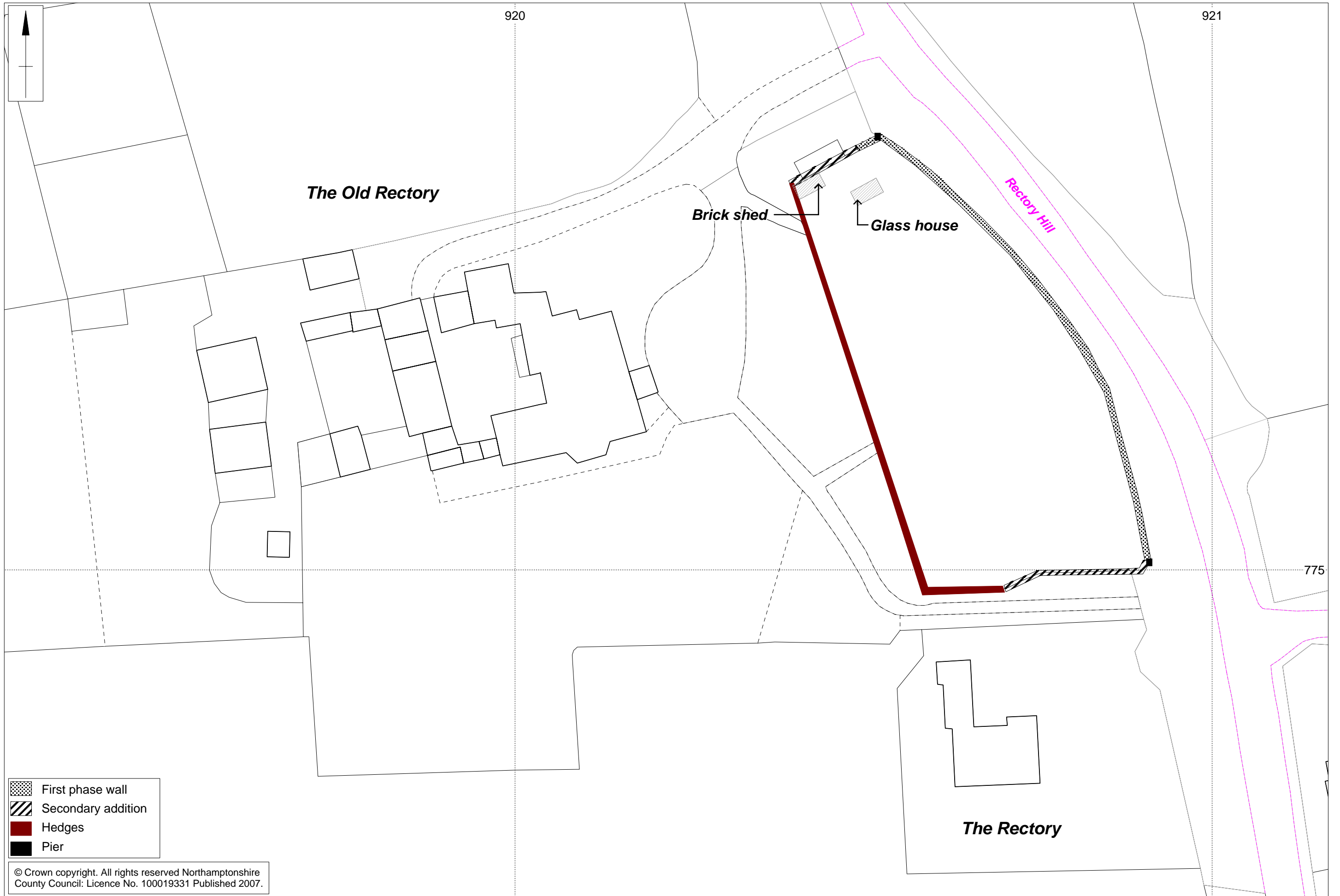
Fig 7 Ordnance Survey map, 1950





Scale 1:15,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:500

The walled garden area Fig 2





William Crosby map, 1782 Fig 3



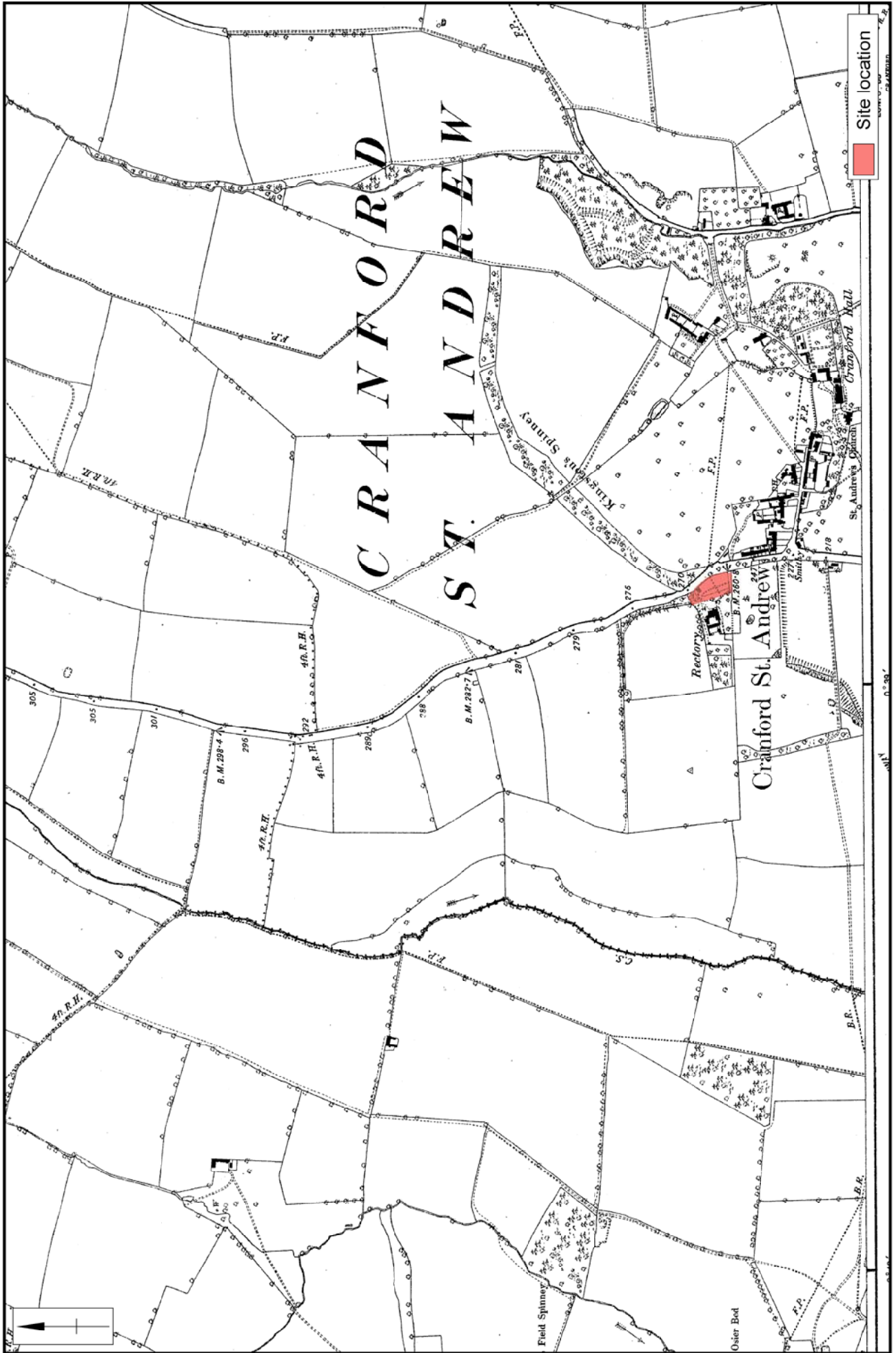


Ordnance Survey surveyors map, 1810 Fig 4





Sir John Robinson estate map, 1875 Fig 5



1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1885 Fig 6



