



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE OLD RECTORY,

BROUGHTON, OXFORDSHIRE.

NGR SP 4199 3841

On behalf of

Ms. M. Keen

FEBRUARY 2011

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground works at the Old Rectory, Broughton. Nineteenth century garden structures were recorded, as was an area of possible demolition again in the nineteenth century. Also noted were earlier, but undated agricultural ditches.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the western edge of Broughton, North of the Castle and St Mary's Church (SP 4199 3841). The site is currently in residential use. It lies at approximately 105m OD and the underlying geology is shown as Middle Lias.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted for the construction of garden walls, greenhouse, swimming pool and plant room and alterations to existing garden shed (10/00417/F). Due to archaeological and historical importance of the site a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with PPS 5 and Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies within an area of some archaeological interest located within the grounds of a grade II listed 17th century building (PRN 9420). The site is also located 150m NW of Broughton Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30882) and 50m North of the boundary of the Registered Park and Garden (PG 2,090). The Castle is a fortified Manor House, dated to the C13th and C14th. The development area also includes the site of a Medieval Tithe Barn, demolished in the C19th (PRN 9421). A medieval window reputedly from it is incorporated in the rectory outbuildings. Further medieval remains have been recorded from cropmarks to the North East of the site (PRN 9348). This is likely to represent a deserted Medieval Village.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To identify and record any archaeological and historic remains exposed during the course of building operations or construction works on the site.

In particular:

- to record the potential for features relating to the medieval settlement.

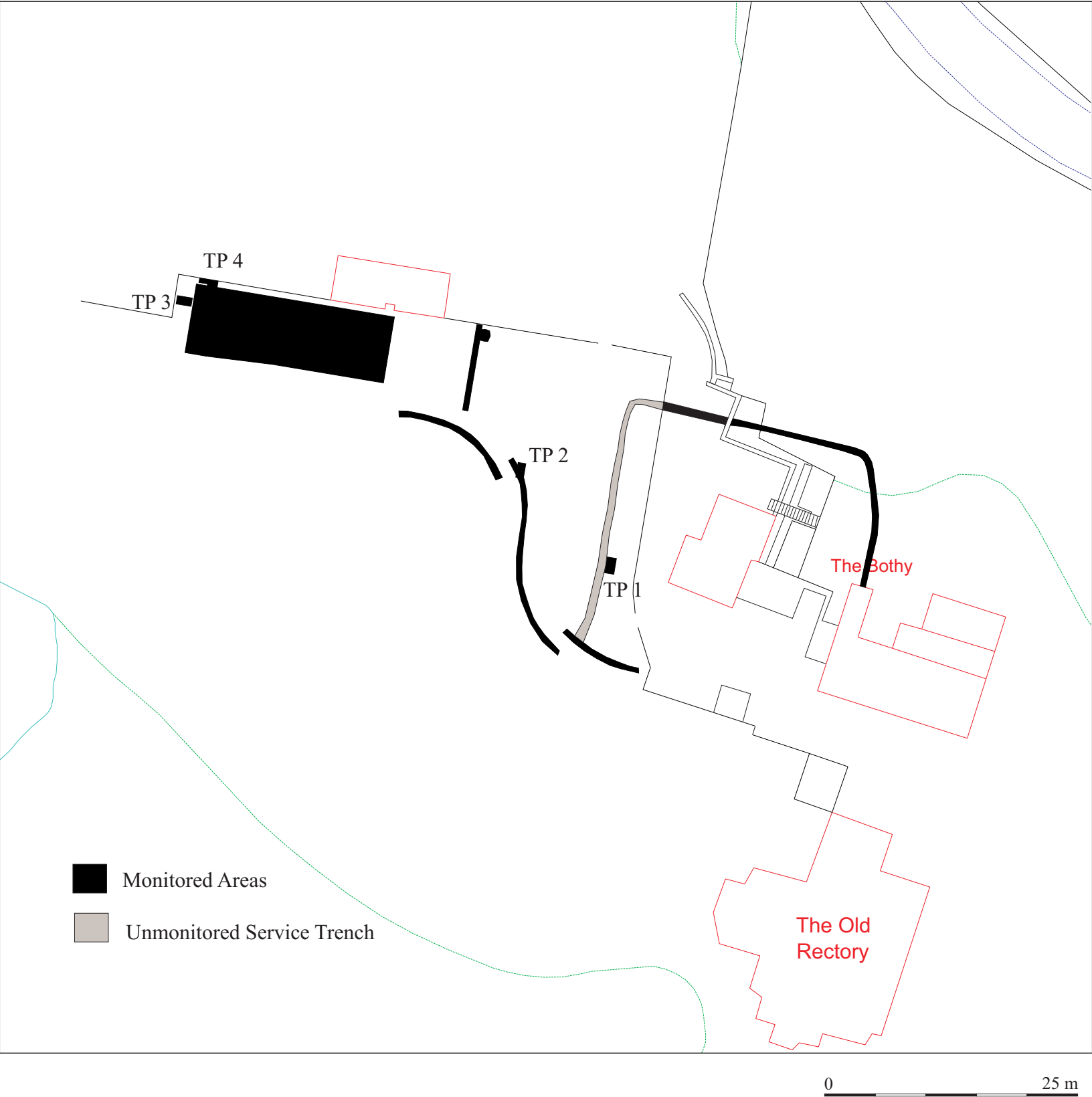
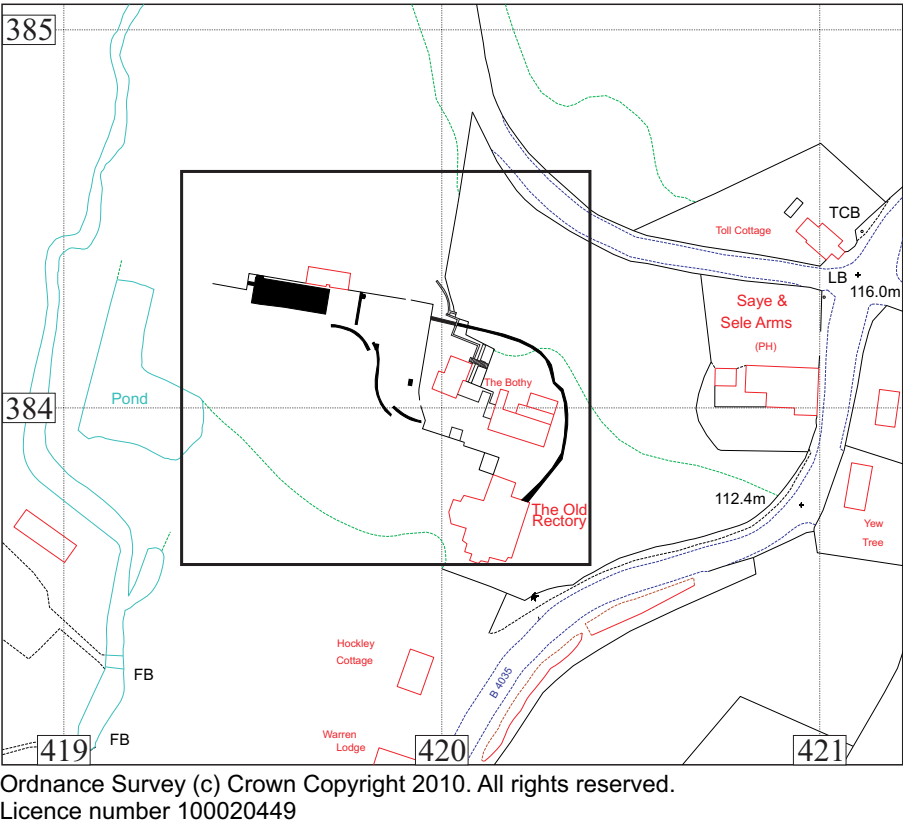


Figure 1. Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS). Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the course of the groundwork, which involved geotechnical pits (Fig. 2, TP 1-4), the machine strip of the area of the footprint of the swimming pool, and machine excavation of foundation trenches and services (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural geological deposit in the area consisted of brown-grey clay with stone (18) this was unexcavated. Above this was red-brown silty clay (07) with sparse gravel that was up to 1.8m thick. It was also thought to be a natural geological layer.

Phase 1: Early Activity (Figure 3)

Cut into this layer (07) were two gullies and a ditch. The ditch 19 was aligned roughly north to south. It was 1m wide and 0.15m deep, its full extent was not seen. It was filled with a dark brown-grey clay-silt (20). Parallel to this ditch was a gully 21 that was 0.25m wide and 0.1m deep with a U-shaped profile and was filled with a dark brown-grey clay-silt (22) flecked with charcoal.

The second gully 08 appeared to be roughly at right angles to the ditch. It was 0.25m wide and 0.1m deep with a flat base and was filled with a dark brown-grey clay-silt (09) with rare charcoal flecks.

No finds were recovered from these three features. These features had been truncated by later 19th century activity.

Phase 2: Early 19th Century Activity (Figure 2)

Above layer (07) was a layer up to 0.6m thick of mid orange-brown silt-clay (03) with small quantities of small stones across the site. Cut into it were three pits or trenches 27, 28 and 41.

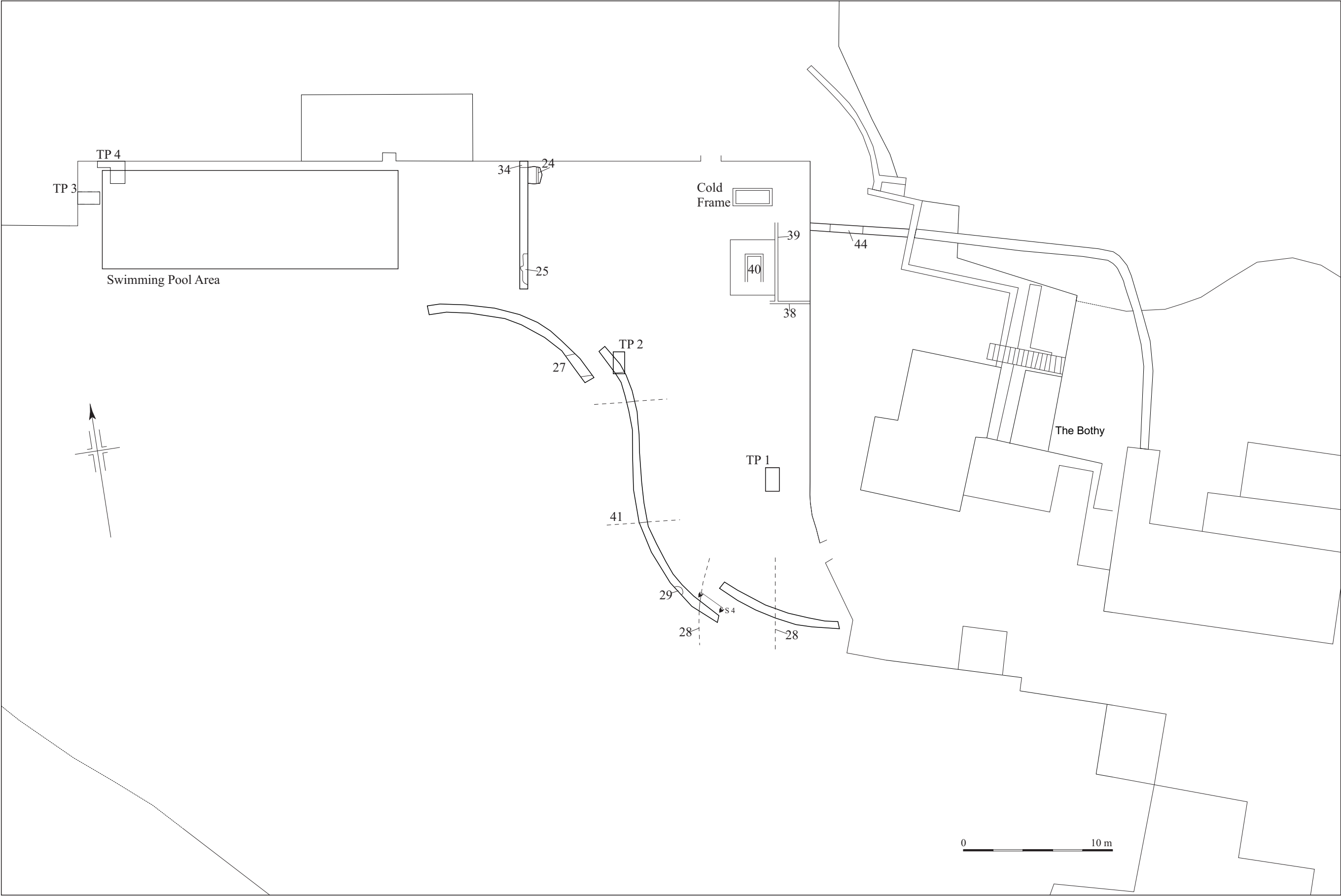


Figure 2. Site plan

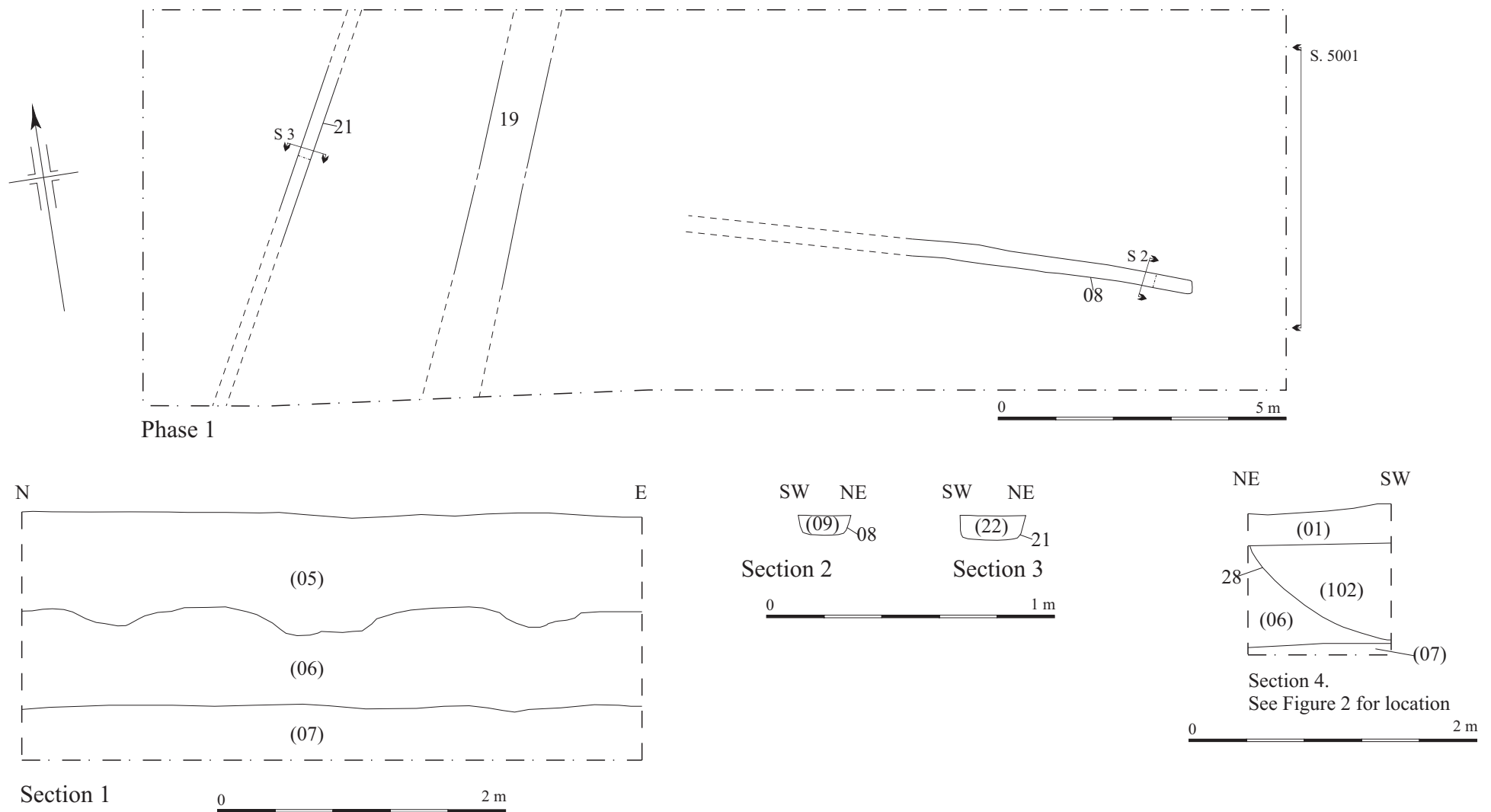


Figure 3. Phase 1 plan and sections. Phase 3 section- Swimming Pool Area

The linear cut 27 was initially recorded during the excavation of geotechnical pits. It was at least 3m long, 2m wide and over 0.9m deep with near vertical sides. The fill was a mid orange-brown sandy clay (202) with at least 50% stone rubble. To the south of this was a large cut 41 that was 9m wide and 0.6m deep with rounded concave sides. It was filled with mid orange-brown sandy clay (43) with at least 50% stone rubble similar to that in cut 27.

Close to this was another large cut 28 that was at least 5m wide. It was 0.6m deep with rounded sides and was filled with a mid orange-brown sandy clay (102) with at least 50% stone rubble with one small brick fragment and early 19th century pottery (Fig. 3, Section 4).

Phase 3: Later 19th Century Activity (Figure 4)

Structure A

Cut into layer (03) were the foundations of a red brick structure within the area of the new swimming pool (Figure 4). The structure was rectangular over 18m long and 6.5m wide. It had been built parallel to the standing east to west aligned garden wall. Three external walls were recorded; the northern (10), the southern (17) and the western (32). Each survived to a height of *c.* 0.9m. Some like wall (10) and (32) were visible on the present ground surface. Each had a width of 0.25m constructed of two bricks wide.

Investigation of wall (17) showed that the lowest three courses had been laid with intentional spaces left, presumably to assist drainage. The wall then survived seven courses above this. The brickwork sat on a rubble footing (36) up to 0.15m thick.



Plate 1. Showing the foundations of wall (17)

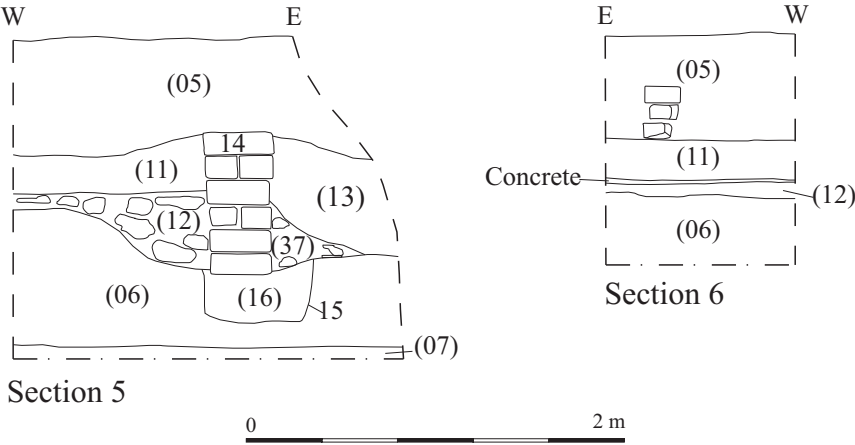
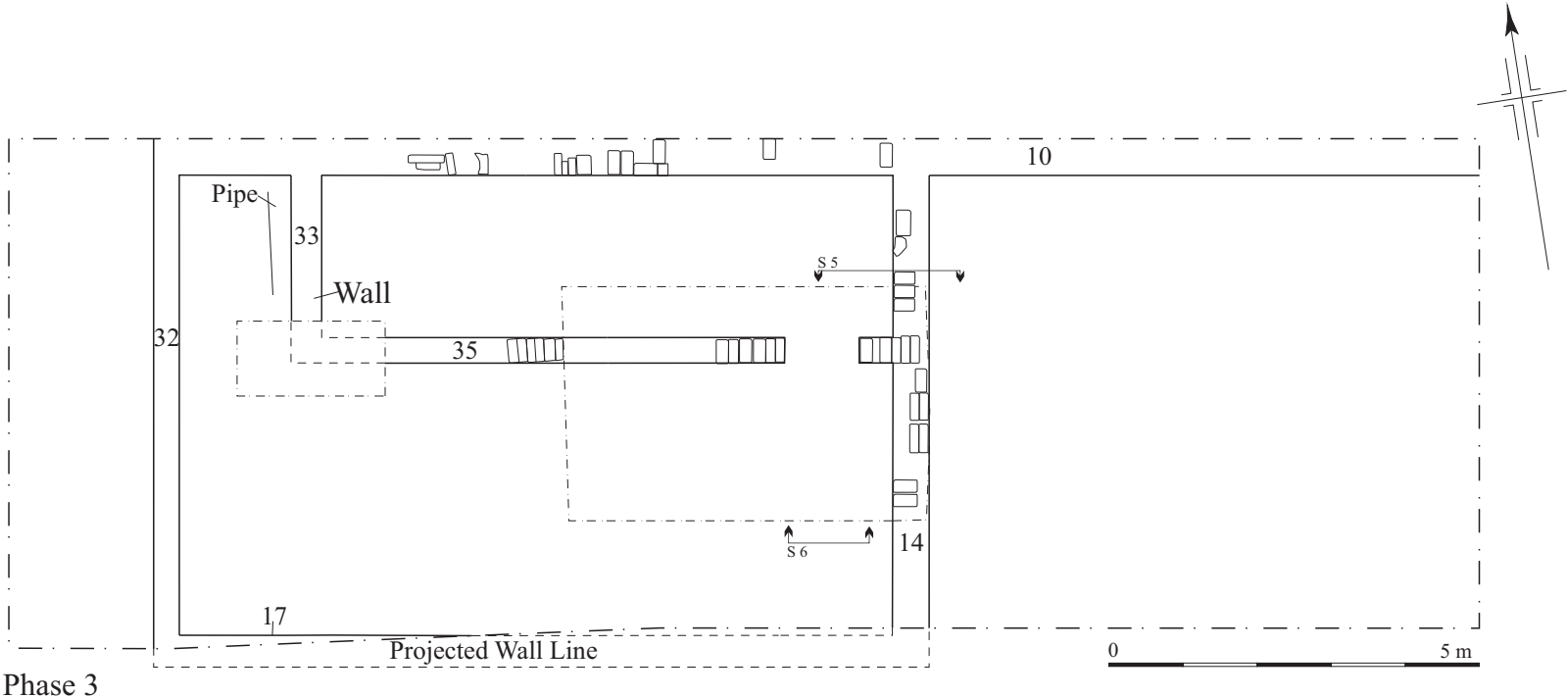


Figure 4. Structure A (Phase 3)- Swimming Pool Area

Three internal walls (14), (33) and (35) were recorded forming four internal areas (Fig. 4). These walls were bonded into the each other and each was 0.25m wide. Walls (14) and (33) appeared to be bonded into the northern wall (10) but it was difficult to see under watching brief conditions. Wall (35) was 8m in length and may have had a 1m wide doorway near its eastern end, close to where it joined wall (33). Wall (33) was 2.5m long and wall (14) ran the entire width of the structure for 6m. A service pipe for a drain was seen to the west of wall (33) and may indicate that the small area in the northwest corner between wall (32) and wall (33) was a washroom.

Layer (03) appears to have been removed from within the structure. In its place was a deposit of mid to dark grey-brown silty clay (06) that was roughly 0.3m - 0.4m thick. However, this could simply be due to layer (03) the area being churned up during construction or use.

Wall (14) appears to have been built on top of a shallow trench 15 that was 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep Fig. 4, Section 5). This was originally thought to be its foundation cut into deposit (06). However the fill of dark brown silt loam (16) flecked with charcoal and small brick fragments does not seem suitable as foundations. This may show that the interior layout of the structure was altered at some point and that the internal walls are actually a later feature.

To the west of wall (14), in places were traces of a concrete floor. This was laid on a base of crushed stone in a beige loam matrix (12) up to 0.1m thick. This was noticeably thicker against the wall (14) where it was 0.4m thick, with a possible cut into deposit (06) to accommodate it. A 0.19m thick layer of stone and brick rubble (11) was seen above this and is likely to result from the demolition of the structure (Fig. 4, Section 6).

There was a build up of stone rubble (37) and slate against wall (14) to the eastern side. This rubble deposit was roughly 0.3m thick and extended 0.5m from the wall. Above this was a dark brown clay (13) flecked with charcoal with concentrations of sandy mortar throughout that was up to 0.5m thick.

It is possible that deposit (37) represents a similar floor layer as deposit (12) and that this had been dug away at a later stage, before the area was filled with deposit (13), but this was difficult to ascertain.

Above both deposits (11) and (13) was a dark brown silty loam (05) up to 0.5m thick with some gravel and charcoal flecks as well a small fragment of brick, glass and 19th century pottery.

Structure B

The removal of the concrete base for a modern greenhouse in the northeast corner of the garden revealed three red brick walls (38), (39) and (40) that may relate to one or two structures (Fig. 2). Although it was difficult to assess it would appear that these walls had foundations cut into the subsoil (03).

Wall (39) was over 5m in length and appeared to be only a single brick wide, 0.12m. It was parallel to the eastern garden wall and bonded to wall (38) that was at right

angles to it. This wall (38) was over 2.5m in length and again only 0.12m thick. Its relationship to the eastern garden wall was not seen.

These two walls may form a raised bed or cold frame, however as the line of wall (38) seems to project beyond the plane of wall (39) it is possible they form apart of a larger structure with wall (40).

Wall (40) appeared to be an open sided rectangle 2m long by 1.2m wide. It was constructed of red brick, one brick wide 0.12m. It may originally have had a south side to form a full rectangle, but this may have been removed during the construction of the modern greenhouse. It seems likely that this was a small cold frame, as its dimensions are similar to that of one still standing (but scheduled for demolition) in the northeast corner of the garden.

Other features

The removal of a large tree stump near to the standing garden wall exposed a short length of red brick wall (24) aligned roughly north to south (Fig. 2). It appeared to be two bricks wide with a similar mortar to that of Structure A.

A soak-away was recorded with the foundation cut for the cross garden wall (Fig. 2). This was cut 25 into the subsoil (03) and was roughly 2.5m wide and over 0.6m deep. It was filled with ironstone rubble in a dark brown-grey sandy clay matrix (26). A french-drain was noted leading away from it west, towards Structure A.

A pit 29 was seen to the southeast of the site cut into layer (07), it was 1.5m wide at the top and 0.8m deep. The primary fill was a grey-black sandy clay (30) with high quantities of ash and charcoal and small fragments of brick that was 0.15m thick. Above this was a pale orange-brown sandy clay (31) 0.65m thick flecked with charcoal.

The upper most layer across the area was a loose dark brown loam (01) that was on average 0.25m thick.

A surface of compacted stone (44) c. 0.10m thick was recorded beneath a present garden path during the excavation of a service trench (Figure 2). It was likely that this stone surface was laid down as a solid base for the present path and therefore of recent origin.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery *(by David Gilbert)*

The post-medieval pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

Sherds of mid 19th – 20th century Mass-produced White Earthenwares (WHEW), Red Earthenware (OXDR), dated 1550+ and Creamware (CRM), dated late 18th – early 19th century were noted from the topsoil (01) as well as contexts (05) and (11). These were not retained.

A sherd of Creamware (CRM), dated late 18th – early 19th century was recovered from context (101) the fill of cut 28.

5.2 Glass

A few sherds of plain window glass from context (05) were notable in their thickness, which was 10mm. Such thick pain would generally be used in glasshouses to help retain heat.

5.3 Brick *(by Gwilym Williams and David Gilbert)*

An assessment of the *typical* brick sample from Structure A was carried out; descriptions and dating are included in the table below.

Context	No.	Weight (g)	Dimensions (l × b × h mm)	Brief description	Assessment
14	1	2000+	220 × 110 × 68	F1; upper face smoothed, rough base, no frog; some mortar traces	Post-medieval; late 18 th C probably

Fabric 1: orange in colour slightly sandy clay with some small ironstone inclusions

The brick recovered from the wall 14 is dated from after the late 18th century. Traces of two different types of mortar were apparent on the brick, indicating that it had been reused.

A white glazed (single face) brick with Rufford Co. Stourbridge impressed on the frogged-side was noted from context (05). Rufford were making bricks during the 19th century, but were also noted from the manufacture of glasshouse pots (Cockeram 2000).

6 DISCUSSION

The earlier undated ditches and gullies of the first phase are likely to be of agricultural origin. These may have gone out of use between 1589 and 1607 when Sir Richard Faiennes turned to large-scale farming and inclosed Broughton, he laid down much of the parish to pasture (VCH 1969).

John Knight who was formerly Vicar of Banbury rebuilt the rectory house on coming to Broughton in 1694 (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974). He is noted to have prosecuted both Protestant and Quaker farmers for non-payment of tithes (VCH 1969). It is also possible that the agricultural land was taken at this point to form part of the rectory grounds.

However, a considerable depth of deposits seals these features and they may well be of an even older date.

The trench 27 of the second phase appears to be a robbed out foundation. It is likely that the other areas of similar disturbance, pits 28 and 41, may also represent similar

activity. It is possible that these are not pits but trenches that were caught obliquely by the foundations for the new walls. The recovery of creamware from pit 28 dates this activity to the early 19th century contemporary to when the Historic Environment Record records the demolition of the medieval Tithe Barn (PRN 9421) in the area. These robbed foundations may belong to the barn or an associated structure.

Structure A is without doubt the remains of the glasshouse recorded on the 1:2,500 OS map of 1882. This glasshouse is also present on the 1:10,560 OS map of 1955, but is not recorded on the 1:10,000 OS map of 1977 and therefore must have been demolished sometime between the two dates.

The glasshouse was large and rectangular. The eastern wall was not seen within the excavation area of the new swimming pool, but it could possibly be wall (24) recorded further to the east.

Service trenches

The service trenching across the site was monitored across the northern side of the Old Rectory. The service trenches within the area to the immediate east of the new walls and swimming pool were not monitored as it was considered it would not be informative to record any further service trenches across this area, due to extensive ground disturbance from already existing wall footing trenches.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store under accession number 2010.56.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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