



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Evaluation at Angley House, Cranbrook, Kent.

TQ 77111 36714

by
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Summary

Two archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at Angley House, Cranbrook, Kent, in advance of the construction of a new house at the site. A largely robbed-out brick wall and drain were located in one trench and were probably garden features associated with the 18th century house that stood on the site. A brick-built domed cistern of later 19th century date was also found and probably relates to the house of this date which replaced the earlier house.

Apart from a single residual sherd of late 15th to mid 16th century pottery, there was no evidence for any earlier building or activity on the site.

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1.0 Introduction.

1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services (CBAS) was commissioned by Mr Ian Crawley to carry out an archaeological evaluation excavation in advance of the construction of a new house at Angle House, Cranbrook, Kent (TW/07/03713) in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed development.

1.2 Angle House is situated on the north-west side of Cranbrook, in Angle Park (TQ 77111 36714), on the north side of Angle Road (Fig. 1). A house has stood on this location since at least 1797. This first recorded house was replaced by a new building in c.1870, which in turn was probably demolished c.1930, to be replaced by the current building.

1.3 The site is located on a north-west facing slope at approximately 99m OD, with a lawn and tree covered garden to the south and west. Part of the post-1930 house is being demolished to make way for the new house. A group of other houses which once formed part of Angle Park are situated to the east of Angle House.

1.4 The geology, according to the British Geological Survey, is Tunbridge Wells sand.

1.5 A Specification¹ was prepared for an archaeological evaluation excavation by the Kent County Council County Archaeologist.

1.6 The evaluation excavation was required to establish:

- Is there any evidence of the post-medieval house and estate in the evaluation area?
- Is there any evidence for prehistoric, Roman and/or medieval activity within the development area?
- Has modern disturbance reduced the archaeological potential?
- What impact will the development proposals have on any buried archaeology?

This will enable further decisions to be made regards the mitigation strategy for either in-situ preservation of the archaeology, or its preservation by record.

1.7 The evaluation excavation took place on the 30th April 2009, and was carried out by the author.

¹ *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at Angle House, Angle Road in Cranbrook.*

2.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 2.1** Cranbrook may have 11th century origins, but it mostly developed during the 13th century reaching the height of its prosperity in the 15th and 16th centuries due to the cloth trade.
- 2.2** A desk-based survey² has established that the earliest reference to a Manor of Angley follows the Norman invasion in 1066, after which it was owned by Battle Abbey until the dissolution of the Abbey by Henry VIII. The earliest map evidence³ suggests that the manor itself may have been located in the area of Spratsbourne Farm.
- 2.3** The first evidence for a house on the site comes from maps of 1798/1801, and a picture of Angley House dating to 1814. The precise location of this Georgian style property is not known for certain, but is possibly within the footprint of the later 19th century house.
- 2.4** The Georgian house was probably demolished in the later 19th century after a change in ownership, and a new, slightly larger, house was built c1870. This house was demolished or burnt down in c1930, and replaced with the current property.

3 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** On arrival at the site the existing property had already been partly demolished. In accordance with the specification provided by KCC, two evaluation trenches were excavated (Fig. 2), each being 2m x 1.8m in size.
- 3.2** The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. Each trench was initially excavated using the machine until the natural or an archaeological feature was reached. The bottom of the trench and a section was cleaned by hand and recorded.
- 3.3** A TBM was established at the site, and was linked to a spot height (99.44OD) located on the driveway to the north of the house. A metal detector was used to scan the spoil heaps and archaeological features.

² White, A. 2009 *An Archaeological Evaluation: Angley House*

³ Andrews & Drury map of 1769

3.4 All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated in accordance with the Kent County Council manual of Specifications Part B, and according to accepted professional standards, and recorded using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.

3.5 A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services and, after any further analysis, will be offered to Cranbrook Museum. A site reference of AHC09 has been allocated.

4.0 Results

4.1 Trench 1 was situated at the east end of the terrace on the south side of the house (Fig. 2), and was positioned partly across the terrace and partly on the adjacent garden. The terrace comprised a layer of paving slabs with a brick edging, and sat on top of a layer of sand, concrete pieces and ceramic building material (Context 1), the overall depth being *c.* 150mm. The terrace was probably contemporary with the 1930's house, and the frogged bricks used for edging had a makers mark of 'SOUTHWATER' in the frog.

4.2 Context 2 was below Context 1, and comprised a disturbed loose dark brown silty loam 200mm deep, with ceramic building material (3%), charcoal pieces and flecks (2%) and roots (1%).

4.3 Below Context 2 was another disturbed layer; a firm yellow-brown patchy sandy clay (Context 3). It contained pieces of ceramic building material (3%), sandstone pieces to 150mm (2%) and charcoal pieces and flecks (1%). Below Context 3 was a compact light yellow-brown sandstone natural (Context 5).

4.4 On the north-east edge of Trench 1 a brick-built dome-shaped cistern was encountered (Feature 4). The trench was extended slightly to enable this feature to be properly investigated. There was a circular hole in the top of the cistern, which had been modified by the addition of some concrete, and this was covered by a circular concrete slab of more recent date. The cistern had a maximum external diameter of 1.8m, and in internal depth of 2.8m.

4.5 Inside it had a number of ceramic pipes running into it from different directions, and it had a small amount of water (*c.* 150mm) in its bottom. It did not appear to have been used for foul water, and may have been for rain water. A vertical pipe of small diameter inside the cistern suggests that it may have originally had a pump, and may have been used for watering the adjacent garden.

- 4.6** The cistern was within a cut (Cut **6**), which had been cut into the natural, and also contained the same fill as Context **3**, which suggests that the cistern was built at the same time as the 'made ground' represented by Context **3** had been laid down. The handmade bricks used to build the cistern are likely to have dated from the earlier part of the 19th century⁴.
- 4.7** Trench 2 was situated a short distance further west, and was also cut partly through the terrace and partly through the adjacent garden (Fig. 2). It had a similar sequence of Contexts **1**, **2** and **3**.
- 4.8** A partly robbed-out, brick wall was encountered below Context **3**, on the west side of the trench, running on a north-south alignment. The cut for the wall (Cut **7**) was 250mm wide and 90mm deep, and contained a buff to light brown loose silty clay loam fill (Fill **8**) with ceramic building material (10%), slate pieces (2%), charcoal pieces and flecks (2%) and sandstone pieces to 100mm (1%). Three bricks were still in-situ, and were dated to the 19th century.
- 4.9** Also below Context **3**, and on the east side of Cut **7**, was a thin layer c120mm deep of loose mid grey-brown silty clay loam (Context **10**). This contained small pieces of ceramic building material (2%), charcoal flecks (1%) and roots (<1%), but did not extend across the whole trench, being confined just to a 0.75m wide strip along the north side. Both Cut **7** and Context **10** appeared to have been truncated by Context **3**, whilst Context **10** appears to be retained by the wall (Cut **7**), which may have been a garden feature.
- 4.10** Below Context **10** is a firm buff to light yellow-brown sandy clay with no inclusions (Context **11**), and below this is the natural (Context **5**). Across the remainder of the trench the natural was directly below Context **3**.
- 4.11** Below Context **3** and running east to west across the southern part of Trench 2 with a slightly curving profile was a drain which was slightly cut into the underlying natural. The drain (Feature **9**) was constructed with a base of re-used ceramic roof tiles and a line of bricks along each edge (surviving to two courses in places) sitting on the tiles. There was no evidence of any bonding although the natural clay may have sufficed as a bonding material. The building materials used in the drain have a later 18th to mid 19th century date.

⁴ L. Barber (pers. com.)

4.12 A trench for a drain had been cut around the east and south sides of the house, and revealed a brick wall footing 800mm wide running north-south of probable 19th century date, possibly corresponding with the later 19th century house. On the east side of the house, a 19th century metal drain covered by brick vaulting was also revealed.

4.13 There were no other features or deposits noted.

5 Finds by Luke Barber

5.1 The archaeological work recovered a small quantity of finds. The assemblage is quantified in Table 1.

Table 1: Quantification of finds assemblage.

Context	Pot	Ceramic Building Material	Stone	Other	Date
T1: 2	-	Brick 1/731g Tile 1/6g	2/115g	-	Later C18th – 19th
T1: 3	3/23g	Brick 1/1,519g Tile 4/347g	4/672g	Glass 1/1g	C19th
T2: 2	1/12g	Tile 2/49g	-	Glass 1/71g	Late C18th – mid 19th
T2: 3	-	Tile 1/289g	-	-	C19th
T2: 8	1/13g	Brick 1/2,700g Tile 1/129g	2/150g	-	C19th (resid. C16th)
9	1/1g	Brick 1/1,091g Tile 4/1,030g	-	Glass 1/1g	Later C18th – mid 19th

5.2 Only a small quantity of pottery was recovered from the site. The assemblage consists of generally small to medium sized sherds (to 40mm across) most of which show some signs of abrasion suggesting some reworking. The earliest sherd is residual in Context T2: **8** and appears to be an oxidised hard-fired earthenware body sherd of the late 15th to mid 16th centuries.

5.3 The remainder of the pottery can be placed in the late 18th or 19th centuries. The earliest of these pieces consists of part of a creamware plate from Context T2: **2** which may be of the later 18th century, though the pearlware sherd from Context **9** is probably not much later. The remaining sherds are composed of glazed red earthenware, plain 'china' and unglazed earthenware flower pot, all from Context T1: **3**.

- 5.4** A notably larger assemblage of ceramic building material was recovered. All of the bricks are well formed and fired frogless examples dating to between the mid 18th and mid/late 19th centuries. Dimensions vary slightly, with heights ranging between 60 and 65mm. A complete example from Context T2: **8**, weighing 2,700g, measured 215 x 105 x 60mm. All are tempered with sparse/moderate fine sand with sparse to moderate iron oxide inclusions to either 5mm, or on finer examples, 2mm.
- 5.5** The tile from the site is virtually all in sparse fine sand tempered fabrics, often with sparse iron oxide inclusions to 2mm. On the whole the tiles are well made and hard fired – a number have warped slightly with over-firing (eg Context **9**) suggesting seconds on the site. All fragments appear to be from peg tiles with diamond, or less commonly square, peg holes and all would be in keeping with a later 18th- to 19th- century date.
- 5.6** A small assemblage of stone was also recovered. This is dominated by Welsh roofing slate of late 18th-, or more likely 19th-, century date. Context T1: **3** also produced a 19th- century slate pencil. The only other stone recovered consisted of a piece of Portland stone from Context T1: **3**. The piece is from a moulded slab some 40mm thick but too little is present to establish its original form.
- 5.7** Three fragments of glass were recovered from the site. Two consist of 19th- century aqua coloured thin flat glass from either windows or potentially square-sectioned bottles. The other piece (Context T2: **2**) is from the base of a late 18th- to mid 19th- century wine bottle.
- 5.8** The finds assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and is recommended for discard.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1** The assessment excavation has confirmed that there were no in-situ remains within the trenches that predate the 18th century. The only artefact from an earlier date is the single residual sherd of late 15th to mid 16th century pottery from Context **8**.
- 6.2** The wall and drain features found in Trench 2 are probably related to the house that was on the site in the late 18th to early 19th centuries, and these may have been garden features. With the replacement of this house in the later 19th century these features appear to have been largely robbed-out and the made ground (Context **3**) laid over them.

- 6.3** The cistern found in Trench 1 seems to have been built in the later 19th century and was almost certainly associated with the house of this date. The made ground (Context 3) filled the constructional cut for the cistern and was also used to level up the ground around it.
- 6.4** The majority of the artefacts found during the evaluation excavation belong to the 18th and 19th centuries, and relate to the known history of the site. The presence of the single earlier pottery sherd hints at some possible earlier activity, but it seems likely that if there was an earlier building at the site it almost certainly sits within the footprint of the later buildings.
- 6.5** The assessment excavation has shown that there is little likelihood of encountering pre-18th century features during the construction of the new building at the site. However, there could be further 18th and 19th century buried features, together with scattered artefacts and deposits from this period.

7.0 Acknowledgements

- 7.1** I would like to thank Mr Ian Crawley for commissioning the work, and the contractors for their co-operation and assistance during the fieldwork. The project was managed by Chris Butler for CBAS, and monitored for KCC by Adam Single. I would also like to thank Luke Barber for reporting on the finds.

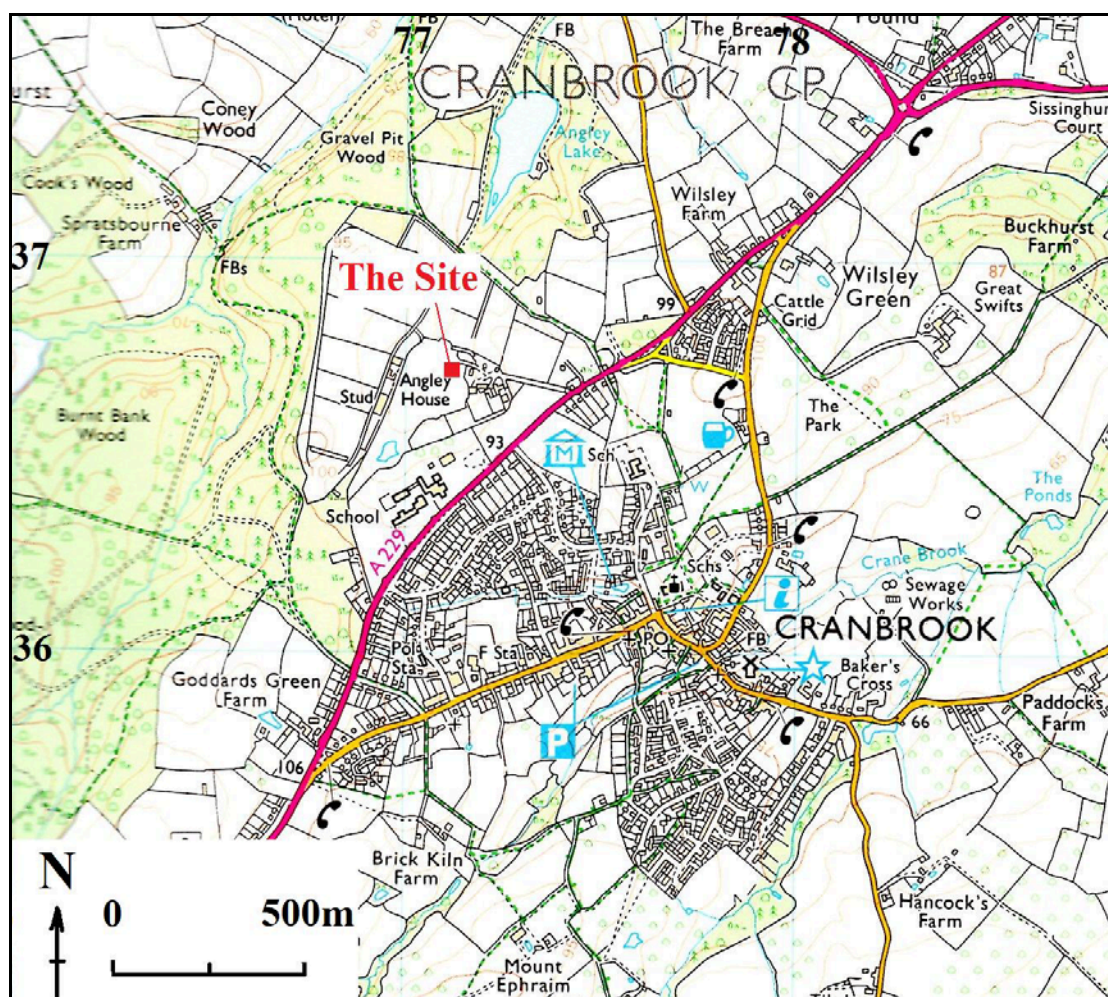


Fig. 1: Angley House, Cranbrook: Location of site

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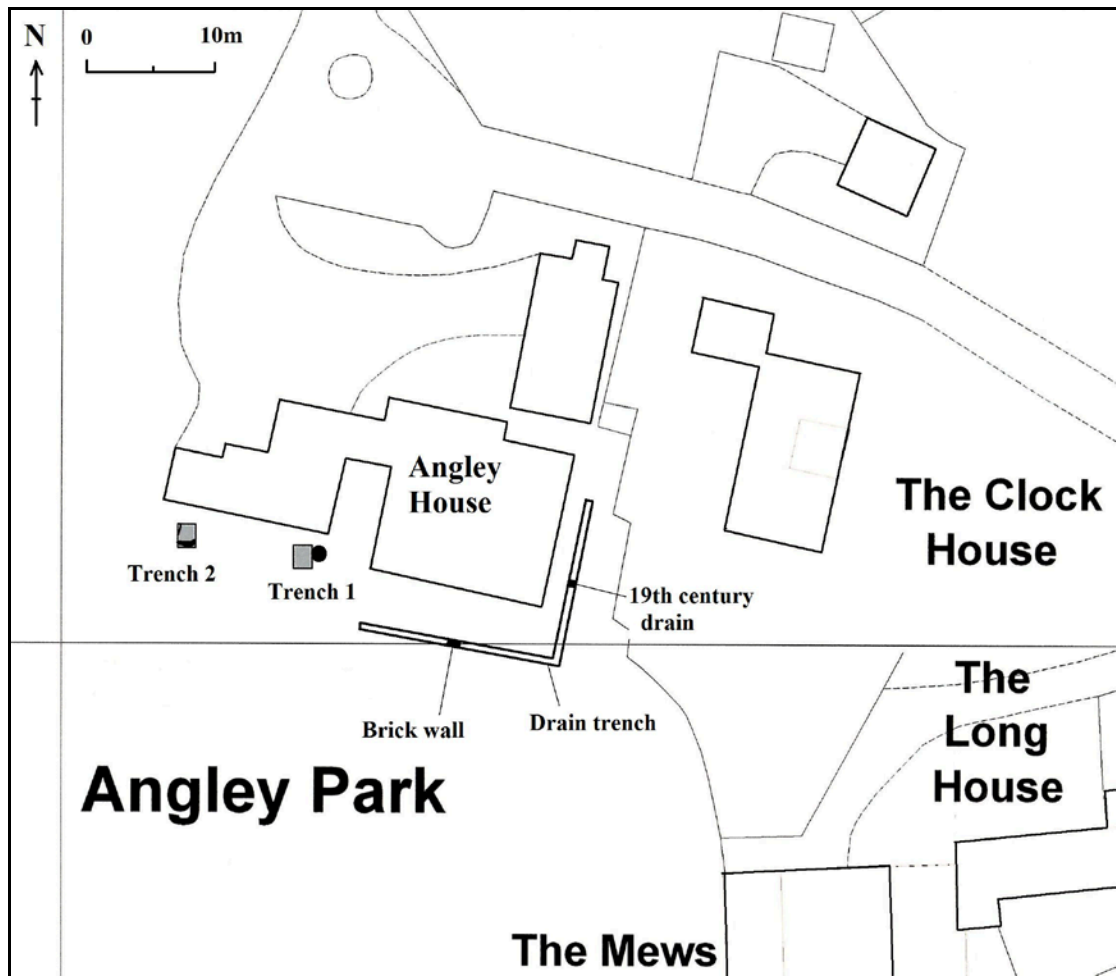


Fig. 2: Angley House, Cranbrook: Plan of site showing the location of Trenches 1 and 2 and the drain trench.

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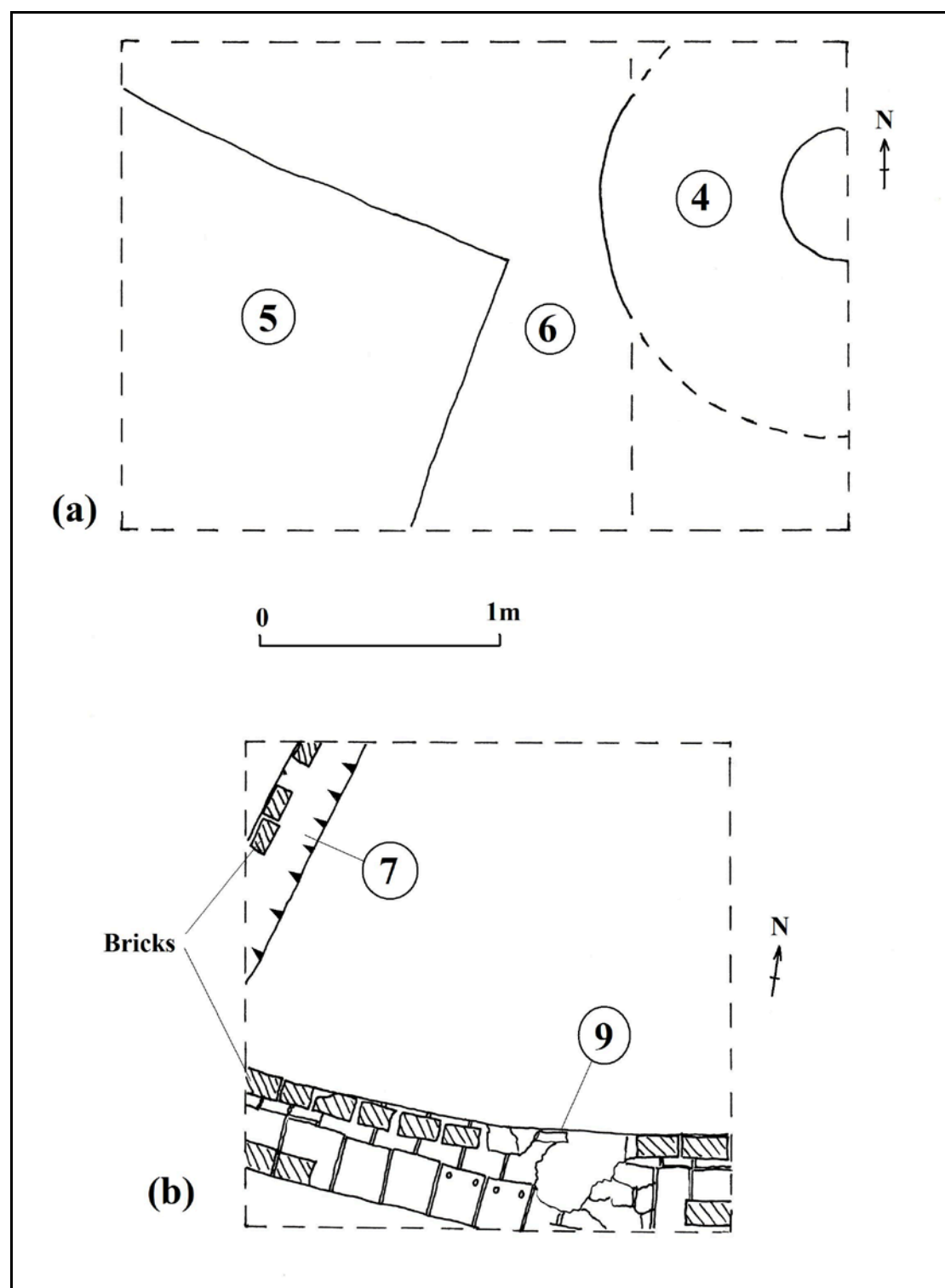


Fig. 3: Angley House, Cranbrook: (a) Plan of Trench 1; (b) Plan of Trench 2

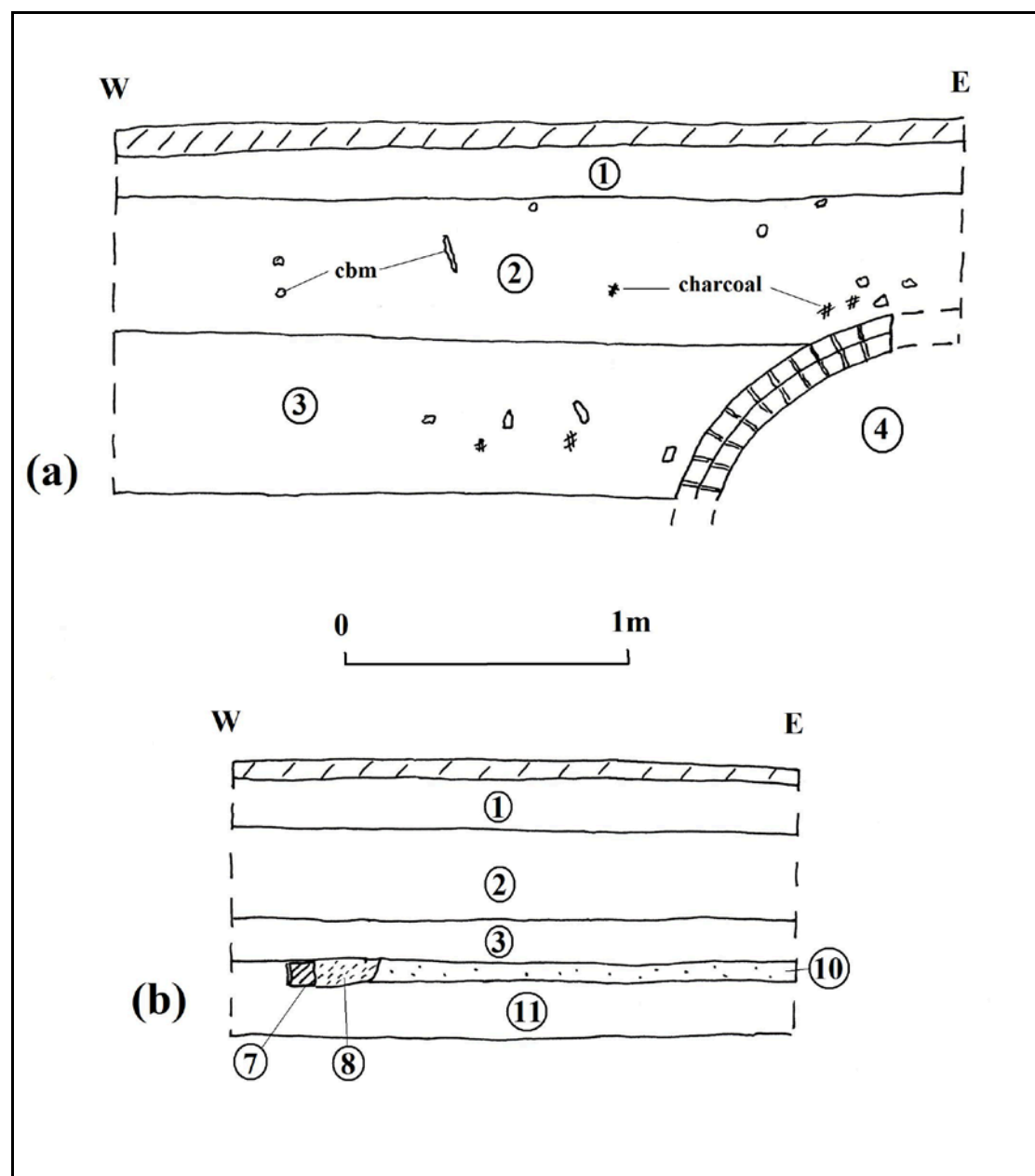


Fig. 4: Angley House, Cranbrook: (a) Section of Trench 1 showing hypothetical section through cistern; (b) Section of Trench 2.



Fig. 5: Angley House, Cranbrook: Trench 1 showing the cistern on the left side of the trench.



Fig. 6: Angley House, Cranbrook: Trench 2 showing the tile and brick constructed drain.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	AHC09					
Identification Name and Address	Angley House, Cranbrook, Kent					
County, District &/or Borough	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 77111 36714					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. X	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban X	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 30/04/09	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr I Crawley					
Project Manager	Chris Butler					
Project Supervisor	N/A					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM X	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Two archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated at Angley House, Cranbrook, Kent, in advance of the construction of a new house at the site. A largely robbed-out brick wall and drain were located in one trench and were probably garden features associated with the 18th century house that stood on the site. A brick-built domed cistern of later 19th century date was also found and probably relates to the house of this date which replaced the earlier house.</i></p> <p><i>Apart from a single residual sherd of late 15th to mid 16th century pottery, there was no evidence for any earlier building or activity on the site.</i></p>						

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, a Mesolithic hunting camp, and a Roman Villa.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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