

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AT
HAM COURT,
UPTON-ON-SEVERN,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Simon Sworn

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

12th October 2006

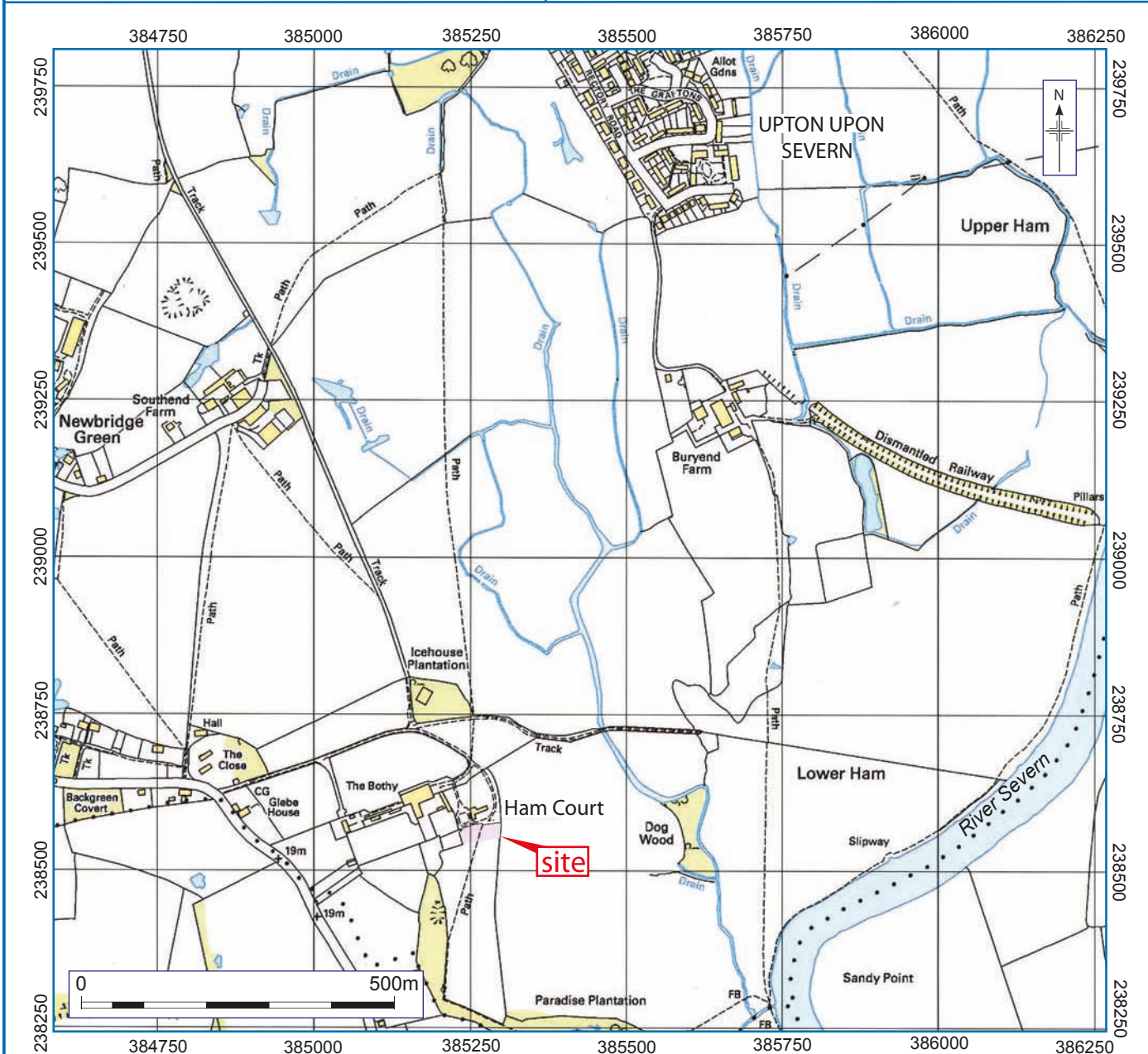
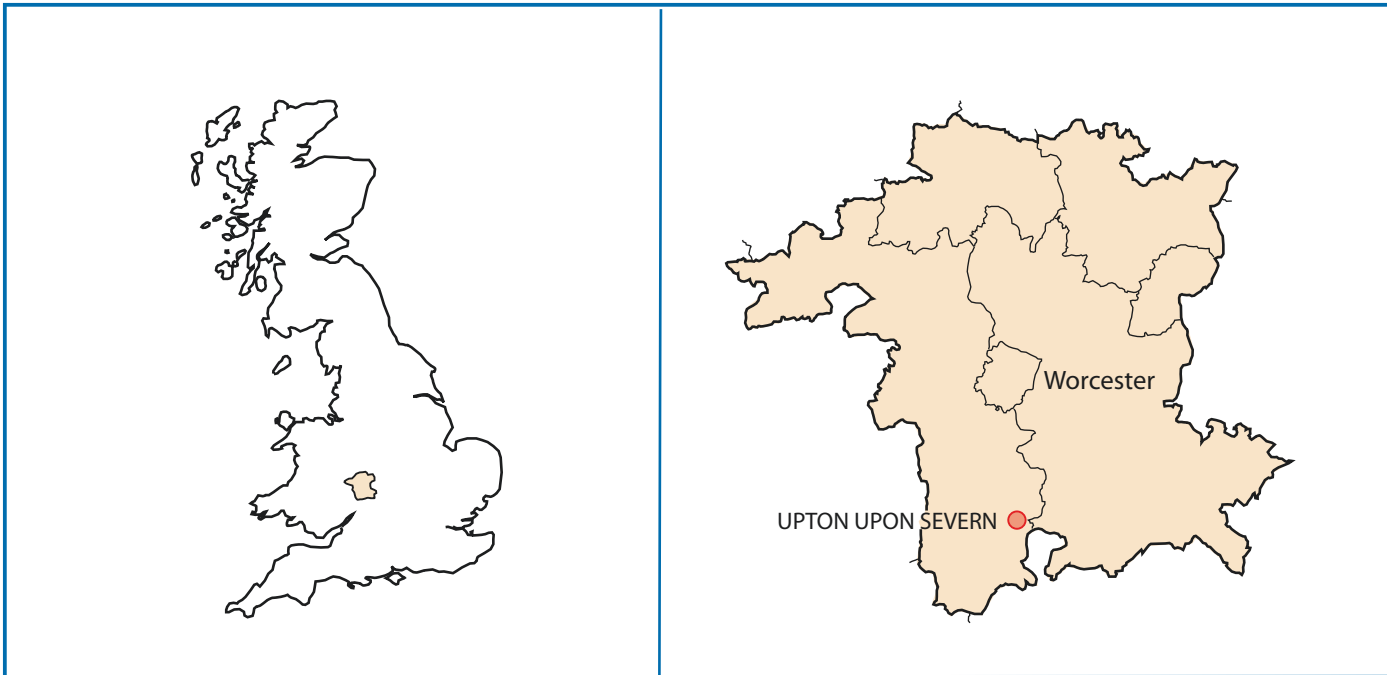
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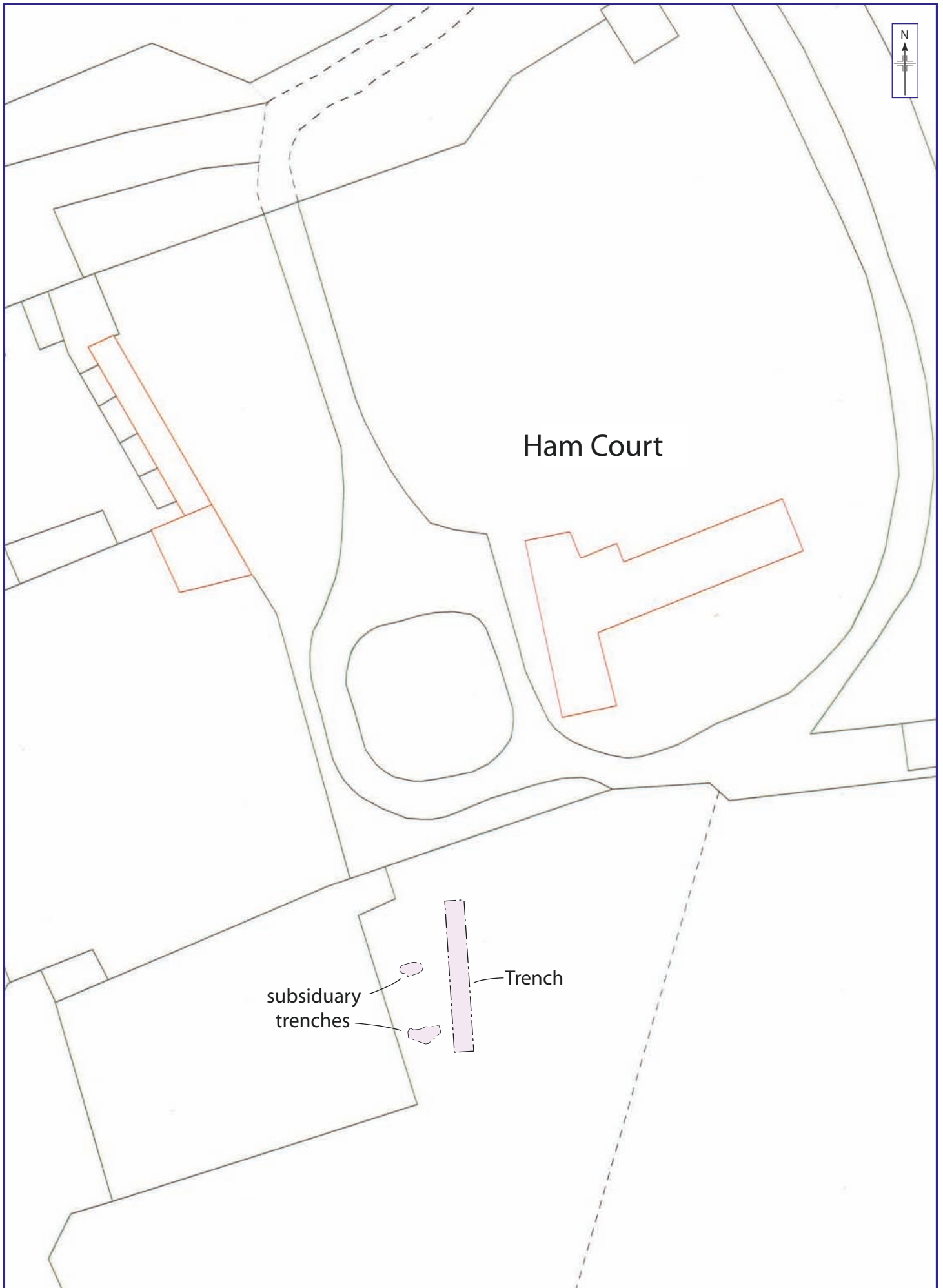
Project 2956
Report 1473
WSM 35099



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Location of the site.

Figure 1



Archaeological evaluation at Ham Court, Upton-on-Severn, Worcestershire

Simon Sworn

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Dr. D. Payler
<i>Site address</i>	Ham Court, Upton-on-Severn, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 8524 3855
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 35099
<i>Planning authority</i>	Malvern Hills District Council
<i>reference</i>	MH/06/0825
<i>Brief</i>	HEAS 2006a
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2005b
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999

Topographical and historical background

Ham Court lies on slightly raised ground roughly 1.5km to the south-west of Upton-on-Severn, on the eastern bank of the River Severn. The natural geology consists of well-drained coarse loamy and sandy soils of the Wick 1 Series over underlying gravels (Mackney *et al* 1983). A brief history of Ham Court has been undertaken by the present owner (Payler 2006). The evaluation trench, located in the paddock to the south of the present building, lies directly across the location of the former manor house, first documented in 1762 and demolished in 1926. The present Ham Court was originally the domestic quarters of the main house. The main house, probably built in the 17th century underwent a number of alterations and enlargements, principally in the late 18th century when Anthony Keck, considered to be the foremost architect in the Three Counties, was commissioned to design a neoclassical mansion to be joined to the existing house. The outline of this building appears clearly on a 1780 map (Plate 12: Payler 2006).

The manor house built by Keck between 1770 and 1772 is illustrated by Nash (1781) and also includes the plantations made by John Martin. Nash also details the surrounding park at this time (WSM 28882).

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

A number of finds have been recovered from metal detecting in the fields directly to the south of the present building by Mr. L.J. Jones, Yew Tree Cottage, Longdon, Tewkesbury. They include four Roman coins, one fairly complete "Polden Hill" type from the 1st century AD and a silver coin, probably dating from the reign of Commodus (AD 180-193). A number of medieval finds have also been recovered, including an Elizabeth I silver groat/sixpence, an Irish long cross penny, a copper alloy circular shoe buckle dating to the 14th – 15th century, a 15th century copper alloy buckle fragment, 3 lead tokens/seals with designs on one side only and a single large lead disc probably from a harness fitting (WSM 21751).

Roman coins have frequently been found in the Upton-on-Severn area (WSM19757).

During 2005 Warwickshire Museum Field Services undertook archaeological work in the vicinity. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in two locations within Ham Court Park during Environment Agency habitat enhancement and fisheries improvement works adjacent to the River Severn. A number of alluvial layers were noted, and some of these contained prehistoric flintwork and Romano-British pottery, suggesting an episode of alluviation here, of Roman-British, or later, date. The remains of a disused 19th century sluice were also noted (Warwickshire Country Council 2006).

Aims

The aim of the evaluation was to observe and record any archaeological deposits associated with the original Ham Court manor house or earlier activity, prior to the construction of a new residential dwelling, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	Sources cited by the SMR/HER 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886 2006 Aerial Photograph of Ham Court (Payler) 1780 Map (Payler 2006) Upton-on-Severn Tithe Map 1841

Dates of fieldwork	4 th – 5 th September 2006	
Area of site	c 24m ²	
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Main trench	length 15mm width 1.60m depth 0.80m (max)
	Subsidiary trench North	length 2.25m width 1.75m depth 0.65m
	Subsidiary trench South	length 3.50 m width 1.75m depth 0.70m

Access to and visibility of structure/deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits and structures.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Table 1: Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Date (<i>Terminus post quem</i>)	Depth (below ground surface)
100	Topsoil	Loose mid-dark brown sandy silt loam, frequent small sub-rounded gravels, charcoal and heavy root action.	Modern	0 – 0.20m
101	Demolition layer	Loose white crushed lime mortar deposit, frequent brick and tile rubble.	1926	0.20 – 52m
102	Natural	Loose reddish brown sand and sub-rounded gravels, frequent manganese flecks.		0.32m+
103	Layer	Friable dark brown silty sand, frequent small sub-rounded pebbles, brick and tile fragments, occasional charcoal flecks.	Post-medieval	0.20 – 0.28m
104	Brick buttress	Square brick structure, contains bricks of various sizes, damaged to southern edge. Bonded by hard yellow lime mortar.	L17 th - mid 18 th century	0.34 – 0.60m
105	Brick structure	Single course of bricks (225 x 110 x 60mm) and brick fragments. Hard yellow mortar, shows signs of originally being more than one course.	Late 17 th - mid 18 th century	0.20 – 0.28m
106	Construction cut fill	Loose dark brown sandy silt, clear edges, frequent brick and tile fragments, charcoal and small sub-rounded pebbles.	Late 17 th - mid 18 th century	0.37 – 0.60m
107	Construction cut	A partially exposed cut, vertical side, flat base, with sharp brake of slope, contains 104 and 106.	Late 17 th - mid 18 th century	0.37 – 0.60m
108	Wall footing	Single course of large blue lias and sandstones (c 450 x 360 x 80), aligned east/west.		0.44 – 0.54m
109	Construction cut	East/west aligned linear cut, heavily truncated, vertical sides and flat base, contains wall 108.		0.30 – 0.54m
110	Post hole fill	Firm mid-dark brown sandy silt, occasional small brick and tile fragments.	Post-medieval	0.36 – 0.06m
111	Post hole	Circular (0.19m dia) cut, vertical sides and flat base, filled by 110.	Post-medieval	0.36 – 0.06m
112	Mortar layer	Thin layer of compacted white lime mortar.		0.34 – 0.38m
113	Brick wall	East/west aligned wall, 2 courses, bricks 230 x 115 x 70mm, very hard cream mortar.		0.33 – 0.52m
114	Wall footing	Single course of large blue lias and sandstones (c 400 x 360 x 70), aligned east/ west.		0.52 – 0.70m
115	Construction cut	East/west aligned linear cut, heavily truncated, vertical sides and flat base, contains wall 114.		0.52 – 0.70m
116	Ditch (?) cut	NW/SE aligned linear cut, partially exposed, moderate concave sides and base.	Post-medieval	0.30 – 0.86m
117	Ditch (?) fill	Well-compacted light-mid brown silty sand, frequent sub-angular gravels.	Post-medieval	0.30 – 0.86m
118	Brick structure	Partially exposed brick fragment structure butting 119, bricks 115mm wide and 70mm thick, loose yellow lime mortar.	Late 17 th - mid 18 th century	0.19m+

Context	Classification	Description	Date (<i>Terminus post quem</i>)	Depth (below ground surface)
119	Curved brick wall	Brick wall, bricks 115mm wide and 70mm thick, bonded by hard yellow mortar, butts 120, same as 126. Only visible in plan.	Mid – late 18 th century	0.15m+
120	Brick wall	NW corner of brick structure, bricks 230 x 110 x 60mm, hard cream mortar, same as 128, butted by 119, above 129.	L17 th – early 18 th century	0.25m+
121	Construction cut fill	Friable dark brown sandy silt, frequent charcoal flecks, occasional small brick and mortar fragments		0.35 – 0.55m
122	Construction cut	East/west linear cut, vertical sides and flat base, filled by 113 and 121.		0.22 – 0.55m
123	Buried soil horizon	Friable dark brown sandy loam, frequent small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional charcoal flecks.		0.27 – 0.38m
124	Subsoil	Friable mid-light brown sandy loam, frequent small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional charcoal flecks.		0.20 – 0.29m
125	Buried soil horizon	Friable mid-light brown sandy loam, frequent small sub-rounded pebbles, occasional charcoal flecks.		0.38 – 0.48m
126	Curved brick wall	Brick wall, bricks 115mm wide and 70mm thick, bonded by hard yellow mortar, butts 127, same as 119. Only visible in plan.	L17 th – early 18 th century	0.19 – 70m+
127	Wall footing	Partially visible in plan in SW corner, single course of large blue lias and sandstones (c 400 x 360 x 70).		0.56 – 0.70m
128	Brick wall	Single course of bricks, only visible in plan, heavily robbed, above 129, same as 120.		0.48 – 0.55m
129	Wall footing	Partially visible, single course of large blue lias and sandstones (c 400 x 360 x 70), below 128.		0.55 – 0.65m
130	Deposit	Compacted dark reddish brown silty sand, frequent sub-rounded gravels.		0.60 – 0.64m

Artefactual analysis by Laura Griffin

Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995, appendix 4).

Method of analysis

All hand retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992; Hurst 1992).

Results

The artefactual assemblage recovered from the site consisted of 79 finds totalling 39.1kg, which is summarised in Tables 2 and 4. The assemblage came from 11 stratified contexts and could be dated from the post-medieval period onwards, with the majority dating to the 18th century (see Table 2). Level of preservation was variable, but in general material from stratified contexts was well preserved and displayed very low levels of abrasion.

Ceramic building material formed the largest artefact group accounting for 61% of the assemblage and consisting primarily of brick samples taken from standing walls during excavation. In addition, four pieces of flat roof tile, one piece of oolitic limestone masonry, 11 pieces of internal wall plaster and 6 pieces of mortar were also identified.

Pottery totalled just three undiagnostic sherds that were identified, grouped by fabric and dated to their general period or production span on the basis of fabric type (see Table 3).

Remaining finds consisted of two fragments of animal bone (contexts 103 and 110), one shard of window glass (context 117), one section of ceramic field drain (unstratified), six iron nails (contexts 101 and 117), sixteen adjoining fragments of modern ceramic tile with a painted cart and horse scene and a small, bent disc of copper alloy which could possibly be a coin or token but is too corroded to identify.

Discussion of the artefacts

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated based on the evidence recorded and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Post-medieval pottery	2	18
Modern pottery	1	2
Brick	28	31888
Flat roof tile	4	3977
Modern tile	16	88
Brick	28	31888
Mortar	5	731
Plaster	11	191
Stone building material	1	604
Ceramic field drain	1	1368
Animal bone	2	17
Copper alloy object	1	1
Window glass	1	1
Iron nails	6	219

Table 2: Quantification of the assemblage

Post-medieval

The vast majority of material recovered was of this period with seven contexts (105, 106, 110, 113, 119, 120 and 126) allocated a *terminus post quem* of 18th century on the basis of the material retrieved from them. A substantial assemblage of bricks was retrieved from the above contexts and where possible, length, width and thickness were recorded to assist with dating (see Table 3). From these measurements, it would appear that all bricks present date between the late 17th and mid 18th centuries. However, it is possible that those of 2.25 inches in thickness could be at the earlier end of this range with the example from context 120 in particular, resembling examples from late 17th/early 18th century contexts on other sites (A Crawford pers comm.).

Due to a lack of pottery within the assemblage, it is not possible to further narrow the date ranges for contexts within this period. However, there is no evidence to contradict the suggestion that the Phase 2b curved wall (contexts 119 and 126) could have been laid by Anthony Keck between 1770 and 1772.

In addition to the bricks, a single near complete flat roof tile was also recovered (context 120). This appears to have been reused within the construction of the wall with mortar on both surfaces. In addition, the mortar on what would have originally been the lower face of the tile has the outline of two bricks impressed into it. Other finds of note from contexts dated to this period consisted of one fragment of mortar (context 110) and six pieces of internal wall plaster which may originally have been painted yellow (context 106). A further five pieces of this plaster were found within later contexts, with those from context 101 appearing bluish in colour and those from 117 having a more pink appearance.

A piece of building stone was also recovered from the site (context 101), which although residual, is likely to be of similar date to the bricks discussed above. The stone itself is oolitic limestone and has been shaped into an unusual 'wedge' shape with a very flat back, which looks likely to have

been laid against a wall or floor. The upper surface has many diagonal striations, which indicate it to have been sawn. It is not know what structure this stone originally came from but the good condition of the piece may indicate that it is from the interior of the house, possibly a fireplace or similar feature.

Only two sherds of post-medieval pottery were retrieved and both were residual within context 101. Neither was diagnostic but both were of black-glazed post-medieval red sandy ware fabric (fabric 78) and of 18th century date.

Context	Material	Total	Weight (g)	Length (inches)	Width (inches)	Thickness (inches)
101	Brick	1	2580	8.75	4	2.5
101	Brick	1	2380	0	4.5	2.5
101	Brick	1	3600	9	4	2.75
103	Brick	4	40	0	0	0
105	Brick	1	2920	9	4.25	2.5
106	Brick	1	539	0	0	2.5
106	Brick	1	283	0	0	2.5
106	Brick	1	569	0	0	2.5
106	Brick	4	7	0	0	0
110	Brick	1	30	0	0	0
110	Brick	2	6	0	0	0
113	Brick	1	2980	9	4.5	2.75
118	Brick	1	2400	0	4.5	2.5
118	Brick	1	420	0	4.25	0
118	Brick	1	3790	9	4.5	2.5
119	Brick	1	403	0	4.5	0
119	Brick	1	2158	0	4.5	2.75
120	Brick	1	3490	9	4.25	2.25
126	Brick	1	1670	0	4.25	2.25
126	Brick	1	1614	0	4.25	2.25
126	Brick	1	9	0	0	0

Table 3: Quantification and dimensions of the brick recovered

Modern

One context (101) could be dated to the late 19th century onwards. This context contained a variety of residual building material, including a modern flat roof tile from which this *terminus post quem* was taken.

Overview of artefactual evidence

The dating of the artefacts retrieved ties in well with and supports the assumed dates for the construction of the semi-circular extension to the western end of the building by Anthony Keck.

In addition, the lack of material pre-dating the late post-medieval period may indicate that any earlier building on the site was either in a different location or that large scale ground clearance and landscaping took place before construction of the last house.

Context	Material	Total	Weight (g)	Period
N/A	Ceramic field drain	1	1368	1850 - 1890
101	Brick	3	8560	Post-medieval
101	Iron nails	5	218	
101	Plaster	1	63	Post-medieval
101	Post-medieval pottery	2	18	Post-medieval
101	Stone building material	1	604	
101	Modern ceramic tile	16	88	Post-medieval
101	Flat roof tile	2	21	Post-medieval
101	Flat roof tile	1	256	Modern
103	Animal bone	1	16	
103	Brick	4	40	Post-medieval
105	Brick	1	2920	Post-medieval
106	Brick	3	1391	Post-medieval
106	Brick fragments	4	7	Post-medieval
106	Copper alloy object	1	1	
106	Plaster	6	49	
110	Burnt animal bone	1	1	
110	Brick fragments	2	6	Post-medieval
110	Brick	1	30	Post-medieval
110	Mortar	1	1	
113	Brick	1	2980	Post-medieval
117	Window glass	1	1	

117	Iron nail	1	1	
117	Plaster	4	79	Post-medieval
118	Brick	3	6610	Post-medieval
118	Mortar	4	730	
119	Brick	2	2561	Post-medieval
120	Brick	1	3490	Post-medieval
120	Flat roof tile	1	3700	Medieval / early post medieval
126	Brick	2	3284	Post-medieval
126	Brick fragments	1	9	Post-medieval

Table 4: Summary of the assemblage

Discussion/Results

The discussion here is of the observed buried archaeological remains rather than a detailed history of the house, which has been collated elsewhere (Payler 2006). Where possible the archaeological evidence has been correlated to the known documentary and cartographic evidence.

The structural remains have been grouped into four phases (Phases 1-4: Appendix 1).

A 15m x 1.6m trench was excavated on a north/south alignment in the paddock to the south of the present standing Ham Court (Fig 2). The trench was located over the known location of the earlier/larger building, demolished in 1926. The trench exposed a number of positive and negative features.

In addition two smaller subsidiary trenches were opened to the west of the main trench, these were dug to establish the extent of the observed features in the main trench and to establish the nature of the visible above ground earthworks.

The present topsoil surface (100) consisted of a loose mid-dark brown sandy silt loam with frequent small sub-rounded gravels. Directly below the topsoil was a layer of crushed mortar and building rubble (101: Section 1, Fig 3), this deposit extended across most of the trench, though in the southern end (the far 2.5m) the topsoil overlay an underlying subsoil (124). Deposit 101 could clearly be interpreted as having derived from the demolition of the existing building in 1926. The deposit contained mortar and small fragments of building material and other artefacts ranging from the 17th – 20th centuries, the useful larger building material would have been sold off at the time of demolition. This deposit had then been spread across the site and levelled off to create the present underlying surface. This extensive deposit overlay a number of features and the underlying natural sand and gravels (102).

The substantial features observed within the main trench consisted of two areas containing sequences of building structures. It was clear that stratigraphically a number of building and demolition phases had taken place. Two sets of parallel walls (or evidence of their previous existence prior to robbing/demolition) were visible running east/west, 5.75m (18.80ft) apart. These walls consisted of a lower single course of blue lias and sandstone blocks (108: Plate 5/114: Plate 7, Section 1, Fig 3) laid flat in a vertical sided, flat based construction cut (109/115). This single course of stones, likely to be of local origin, would have supported a timber-framed structure. The stones designed to act as post pads to keep the timbers off the ground, to avoid extensive rotting. These walls form the first phase (Phase 1, Fig 6) of construction observed during the evaluation.

Built above these footings and following the same footprint was a substantial brick wall (113 to the south, robbed out the north, though its alignment/presence was established by the small trench dug to the west). These brick walls (Phase 2a, Fig 7) would have been the foundation for the last house; the bricks were of probable Georgian date (early – mid 18th century), and well mortared.

The construction cut (122) for this later brick wall was clearly wider than the construction cut for the lower lias course, suggesting that either the lias course had been laid in a thinner trench and then the trench was widened to allow for the mortaring of the bricks, or that the bricks represented a separate phase of construction. A section through these wall structures (Section 6, Fig 4: Plate 7) clearly shows a thin horizon (130) separating the lower wall (114) and the later brick wall (113) above. This layer, consisting of compacted dark reddish brown silty sand with frequent sub-rounded gravels, is likely to have derived during the removal of the upper courses of wall 114, fallen in from the sides of the original construction cut (the deposit appeared to be re-deposited natural).

If walls 114 and 113 were from the same building phase then layer 130 would not be present, also if wall 113 was built directly on top of wall 114 then the mortar bonding would be in-between the stones making up wall 114, not separated by layer 130. This suggests that wall 114 was built first, the majority of it then removed at a later date, leaving only the lowest course, then the brick structure 113 was constructed in a larger construction cut, but following the same footprint as the earlier building. The dating of this early phase of construction was difficult to determine due to the absence of any datable material, though it clearly pre-dated the later brick structure. The lack of any artefactual material suggests that either the site had been extensively cleared of all material and re-graded prior to the construction of the Phase 2a structure, or that the Phase 1 building is of a post-medieval date and this structure stood for only a short period before being demolished and re-built.

The blue lias/sandstone walls appeared in both the sections in the main trench, and in plan (not excavated) in the two smaller trenches to the west (127/129), in all cases they were observed to be below the later brick walls (120/128).

In the main trench the northern section through the walls indicated the presence of the earlier wall (108), however the later brick wall above had been removed/robbed, most likely during the demolition phase of 1926. The original construction cut was still visible though the wall had been removed, filled by the later demolition material (101). However a small section of brickwork relating to the robbed east/west wall was still visible to the immediate north, consisting of a square section of well-mortared brickwork (104: Section 4, Figs 3, 4, 5). This brickwork structure, measuring 0.70 x 0.60 x 0.30m and constructed from 18th century bricks was well faced to the west, north and south, though with a rough/damaged face to the south. It appeared that this structure was originally a buttress attached to the Phase 2a brick wall, robbed in this area, accounting for the damage to the south. The buttress being left behind and not removed during the 1926 demolition. It comprised a well-mortared consolidation of material that would have been of no further use, and was therefore left behind in the ground. The buttress was set within a cut (107) that truncated part of the natural and the abutting lias wall (108), again suggesting that the lower lias wall (Phase 1) and the above brick structure (Phase 2a) were clearly from two different construction phases.

The two subsidiary trenches dug to the west of the main trench exposed the south-west and north-west corners of the main house structure. Again these indicated that there had been a brick structure built directly on top of an earlier lias/sandstone structure (127/129) and following the same footprint. In addition these two trenches picked up a curved brick wall (119, 126: Phase 2b, Fig 8) butting the main building to the west (Plates 8 and 9). Though unexcavated, it clearly butted the square building, yet may have been either part of the same building phase, or tacked on later. This curved wall appears in the photographs taken prior to the demolition of the property in the 20th century (Payler 2006). These walls would probably have been part of the extensions to the property undertaken by Keck in the 1770's. Butting this wall and the main north-west corner of the original structure appeared a small brick structure (118). As this was only partially exposed in plan it was not possible to establish if this was part of the Phase 2b additions or a later strengthening of this corner. The equivalent corner of the building was not exposed in the subsidiary trench to the south so a comparison was unattainable.

In the main trench a single course of bricks (105) may also belong to this phase of building work (Plate 2b). These bricks both butted and overlay the buttress (104) so were therefore of a later date,

though only a single course remained, marks in the mortar on the upper surface clearly indicated that there had originally been more than one course, limiting the possibility of this being a floor surface. This may have been part of later periods of construction that in filled the open area between the original house and the domestic quarters (how the present Ham Court building).

All the visible wall structures were clearly covered by the layer of material (101: Phase 3) from the demolition in 1926.

To the immediate north of the main trench a partially exposed linear cut was observed running in a north-west/south-east direction. Upon excavation, this revealed a possible ditch (117) with irregular concave sides and base (Plate 11: Fig 3). This possible ditch was filled with a single deposit consisting of well-compacted light-mid brown silty sand with frequent sub-angular gravels (116). The exact nature of this feature was unclear, it may well have been a ditch/drainage gully, though the possibility for it to have been a robbed out construction cut remains. However this seems unlikely as if it had originally functioned as a foundation cut then it would be expected that the sides would have been vertical and the base flat. Also the fill of this feature did not contain any of the deposit 101, the demolition layer, indicating that this feature had been in-filled prior to the 1926 demolition. A fragment of mortar recovered from the backfill of this feature indicates a post-medieval date.

In the centre of the main trench two undated features were noted, a small layer of white crushed mortar and a single small circular feature. The mortar layer (112: Fig 3) appeared to be sat directly on the underlying natural gravels and did not appear to be part of a floor surface. It may have been part of dumped material deposited during the construction of any of the building phases, or it may also have been dumped here during the demolition of the building.

The circular feature (111: Section 5, Fig 4) appeared to be a small posthole on excavation (Plate 10). A vertical sided and flat based cut, roughly 0.20m diameter and 0.06m deep was filled with a single deposit of firm mid-dark brown sandy silt with occasional small brick and tile fragments (110). There were no datable artefacts recovered from the fill. This posthole is likely to represent the construction of one of the building phases, located for the insertion of a timber scaffold, rather than for an internal feature, though unfortunately the 1920's demolition removed any stratigraphical evidence for dating and/or phasing.

All recovered bricks are from the late 17th - 18th centuries. There are no obviously earlier bricks or finds, also no bricks were found that were later than 1784 (when the introduction of the 'brick tax' meant that bricks were made 3' thick). All the dated bricks fit into the documented time periods of Keck's constructional phases. The lack of pottery generally makes absolute dating difficult though. There is likely to have been an earlier phase of building, represented by the blue lias/sandstone walls (108/114/127/129), yet these remain undated. The complete absence of any pottery or material dating from before the post-medieval period heavily suggests the absence of any substantially earlier structure or occupation on this site.

Below the topsoil and subsoil to the south of the main trench a series of buried soil horizons were revealed (123/125). No dating evidence was recovered from these deposits. A small east/west linear cut truncated these deposits, containing a ceramic field drain dating from 1850 – 1860.

Conclusions

The evaluation has revealed a number of features, primarily the footprint of the original manor house, and indicating a number of phases of construction.

The archaeological investigation has concluded that there remains some below ground evidence of the original manor house, although the majority was removed in the early 20th century. There is tentative evidence that the brick structures relate to the major improvements and alterations by Keck in the late 1770's and that they were constructed on the footprint of an earlier structure, one that had either been almost completely ruinous prior to the works, or had been virtually raised to the ground prior to the new works commencing. With the exception of this earlier structure there was no indication of any considerable pre-17th century activity on the site, either in the form of structural or artefactual evidence. That is not to suggest that wholesale removal and remodelling of the site prior to the post-medieval building phases could not have taken place.

On the evidence of this investigation it appears that the proposed development of the new residential dwelling will not destroy any previously unidentified archaeological deposits.

Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Dr. D. Payler at Ham Court, Upton-on-Severn, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 8524 3855; SMR ref WSM 35099). A 15m trench and two smaller trenches were excavated in the paddock to the south of the present Ham Court building. The trenches were located on the site of the known location of the earlier manor house, possibly built in the 17th century and demolished in 1927, though having undergone considerable enlargement and alteration in the 1770's. Sequences of building phases were observed. The first phase consisted of two parallel blue lias walls. Above these walls substantial brick footings followed the earlier footprint though they were clearly of a later date. In addition a curved brick wall to the west was noted, this wall might have been part of the brick manor house, though it may have been part of the alterations made in the late 18th century. A small number of undated features were also observed; these probably related the construction/usage of the original manor house. Apart from the earlier blue lias stone structure there was no evidence to suggest any considerable pre-17th century activity on the site, either in the form of structural or artefactual evidence. That is not to suggest that wholesale removal and remodelling of the site prior to the post-medieval building phases could not have taken place.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	2
Photographic records AS3	1
Digital photographs	150
Trench records AS41	1
Drawings	16
Boxes of finds	1

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
01299 250416

telephone

Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Dr. D. Payler (Ham Court, Upton-on-Severn) and Mike Glyde (Worcestershire Historic Environment Planning Advisor).

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Appendix 1 Context phasing groups;

Phase 1 Blue lias/ sandstone footings

Wall	108	114	127	129
Construction cut	109	115		

Phase 2a Brick wall on same footprint as Phase 1

Con cut backfill	121		106	130(?)
Wall	113	120	128	104
Cut	122		107	

Phase 2b Semi-circular extension to the west

Wall	118	119	126	
Brick structure	105			
Layer	103			

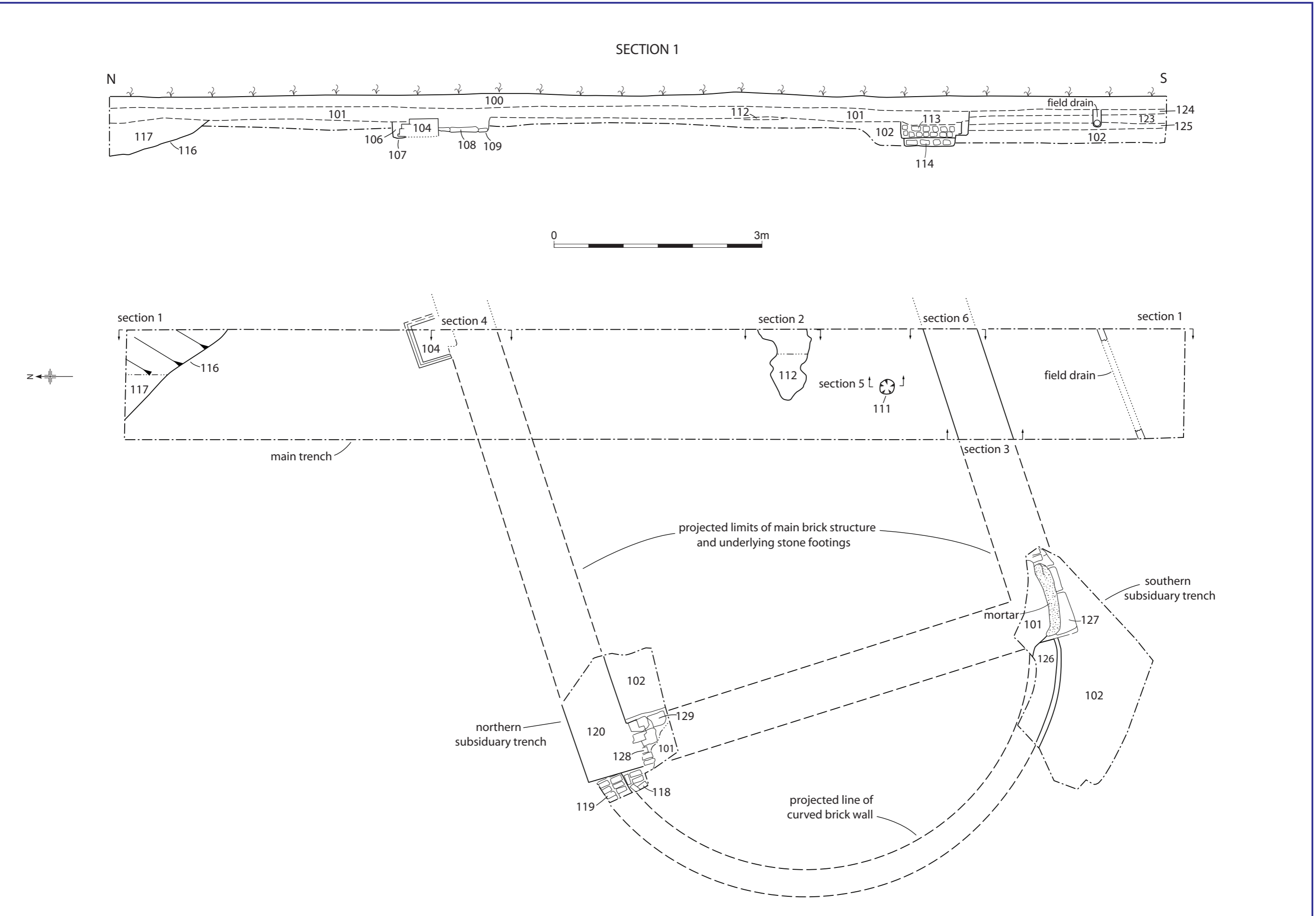
Phases 2a and 2b may both part of Keck's late 18th century alterations, the circular wall is clearly butting the main square building, rather than keyed-in, but this may have been an intentional design.

Phase 3 1926 demolition/modern

Demolition layer	101			
Topsoil	100			
Subsoil	124			

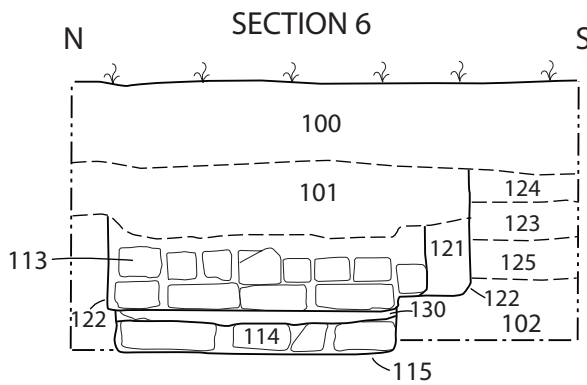
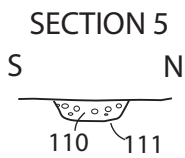
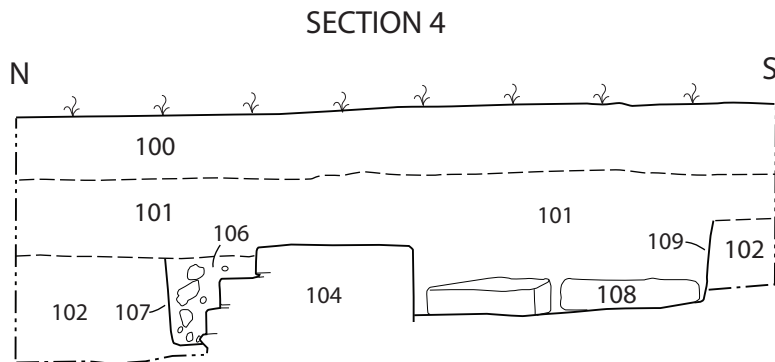
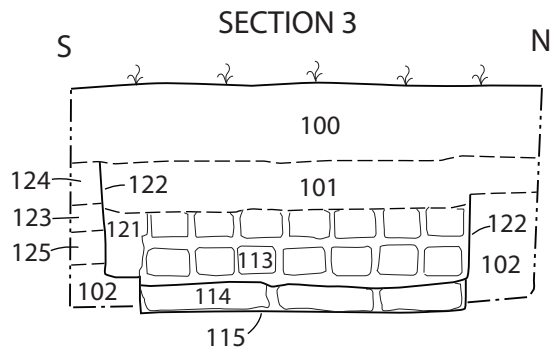
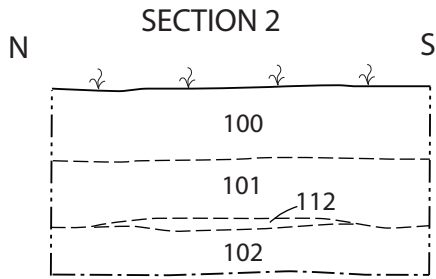
Phase 4 Undated

Post Hole	110/111 buildings)			
Ditch	117/116			
Buried soil horizons to the south of the trench		123	125	
Mortar layer	112			



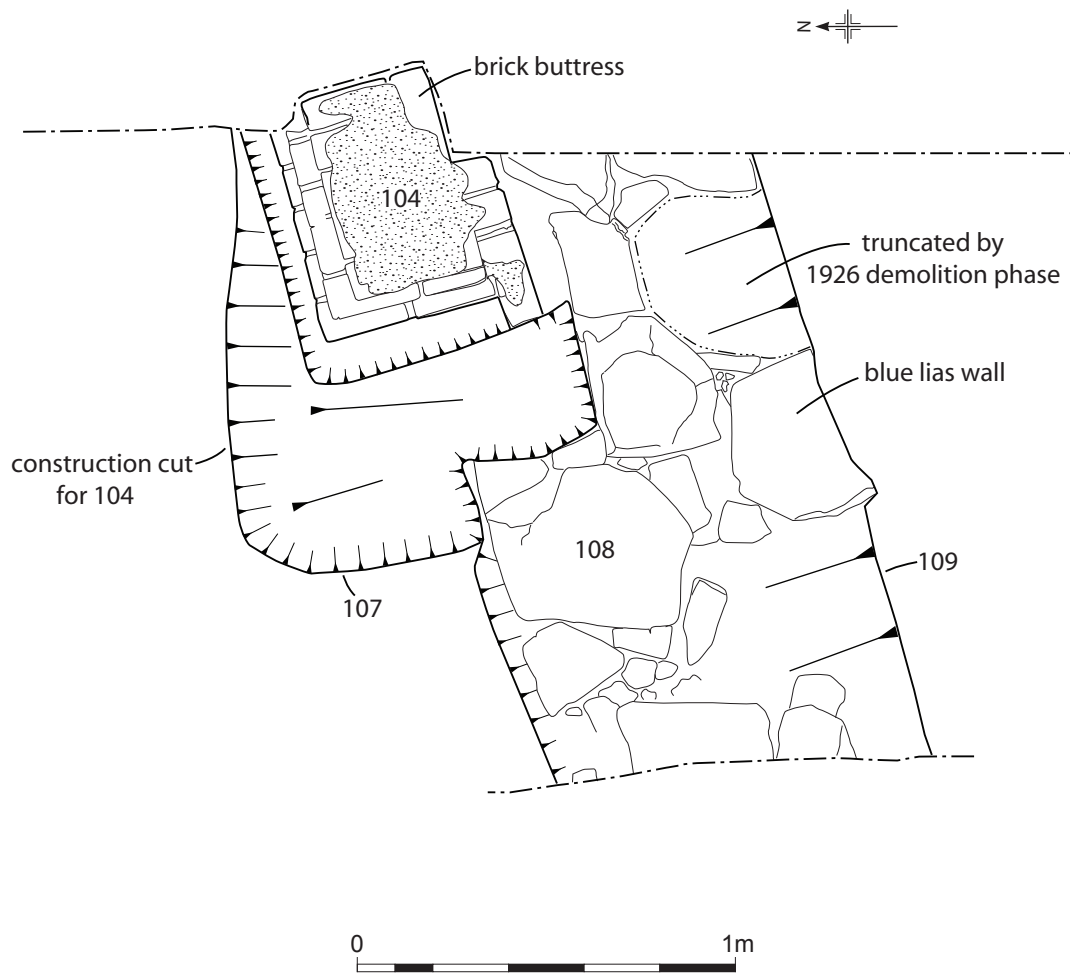
Plan and section of main features

Figure 3



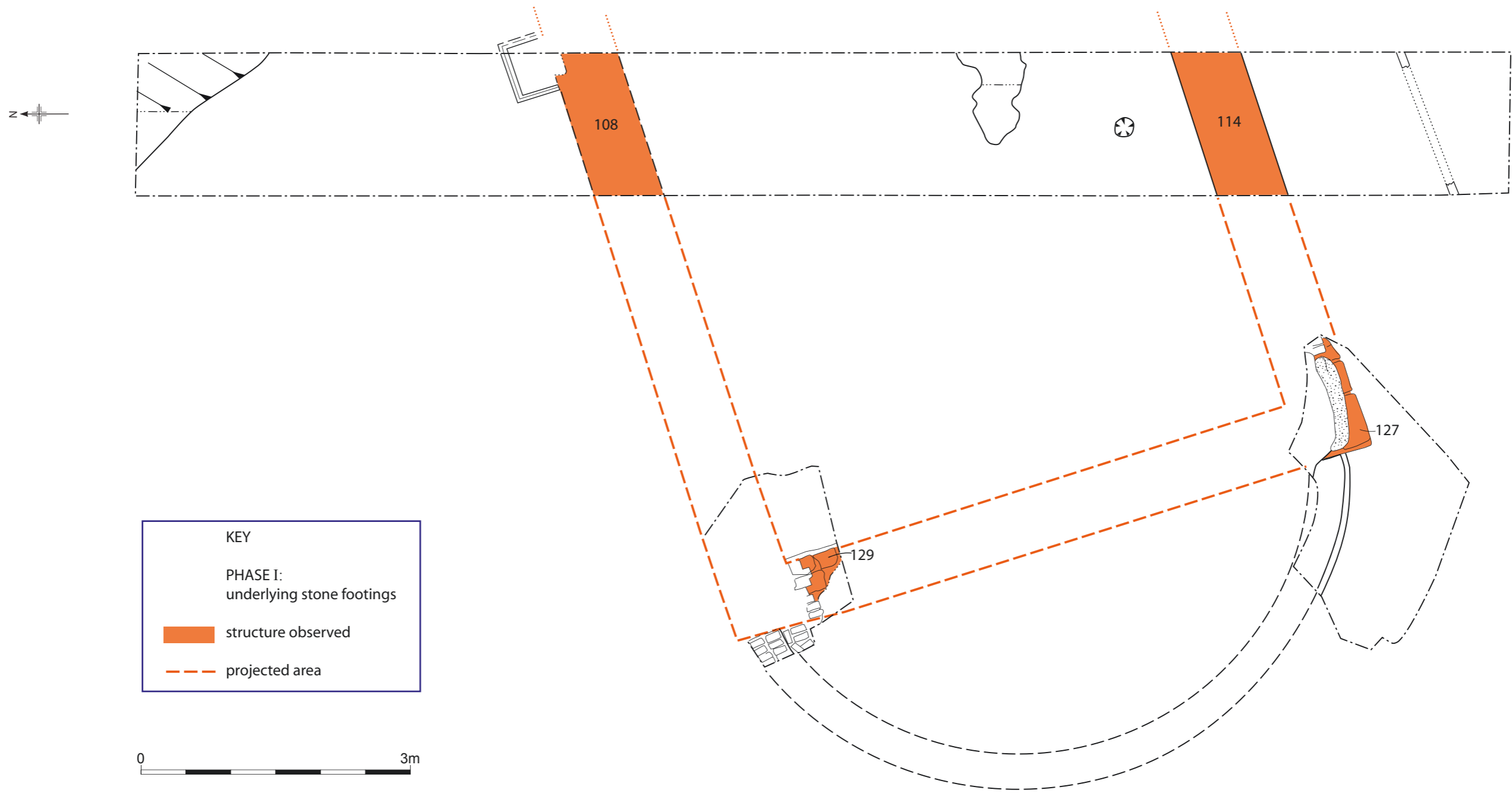
Sections

Figure 4



Detail lan of butress 104 and early blue lias wall 108

Figure 5



KEY

PHASE I:
underlying stone footings

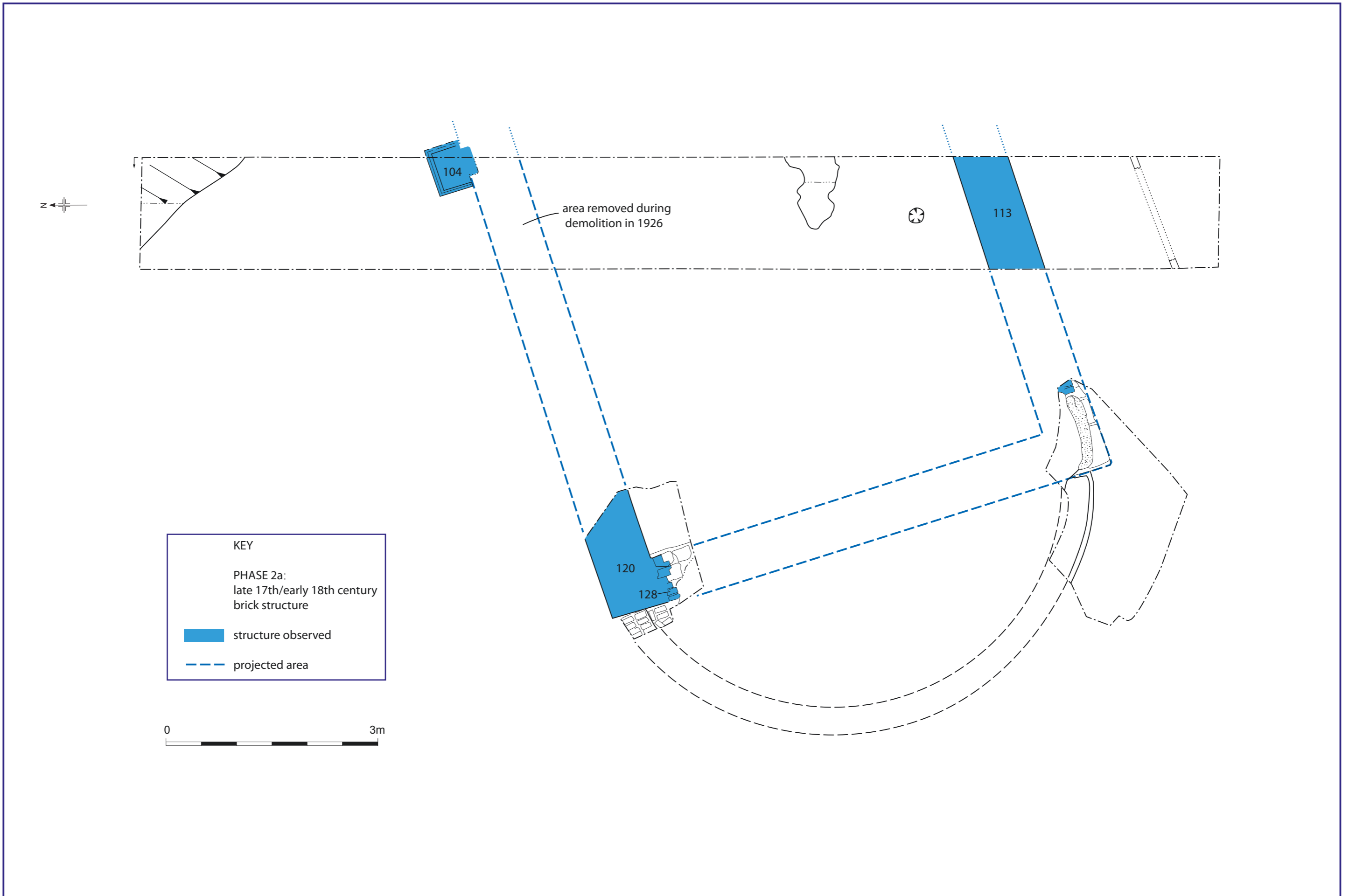
structure observed

projected area

0
0
3m

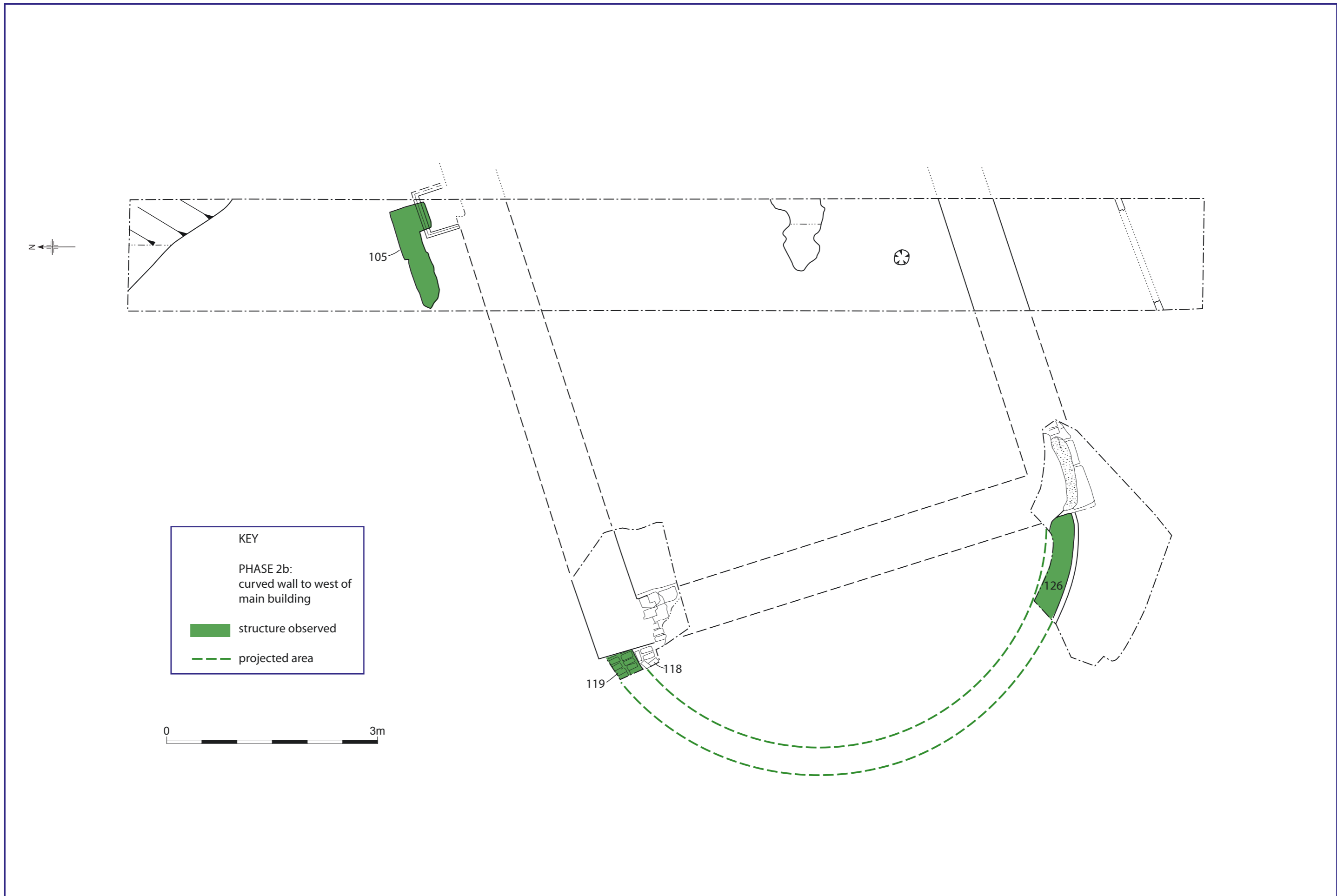
Phase I plan

Figure 6



Phase 2a plan

Figure 7



Phase 2b plan



Extract from CD.ROM of BA1572/572 refs 760/572 Upton upon Severn Tithe map, 1841

Figure 9

Plates



Plate 1: General view of main trench. (Facing south)



Plate 2: Brick structure 105, scale at 0.5m. (Facing east)



Plate 3: Georgian brick buttress 104, with earlier wall 108 in background, scale at 0.3m. (Facing south)



Plate 4: Detail of buttress 104, its construction cut 107 and wall 108, scales at 0.30m and 1m. (Facing south)



Plate 5: Wall 108, scale at 1m. (Facing north)



Plate 6: Southern end of trench, brick wall 113 in foreground, mortar spread 112 in mid-ground, scale at 1m. (Facing north-west)



Plate 7: Section 6, brick wall 113, earlier wall 114 below and brown deposit 130 in-between, scale at 1m. (Facing east)



Plate 8: Southern subsidiary trench, detail of curved brick wall 126, butting earlier structure 127 to right, scale at 1m. (Facing north-west)



Plate 9: Northern subsidiary trench, detail of brick wall 120 and 128, with curved brick wall 119 to left, scale at 1m. (Facing north)



Plate 10: Section 5, posthole 111, scale at 0.3m. (Facing west)



Plate 11: Northern end of Section 1, possible ditch feature to the northern end of the main trench, scale at 0.5m. (Facing east)

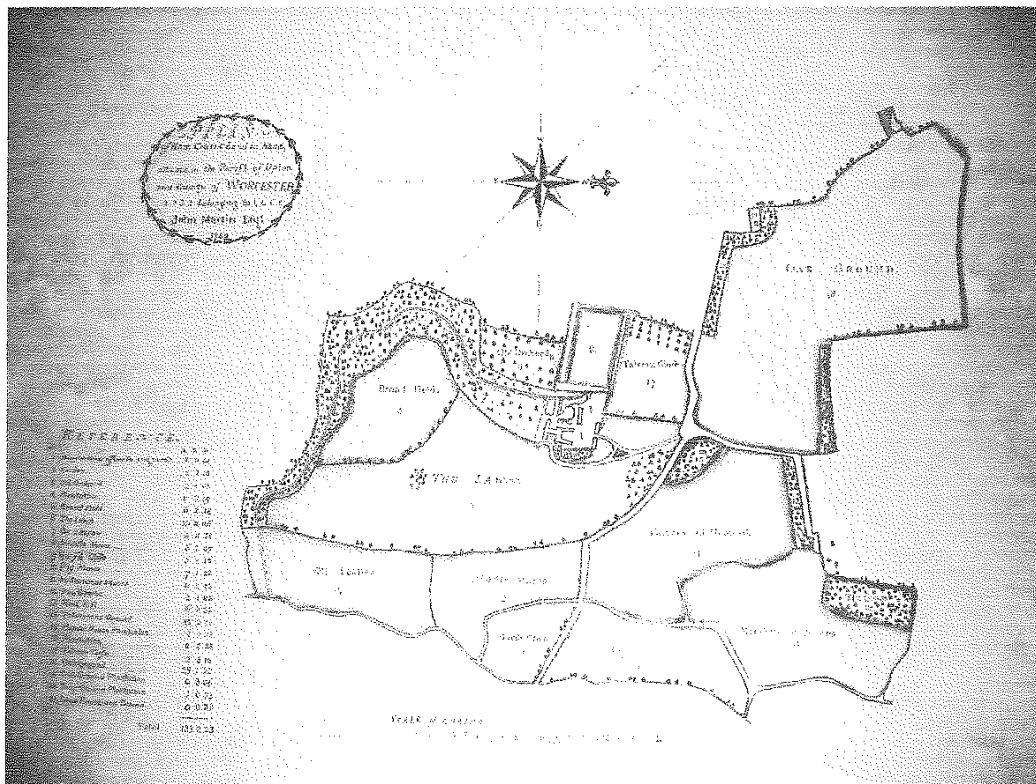


Plate 12: Extract from 1780 Map, showing Ham Court house and parkland. (Payler 2006).



Plate 13: Extract from Nash, 'Collections for a history of Worcestershire' (1781), showing engraving of Ham Court, pg 445