

Strutt and Parker

Thame Park, Oxfordshire

Heritage Assessment and Survey

With Appendices on Archaeological Investigations

Final Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit
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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 The project was commissioned by Strutt and Parker on behalf of the new owner of Thame Park. The primary aim was to produce an historical assessment of the mansion, estate buildings and parkland at Thame Park, as outlined in a project brief issued by Strutt and Parker in September 2000 (Ref: 3824/1710ps2).
- 1.1.2 This report details the results of that project and also incorporates additional works carried out by OAU from January to April 2001.

1.2 ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

- 1.2.1 The work has been undertaken over a number of months and although initially conceived as a building and archaeological assessment project it has been extended to incorporate a range of on-site works including evaluation trenching, geophysical survey and detailed assessment of particular elements of the estate.
- 1.2.2 This majority of this additional work has been undertaken in response to pre-planning questions and issues raised by the client. Fortunately it has been possible to incorporate the results of every stage into the overall research agenda of the project and into the report presented here.
- 1.2.3 The majority of the project consisted of a detailed historical and archaeological desk-based assessment of the mansion, estate buildings and parkland of Thame Park. This involved two phases of works.
- 1.2.4 *Phase I* involved a walkover survey of the parkland landscape accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment using the readily available sources. The focus during this phase was predominately on the estate landscape.
- 1.2.5 Oxfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) are primary repositories of information on all known archaeology in the area. Oxford Archaeological Unit requested a list of sites and finds within 1 km of the estate. In addition the following sources were consulted:
- Ashmolean Library, Oxford - documentary and published sources
 - Bodleian Library, Oxford - documentary and published sources
 - Centre for Local Studies, Oxford - documentary and published sources
 - English Heritage - Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- 1.2.6 A full list of sources consulted can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.2.7 Appendix 2 is a gazetteer of archaeological sites identified within the estate boundary.
- 1.2.8 *Phase II* concentrated on the historical assessment of the main buildings of the estate, this included detailed inspection and further desk-based analysis of the above source material.
- 1.2.9 The following is a list of subsidiary and smaller additional projects that have taken place within the overall programme of works;
- i. Evaluation trenches in the North Wing (Appendix 5),
 - ii. Desk-based assessment and geophysical survey of the Kitchen Gardens (Appendix 7),
 - iii. Watching brief for cable trench from the stables to the chapel (Appendix 6),



- iv. Detailed assessment of the main stairs into the house (Section 7.6),
- v. Detailed assessment of the lean-to at the rear of the stables (Section 8.3),
- vi. Detailed assessment of the of the partitions on the first and second floors of the West Wing,
- vii. Geophysical survey of the northern half of the front lawns (Appendix 8),
- viii. Evaluation trenches in the rear courtyard of the main house (Appendix 9).

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 1.3.1 The project team wish to thank William Laughlin and Michael Randles for their help during the project. Thanks is also due to the teams at Strutt and Parker and Symm and Co. for their support and assistance.



2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

In 971 AD the Bishop of Dorchester, Oscytel, who had considerable landholdings in the locality, died in Thame. This is widely assumed to have happened at Thame Park although there is no evidence to support the idea. In 1070, just after the Norman Conquest, the See of Dorchester was transferred to Lincoln and with it, its possessions and landholdings. Some sixteen years later the Bishop of Lincoln is recorded in Domesday Book as holding Thame with a manor equalling 60 Hides, of which 37 were held by the Bishop and 23 by knights (a hide is a fiscal measure, nominally of 120 acres).

- 2.1.1 The first mention of the Park at Thame appears in 1131 when Henry I licensed an exchange of land between the Bishop of Lincoln and a Richard de Vernon, this exchanged land was for the Bishop to use within his park. The park is likely to have been a deer park, possibly associated with a manorial centre, and a significant status symbol. The Bishop of Lincoln at the time was developing a reputation as a castle builder which eventually drew the disfavour of the crown, and he was imprisoned in c.1132 over this issue.
- 2.1.2 Upon his release, and the surrender of his castles, it seems as if the Bishop, possibly in an attempt to redeem himself in the eyes of his peers, gifted the lands at Thame Park to the Cistercian Order. The monks that subsequently moved to Thame Park had already been offered land at Ottley near Oddington by the lord of that manor. They had moved there but found the land unsuitable, being very wet and dank, and according to sources unsuitable for good health. This unfortunate state of affairs was remedied by the Bishop's generosity. The Monks retained the land at Ottley and it was converted into a grange.
- 2.1.3 The monastic church was dedicated in 1138 to the Virgin Mary, a common Cistercian dedication. As well as gifting the park the Bishop also handed over neighbouring pasture, meadow and moorland, along with a mill and stone bridge. The Abbey became known as *Sancta Maria de Parco Thame* and in 1145 the church was completed and consecrated.
- 2.1.4 The abbey continued to receive generous support from local benefactors throughout the coming centuries and although it never grew to a scale comparable with some of its sister abbeys in the north of England, e.g. Rievaulx, Jervaulx, Fountains and Meaux, it certainly created a significant landholding that allowed the monastery to prosper and grow on a more modest scale.
- 2.1.5 Further mention of the abbey is made in 1232 when Henry III granted the monastery a substantial quantity of timber to build stalls for the choir and again in 1236 when 30 oaks were granted to allow the construction of a kiln to help repair the chancel. The kiln may have been used in the manufacture of roofing tiles.
- 2.1.6 The period between the mid 13th century and early 16th century is poorly documented (*VCH Oxon ii*). This period would have seen the completion of the abbey structures and the growth of its agricultural granges. The North Wing of the main house and the western half of the south wing are the earliest standing elements of this phase.
- 2.1.7 In 1507 a report by a monk at the abbey, William Wood, stated that the abbey was the same size as Furness Abbey, this is supported by work in 1840 by Twopeny who calculated the church to be 230ft (c.69m) long and 70ft (c.21m) with a Lady's Chapel running a further 45ft (c.13.5m) from the eastern end (Lee 1888). These figures are



broadly in keeping with the size of the church at Furness Abbey. Although it must be remembered that the Wood's account may have an element of exaggeration or underestimation depending on the aims of the writer.

- 2.1.8 This can also be borne in mind when considering Bishop Longland's report of the abbey in 1525 when he declared the place to be in a physically and spiritually ruinous condition, full of idle boys and with monks holding court in the local taverns. He also condemns the Abbot for his lavish expenditure on the Abbot's Lodgings (South Wing) and for allowing the monastery to spiral into debt. On a subsequent visitation nothing was done to remedy this opulence and mismanagement. It wasn't until four years later, with the death of the Abbot, that the situation was to change.
- 2.1.9 In 1530 another Abbot, Robert King, heavily backed by Bishop Longland, was appointed Abbot of Thame Park, as it was stated that no-one within the abbey was capable of taking up the post. In his short time at the Abbey, from 1530 to 1539, when the abbey was surrendered under the terms of the Dissolution, Abbot King seems to have divided his efforts between expending further wealth on the Abbot's Lodgings and bringing the monastic holdings back into profitability. However upon dissolution the abbey was still in debt, even though, according to contemporary sources, it had numerous jewelled crosses and considerable quantities of silver plate.
- 2.1.10 In 1542 the abbey was transferred to Sir John Williams, around the time that Abbot King became the Bishop of Oxford. Sir Williams held considerable quantities of land across England and Thame Park with its ruinous abbey and rather small Tudor mansion was not his primary residence, in fact his Oxfordshire seat lay at Rycote on the other side of the town of Thame. The park and house were eventually transferred, by marriage, to the Wenman family who continued to hold the property until the 20th century. Unfortunately the period from the mid 16th to the mid 18th century is poorly documented and little is presently known. Examination of the few surviving family archives and other sources may be able to shed some light on this period.
- 2.1.11 The next major period of change begins with the Sixth Lord Wenman who in c.1745 demolished some *low and straggling buildings* and replaced them with a fine Palladian wing which currently forms the West Wing.
- 2.1.12 The park landscape was probably extensively altered at this time to reflect the naturalistic aesthetic of the day and the lake was probably remodelled and its current serpentine nature may well date from the mid to late 18th century. This dramatic change was reflected in many other house and mansions across England and the actual process of modelling and in many cases the rebuilding seems to have been as important as the finished product.
- 2.1.13 Interestingly in 1785 when Lord Torrington visited the site he made '*the circuit of the old monastery, now turned into a barn and filled with corn instead of Cistercians*' (Brown and Guest 1935, 133). Obviously elements of the abbey were still standing by this time although unfortunately which elements is currently unclear.
- 2.1.14 The park was mapped by Davis in 1797 (see Figure 2.1). The boundaries, nature and extent of the park are broadly the same as present although there are some notable differences. Including a radically different road layout, the presence of potential buildings in the north east of the park and other minor difference in the character and nature of the estate.
- 2.1.15 The next major series of events are linked to the renowned Baroness Wenman who was responsible for numerous restoration programs in the mid 19th century. The details of these projects are not well documented but among work known to have been undertaken on the buildings by the Baroness are the restoration of the chapel (1836) and the refurbishment of the Tudor rooms. Numerous other undocumented building programmes are also believed to have been undertaken by the Baroness but



the details of these are only indicated by surviving physical evidence. Among these were the insertion of each of the three staircases, the rebuilding (and extension) of the north-east corner of the West Wing, the substantial redecoration of the main reception rooms of the house and possibly the construction of the attic (2nd floor).

- 2.1.16 She is also known to undertaken substantial programmes of work within the parkland including laying out the pleasure gardens and redesigning the wider park in light of new fashions. Some of the avenues now seen, especially those on the front lawn as well as the carriageways in Old Park are probably attributable to the Baroness. She was well known locally for her generosity and philanthropy and seems to have bought the estate into good order before her death in 1870.
- 2.1.17 As well as these restorations she also invited William Twopeny to visit the park and he examined the last remaining traces of the abbey at this time. These lay to the north of the house and included, according to Twopeny the outline of the church. No primary source of Twopeny's observations has been found, but a second-hand description was eventually published in 1888 (Lee 1888).
- 2.1.18 A further substantial programme of work was undertaken in the early 20th century and this work is well documented both in surviving plans (included here as Figures 7.5, 7.6 & 7.7) and in an article within the January 1922 edition of *Architectural Review* (Wills 1922). The work largely consisted of a number of internal alterations such as a new set of stairs, several new openings, a lift, a new system of heating and the redecoration of much of the house. Much of this redecoration is reported to have consisted of the removal of Baroness Wenman's work, some of which is described as "peculiarly repulsive decoration in the Louis XV style".
- 2.1.19 Further works were undertaken during the 20th century while the house was in the ownership of Frank Bowden but the next substantial programme of works appears to have been in the 1980s. Mr Bowden sold the estate to the Japanese Tycoon Hideki Yokoi in 1983 whose empire later included at least 12 stately homes and the Empire State Building. Yokoi's daughter, Kiiko Nakahara advanced plans to convert the house to a hotel and the established Oxford firm of Symm & Co began the work on site in 1986. The work progressed well for five years before work was aborted in April 1992. (For a summary of the work undertaken by Symm & Co see Appendix 3). The house remained unoccupied and in limbo before being sold to the current owner in 2000.
- 2.1.20 The parkland seems to have suffered a gradual decline in many areas with the Elm trees it was once famous for all now destroyed by Dutch Elm Disease.



3 HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

971	Oscytel, bishop of Dorchester dies at Thame
1070	See of Dorchester moved to Lincoln and possessions transferred
1086	Bishop of Lincoln held Thame. Manor equalled 60 hides, of which 37 held by Bishop and 27 by his knights.
12th century	Park measured 300 field acres (3 curates)
1128	First Cistercian abbey founded, in England, at Waverley in Surrey
1131	Henry I licensed an exchange of land with Richard de Vernon, as the Bishop of Lincoln needed it for his park
pre-1138	Cistercian Monks first established at Ottley, 3rd daughter house of the Order, but moved because of poor situation of establishment before the buildings were complete. This probably refers to timber buildings that were built to house monks whilst the site was established.
c.1138	Bishop of Lincoln hands Thame Park over to Cistercian Order. He gave all the land within the park, rougher farm land (<i>rusticorum</i>) around that, an area called <i>Somerlesa</i> , a meadow called <i>Hulmead</i> (from the west gate of the park to the stone bridge), plus a mill and pond on the moor near the stone bridge, called broken bridge or bow bridge.
1138	Church is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The site became known as <i>Sancta Maria de Parco Thame</i>
1145	Church completed and consecrated.
13th century	Range built, north wing of present house.
1232	Henry III gave the monastery timber to build the stalls for the choir
1236	30 Oaks were given to build a kiln to help rebuild the chancel.
c.1500	Abbots lodgings first built
1507	William Wood, a monk, made a report to the Pope Julius II, stating that the church was the same size as Furness. This is corroborated by Twopeny's 1840 calculations.
1525	Bishop Longland visited the abbey and noted that the buildings were in ruins and that the abbots quarters were recently rebuilt in great splendour.
1525	Visitation to the Abbey, to examine the claims of Bishop Longland
1530	Robert King becomes Abbot
1536	Dissolution
1539	Abbey surrendered by Robert King who becomes bishop of Oxford
1543	Abbey and lands granted to Sir John Williams
1559	Park and house passes into the hands of the Wenman family
1745	Sixth Lord Wenman pulled down part of abbey and replaces it with Palladian wing, the demolished buildings are described as <i>low and straggling</i>
C.1750-1800	Lake and park probably extensively modelled



1785	Lord Torrington visited Thame Park and made <i>'the circuit of the old monastery, now turned into a barn and filled with corn instead of Cistercians....'</i>
1797	Park mapped by Davies
1830's	Extensive alterations made in the house and park believed to include the gatehouses, two cottages and an extensive kitchen garden (Symm & Co report).
1836	Chapel restored by Baroness Wenman, the floor tiles used came from medieval church, which church is however unclear.
1840	Site of abbey examined by Twopeny and drawings made.
1852	Park measured at c.420 acres
1917	Outlying parts of estate sold by Wykeham
1919	Estate sold by the Wykehams to W H Gardiner
1920	Extensive alterations of house, chapel etc. made by Gardiner under supervision of Berkley-wills of London.
1925	Estate sold by Gardiner to Sir Ian Forbes-Leith Baronet of Fyvie
1938	Estate sold to Frank and Lydia Bowden (of Raleigh Bicycles)
1983	Estate sold to Japanese tycoon Hideki Yokoi. Plans begin to be drawn up by his daughter Kiiko Nakahara for the conversion of the house to a hotel.
1986	Symm & Co begin work on site.
1992	Work on site aborted.
1992-2000	House remains empty. Occasional use of estate for filming such as for 'The Madness of King George' and 'Black Beauty'.
2000	Estate sold to current owners



4 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The area around Thame Park (see Figure 4.1) was investigated through the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record for evidence of archaeological activity. Overall little of archaeological significance has been reported in the area except for a few notable elements. These are listed in a Gazetteer (Appendix 2), with individual sites given an OAU number series, referred to below.

4.2 THE TOWN OF THAME

4.2.1 Thame is first mentioned in two charters of 675 and according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Archbishop Oscytel died there in 971. Archaeological evidence for early medieval activity is confined to burials at St Mary's Church. Situated close to the river Thame on the original line of the road from Aylesbury to Oxford, Thame was originally part of the estate of the Bishop of Dorchester, and the church a Minster. By 1086 the bishopric had transferred to Lincoln and Domesday Book describes the town as agricultural.

4.2.2 The importance of Thame as an ecclesiastical centre increased in the 12th century when Alexander Bloet, the Bishop of Lincoln, founded the prebendal house and donated land at Thame Park for a Cistercian Abbey. The prebendal buildings were originally on a moated site. The chapel survives and the existing prebendal house incorporates some original features.

4.2.3 Bishop Bloet is also thought to have created 'New Thame', to the east of 'Old Thame' which was centred around the church at Priestend. By the early 13th century the layout of burgage plots stretching back on either side of the exceptionally wide High Street had been established and Thame market had been confirmed by royal charter. In 1219 the Oxford-Aylesbury road was diverted away from the church to the foot of the market place.

4.2.4 The medieval layout of the town has been preserved into the present day. Little further development took place until the 19th century, although there was some building in the 16th century funded by Lord Williams who acquired Thame Park and the abbey lands at the dissolution. In the later part of the 20th century there was considerable expansion of the town with residential development to the north and south.

4.3 ROMANO-BRITISH ACTIVITY

4.3.1 The area around the estate contains some limited evidence for Romano-British activity in the form of a series of potential inhumations uncovered during the development of the industrial area to the north of the estate (SMR 985, 987, 988). There is also the possibility that the town of Thame has Romano-British origins.

4.4 SAXON DEPOSITS

4.4.1 Limited Anglo-Saxon remains have been identified in the immediate area including a possible inhumation south-east of Sydenham (NMR SP70 SW4), documentary references to the Bishop of Dorchester (VCH 7 160) and a possible Saxon Church at Thame (Briggs 1986, 183). This seems to indicate that the general area was occupied prior to the Norman Conquest and it seems likely that Thame's importance as an ecclesiastical and commercial centre began to emerge during this period. It is also possible that elements of Thame Park were laid out and founded during this time.



4.5 *SHRUNKEN AND DESERTED SETTLEMENTS*

- 4.5.1 The shrunken village of Sydenham (NMR SP70 SW16 and the potential Deserted Medieval Village at Attington although not directly associated with the park would have been extensively involved with the life of the abbey and park as neighbouring settlements. They both lie on or near transportation routes that connect the park to other areas and in the case of Sydenham it is likely that a grange associated with Thame Park Abbey was located in the village. This grange also had a mill, known as Grimband's mill (NMR SP70 SW17).



5 THAME PARK - PRE DISSOLUTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Prior to the development of the present day parkland landscape and mansion the estate had already developed a distinctive and substantial landscape character. The later park seems to have incorporated significant elements of this earlier landscape. It is felt that two primary stages in the development of the pre-park landscape can be identified.

5.2 THE PRE-MONASTIC LANDSCAPE

5.2.1 The primary element of the pre-monastic landscape is the Deer Park created by the Bishop of Lincoln. This is first mentioned in 1131 when reference is made to a transfer of land between a local landowner and the Bishop, so that the Bishop can complete his Deer Park.

5.2.2 This park is relatively early in date, as the majority of parks were emparked in the 13th and 14th centuries (Bond 1986, 153). As such it is a significant survival out of the 41 examples known in Oxfordshire (see Figure 5.2).

5.2.3 The major interest lies in the fact that it may be possible to trace the extent of this park, in a recognisable physical form, across a significant portion of the estate (see Figure 5.1). Field survey, aerial photography, documentary research and map analysis has identified a series of features that could represent the remains of the Park Pale, these are OAU 6, 13, 14 and 18.

5.2.4 These features take the form of earthwork banks with associated ditches in a variety of physical forms. This variety being due to later landuse and conversion, OAU 13a-c seems to have been converted into a carriageway / road at some point, whilst OAU 14 has been ploughed down to a virtually negligible bank and OAU 6 has been extensively re-cut and modelled to form a deep ditch.

5.2.5 The earlier bank and ditch arrangement would have probably been topped by a staked palisade forming a deer fence to ward off poachers and to also maintain the integrity of the herd. It is unlikely that any substantial buildings would have been contained within the pale at this time. A hunting lodge may have been situated on the site but with the established town of Thame only a few kilometres away this may not have been the case. As yet no evidence to indicate the presence of a lodge or any other pre-monastic occupation has been located.

5.2.6 Limited pre-monastic artefactual material was recovered from evaluation trenches at the rear of the main house in the form of a single shard of Romano-British Greyware, however this does not necessarily indicate that any significant occupational activity can be attributed to the site prior to the monastic period.

5.2.7 The park was not the only land held by the Bishop within the bounds of the current estate. As the documented transfer of land from the Bishop to the Cistercians indicates he also held considerable areas of pasture and moorland in the vicinity, this included the area west of the park towards Bow Bridge, possibly land to west of the southern lodges in the area around Moreton and maybe some of the meadowland to the north of the pale. It essentially seems as if a fully functioning medieval estate was handed over to the Cistercians by the Bishop.



5.3 THE MONASTIC LANDSCAPE

5.3.1 Introduction

- 5.3.1.1 The Cistercian monks who originally occupied Thame Park came from Ottley near Oddington, halfway between Oxford and Bicester, where they had been granted land to establish an abbey. The land proved to be overly wet, dank and not conducive to good health and they subsequently moved to Thame Park, thanks to the ‘generosity’ of the Bishop of Lincoln.
- 5.3.1.2 Unusually for the Cistercian order they moved into an established agricultural landscape with a long history of occupation and usage, including a deer park. The Order tended to favour, especially early in its history, ‘wilderness’ sites away from civilisation, where they could observe their strict vows in peace.
- 5.3.1.3 The site of Thame Park with the nearby settlements of Sydenham, Thame and Attington is unlikely to have afforded them that privilege, however the generous grants of land, including the original Ottley site, which became a grange, did allow them to develop their agricultural pursuits.
- 5.3.1.4 The order was well known for its agricultural activities which served a two-fold process. Firstly the work supplied a meditative aspect to the routine of life, and it was felt that the monks and lay-brothers benefited spiritually from physical labour. Secondly they did not have to pay tax on any earnings derived from land they worked themselves, this latter aspect is one of the reasons the Cistercian order was able to accumulate significant wealth.
- 5.3.1.5 The abbey complex would have contained numerous relatively standard elements in accordance with the Cistercian order’s design. This laying out of monastic space was fairly regulated, as Figure 5.5 shows. This regulation does however tend to only really apply to the core of the site and to govern the principle buildings such as the church, cloister and chapter house. Ancillary buildings were less regulated in their arrangement and structure. This lack of regulation is particularly important when attempting to interpret the monastic remains and their likely locations.
- 5.3.1.6 As important as the built core of an abbey would have been the surrounding earthwork remains including water management features, fishponds, fields, granges, woodland, roads etc. These are present to no small degree at Thame Park and are discussed below.
- 5.3.1.7 The following sections outline the physical evidence for various elements of the abbey as presently understood and highlights particular areas for attention.

5.3.2 The Core of the Monastic Site, inc. the Church and associated structures

- 5.3.2.1 The geophysical survey of the north front lawn (see Figure 5.4 and Appendix 8) has potentially revealed the location of the main abbey church and the associated cloister and ancillary buildings (see Figure 5.5 for examples). The vague but discernible lines of a east-west aligned structure can be seen running just south of the present St. Mary’s Chapel. Whilst hints of the cloister can be seen further to the south of this.
- 5.3.2.2 The width of the main church seems to be approximately 21m as determined by the geophysical survey but unfortunately it has not yet been possible to accurately determine the location of the ends of the church, primarily due to the low resolution of the geophysical data. This width broadly corresponds with recording work undertaken by Twopeny in 1840, who concluded that the church was 230ft long and 70ft wide with an additional chapel some 45ft long at its eastern end.



5.3.2.3 Unfortunately examination of the Twopeny papers at the British Museum revealed only a series of architectural drawings of the main house and not plan of the church's extent. Similarly the Lee article of 1888 (Lee 1888) gives only the textual description so the exact basis of this information is not known.

5.3.2.4 Lee speculated in 1888 on the wider form of the abbey, apparently based on a 16th-century source, but clearly written in the 19th century:

The abbey of Thame Park...was mainly of the First Pointed architecture, severe in its style, dignified in its size, and complete in its well arranged and extensive plan. It is believed to have been arranged in three large squares (or courts). It comprised hall, frater-house, dormitory, lavatory, chapter-house, refectory, cloisters, and kitchen. There was likewise a special range of buildings in an outer court, towards the north, known as the guest house, with servants' apartments and stables for the horses of strangers. There was also a burial ground (or grave-garth) and a grand church. This latter, cruciform in plan, with a Lady Chapel at the east end, was its chief feature, towering far above the other abbey buildings. Near the chief entrance to the abbey, outside the gateway, leading to the road from Watlington to Thame, was a chapel for strangers, visitors, and wayfarers, and others who lived near.....The Abbott's lodgings, in a later architectural style, were on the south side....

5.3.2.5 This may be based on general knowledge of Cistercian sites, or Twopeny's observations, or may even be sheer speculation.

5.3.2.6 The structures that do remain on the site, namely the North and South Wings of the house, and possibly St. Mary's Chapel have been examined in some detail and the results are presented in Chapters 7 and 8. At present the exact interpretation of their function, role and phasing remains uncertain.

5.3.2.7 Initial work would indicate that the North Wing is part of a subsidiary cloister perhaps connected to the South Wing by a covered walkway, the line of which has been revealed during evaluation trenching in the rear courtyard (Appendix 9). The South Wing, as well as containing the later Abbots quarters, probably once consisted of a medieval hall / range associated with the monastery and it seems likely that an additional range was located to the east of the current structure. This additional range has been partially revealed during archaeological investigations in the rear courtyard (Appendix 9).

5.3.2.8 The West Wing seems to overlie earlier monastic structures, as indicated by the reference to the demolition of low and straggling structures prior to the construction of the wing in c.1745. A small fragment of possible foundation material from these earlier structures can be found near the south-western corner of the West Wing.

5.3.2.9 St Mary's chapel (see Figure 5.3) has been taken by previous researchers to be a guest or travellers chapel situated at the edge or just outside of the monastic precinct. The geophysical survey would seem to indicate other interpretations are perhaps more appropriate. The chapel could be monastic in origin and perhaps a subsidiary chapel associated with the church. However the rather poor quality of construction would, we feel, lend weight to a later date. Therefore it is felt that the chapel is in origin a post-monastic structure perhaps built from re-used masonry and architectural features. This would probably give a mid or late 16th century date.

5.3.2.10 Figure 5.6 presents an initial interpretative diagram of one possible layout for the core of the monastic site at Thame Park. This diagram is speculative and is based on assessment of all the available evidence, other interpretations are however possible. The broad locations of elements of the abbey are probably however roughly correct.



- 5.3.2.11 The cemetery (Grave-Garth) has already been disturbed during the tenure of Thomas Lord Viscount Wenman (c. mid 17th century) when the construction of the northern service drive to the rear of the main house uncovered a series of stone coffins that contained bones and limited leather garments (LEE 1888), unfortunately no further details are known. This would however place the cemetery in a location broadly compatible with the interpretation shown in Figure 5.6.
- 5.3.2.12 A comment made in 1785 by Lord Torrington on a visit to the park is also of interest and may shed some light on the potential location of other monastic remains. It is stated in an Oxford Times article of 1933 the Lord Torrington *made 'the circuit of the old monastery, now turned into a barn and filled with corn instead of Cistercians.'* This comment indicates that a substantial structure was present on the site, apart from the two wings, that was previously part of the abbey. No structures currently standing fit this particular description, however a possibility would be the area currently occupied by the stable.
- 5.3.2.13 Overall the Thame Park pleasure garden area contains a significant monastic archaeological resource including standing buildings, buried monastic structures, and other associated features such as culverts. The standing structures that survive are extremely significant, and warrant their Grade I listing. The other buried remains in the site are in an unknown condition and have an undetermined potential in terms of their ability to contain significant archaeological material and information. Initial excavation at the rear of the main house would generally indicate that many remains have been heavily truncated and disturbed by later activity. Whilst the geophysical results would indicate that either the deposits are buried under at least 1m of material in the front lawn area or that they too have been highly disturbed.

5.3.3 The Monastic Gardens

- 5.3.3.1 The gardens were not laid out by the Cistercian Order to any set blueprint, their locations were governed by local conditions and the will of the monks. The gardens formed an integral part of the monastic landscape and would have potentially occupied more than one site. Unfortunately we have no fixed location for the gardens at Thame Park, although the reuse of the monastic gardens as later kitchen gardens should not be discounted. The assessment of the kitchen gardens (see Appendix 7) revealed limited evidence for potential monastic elements in the form of standing masonry walls, although this could as easily be interpreted as 18th or 19th century in origin.

5.3.4 The Monastic Fishponds.

- 5.3.4.1 Cistercian monasteries almost invariably had fishponds. In this case they probably lie underneath the present lake. There are no other suitable locations and the conversion of fishponds to serpentine lakes and later features is relatively common.
- 5.3.4.2 Fishponds tended to be linked to the Abbot in terms of ownership and the presence of the Abbot's quarters (the South wing) overlooking the southern end of the lake is as expected. This is in keeping with their role as a reflection of status within medieval society, where the ownership and operation of fishpond complexes was held in high regard.
- 5.3.4.3 The exact extent and physical nature of the fishponds at Thame Park is currently undetermined. They are unlikely to have been particularly extensive, in comparison with other sites, but may have occupied an area at least equal to the current lake, and perhaps even beyond its bounds. The Cistercians and medieval society in general were exceptionally talented engineers, especially in the management of water, and large scale sluiced fishpond complexes with clay linings and revetments were often constructed.



5.3.5 Monastic Water Management System

- 5.3.5.1 The management of flowing water for drinking, bathing, laundry and sewage was an integral part of the monastic landscape. The situation at Thame Park would have been no different. At present we have only barely begun to understand the water system.
- 5.3.5.2 Perhaps the most interesting feature that may date from this period is OAU 21, see Figure 3.1, a constructed ditch running along the hill slope south of the house. This massive earthwork terminates in a pond, with later 19th century brick dams below, directly above the south lawns. It is currently felt that this feature is a major element of the monastic water system. Its southern extent has not been fully traced and the exact junction between it and the 'Sydenham stream' mentioned in the 12th century documents (*VCH Oxon VII*, 116,119) has yet to be established.
- 5.3.5.3 It must also be considered possible that this feature is related to the construction of the fountain (OAU 28) in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 5.3.5.4 A more definite monastic culvert has been identified during the geophysical survey and watching brief (Appendices 6 and 8). It runs to the east of the chapel and south towards the internal ditch within the pleasure gardens (OAU 8) (see Figure 5.6). It has been identified as a positive anomaly in the geophysics whilst the watching brief revealed the top of a stone culvert at approximately 0.6m below ground surface. The connection with OAU 8 is tenuous but if it was proved then it could be shown to be linked with 'Sydenham stream' complex.
- 5.3.5.5 Other potential monastic water features include OAU 23, the channel just north of the stable block and OAU 6, part of the deer park boundary ditch. The majority of the major ditches on the estate including those running along the northern boundary are quite possibly monastic in origin.
- 5.3.5.6 Overall it is likely that a significant element of the present drainage and water management system for the estate is based on monastic lines although their physical form has probably been considerably altered.

5.3.6 Outlying Monastic Elements

- 5.3.6.1 An abbey is not just confined to a small area immediately adjacent to its church and principal buildings. Integral to the make up and character of an abbey are the outlying lands and farms, the later being correctly termed granges. Within the immediate vicinity of Thame Park (see Figure 5.7), three grange sites can be readily identified. These are at Sydenham Grange Farm, Sydenham and Parkgrange farm. It is likely that Parkgrange farm and Sydenham Grange farm lie on lands originally donated by the Bishop of Lincoln and are probably of considerable antiquity. Another known grange lies at Ottley where the first attempt at founding an abbey was made prior to the move to Thame Park.
- 5.3.6.2 The area currently bounded by the estate would have also been farmed. Aerial photographs show considerable expanses of ridge and furrow across this indicating that extensive areas were being cultivated either prior to the monks arrival or more likely during their occupation of the site. Whether this was arable or pastoral cultivation is open to debate as ridge and furrow could also be used as pastoral management tool designed to improve drainage and increase grass area. However arable cultivation does seem more likely in this instance.



5.4 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.4.1 The monastic and pre-monastic landscapes at Thame Park are at present only partially understood. The parkland contains significant elements from these periods and is likely to reveal further information with more detailed examination. Areas of earthworks such as OAU 5, 11, 12 and 16 all potentially date from this period and our lack of knowledge about their form and function hinders our understanding of the park. This is especially true of OAU 12 where the elbow shaped ditch noted on aerial photographs, just outside the Ha Ha has the potential to be part of the monastic precinct boundary.
- 5.4.2 The core of the present estate, the area centred on the main house and within the Ha Ha, contains a wealth of archaeological evidence from this period in the form of standing buildings and the buried remains of the Abbey church, cloister and associated structures. The location of the abbey church seems to have been identified during geophysical survey, although this may need confirmation. This location confirms the idea that the standing medieval wings at the rear of the main house are related to ancillary and not central monastic structures.
- 5.4.3 Overall the archaeological potential of the park and in particular the area in the immediate vicinity of the main house is extremely significant and merits further study and careful management. This significance is further increased when the post-dissolution activity is taken into account.



6 THAME PARK - DISSOLUTION TO PRESENT DAY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The post-monastic landscape of Thame Park, in its current form, can be considered as a classic country park of the 18th and 19th centuries. What follows is an exploration of arbitrary areas of that parkland landscape as mapped on Figure 6.1, informed by a brief synopsis of the evolution of the park. It must be remembered however that the information currently to hand does not allow us to generate particularly complex or detailed understandings of the parkland development and further work will be required in that area.

6.2 HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS

6.2.1 Unfortunately we have little idea of what events occurred on the estate between the dissolution and the building of the Palladian frontage for the house. It seems likely that Thame Park became the main seat for the Wenman family and that the South Wing formed the primary residence. It is probable that remains of the abbey were upstanding in the area now known as the pleasure gardens and these were probably utilised where possible. The primary gardens were likely to have been to the south of the Tudor wing in the area now occupied by lawn.

6.2.2 At present it is assumed that the Palladian front wing was constructed in c.1745 by the 6th Lord Wenman. This construction replaced some monastic structures and also may have changed the entire orientation of the house. Previously the Tudor wing may have been the residential quarters for the family, this overlooked a small garden and an area leading down to the lake / fishponds. This essentially small-scale water based garden would have been in keeping with late medieval gardening traditions but would have been considered traditional and unfashionable in the 18th century.

6.2.3 The building of the new frontage to the house would have probably been accompanied by the rearrangement of the gardens. This would have potentially included the creation of the Ha Ha (although its current physical form seems to be 19th or 20th century in date), the development of the front lawns, possibly the remodelling of the lakes, the planting of the avenues in the old park area and the beginning of the naturalisation of the trees into clumps. This process would have been ongoing and it was not until the late 18th / early 19th century that the next major phase of identified developments began. This would have consisted of the building of the stable block, the creation of the kitchen garden walls and the first arrangement of the new carriageways.

6.2.4 Later in the mid-nineteenth century extensive renovation and refurbishment took place and the New Park was acquired. This may have been accompanied by a redevelopment of the pleasure gardens and the final arrangement of the carriageways by 1881. It is also possible that the lake was remodelled during this period. Since the late 19th century the park has seen minor changes in garden layout and form but there have been no major shifts in orientation and hard landscaping.

6.2.5 The sale in 1917 of all the outlying portions of the estate reduced Thame Park to the mansion and its parkland, and severed the historical connections with the surrounding landscape.

6.3 SYDENHAM HURST

6.3.1 This area of woodland seems to have been established between c.1830 and 1881. It does not clearly appear on the 1st edition 1" ordnance survey maps but is shown as extant with a layout identical to today on the 1881 1st edition 6" map. The woodland



is highly mixed in character with numerous exotics alongside native species. Rides through the woodland can still be traced although some are obscured by vegetation.

6.4 NEW PARK

6.4.1 This area became part of the estate in the nineteenth century and was progressively remodelled during that period. At present it is in a poor state of repair, being under a set-aside regime, elements of its clumped trees and parkland features can still be seen.

6.4.2 The area is important in terms of the landscape setting and character of the park even though it is largely screened from the house and pleasure gardens by the belt of woodland east of the lake. However it does supply a backdrop for the core elements of the site as one approaches from the north and also frames many of the views from the upper floors of the house. It is an important visual component of the estate and would benefit from a pastoral regime.

6.5 KITCHEN GARDENS

6.5.1 These lie to the north of the house and are in relatively poor condition. They have been subject to more detailed archaeological desk based assessment and geophysical survey, the results of which can be found in Appendix 7, and which are in part reproduced here.

6.5.2 The gardens are bounded by well built masonry and brick walls with noticeable quantities of ashlar, these are currently Grade 2 listed structures. Within the bounds of the walls two identifiable areas can be recognised. Firstly the main rectangular zone in the northern half of the garden with its quadrant layout and secondly the sub-rectangular annexe to the south of this.

6.5.3 The development and phasing of the garden development is more complex than the uniform brick walled interior would suggest (see Figure 6.2). The study has enabled us to identify four potential phases of construction within the Kitchen Garden complex.

6.5.4 Phase 1 was probably a rectangular structure along similar lines to the present main body of the garden. This would have had a stone built wall, probably with a similar quadrant layout of paths and beds. This phase is still visible in the Kitchen Garden today. The majority of the west wall of the garden, on its external face, seem to be representative of this phase. Other smaller sections of this earlier wall can be seen at the base of the eastern wall and at the south western corner of the southern greenhouse. In both of these locations the stones marking the line of the earlier wall can be traced running under the present wall.

6.5.5 It is currently felt that this phase is probably connected with the redevelopment of the estate by Lord Wenman in the mid-18th century. Another possibility that should be considered is the potential for a monastic origin for elements of this phase.

6.5.6 Phase 2 involved a radical and substantial overhaul and remodelling of the garden. This phase involved the rebuilding of all the walls in brick, the construction of the concave corners and probably the building of the northern greenhouse. This layout seems to be visible on the 1811 Ordnance Survey drawing, however the poor quality of reproduction does make this interpretation somewhat debatable.

6.5.7 The evidence for these first two phases is primarily derived from field inspection. This is especially true of determining the phasing of the concave corners. The junction between the western wall (external face only) and the south-western concave corner can be clearly seen, indicating that this corner was an insert. However internally the brick facing continues uninterrupted around the entirety of the site,



- potentially indicating continuity between the brick facing and the construction of the corners.
- 6.5.8 Overall it is felt that Phase 2 occurred in the late 18th / early 19th century.
- 6.5.9 Phase 3 saw the remodelling of the garden into a form that is instantly recognisable today. The primary events of this phase being the demolition of the southern wall of the rectangular garden and the building of the southern annexe, southern greenhouse and further annexes and greenhouses to the south.
- 6.5.10 This phase is currently felt to have occurred, probably not as a single event, between 1830 and 1881. The latter date has been established by examination of the 1st edition 25" Ordnance survey map which clearly shows the current garden layout. Unfortunately the 1830 1" 1st edition Ordnance survey map is at an unsuitable scale for detailed analysis. However it does outline the approximate extent of the garden and seems to indicate that it had a rectangular form, although seemingly with convex, not concave, corners.
- 6.5.11 Phase 4 involved only a small degree of alteration in the north eastern corner of the southern annexe. Here an ornamental gateway was constructed opening up an entrance between the kitchen gardens and the former formal garden to the east (OAU 25). This involved the partial demolition of a greenhouse. It is likely that this occurred after 1925, when the greenhouse is mentioned in the Sale particulars but before 1936 when the path and gateway appear on an Aerial Photograph (CCC 5234 / 26878 NMR ref).
- 6.5.12 Overall the phasing of the kitchen gardens is interesting in so much as it identifies a relatively early date for their current form. The southern annex however seems to be a mid-19th century addition perhaps associated with Lady Wenman's rehabilitation of the estate. The main garden is possibly associated with mid-18th century revival under Viscount Wenman. The wall fabric is for the most part contemporaneous with these periods although the west wall is probably comprised of older material, however this may not be in situ.
- 6.5.13 Finally a small feature noted during the examination of the wall fabric is worth mentioning. A carved graffiti windmill can be seen on the wall one of the entrances on the western side of the southern annexe. This carving is relatively crude and is possibly ancient, but may only be 18th or 19th century in date; its origin and what it represents are unknown.
- 6.5.14 Another aspect of interest is the identification of potential early plant varieties within the greenhouse at the north of main area. This has been possible through the comparison of the 1925 sale particulars and field survey. The 1925 particulars mention three ranges of glass houses:
1. *'.... two division Peach and flower house, Peach House, Vinery stocked with Hamburgh, Foster and Alicante vines;'*
 2. *'Second vinery, recently replanted with late Alicante;'*
 3. *'Peach house, range of six-light cold frames, two twelve-light cold frames and a twelve light heated frame, and three division Melon house, with stoke hole and Ideal Boiler.'*
- 6.5.15 Figure 6.3 shows the probable locations of these three ranges of glasshouses. Although it must be emphasised that this may be incorrect. The primary interest lies not in the structures but in the surviving plants located in the most northern glasshouse (no. 3). The current structure has living vines and peach (?) that date from at least this period and may be earlier, and it may be beneficial to maintain and propagate these.



6.5.16 The gardens are a significant and important part of the central core of the estate. Their history is now relatively well understood, although still open to revision, and the presence of historical plant stock only adds to their interest and value. They have been demonstrated to be approximately 200 years old at least and may in fact have far older origins.

6.6 PLEASURE GARDENS

6.6.1 It is extremely difficult to map with any degree of accuracy the development of the pleasure gardens, including the lake, with the currently examined sources, prior to 1881. The 1797 Davis map is too crude and large scale to afford any detail whilst the 1811 OS drawing is heavily distorted and poorly reproduced.

6.6.2 The 1830 OS 1" map is fairly useful but its scale makes detailed analysis very difficult. It does however show that the front lawns were arranged very differently, the two drives arriving across the line of the Ha Ha separately and on different alignments to the present arrangement.

6.6.3 The area to the south-east of the house seems to be laid out in a formal manner and the lake has a different shape, although this could be due to mapping rather than any changes. However we should accept the possibility that the lake has been extensively remodelled between 1839 and 1881.

6.6.4 The 1881 25" 1st edition OS map does afford us a detailed view of the layout. It is effectively the same as currently represented. There is a slightly higher degree of formality within the planting regimes but the majority of the layout seems to closely correspond to the present situation.

6.7 OLD PARK

6.7.1 The Old Park forms the major historical parkland component of the estate. Prior to the construction of the Palladian frontage it would have not been the focus of the house and gardens and its exact layout and role is uncertain. However the Davis Map of Oxfordshire of 1797 (see Figure 2.1) does begin to give us some idea of how the park would have looked prior to the remodelling episodes of the 19th century.

6.7.2 The most noticeable feature is the lack of carriageways running from the north and south ends of the estate. This would indicate that the northern service drive formed the primary route into the rear of the house. This would have probably incorporated OAU 4 as the line of route. The two major carriageways first appear in slightly different forms on the 1811 OS drawing, their line seems to have remained the same up to 1830, but between 1830 and 1881 they were changed to their current layout.

6.7.3 The park pale, as marked by OAU 13a, b and c, is extremely obvious on the Davis map, it is possible that this was the boundary of the parkland shortly prior to the map being made. The reasons for this are primarily to do with the siting of the building at the junction of the pale and northern service road, which probably served as a gate lodge (OAU 30). Even though Davis has chosen to mark the land between the present road to Thame and the park pale as parkland it is likely that this lay outside of the main park area. It should also be remembered that the line OAU 13a, b and c was remodelled as a carriageway at some point in the past and may have been acting as such during the 18th century linking the 'gatehouse' (OAU 30) with the main road to the south.

6.7.4 These buildings may of course have earlier origins and the mentions of guest houses and guest chapels' in literature connected with the abbey may possibly relate to these structures. This linkage is however extremely tenuous and speculative.

6.7.5 Other notable features of the 1797 map include the avenue at the southern end of the park, now relict but partially defined by OAU 8.



- 6.7.6 The lack of any mapped structures aside from the main house and the St. Mary's Chapel is interesting perhaps indicating that the large stable block had not been constructed by this time.
- 6.7.7 Overall the park at the start of the nineteenth century had a very different layout to present. However by 1811 the OS drawing seems to indicate that the parkland was being formed into a layout that is recognisable today. By 1830 the primary difference between the parkland of today and then is in the layout of the drives, the present arrangement first appearing on maps in 1881. Overall it seems as if the Old Park is primarily a product of the late 18th and the 19th centuries, overlaid on a monastic and pre-monastic base.



7 THE MAIN HOUSE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 This Heritage Assessment covers each of the buildings at Thame Park, the most significant being the main house. The assessment of the house has been sub-divided into separate sections on each of the three wings and each includes i) a summary of the known (or apparent) phasing; ii) an overall external description; iii) an internal description of each floor highlighting features of significance. At this stage of reporting some elements (e.g. the front stair) have been accorded more space because of the need to provide detailed information, whereas some parts are treated more generally.

7.1.2 Each of the main rooms in the house is briefly described in this section and more fully in the inventory (Appendix 4). The inventory includes both current observations and documentary references to the rooms from a variety of sources including *Building News* (1888), *Architectural Review* (1922), *Archaeological Journal* (1929), *Country Life* (1909, 1957) and sale particulars (from 1925 and 1984). Lee, in his *Building News* article includes a list of paintings to be found in the rooms of Thame Park and where possible these are included in the inventory. Some of the names ascribed to the rooms have changed over the years and as far as possible the terms used by Lee have been assimilated with terms used in later documentation. However there may be some error and for this reason where there is some doubt, the term used by Lee has been included in italics with the supposed location included in brackets.

7.1.3 Floor plans (Figures 7.1 - 7.4) are included at the end of this section which show the apparent phasing of the house. However in some areas the walls are obscured with panelling or plaster and it is not possible to be certain of the age of the walls in these areas. An informed guess has been attempted throughout the house and thus the phasing shown of some parts of the building is based on more information than others and is therefore likely to be more accurate. The accuracy of the assessment is inevitably dependent on the quantity of information currently available and it is likely that further work in the future will allow a greater understanding of the development of the house and will necessitate some revision of the phasing in some specific areas.

7.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND PHASING

7.2.1 Thame Park house is located c.150 m to the south-east of the probable location of the former church and consists of three wings around a rear courtyard. The main reception rooms and bedrooms of the house are contained within the large West Range which was added to the North and South Ranges which both date to the monastic period.

7.2.2 The North Range is essentially a 14th-century building which formed part of a 'cloister' range but there is much phasing evidence within the walls relating to various alterations and the interior has been much changed since its original construction.

7.2.3 The South Range has developed in a number of phases the earliest of which appears to date to the 14th century. Substantial works were undertaken to the range in the later monastic period including some dated to the 1530s.

7.2.4 The West Range was constructed in the mid-18th century but it is known that several substantial refurbishment programmes have been undertaken on it, particularly in the 19th century, and there is evidence of these within the fabric of the building. For example evidence shows that the north-east corner of the West Range was rebuilt in the mid 19th century and that the north elevation of the range was originally two bays



wide (rather than the existing three bays) similar to the south elevation. There was originally a hipped projection to the east, towards the north-east corner, but this has been subsumed into the expanded corner. Evidence also shows that each of the three existing staircases is secondary including the main central staircase which was probably added in the later 18th century or the 19th century.

- 7.2.5 A series of 19th and 20th-century changes occurred only to be removed in the 1980s, and are now known from plans or photographs where their traces have been obliterated by recent work.

7.3 NORTH RANGE

7.3.1 Introduction

- 7.3.1.1 The North Range (Plates.1,2,5,10,12) is a monastic structure probably of 14th-century date which was part of a cloister or passage adjoining other buildings although not the main cloister adjacent to the church. It was investigated during previous building works in the 1980s and is reported by John Steane and Mark Taylor of the County Archaeological Service in *South Midlands Archaeology* 17 (1987). However, their work was undertaken prior to a number of intrusive works which have subsequently exposed areas of the building's structure and the findings here therefore differ in some respects from those of the previous work. Among the works undertaken was the removal of a possibly medieval first floor and extensive masonry repairs and it does not appear that the work was recorded archaeologically.

- 7.3.1.2 Several samples of roof timber were taken from the North Range and subjected to dendrochronological analysis, but the precise location of samples is currently uncertain, and they are not thought to provide a reliable date for the building.

7.3.2 Description

- 7.3.2.1 **General description:** The North Range is largely stone-built and two storeys tall (although the upper floor has been lost) with a gable to the east and a hip to the west where it adjoins the main West Range. There is a outshut on the north side next the main house, and a single storey hipped projection at the east end. The roof is entirely covered with modern tiles and a stack of three square brick chimneys (diagonally set to each other) rises in the centre.
- 7.3.2.2 The **south elevation** is dominated by five pointed-arch openings separated by four stone buttresses. That furthest east is a doorway with a pointed arch, the eastern pier of which has been reformed in brick and modern facing stone. Above the arch is a single-pitch scar from a formerly adjoining north-south structure. Both the roof scar and the arch are believed to be primary or early features although some of the stonework around them may have been reformed. A photograph contained in a *Country Life* article (Nov 21 1957) shows that in the mid 20th century the arch was filled with stonework and a window. The four other arched openings are each windows with cusps to the main arch, columns embedded in the side walls of the opening and partially surviving cinquefoil arches. Each opening would have had three such cinquefoil arches supported by two free-standing columns and the design is strongly suggestive of a cloister walk. The free-standing columns have all been lost but what appears to be the base of one of the columns has been recently found close by and has been retained on site. There is no evidence for original glazing, but slots have been cut for later window frames (now lost). The low stonework in the third bay from the west is clearly modern and a photograph included in the 1957 *Country Life* article referred to above shows a double doorway through this arched bay. The stonework immediately to the west of the westernmost bay is also modern having been rebuilt when an abutting 19th-century structure was removed in the 1980s. Two large four-light mullioned windows have been inserted at first floor in



the two west bays (probably in the 16th or 17th century) and there are two smaller windows towards the east. One of these is a three-light mullion (again a secondary insertion) while the other, a single vertical light, may potentially be a primary opening. The south elevation of the hipped eastern projection is entirely of stone. Although some restoration (possibly even some rebuilding) was undertaken on this wall in the 1980s the wall is believed to probably date to the early post-dissolution period (see Appendix 9).

- 7.3.2.3 The **north elevation** divides between the small single storey projection to the east, the two storey section towards the centre and face of the outshut to the west. The eastern projection is of stone and there is a 3-light timber window at the point where it adjoins the central section. As detailed elsewhere (see Appendix 9) this structure is believed to be a post-monastic structure and the roof appears to be of 18th- or 19th-century date. The central section is also of stone with two ground floor windows (modern softwood) and two first floor windows (possibly medieval 2-light mullions). Between the two ground floor windows is a blocked medieval doorway with a plain, pointed arch and to the west of this (beneath and adjacent to the window) the wall has been rebuilt in modern stone. The north face of the outshut is of stone and there are two gabled dormer windows projecting above the low eaves. Although the outshut is post-medieval its north wall appears to incorporate a plinth from a wide (c.90 cm) old, stone (potentially monastic) wall.
- 7.3.2.4 The **east elevation** divides into two parts. The ground floor (of the projection) is of stone which appears to be of a post-medieval date (with recent restoration) although it may be part of a late-monastic structure. The first floor gable is of brick and there are straight joints towards each edge, up to eaves height, at the point where the brick cross wall abuts the north and south elevations. The straight joints either suggest that the north and south stone walls formerly continued further east or that they formerly adjoined another structure. The adjoining structure or the extensions of the two walls must then have been demolished and the walls were capped in brick before (as part of a later phase) the existing brick gable was constructed between the brick caps. The foundation of a large north-south wall with the same alignment as the brick gable has been recently uncovered to the south in the courtyard and it therefore appears probable that this wall continued north to form the east end of the North Range. Therefore when the wall was demolished the ends of the two walls were capped in brick. There must have been some other structure (possibly a lean-to) which formed the end of the range after the demolition of this wall but before the construction of the existing brick wall.
- 7.3.2.5 In its modern form the **interior** divides into four main areas: the projection to the east, the outshut to the north-east and the two main rooms either side of a central stone and brick chimney stack. Both of the main rooms are double height spaces. The first floor was removed from the western room in the post-medieval period (but before the 20th century) to create a large open kitchen while that within the eastern half of the building was removed in the recent (1980s) works. The joists remain within the building but not *in situ*.
- 7.3.2.6 The roof is now fully exposed above the two main rooms on either side of the chimney. The primary construction was a rafter roof (ie with no purlins or ridge piece) and each pair of rafters is coupled with a collar, soulaces and ashlar, making a seven-cant profile. In order to give lengthways support to this roof a crown post was later added, standing on a cambered tie-beam. The studding on the tie suggests that the first floor had separate rooms either side of the truss.
- 7.3.2.7 The internal face of all the walls are exposed and there is a wealth of phasing evidence which adds to that visible on the external faces. The west wall (adjoining



the West Range) is of stone of several phases and although the door at its southern end is of 20th-century date the opening is historic (although perhaps dating from the 18th-century). From the stone in-filling above the door it appears the original doorway may have been arch-headed. A wide brick-arched opening has been created (C18th?) in the north wall of the west room to unite the space with the outshut although the primary wall was stone. There is a clear structural break in the west wall within the outshut which aligns with a full height straight-jointed quoin in the east wall of the West Range. It is apparent from this, and other evidence, that the north-east corner of the West Range was a secondary addition.

- 7.3.2.8 A large ground floor opening (fire place) to the east face of the central chimney stack has been recently blocked and above this smoke marks clearly show that there was formerly a small fireplace at the north-west corner of the removed first floor room.
- 7.3.2.9 The easternmost room (within the hipped projection) is now a single space with the main double-height space although there is a brick gable end wall between the two areas above ground floor now supported by acro props and a thin timber plank. There are three relieving arches within the brickwork immediately above the props suggesting that the opening is not a recent insertion although there would have been a substantial lintel creating the opening.
- 7.3.2.10 Plans survive from 1919 (Figure 7.5) which show the layout of the North Range in the early 20th-century and which works were undertaken at this time. The western ground floor room was a kitchen with stone tiled flooring and partially tiled walls. The eastern part of the main building was divided into two rooms at ground floor (scullery and larder) with a staircase between them. The single storey projection was also divided into two areas (Game larder and Drying room).

7.3.3 North Range Assessment

- 7.3.3.1 The two storey section of the North Range appears to date from the 14th century and from the unglazed window openings it would almost certainly have formed part of a cloister range or passage building (ie not necessarily a quadrangle building). The building is too wide for a cloister walk but the east-west wall uncovered in the recent evaluation, parallel to the arches, suggests that there would have been a narrower front passage with rooms behind, and all under a single first-floor room (like the Windsor Canons Cloister). A recent geophysical survey undertaken as part of the current works appears to have located the main cloister range to the north-west of the Palladian house so the cloister surviving in the North Range would therefore have formed part of a lesser range, possibly part of the infirmary.
- 7.3.3.2 The roof scar and doorway in the south wall of the range strongly suggest that this was the end of the east range of the cloister and this is supported by the foundation of a large (1m wide) north-south stone wall which has recently been revealed which aligns with the top (east) of the roof scar. The wall would have formed the rear of the cloister and the smaller foundation of the front wall of the cloister has also been located in the evaluation. The large wall would have continued north and formed the east end of the North Range. This wall was then demolished together with and the east range of the cloister and the two ends of the North Range walls were capped in brick. The current archaeological evaluation (Appendix 9) shows that the single storey projection to the east of the range was constructed on the foundation of the large north-south wall and therefore must post-date its demolition. It is therefore probably post monastic.
- 7.3.3.3 The hipped roof over the east projection appears to date to the 18th or 19th century and the straight joints in the east gable show that there must have been a phase after the demolition of the wall and east cloister but before the projection took its current



form. It is likely that the east end of the range would have been terminated in this phase by a lean-to or similar ephemeral structure. Wall foundations uncovered in the current evaluation within the North Range (at the east end) have confirmed that previous structures pre-dated the current projection.

- 7.3.3.4 The entire house is Grade I listed and is therefore of high significance but the North Range is believed to be probably the earliest substantially surviving monastic structure at Thame so it is therefore of particularly high significance. It is also of particular archaeological sensitivity due to the potential that remains of a previous building survive below ground within the range.

7.4 SOUTH RANGE

7.4.1 Introduction

- 7.4.1.1 The South Range has developed in a number of phases of which five principal ones have so far been identified.
- 7.4.1.2 **Phase I:** The earliest structure is contained within the steeply-pitched building which now adjoins the West Range although the outline of this structure has been altered at a later date. The building is monastic and with its rafter roof is probably 13th or 14th-century in date. The east wall of this range (now an internal cross wall) appears to survive with evidence of a formerly external doorway but the north wall and relatively thin south wall both appear to at least partially belong to later phases.
- 7.4.1.3 **Phase II:** The outline of a former pitched roof can be seen on the east side of the Phase I building, but below the present roof line, and must belong to a lost building, probably of pre-16th-century date.
- 7.4.1.4 **Phase III:** The Phase II structure then appears to have been demolished (or substantially rebuilt) and replaced by what is essentially the eastern half of the South Range (although the north wall and roof are later). Possibly at the same time the entire south facade of the range (including the Phase I building) was rebuilt with the existing wall although there is some evidence to suggest that the two halves of the wall are of different phases. This was probably undertaken in the early 16th century as part of the creation of a grand house for the abbot. The division between Phases I and III is visible externally by the break in the roof line although the roof over Phase III is a later addition.
- 7.4.1.5 **Phase IV:** a three storey tower was then added, probably between 1530 and 1539, towards the east end of the south elevation. The structure is clearly shown to be of a later date than Phase III by enclosing an originally external doorway and abutting moulded hoods over a door and a window. It is also dated to the pre-Dissolution phase by the internal features and the heraldry of the 'Abbot's Parlour'.
- 7.4.1.6 **Phase V:** a straight joint in the east elevation and corresponding gable coping shows that the north wall of the Phase III structure was moved c.1m to the north and the lack of any straight joint in the north elevation suggests that the entire north wall was similarly moved or refaced. The roof of the Phase II structure is known to have been raised and it is likely that this was undertaken at the same time as the north wall was moved. Judging from the brickwork within the north wall it is likely that this was undertaken in the later 18th century, though the roof trusses appear in part to be older (and may be reused).
- 7.4.1.7 **Other buildings:** there is evidence to suggest that there may have been a further building to the east of the South Range to which it was linked. A N-S wall foundation has been recently revealed within the courtyard just beyond the east wall South Range (see Appendix 9) and this may have been linked to the Abbot's Parlour



(Phase IV) by a surviving first floor doorway. There is also some evidence to suggest a first floor doorway at the north end of the east wall of the range which may have formed a link to the other building.

7.4.2 General Description

- 7.4.2.1 The **south elevation** is highly picturesque with two bay windows, a projecting stair tower and a large secondary tower to the east, all of which are crenellated. The elevation is entirely of stone, most of which is primary, although the stonework to the Phases 1 and 3 are possibly different to each other. The Phase 1 wall is generally formed of larger blocks while the Phase 3 wall is generally of smaller stones. The windows all have stone mullions; those at first floor are arched while those at ground floor are square headed. Among the more interesting features is the moulded, arched lintel of a blocked doorway between the oriel window and stair tower which would have allowed access into the Phase 1 part of the South Range. The way that the doorway is squeezed by the projecting bay window and stair tower suggest strongly that the stairs (and possibly also the bay) are secondary. At the east end of the elevation there are several interesting pieces of phasing evidence which confirm that the large tower must post-date the rest of the building. At the point where the main south elevation adjoins the west wall of the tower there are two moulded hoods (at ground and first floor) which continue beneath the tower wall. The lower one is above a possibly early 20th-century door but was originally above a wide window. The original doorway to the Phase 3 section of the South Range was to the east of this and is now an internal doorway (with original moulded hood intact) between the 'dungeon' and the former Dining Room.
- 7.4.2.2 The **north elevation** is plainer, entirely of coursed stone, and is believed to entirely date from the 18th century (or later) with large patches of modern work. There are three ground floor windows (two-light stone mullion windows) all of 20th-century date. The stone surrounding them (and extending to the east edge of the wall) is all modern. The ground floor stonework to the western half of the elevation is older except for a recently blocked doorway at the western end of Phase 3 with stone quoins and lintel. The internal face of the wall at ground floor is largely of brick (probably 18th century) with two recently blocked openings towards the east. There are three timber windows at first floor all of which appear to be of 20th-century date. The internal face of the wall at first floor is of brick (18th-century?) to the west half and stone to the east (partly old partly modern).
- 7.4.2.3 The **east elevation** divides into three main sections and shows a wealth of phasing evidence. The northern section (at the end of the main range) is gabled; to the south of this is a projecting hexagonal stair tower with a crenellated top; at the south end is the square plan tower, again with a crenellated top. The elevation is entirely of stone other than a partly brick chimney stack (probably 18th-century insertion) which projects from the gable end. A straight joint with stone quoin, inset c.1m from the north edge of the elevation, extending vertically from first floor level to the roof line shows that the north wall of at least this part of the building was originally c.1 m further south. The stonework beneath the straight, at ground floor level, has been reformed, apparently recently, and the lower section of the joint has therefore been lost. That this was originally the edge of the building is further confirmed by a stone coping along the top of the gable which terminates at the head of the straight joint. The straight joint continues through to the internal face of the wall but it is apparent that the internal face of the east wall is not bonded into the north wall. It is also apparent that the plasterwork on the internal face of the north wall continues east beyond and behind the stonework of the east wall. This may have been a small recess in the internal face of the wall or it may potentially have been a narrow doorway and a linking corridor to a further building to the east. The external quoin at the north-



east corner suggests against a possible opening. The ground floor stonework of the gable (including two stone windows) was replaced in the 1980s which has removed the lower section of the straight joint. There are two upper windows in the gable end (one of which lit a now removed attic) and both are historic although the stonework surrounding them suggests that they have been inserted. The stair tower, which is illuminated by a series of small lights, must have been added at the same time or after the square-plan tower.

- 7.4.2.4 The **west elevation** of the tower consists of a projecting oriel window at first and second floor, which was rebuilt (together with much of the stonework) in the 1980s. A wide blocked doorway beneath a 4-centred arch survives at ground floor to the south of a modern stone mullion window.

7.4.3 Interior

- 7.4.3.1 The current internal arrangement of the South Range closely follows the overall phasing of the range and divides into three sections at each floor (other than some minor modern alterations). The first and third phases are divided by a thick stone cross wall the full height of the building which was originally an external wall.

7.4.4 Lower Ground Floor

- 7.4.4.1 At lower ground floor level the Phase 1 part of the South Range is divided into the Former Morning Room and the Garden Lobby adjacent to the West Wing. The internal faces of all the walls in each of these rooms are covered with 20th-century panelling; that in the Former Morning Room is of oak while that in the Garden lobby is plastic imitation linfold. The Former Morning Room has a decorated box beamed ceiling and leaded light windows, one with a seat.
- 7.4.4.2 To the east of this, in the Phase 3 part of the range is the Former Dining Room in which the walls have been entirely stripped of plaster (or panelling) and reveal a wealth of phasing evidence. The north wall is largely of brick and is post-monastic while the other three walls are each largely of stone (with many patches of rebuild) and are each of 16th century (or earlier) date. Among the most significant features visible within the room is a 1.5 m tall moulded stone door jamb towards the south end of the internal west wall. The wall would originally have been external and the doorway would have access into the existing building at the west end of the range, or a previous building which was replaced by the existing building. It would appear that the door would have abutted the existing south wall of the range which suggests that the south wall must be later than the wall with the doorway.
- 7.4.4.3 Although now a large room, originally divisions were made to allow for a games room, china store and a Wedgewood Dairy (1919). A photograph in *Country Life* (July 17th 1909) shows the interior of the dairy and significantly shows worktops with decorated table legs identical to several currently within Building 2 of the farmyard (see below). The table legs were presumably reused in the farm building when the Wedgewood Dairy was dismantled probably in the mid 20th century.
- 7.4.4.4 The Lower Ground Floor room within the 1530s tower (Phase 4) is known as the Dungeon and each of the walls is of unplastered stone. Among the most significant features is the moulded hood over the door to the former Dining Room which was clearly originally external.

7.4.5 Upper Ground Floor

- 7.4.5.1 The rooms are similarly divided on the above floor with an ante-room immediately adjacent to the West Range, a Library in the main Phase 1 part of the range, the Armoury (in the Phase 3 part) and the Abbots Parlour in the Phase 4 tower.



Although it is physically part of the South Range the ante-room is of a later date (18th century or later) and shares the higher floor level of the West Wing. A set of steps were added in the early 20th-century works which allowed movement from the library (South Range) to the ante room but these were blocked in the recent works when a set of toilets were inserted into the ante room.

- 7.4.5.2 The walls of the library were re-panelled in the early 20th-century but the impressive 16th-century ceiling survives together with a carved frieze which bears the name of ROBERTVS KING the last abbot at Thame between 1530 and 1539. The ceiling is boarded with intersecting ribs divided into three sections by moulded cross beams. The room is believed to have been the abbot's private dining room.
- 7.4.5.3 The eastern section of the building (formerly known as the Armoury) has been stripped of plaster (similarly to the corresponding room at ground floor) and this reveals a wealth of phasing evidence. The north wall (of brick to the west, stone to the east) strongly appear post monastic and adds to the evidence in the east elevation (straight joint) which suggests that the north wall was rebuilt, probably in the 18th or 19th century. The east wall is older and retains two probably primary stone-mullion windows and a historic stone fireplace. Staircase and small attic removed from east end of Armoury in recent works. The north wall of stone, with three historic windows, which appears consistent with an early 16th-century date. The west wall (now internal but originally external wall of Phase 1 building) has the clear imprint of a former pitched roof beneath the existing roof. The eaves of this roof would have been beneath the lintels of the existing windows in the south elevation which strongly suggests that there must have been a previous lower structure on the approximate footprint of the Phase 3 building. This building must have post-dated (or possibly been contemporary with) the phase 1 part of the range. The roof structure is exposed within the room and the trusses are of at least two phases, both of which appear to be of 18th-century date (or later).
- 7.4.5.4 The Upper Ground Floor room within the Phase IV tower is known as the Abbot's Parlour and is Thame Park's most significant surviving interior retaining much panelling believed to be from the 1530s. It has been the subject of much previous research particularly by Walter Godfrey (*Archaeological Journal* 1930). Linen-fold panelling covers two-thirds of the height of the room, the space above is filled with carved Renaissance panels each (except for those with shields of arms) having a roundel with heads set into moulded frames. The faces of each of the heads have at some time been removed although the purpose or cause of this is unknown. A grotesque frieze adds to the decoration, again its design is centred on roundels, echoing those on the panels; similar carving also appears on the underside of the ceiling beams. The frieze incorporates the initials R K into the design almost certainly relating to Robert King who was the last abbot at Thame (from 1530 to 1539).
- 7.4.5.5 Among the many significant features of the room is a panelled lobby or internal porch, which it has been suggested may be a very early example. Against the east wall is a typical Tudor fireplace and a door in the panelling which may have provided access to a garderobe now destroyed. The whole room would have originally been coloured and gilded; greenish-blue ground was recorded as remaining in the upper part by Godfrey (1930, 62). It is known that some limited restoration has been undertaken in the later 20th century and more particularly on the ceiling which is shown in photographs (*Country Life*, 1957) to have been in a worse condition than that existing today.
- 7.4.5.6 This room is of exceptional importance for being a very early example of a domestic interior with renaissance decorations.



7.4.6 Loft above South Range

- 7.4.6.1 The loft is c.9.9 m long by 5.7 m wide (between vertical ashlar pieces). It is a rafter roof (ie without longitudinal members such as purlins and ridge piece) consisting of 18 pairs of coupled rafters. Each pair of rafters is triangulated by a collar and a tie-beam (hidden, other than at each end) and towards the end of each rafter there is a vertical ashlaring piece which further braces the frame. The timber appears to be of oak and the joints are pegged.
- 7.4.6.2 The area is not currently used or floor-boarded (other than at the west end) but lath marks to the undersides of the collars and rafters and to the inner faces of the ashlaring pieces shows that the area has been plastered in the past and used as an attic room. In addition to this there survives the frame of a secondary floor which now obscures each tie-beam (other than beyond each ashlar piece).
- 7.4.6.3 The floorboards have been removed to reveal the floor structure above a lath and plastered layer in which the plaster is to the upper face and the laths appear to lie directly on each tie-beam. It could not therefore have been a ceiling and is likely to be a sound insulating device when the loft floor was inserted. The plaster remains almost entirely in-situ (obscuring the beams) but there is a small hole within it through which boards (presumably the existing library ceiling) is visible.
- 7.4.6.4 The floor consists of an E-W principal joist along the spine of the loft and a further pegged N-S principal towards the centre. Spanning between the spine joist and a further beam adjacent to each ashlar piece is a series of pegged common joists which do not align with the roof trusses and are structurally independent to them (although they do rest on the ties). The common joists, which are laid horizontally, strongly appear to pre-date the mid-18th-century works at Thame and may date to the late monastic, early 16th-century phase.
- 7.4.6.5 The only area which retains floorboarding is at the west end where there is a simple 19th/20th-century tongue and groove board floor. Adjacent to this, forming the west end of the loft, is a king-post truss of 18th- or 19th- century date with red brick infill, also of 18th or 19th century date. There is an iron strap which secures king post to tie beam and due to the steeply pitched roof there is a second mini king-post truss above the main truss towards the apex of the roof.
- 7.4.6.6 The east wall is of stone up to the collars and brick above. The only features within this wall are what appear to be put-log holes which would have been used to build the wooden scaffolding frame when the wall was originally constructed.
- 7.4.6.7 There are several small areas of 20th century work including a single timber brace between the two inner faces of the roof towards the western end which was almost certainly added in the late 1980s work.
- 7.4.6.8 The roof form is characteristically medieval and it is probably of 14th-century date (or potentially earlier). However it is known that some roofs were built in the 17th century, including several at Oxford Colleges, with a medieval form broadly similar to this so it is possible (although unlikely) that it is an anachronistic post-medieval roof. Assuming the main roof is medieval it is of very high significance (as well as apparently being in a relatively good condition) and its preservation will be required. It should however be possible to successfully convert the loft to a useable room, while still preserving the roof structure in-situ. As the brick-filled king-post truss at the western end of the loft is of 18th- (or possibly 19th-) century date it is of a relatively lower significance although still of interest.



7.4.7 South Range Assessment

7.4.7.1 The South Range has developed in a number of phases, most of which date to the monastic period, and it has a very high overall significance. The earliest structure appears to be of 13th- or 14th- century date and most of the rest of the range appears to date to the early 16th century. It contains a wealth of phasing evidence which provides clues to the development of this part of the house. Among the most significant features are the rafter roof within the loft and the 16th-century panelling and frieze in the Abbots Parlour.

7.5 WEST RANGE

7.5.1 Introduction

7.5.1.1 The West Range forms the main part of the existing house and it was constructed in c.1745 by the sixth Lord Wenman replacing several possibly monastic structures.

7.5.1.2 The shell of the main body of the building is largely of a single phase but it is apparent that several alterations have been made to the rear (east face) of the building for 19th and 20th-century servicing of the mansion. The most significant phasing evidence is a set of former openings in the east face of the projecting main staircase block which are partially truncated by the two existing arched window openings and which could not relate to the existing staircase. Therefore the staircase must be a secondary (later 18th century or possibly 19th) addition to the building. The only alternative is that the wall survives from a previous building but this is highly unlikely because the West Wing is known to have replaced several low straggling structures. It is also apparent that neither of the other two staircases is primary. The staircase towards the north end of the house is shown to be secondary by blocked openings at each floor level in the south wall, each of which is abutted by a flight of stairs. The southernmost staircase is believed to have been inserted at the lower levels in the 19th century, then extended to the second floor in the early 20th and replaced in the 1980s.

7.5.1.3 The other significant piece of phasing evidence in the shell of the building is a full height straight-jointed quoin towards the north edge of the east elevation which strongly suggests that the north-east corner of the building has been rebuilt. This is supported by evidence within the roof space and it is confirmed by Skelton's view (plate 44) which shows the north elevation of the house only two bays wide. The north-east corner of the building clearly originally stepped in and there was a hip-roofed projection to the east which was subsumed within the enlarged corner. The extension was presumably undertaken in the mid-19th century by Baroness Wenman.

7.5.1.4 The overall layout of the interior is largely primary but it is known that several substantial programmes of refurbishment and redecoration have been undertaken. Much of this work was undertaken in the 19th century by Baroness Wenman and further large scale programmes of work were undertaken in the early 20th century by G Berkeley Wills and then in the 1980s and early 1990s. However it is believed that much of the 20th-century work consisted of the removal of Lady Wenman's 19th-century alterations, and other secondary structures, and it is apparent that a significant quantity of primary and historic fabric remains in-situ. Among the features of interest probably relating to these redecoration are several small samples of historic hand-painted (or hand-printed) wall paper.

7.5.1.5 For the purposes of this study, to remain consistent with previous surveys of the house the floors are called: the lower ground floor; the upper ground floor; first floor; second floor. The names of the rooms have also been taken from the most recent sales particulars (see Appendix 4 for former room names).



7.5.2 General Description

- 7.5.2.1 It is almost entirely stone built, 11 bays long, 4 storeys tall and has a tile-covered Dutch-gabled roof with several hipped projections to the rear. The main reception rooms are on the upper ground floor (*piano nobile*), the main entrance to which is by a grand stone external staircase to the west.

7.5.3 External Description

- 7.5.3.1 The **west elevation** (front) is of ashlar. It is 11 bays wide with the three central, pedimented bays projecting slightly although much of the stonework to the central section was replaced in the 1980s. The square sash windows to the lower ground floor are beneath a stone plat band and have rusticated quoins. The large windows to the upper ground floor are all 15-light sashes while those to the first floor are 12-light sashes and are supported on pairs of small stone brackets. The second floor is illuminated by dormer windows but they are hidden behind a stone parapet. The main entrance to the building is through a doorway at upper ground floor level with segmental pediment and Corinthian half-columns. The door is reached via a grand staircase (see 7.6 below). Towards the southern edge of the elevation the ground level dips slightly and exposes what appears to be the stone footing of a previous building on which the existing 18th century wall was built. A 2 m long section of the old wall is visible and it is at a similar orientation to the main above-ground wall but slightly more NNE-SSW as opposed to the N-S main wall.
- 7.5.3.2 The **south elevation** is two bays deep and has broadly similar detailing to the west elevation although the stonework is largely of coursed rubble stone and the elevation is ornamented by a simple Dutch gable with large curves to each upper corner.
- 7.5.3.3 The **north elevation** is similar to the south other than that the stonework is rendered and that it is three bays deep. The elevation is unbalanced with what aesthetically appears to be an added section (c.1.5 m long) towards the east end. As referred to above physical evidence suggests that the east end of this elevation has been rebuilt and an illustration from 1823 (*VCH Oxon vii*) confirms it showing the north elevation of the house only two bays wide. There is a slight step in the ground plan at this point and the inset corner has a rusticated quoin at lower ground level. The three windows are also centred on the narrower elevation and the Dutch gable curves down to the inset line. It is also interesting to note that the mid 19th-century stepped-out corner is constructed on a foundation of old stone including some dressed architectural masonry. What strongly appears to be part of a moulded window jamb is visible immediately to the east of the corner within a cutting apparently made for drainage pipes. The jamb cannot be in-situ because it is beneath ground level.
- 7.5.3.4 The **east elevation** is the rear of the range and contrasts sharply with the regularity and symmetry of the front. It is adjoined by the South Range at the lower two storeys and by the North Range at lower ground floor. The elevation is entirely of stone (other than an inserted brick stack towards the north end) although this is of several phases. At the centre of the elevation is a hip-roofed projection which encloses the main staircase and shows several pieces of phasing evidence to suggest that the staircase (and two semicircular arched windows) may not be primary. There are four distinct straight joints (each one strongly appearing to be a window jamb) adjacent to the four corners of the existing upper window. The two pairs of straight joints are directly in line with each other and beneath the southern line is a blocked window, partially truncated at its upper corner by the existing lower window. This former window would have been abutted by the landing of the existing staircase showing that it must have pre-dated the staircase. There is also an external doorway at the foot of the stairs which has been blocked with modern stone. The arrangement suggests that there were originally five regular windows and a doorway to this part of the



building and that the roof was originally higher. It appears that either the internal arrangement of the building has been substantially altered or this part of the building survives from a previous structure.

- 7.5.3.5 To either side of the central projection are two 1980s additions: the structure to the south encloses a staircase and that to the north houses a lift shaft. The pitched roof above the lift shaft abuts a blocked window at first floor level directly beneath a dormer window. Internal examination (detailed below) shows that beneath this blocked window there were further windows at each floor and a doorway at ground floor but that each of these openings were abutted by a staircase. The staircase must therefore be secondary and the dormer was added to illuminate its head. A bulls-eye window was also added to light the staircase within the east wall. There is further significant phasing evidence towards the north edge of the elevation where there is a full-height, straight-jointed quoin inset c.4 m from the north wall. Evidence within the roof space also suggests that this projection originally had a hipped roof with a ridge which terminated immediately above the straight-jointed quoin. It is possible that the quoin survives from a previous structure pre-dating the existing West Range but more likely that the corner in the original house stepped-in and was rebuilt to increase the floor area. Much of the latest phase of work arose from the demolition of the earlier 20th-century additions at the rear of the house.

7.5.4 Internal description

- 7.5.4.1 The main body of each floor of the building is divided into five areas by four masonry east-west cross walls. The rooms at each end of the building are linked by a north-south corridor along the eastern side of the house immediately to the west of the main staircase block.

7.5.5 Lower Ground Floor

- 7.5.5.1 The Lower Ground Floor is generally of a utilitarian nature and housed, among other things, two wine cellars and a boiler room.
- 7.5.5.2 The main entrance to the floor is from the west through a small vestibule and into the Lower Stone Hall. This is an open hall which was created in the mid 20th century by Frank Bowden by inserting four plaster pillars (enclosing stanchions) into an area previously subdivided into several small rooms. The 1919 plan shows three rooms (Strong Room, Drying Room, Flower Room and Pantry) either side of an east-west corridor. The room has a stone flag floor, two painted stone fireplaces and four display niches.
- 7.5.5.3 The stone flag floor continues through the corridor into the adjacent Inner Staircase Hall which provides the key point of access to the upper floors.
- 7.5.5.4 The two rooms at either end of the main body of the West Wing are brick-vaulted cellars (Wine Cellar to south, Beer Cellar to north) and the floors of each have been raised by 95 cm (in the 1980s) to the current lower ground floor level. Each floor now consists of concrete joists loosely laid but a small hole allows some limited visual access into the space beneath the northern beer cellar.
- 7.5.5.5 The 1919 plan shows that the southern room was reached via eight steps (from the corridor) and that the room had a series of wine storage vaults around three walls but it suggests that the floor of the northern Beer Cellar had already been raised. The 1983 sale particulars record that the room was fitted as a “pub”. The two areas immediately adjacent to the two cellars have both been subdivided in the recent (1980s) works. The area to the south of the Beer Cellar (a servants sitting room in 1919) has been partially converted into a set of toilets but retains its historic fireplace and window shutters. The room to the north of the Wine Cellar (now called a Former



Office but labelled a workshop in 1919) has been subdivided into three rooms with modern partitions. Each of these two areas is divided from the corridor by impressive, recently exposed trussed partitions, each of which is probably primary.

- 7.5.5.6 The most significant changes to the footprint of the West Wing have been undertaken at its north-east corner and this is reflected in the ground floor layout at this point. The area to the east of the Beer Cellar and to the north of the staircase is now a single room into which several large concrete bases have been inserted (presumably for boiler plant not installed). However the 1919 plan significantly shows a thick structural east-west wall at the mid point of the room. From other evidence detailed elsewhere it is apparent that the north-east corner of the West Wing has been rebuilt and this thick wall would have originally have been external. The wall has been replaced by a modern steel joist and each supporting wall has been rebuilt in brick beneath it. In 1919 there was a pantry and two toilets to the north of the wall and a Boots and Knives room to the south of it.
- 7.5.5.7 One of the more interesting features at Lower Ground Floor level is a blocked doorway which is abutted by the lowest section of the northernmost staircase. A single stone chamfered jamb is visible (the other appears to have been removed in 1980s work) and there is a brick segmental arch over. The brickwork appears to be of 18th-century date which confirms that although the stone jamb may potentially relate to an older (possibly monastic) doorway there must also have been a doorway here in the primary mid 18th-century West Wing. The staircase above ground floor level is known to be secondary (as detailed elsewhere) but the fact that this doorway is now abutted by the stone steps confirms that even this lowest section was secondary and there must have been a different set of steps (probably within the same vicinity) to allow passage from the North Wing to the West Wing. Although the stone jamb is similar to others in the house known to be of 18th-century date it is in line with the south wall of the North Range and may potentially be part of the older, monastic structure.

7.5.6 Upper Ground Floor

- 7.5.6.1 The principal reception rooms are situated on the Upper Ground Floor and are reached from grand staircase at the front of the house. Each of the rooms is richly decorated but it appears that much of the work may relate to 19th-century refurbishments by Lady Wenman (d.1870). The article in the *Architectural Review* detailing the early 20th-century works states that the reception rooms on the piano were 'found unfortunately to have been much interfered with, probably by the last Lady Wenman'.
- 7.5.6.2 At the centre of the floor is the Upper Stone Hall, which has four matching doors leading to other rooms, each of which is beneath an elaborately decorated pediment and console. The walls are panelled and enriched with plaster swags and pendants in the manner of Grinling Gibbons, and a finely carved stone mantelpiece, surmounted by a handsomely carved wood overmantel, encloses an open stone fireplace. Above this, a large mirror is mounted on the wall.
- 7.5.6.3 To the north is the Small Drawing Room, with decorated cornice, panelled walls and carved Adam-style mantelpiece. Over the mantelpiece, the wall is adorned with carvings of fruit and flowers in the style of Grinling Gibbons. The floor is polished oak. Writing in 1988 Lee catalogues that in the Saloon (perhaps the small drawing room on the Upper Ground Floor) two paintings are noteworthy: 'The Rape of the Sabines' and 'The Horatii and Curiatti' after Le Brun.
- 7.5.6.4 Adjoining this is the Dining Room which is now a single room the full width of the building although, as detailed elsewhere, the north-eastern corner of the house was



rebuilt in the mid-19th century and thus the eastern section of this room is a secondary addition. The opening between the two sections of the room is created by two ionic columns which were inserted in the early 20th-century works to replace previous Corinthian columns. A pantry was also inserted at this time at the far eastern end of the room and the existing mantel was relocated to the room from one of the bedrooms within the house. The influence of Grinling Gibbons is again visible in the fruit and flowers carvings of the mantelpiece and on the frieze supported by two Ionic columns.

- 7.5.6.5 At the south end of the floor is a large Drawing Room which was created by forming a wide opening between two former rooms, and four Ionic pilasters flank the opening. The rooms were previously used as a Billiard Room and Lounge (1919) and the division between visible by the four pilasters delimiting the space. The ceiling is finely modelled plaster in high relief. The open fireplace with marble hearth and surround is enclosed by a tastefully carved mantelpiece with applied carvings of fruit and flowers. This room was redecorated during the early 1920s, and given an imported Georgian chimney piece (*Country Life* 1957b).

7.5.7 First Floor

- 7.5.7.1 The first floor comprises the main bedrooms and appears to largely retain its primary layout except at northern end. The Master Bedroom is at the southern end, the Guest Bedroom is at the northern end and there is a corridor between the two which is immediately to the east of a set of further rooms (Bedrooms 2-4 and 2 ensuite bathrooms). The layout of the Master Bedroom, Bedrooms 2, 3 and 4 and the two ensuite bathrooms appear to be broadly the same as those shown on the 1919 plans although each bathroom was then a further bedroom and the partition between Bedroom 2 and its bathroom was slightly to the south of its current location. The Guest Bedroom however is shown in the 1919 plans as two smaller bedrooms and the bathroom at the north-east corner was a further bedroom making a total of nine bedrooms on the first floor.
- 7.5.7.2 Immediately to the south of the north-eastern bathroom is a nursery and to the south of this is the staircase. As detailed elsewhere it is believed that the north-east corner of the building was rebuilt, probably in the 19th century, and therefore at first floor level the east wall of the Guest Bedroom and the north wall of the Nursery would have been at the approximate location of external walls. The current walls are frame partitions dating to the rebuilding of the corner or later. It is also known that the staircase is secondary (shown by blocked openings in its southern wall) and evidence shows that before the staircase was constructed the nursery originally extended south to the corner of the projection. This is shown partially by the window in the east wall of the nursery which would have been central to the large original room but whose sloped jamb is now abutted by the north partition of the staircase. It is also suggested however by a small hatch within the north partition of the staircase, which allows visual access into the space above the Nursery ceiling. This shows that the existing ceiling is significantly below the high primary ceiling which would have been c.3.75 m above the first floor and encircled by an ornate plaster cornice. The high ceiling would have been appropriate to the large original room but not to the existing small Nursery. Several sections of wallpaper with a floral design survive within the ceiling space. The construction of the staircase and truncation of the Nursery is known to predate the early 20th-century work and was probably undertaken by Lady Wenman in the 19th century.
- 7.5.7.3 To the south of the staircase is a lift shaft and enclosure added in the 1980s which replaced a previous, deeper structure which in 1919 housed a further bathroom. The southernmost projection to the east houses an ensuite bathroom for the Master Bedroom and a section of the southern staircase. In 1919 the southern half was a



bathroom as it is today (although the existing suite dates to the 1980s) while the southern half housed toilet facilities.

7.5.7.4 The wide opening to the main staircase is flanked by two pairs of Doric plaster columns which are known to have been inserted in the early 20th-century work.

7.5.7.5 The 1925 sale particulars appear to confirm that at that date the layout of the floor was unchanged from that of 1919. They describe the floor as comprising nine bed and dressing rooms, opening on to a corridor, with polished oak floor.

7.5.8 Second Floor

7.5.8.1 The second floor is an attic, lit by roof dormers and gable windows, which would historically have housed the servants quarters. It is accessed via the two side staircases, neither of which is primary (or at least not in their primary location). That towards the south end of the range was extended up to the second floor in the early 20th century (and further work was undertaken on it in the 1980s) while that towards the north is historic but is shown to be secondary (or relocated) by phasing evidence (detailed elsewhere).

7.5.8.2 The second floor was substantially renovated in the recent (1980s) work with new doors, skirting boards, bathroom suites and floor boards throughout together with new ceilings and all walls either replastered or covered with plasterboard. However, although few historic features remain visible it appears that the arrangement of rooms was not substantially altered at this stage and that the basic historic structure remains largely in-situ. A plan of the second floor (called the third floor in that survey) dated 1919 confirm that the existing arrangement is broadly similar to the early 20th-century arrangement (the minor differences are detailed below)

7.5.8.3 Whether this is the original layout, however, is open to doubt. From discussions with Aiden Mortimer of Symm & Co (who undertook the work in the 1980s) it appears that Symm & Co's interpretation of the structure was that the second floor was a secondary feature, probably added in the mid 19th century (possibly 1830s) as a large-scale loft conversion. The work in the 1980s (which included inserting much steel into the roof) would have allowed Symm & Co a much clearer assessment of the structure than has been possible in the current survey and thus it is likely that their assessment is correct. However it has not been possible to confirm this, due to the 1980s work currently obscuring much of the historic structure, and the possibility remains that the attic may have been primary.

7.5.8.4 The general arrangement of the second floor is of two relatively large bedrooms to the north and south ends (Bedrooms 7 and 10), with a corridor between the two (adjacent to the east wall) and a series of smaller rooms off the corridor to the west. To the east of the corridor are the two staircases, a bedroom (No 12) in the projection above the grand staircase and a further bedroom (No 11) at the north-east corner in a small secondary extension to the house. The six rooms between the large end bedrooms (Nos 7 and 10) are divided by the four principal masonry walls rising through the building and by three historic (primary or relating to 1830s? conversion) structural timber cross frames. The masonry walls and timber frames are alternated so that each frame provide intermediate support for the roof between the principal masonry walls.

7.5.8.5 The thick masonry cross walls are clearly primary and the aligned arched openings within them show that the corridor is also primary (at least primary to the second floor loft). Although the structure of the three non-masonry cross walls (dividing the four bathrooms and Bedrooms 8 and 9) are hidden behind 1980s plasterboard evidence strongly suggests that they almost certainly incorporate elements of the



historic structural cross frame, if not entire trussed partitions. This is suggested by the visible outline within the central partition of three historic (primary?) iron straps which secure structural posts to the principal joist/tie-beam beneath. These straps have been exposed on the posts flanking the corridor. The outline of the straps are only visible on the central partition (between the bedrooms) because the two partitions between the four bathrooms incorporate voids for water pipes between the frame and the plasterboard and therefore the straps are entirely hidden. However it is highly likely that as the frames are structural they remain in-situ.

- 7.5.8.6 Although it appears that the corridor remains in its primary location the partition to the west of it is covered with plasterboard and it has not been possible to determine whether any of the historic frame remains in-situ within the partition. The partition would not be structural and it is possible that the historic stud-work has been entirely removed and replaced by modern studs. At the east end of each of the four bathrooms a modern 'buffer' has been created between the bathroom and the corridor. Each one has been divided into three compartments: two cupboards accessed from the corridor and a shower for the bathroom. The 1919 plan confirms that this arrangement post-dates the early 20th century and is presumably entirely modern. The doors and surrounding architraves for the cupboards are shown to be modern as their heads are above the height of the primary ceiling (detailed below).
- 7.5.8.7 The 1919 plan confirms that the two bathrooms towards the southern end of the building were bedrooms and that the southern one of the pair of bathrooms towards the north was also a bedroom. The northern one of the northern pair was a linen room and airing cupboard. The northern bedroom (Bedroom 10) was in 1919 divided into two bedrooms by a partition.
- 7.5.8.8 Evidence at second floor level appears to confirm external evidence in the east elevation of the West Range (detailed elsewhere) that the north-east corner of the building (Bedroom 11) was a secondary extension to the house. A small hatch within the bathroom immediately to the south of Bedroom 11 allows some limited visual access into the roof space behind the low ashlar to the side of the wall. Within this space there strongly appears to be two distinct phases of roof structure: a hipped roof above the bathroom and staircase; a northern projection to this hipped structure enclosing Bedroom 11. This evidence appears to be confirmed by a cut-off purlin within principal rafter visible on the east side of the short corridor to Bedroom 11. The principal rafter is now a diagonal member in a vertical wall but it would originally have formed part of the northern slope of the hipped projection and, before it was truncated the purlin would have blocked the existing corridor to the bathroom. The extension is historic (almost certainly of pre-20th century date) and creates an valley and small gap between Bedrooms 10 and 11.
- 7.5.8.9 The existing ceiling was inserted in the recent works at a level above the primary ceiling. This has exposed the original ceiling's structural support and provided an indication of the roof truss type. When the 1980s work was undertaken (and the roof was fully exposed) Symm & Co's interpretation was that the original roof consisted of scissor trusses which were then sawn through in the possible mid 19th-century conversion.
- 7.5.8.10 Although some of the roof carpentry is obscured several clues are visible. The trusses appear to consist of principal rafters resting on wall plates and tie-beam at second floor level, a collar which supports the second floor ceiling, raking struts between collar and principal rafters, a king post above the collar, low ashlar posts within horizontal spurs to eaves and short inner principals between collar and ashlar and posts. There are several pieces of structural ironwork (either primary or dating to mid-19th-century conversion) within each truss similar to the post straps previously



referred to. These include straps fixing the raking struts to the collar, two bolts securing the king post to the collar and two bolts securing the inner principals to the principal rafters.

- 7.5.8.11 Three bridging joists (N-S) span between the collars and empty mortices in the faces of each bridging joist confirm that common ceiling joists (E-W) would have supported a lower ceiling which would have obscured the entire structure. There is some inconsistency in the type of common ceiling joist mortice as although most of them are conventional individual mortices those towards the south end tend to have horizontal grooves (or sliding mortices) at one end with individual mortices at the other. The structural wood all appears to be oak.
- 7.5.8.12 A small section of the modern floorboards have been removed from within Bedroom 12 to expose the primary floor structure beneath. It consists of a deep E-W principal joist, N-S common joists and separate E-W ceiling joists (perhaps implying that the attic was used before the 19th century.
- 7.5.8.13 Although the existing form of the second floor may not be primary its general layout and existing structure is sufficiently historic to be of significance, though further assessment of the roof type should be undertaken if substantial works are planned for the roof.

7.6 EXTERNAL FRONT STAIRCASE

7.6.1 Introduction

- 7.6.1.1 To the west of the house is a grand external staircase which forms the main entrance to the upper ground floor (*piano nobile*).

7.6.2 Historical evidence

- 7.6.2.1 The stair is shown in a number of historic illustrations and photographs. The earliest such illustration is from 1823 and is principally a view of the chapel but it also shows the Palladian house and the steps in the background. As the steps are towards the rear of the view small details of the steps cannot be discerned but the illustration does confirm that, as would be expected, at this date the steps had been constructed and were of the same basic form as those surviving today. The doorway beneath the staircase to the lower ground floor of the house is visible and although the view is not conclusive there appear to be no vases or other ornamentation on the pedestals.
- 7.6.2.2 A photograph of the staircase survives in a *Country Life* article from July 17 1909. This also clearly shows the steps in much the same form as that surviving today and although the two lowest pedestals on the north side are not shown none of the other pedestals have ornamentation on them (including the two which do currently have vases). Although the steps are in the foreground of the photograph most of each of the flanking walls beneath the stairs are covered with vegetation and are thus obscured. A further *Country Life* article (Nov 28 1957) has a photograph which shows two vases on the pedestals at the front of the upper landing. These are almost certainly the same two vases as those surviving on the same pedestals today but the photograph also shows what appears to be urns on each of the four ground pedestals at the base of the staircase.
- 7.6.2.3 The staircase has been discussed with Adrian Mortimer of Symms & Co who have been the main building contractors at Thame Park since the early 20th century. Mr Mortimer confirmed that Symms & Co have not undertaken any work on the staircase.



7.6.3 Description

- 7.6.3.1 The staircase forms the main entrance to the house carrying visitors up to the reception rooms of the piano nobile. The staircase is symmetrical in plan with two L-shaped staircases rising to a landing adjacent to the entrance to the building. Beneath this landing and raised entrance there is an doorway to the lower level hall with a semi-circular fanlight and rusticated voisoirs. The two upper flights have 10 risers while the two lower flights each have 11 risers. There are sandstone pedestals at each junction making sixteen in total, with only the two at the front of the upper landing with any ornamentation. Each of these have a stone vase with four handles. Each flight of stairs is flanked to each side with a sandstone balustrade and moulded sandstone handrail. The vast majority of the balusters remain in-situ (although as further detailed below their condition is poor) but some have been lost entirely and some (c.3) replaced by polystyrene replicas. This is believed to relate to the use of the site as a set for a film. Some balusters also have a subtly different design to the main balusters and must therefore almost certainly be replacements.
- 7.6.3.2 The entire staircase is constructed on a single course of large sandstone blocks (c.60 cm high) with shallower courses above (c.35 cm high). The stonework has rusticated quoins beneath each raised pedestal and there is a similar smooth rustication surrounding the entrance to the lower hall beneath the landing. The rest of the staircases flanking walls are thinly jointed.

7.6.4 Condition

- 7.6.4.1 The staircase is currently in a poor condition and in need of repair. The poor condition is both superficial and fundamental. Much of the balustrading on the north side is in a particularly perilous state and some temporary scaffolding has been erected here (and elsewhere on the stairs) to give support.
- 7.6.4.2 As referred to above a small proportion of the balusters have been totally lost (or replaced by polystyrene) but most of the surviving balusters are damaged to some extent. Many are either severely cracked so that they will be come apart when moved or they have already lost a section of stone. Some small sections of the handrail (at the point where it adjoins the house) are no longer in-situ although those removed sections do survive on the ground close to the staircase. Much of the lower stonework to the walls flanking the stairs has either lost its facing or has more severe fundamental cracks. The corner stone at the south-east corner is particularly poor and has fragmented into a series of vertical slices divided by substantial cracks. This has apparently occurred by the stone (and many others) being placed with the bedding facing up.

7.6.5 Conclusion

- 7.6.5.1 The staircase is of very high significance forming a fundamental part of a Grade I listed building. It is clearly a primary feature of the Palladian extension to Thame Park house and was thus constructed in c.1745. It has undergone some repairs and limited rebuilding but the stonework itself largely appears to be original. The handrail and balustrade have clearly been dismantled and rebuilt in the past and some of the balusters appear to have been replaced. Some of the stones in the flanking walls also appear to have been replaced or possibly just refaced.



8 OTHER BUILDINGS IN THAME PARK

8.1 *ST. MARY'S CHAPEL*

8.1.1 Introduction

8.1.1.1 St Mary's Chapel is c.150 m to the north-west of the mansion and partly secluded within light woodland. The chapel has previously been believed to be a heavily restored medieval building although evidence suggests that much of the existing structure, (possibly even all of it) is post-medieval.

8.1.2 Historical background

8.1.2.1 It is known that a 14th-century chapel of the Blessed Virgin stood at the gates of the abbey but the exact location of this chapel, or whether it could be the same as the existing structure, is not known. The existing building was used as a private chapel in the 17th and 18th centuries (*VCH Oxon VII*), and a substantial restoration is known to have been undertaken in 1836 by Baroness Wenman. It is reported that the floor tiles used in the restoration were reused from the site of the choir of the old monastic church (*Building News* March 30 1888), and the same report also states that the chapel had been 'much dilapidated' having long been disused for interments and that although the work was begun by an architect called Mr Harris it had to be finished by a Mr Abraham. The article is most unfavourable in its assessment of the work but provides an indication of some of the work undertaken:

The huge pulpit and reading desk on the north side are both very cumbersome and vulgar, while the organ occupies far too large a space. The sanctuary was wretchedly restored, and the stained glass is exceedingly poor

8.1.2.2 Another good source in identifying what work was undertaken in 1836 (and later in the century) is an illustration of 1823 in Skelton's *Antiquities* which can be compared with the existing form of the building (Plate 44). The footprint of the existing building is the same as that of 1823 but a number of alterations have been made. The existing bellcote is taller than that shown in 1823 and ornamental battlements have been added to the ridge of the west gable. An elaborate surround has been added to the door and a triangular-shaped ornament has been removed from towards the apex of the gable. Further 19th-century works which the illustration cannot confirm probably include the installation of a system of under-floor heating, the replacement of the roof, the rebuilding of a number of brick buttresses, some re-organisation of the internal plan and the insertion of pews, pulpit, panelling and other internal joinery. It is known that the chapel also underwent a restoration in 1960/61 but it not known what work was undertaken (Sale Particulars, 2000)

8.1.3 Description

8.1.3.1 The *North wall* has an ashlar plinth with repointed uncoursed rubble limestone above. There are three rendered brick buttresses and a small stone gabled porch sits on the central buttress. There is a stone cornice above the limestone wall and above this there are five courses of the same red brick as that to the buttresses, rendered to east side and with render removed to the west side. A Medieval window, which has been inserted into a previous wider opening, has a pointed arch with the bases of arched ribs resting on gargoyles (one lost). The window has diamond panes with a painted crest design and stained glass with a floral design in the three upper panes.

8.1.3.2 The *South wall* is largely constructed of large stones but there are several areas of rebuild in smaller stones. It is generally of similar construction to the north wall and has a medieval doorway with columns and hood mould to west. To the east is a 19th-



century 2-light window. There are three buttress; that to the east is of recent stone, that to the west is of old ashlar (post-medieval) and that to the centre is of brick.

- 8.1.3.3 The *West wall* is covered with stucco, probably added in 1836 restoration. There are fluted columns and a two-centred arch around the door with an elaborate gable immediately above which partly overlaps the sill of a large tri-partite window. Rendered buttresses are to either side and battlements were added in 1836 to the ridge of the gable. The bellcote was also added in 1836.
- 8.1.3.4 The Chancel is of coursed limestone repointed, with two brick buttresses at the corners. The ivy-covered stone work appears to be of no great age although this may be largely due to repointing. A plaque within the chancel confirms that it was constructed as an extension to the chapel in 1836.
- 8.1.3.5 The arrangement of the *interior* appears largely to belong to the 19th-century restoration. The roof trusses, joinery and some of the memorials are all of 19th-century date and the floor was reformed in the 19th-century, partially to allow installation of underfloor heating. The floor incorporates reused medieval tiles (in the chancel) and several 17th-century memorial slabs. At the rear (west) of the chapel, behind a low simple screen, there is a panelled dado. The walls within this area show the lines of removed pews. The panelling also obscures the lower part of two blocked doorways in the north and south walls. There is a pulpit against the north wall, two enclosed pews against north and south walls and an enclosed individual seat against the south wall. The three roof trusses are of 19th-century date with ornamental carved roof structure beneath the ceiling (tie-beam, arched struts and pendants), while the structural roof is above the ceiling (scissor braces, collar, vertical tie-rod, raking struts). The chancel is vaulted with ribs springing from corbels.
- 8.1.3.6 The ducts for the underfloor heating are fed from a small boiler located in a brick vaulted cellar beneath the north wall of the chapel and accessed via a set of steps. To the east of this is a vaulted crypt beneath the chancel reached by a short set of steps from the south. The walls within this crypt are all plastered and there is an up-standing stone coffin within the crypt. The floor is covered with stone slabs, there is a window to the north with bars and the door to the south has a 4-centred arch.

8.1.4 Significance and conclusion

- 8.1.4.1 Although the chapel has previously been attributed a 14th-century date it now appears doubtful that much (or potentially any) of the existing building is medieval. At the very least it has been heavily restored and although there are a number of medieval architectural features within it at least one of these (the window in the north wall) has clearly been reused and inserted. However the chapel is still a Grade II listed building and is of high significance both for its intrinsic interest and in relation to Thame Park generally. It is currently in a very poor condition and is in need of urgent works to prevent further deterioration.

8.2 STABLES

8.2.1 Introduction

- 8.2.1.1 A short distance to the north-east of the house is a three-sided stable court which is believed to have been added in the mid-to-late 18th century. Lee's account in the *Building News* reported a local tradition that part of one of the abbey cloisters was converted into a stable but no evidence has been identified in the current study to support that, and while it may be true is unlikely to refer to this building. From the location and orientation of the stable court however it is possible that they were



constructed over previous abbey buildings, possibly incorporating their foundations. The stables are Grade II listed.

8.2.2 Description

- 8.2.2.1 The stable court has three ranges of two storeys with a pitched roof (hipped to the west). Each range is built of roughly coursed stone with ashlar dressings. There is blind arcading at ground floor beneath square-headed windows at first floor and the eaves are decorated by dentil stone work. It is thus a formal classical design suitable for a country house stable block.
- 8.2.2.2 The East Range is divided at ground level by a tall central passage which has been blocked by a secondary softwood staircase. Direct access to the upper floor above the passage was via a step ladder against the inner face of the west wall. The rooms each side of the central passage are both stables which retain stabling of probably 19th-century date. The ironwork of the stable boxes were made by *Barnard Bishop & Barnards, Norwich* and on the inner face of each wall flanking the passage there is a chute apparently also of 19th-century date. Each of these were made by Musgrave & Co Ltd Belfast and London but the address *240 Rue de Rivoli, Paris* is also cast onto the box.
- 8.2.2.3 The first floor must in part have been a hayloft, but parts have been converted to domestic accommodation, or used as store rooms (one containing architectural items). In the east range two types of roof truss are visible. To the north of the central passage there are two queen post trusses with large iron bolts (typically later 18th/early 19th century) and to the south of this are five oak trusses with curved inner principals. These (as noted again below in the lean-to and the farmyard) are a constructional feature of local vernacular buildings found within south Oxfordshire and adjacent areas typically between c.1750 and 1850. The curved principals served to brace the collar beams and at the same time provide a support for the side purlins (thus causing less obstruction than a queen-post roof). They are of no great significance except for their very localised occurrence in this area.
- 8.2.2.4 At the west end of the South Range is a boiler room with painted brick surfaces and a quarry-tiled floor. The adjacent room houses two large tanks and is of a similar character to the boiler room. To the east of this is a garage and east of this is a tack room with modern hard-board ceiling which hides the primary plastered ceiling (visible through hatch). The walls are covered with tongue and groove boarding and there is a small wood-burning stove (probably early 20th century). The porte-cochère built in front of the boiler room (carriage house) was added as part of the film set constructed for the filming of *Black Beauty* (F Bowden, pers Comm).

8.2.3 Significance

- 8.2.3.1 The stables are of considerable significance as a major stable block associated with the Grade I house, and sharing some aspects of classical design.

8.3 LEAN-TO BEHIND STABLES

8.3.1 Introduction

- 8.3.1.1 On the east side of the stable block is a lean-to range which housed various utilitarian functions. The stable block (including the lean-to) is listed Grade II. The lean-to, like the stables, contain numerous architectural fragments, potentially of considerable significance, that have been removed from the house. The lean-to was a later addition to the mid-18th century stables (but possibly not much later). As a small outbuilding of lesser importance the structure is not referred to specifically in any of the pre 20th-century historical accounts of Thame Park or shown on any of the views. It is shown



on the first edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (1881). It also appears to be referred to in the 1925 Sales Particulars which states that:

At the rear of the Stabling are the following additional buildings: Garden Shed, Lime House, Potting Shed, Stable Messroom, with sink; Wash-house, with copper and sink for use of the stable flats; Gardener's Messroom, Store Shed, pedestal WC, and Oil Store and Machine Shed.

8.3.2 Description

- 8.3.2.1 The lean-to is c.5 deep (with some variation to the south end) and extends the full length of the east side of the stable block. The roof is a single-pitch lean-to for the full length of the structure other than at the south end where an earlier stone structure has a half-hipped roof. The entire roof is clad in modern concrete roof tiles which are the subject of a listed building enforcement notice for their replacement.
- 8.3.2.2 The structure is in two main sections either side of a central passageway from the stable courtyard. The structure to the north of the passage has weatherboarded walls to the front and south (flanking the passage) while the north wall is of brick. The structure to the south of the passage is largely of brick and stone of several phases. The wall forming the south side of the passage, together with the adjacent northernmost section of the front, is formed of 20th-century brick while the section of the front immediately to the south is an attractive Flemish bond brickwork (probably late C17th/early C19th) with blue headers and red stretchers. As referred to above the southernmost section of the structure is of stone with brick work surrounding the openings.
- 8.3.2.3 Internally the northern section has two areas divided by a simple boarded partition. There are four bays to the north and one to the south and both the rooms were utilitarian storage areas without any plastered surfaces.
- 8.3.2.4 The rafters are 20th-century additions and are supported by two purlins and a series of lean-to 'half trusses'. Each of these consists of a tie-beam, a post immediately against the stable wall, a 'collar' immediately beneath the upper purlin, a principal rafter and a curved inner principal supported by a raking strut. The head of the curved inner principal is tenoned into the underside of the collar and the base has a short sharply-diverging vertical spur, immediately beneath the lower purlin, which is supported by the tie-beam. It is of particular interest that the spur is part of the same piece of timber as the rest of the curved inner principal rather than being a separate member tenoned to it.
- 8.3.2.5 The southern half of the lean-to is divided into four rooms the northernmost of which, as referred to earlier, is formed of 20th-century brick and is not shown on the 1921 OS map. This room has a lath and plaster ceiling and is currently used as a log store. The adjacent room immediately to south appears to have functioned as a small washhouse. There is what appears to be a brick-lined copper (with fire beneath) for washing clothes and an oven with a cast-iron door. At the west side of the room (adjacent to the stable wall) is an area boxed off with tongue and groove boarding. The walls are white-washed and the sloped ceiling is lath and plastered. The adjacent room has a horizontal lath and plaster ceiling, white-washed walls and a brick fireplace (not for blacksmiths). The southernmost room also has whitewashed walls but no ceiling and has most recently been used as a storage area.
- 8.3.2.6 The roof members in the southern half of the lean-to (other than the southernmost room) are very similar to those in the northern half (described above) and also have curved inner principals. However the low spur to the curved principal is slightly lower and less vertical in each truss than those in the northern trusses. Each truss is pegged.



8.3.3 Significance

- 8.3.3.1 The lean-to is of a lesser significance than the stables, although it does form part of the Grade II building and is of some interest in its own right. The features of most interest are the curved inner principals in each of the roof trusses, as described above, and the particular form they take with the vertical upright section. These are different from the main stable block roof and may be slightly later, or even early 19th century. The half-hipped stone structure at the south end appears to be earlier however and may date from the original construction of the stable block.

8.4 WOODMAN'S COTTAGE

8.4.1 Description

- 8.4.1.1 Woodman's cottage is located a short distance to the north of Thame Park House and the chapel and is immediately adjacent to the main track from the North Lodge to the stables. It is a brick-built, 2-storey, single-phase cottage built in 1893 with a tile-covered gabled roof. The brickwork is polychromatic with red brick to quoins, window jambs and first floor string course contrasting with a red/blue colour to the main body of brickwork (the contrast is obscured by algae on the surface).
- 8.4.1.2 The front is symmetrical with a central porch and three first-floor windows. The south elevation has the date 1893 in polychromatic brickwork, and a date stone with 'WA WM 1893' on it. The north side also has the initials WA WM in the brickwork.
- 8.4.1.3 The interior is divided into four rooms at each floor, two either side of a central staircase and hall. Each room is relatively plain but a large quantity of primary detailing remains in-situ, for example several original fireplaces, and quarry tiles to the hall floor.
- 8.4.1.4 To the SE of the cottage is a small set of farm buildings set within a brick-walled yard. Some timber sheds of late 19th or 20th century date and of limited interest.

8.4.2 Age and significance

- 8.4.2.1 The 1893 cottage is an attractive structure at a prominent location adjacent on one of the approaches to the house and is therefore considered to be of moderate significance despite its relatively late date. It is unlisted (although within the curtilage of a Grade I listed building), and is not thought worthy of listing.

8.5 GROVE COTTAGE

- 8.5.1 Grove cottage is located to the north-east of the house and to the east of Woodman's Cottage. Historically it was a pair of gardener's cottages (1925 sales particulars). The earliest section (front right-hand 2/3) is probably of early 19th-century date and it was then extended in two main phases: first at the east end and then doubled by addition of gabled range at rear in later 19th century. The front is of regency appearance with overhanging eaves, and was extended in similar style. The rear was built as a set of gothic gables, with pointed windows, presumably so that if seen from the grounds it would appear as a cottage orné. Many of the internal features survive, including a button-headed newel post and several fireplaces. Other attractive features include the dentil brickwork on the two gable ridges facing south. This is of moderate significance as an attractive period estate cottage, and is an unlisted building within the curtilage of a Grade I listed building (but probably not itself of listable quality).



8.6 LAUNDRY

8.6.1 The Laundry is located to the north of Grove Cottage. It is single storey, red brick building with a slate-covered gabled roof. It has a date stone of 1901, chimneys to each gable and a large vertical vent projecting above the roof ridge suggesting its former function. Internally there are some surviving historic features including a boiler and a boarded drying room. The 1925 sales particulars describes the building as ‘consisting of washing room, fitted with two coppers; ironing and drying rooms; company’s water and force pump’. It is an interesting and not unattractive building of minor significance as evidence of the operational side of the estate.

8.7 BOAT HOUSE

8.7.1 The small boat house at the south end of the lake may be the same as is shown on the first-edition OS map of 1881. It consists of a low-pitched timber roof on low side walls of brick, and is now somewhat dilapidated. It is of moderate to low significance.

8.8 FARMYARD

8.8.1 Introduction

8.8.1.1 There is a small group of farm buildings c.1 km to the north of Thame Park House and immediately to the south of the stream which may feed the large pond adjacent to the house. It is reached via a narrow track which branches off from the main approach to the stables and the rear of the house from the North Lodge. The complex consists of 5 buildings grouped around a yard and a further detached structure to the south. It has clearly developed in several phases and several of the buildings are of some historic interest including one which appears to have a reused roof from a large, old barn. None of the buildings is listed (or especially worthy of listing) although all are within the curtilage of the Grade I listed house.

8.8.2 Farm Building 1

8.8.2.1 *Description:* This is an open-sided cart or beast shed on the north-east side of the yard. It is a weather-boarded, open-fronted to the east, and with a concrete-tile covered gabled roof. The three walls are each formed of vertical studwork with diagonal bracing and are each set on a low brick plinth (other than a low rubble stone plinth to the each half of the north wall).

8.8.2.2 The roof is of some interest and it appears to have been possibly partially reused from a previous barn. It consists of two trusses with curved inner principals similar to those found elsewhere at Thame Park (stables and stable lean-to, and Building 2) but the quality of the carpentry suggests an older date (possibly 17th century). The curved inner principals are of particular interest as they are a type of vernacular construction particularly found in the area south and east of Oxford. They are normally found in buildings constructed between c.1750 and 1850.

8.8.2.3 Evidence also suggests that the two end trusses were originally similar internal trusses from a previous, longer (and possibly taller) building. Each full truss consists of tie-beam, collar, curved inner principals (between tie and collar), principal rafters, jowled posts and arched brace between post and tie. Empty mortices in the sides of the principal rafters show that there would originally have been one tier of wind braces but these would not have fitted with the existing two rows of purlins. This, together with the fact that there are no mortices in the purlins, suggests that the purlins date to the existing structure rather than having been reused from the previous building. Also dating to the existing building are pairs of relatively flimsy raking struts and straight braces at each corner between corner post and lower purlin.



8.8.2.4 Empty mortices in the two end trusses (to the underside of collar and tie-beam) would have secured curved inner principals in these two frames strongly suggesting that the original barn was longer at both ends (ie at least 5 bays wide) although the existing building is immediately to the south of the stream and hence could not originally have extended any further to the north. The reused members are all constructed on a relatively large scale: the tenon of the arched brace is secured to the tie beam with four pegs and the head of the brace is secured to the collar with three pegs. The members are inscribed with chiselled carpenters marks probably of late 18th or 19th century date which presumably relate to the removal and reuse of the structure. It is clearly an impressive piece of carpentry and it appears to be too low for a structure of this type, with the tie-beam barely above head-height.

8.8.2.5 *Age and significance:* It is likely that the previous building from which some roof elements were reused was of 17th or early 18th-century date and that the existing structure was constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century. The 1st edition OS map confirms that the building pre-dates 1881. The building is of moderate significance as one of the older of the historic group of farm buildings.

8.8.3 Farm Building 2

8.8.3.1 *Description:* A stable on the south-east corner of the yard and although it was originally a detached structure it now forms part of an L-shaped building with Buildings 3 and 4. It is two storeys tall, constructed of rubble stone with brick dressings and originally had a clay tile-covered half-hipped roof. The N end is still half hipped but the S end has been extended by a late 19th-century structure (Building 3) constructed at the corner between the earlier Buildings 2 and 4. The original S half-hipped end (with window) remains in-situ enclosed by the later roof.

8.8.3.2 The interior is now divided into two areas at ground floor: a two-bay stable to the north with white-washed stone walls and a single-bay room with plastered walls to the south. The wall dividing the two areas is a single-skin brick wall of 20th-century date and it is apparent that originally the ground floor was a three bay stable. Simple feeding boxes and the individual stable pens remain in-situ. The first floor joists remain in-situ together with most of the floor boards but the structure is too fragile to allow a full inspection. The two trusses consist of tie-beams, collar, and curved inner principals directly beneath principal rafters which have a near-vertical spur towards their base which rests on the tie-beam. There are two tiers of purlins and straight braces between each corner and the underside of the lower purlin. (See above for curved inner principals). Among the more interesting features of the building are the dairy fittings placed in the southern room, consisting of several small decorative table legs which now support simple worktops but have clearly been reused from a relatively high status structure. A photograph contained in one of the 1909 *Country Life* articles shows that the legs were almost certainly relocated from the *Wedgewood Dairy* which was situated at the eastern end of the South Wing of the house. The dairy was shown on the 1919 Berkeley Wills plan of the house and was probably dismantled in the mid 20th century.

8.8.3.3 *Age and significance:* From the rubble stone construction, the curved inner principals and other dating evidence it is likely that Building 2 was constructed in the mid/late 18th century and the 1st edition OS map confirms that it had been constructed before 1881. It is of moderate significance as part of the historic farmyard. Although they are not in their original location the table legs are of higher significance and should be preserved (not necessarily in their current location).



8.8.4 Farm Building 3

- 8.8.4.1 *Description:* Building 3 is located at the SE corner of the farmyard and was constructed in the late 19th-century to fill the corner between the existing Buildings 2 and 4. It has Flemish bond brick to its two external faces and a clay tile-covered roof. Internally it consists of a single ground floor room.
- 8.8.4.2 *Age and significance:* The 1st and 2nd edition OS maps appear to confirm that Building 3 was constructed between 1881 and 1898. It has a limited historical significance.

8.8.5 Farm Building 4

- 8.8.5.1 *Description:* A dairy shed forming the south range of the farmyard, and adjoins Buildings 2 and 3 at its E end. It has English bond brick walls to the south and west and a weather-boarded stud wall to the north (vertical studs and diagonal braces). The north wall abuts the west wall of Building 2 and is therefore shown to post-date it.
- 8.8.5.2 The clay tile-covered roof is hipped at its west end but the eastern hip (which remains in-situ) has been enclosed by the later roof of Building 3. The brick wall at the east end of Building 1 (originally external) also remains in-situ although the northern part of this wall is formed by the corner of Building 2 at the point where the two buildings overlap. The south elevation appears to be of a single phase with three primary timber doors and three primary timber-framed windows (each with sliding vent beneath three lights). The window and door jambs are formed with curved bullnose bricks.
- 8.8.5.3 The roof is supported by five queen-post trusses with purlins (one to each slope) clasped between principal rafter and collar. The timber is all pegged and shows chiselled Roman numeral carpenter's marks. The posts have jowled heads and there are braces between the posts and the underside of the tie-beams. The timber is painted and although the primary rafters appear to largely remain in-situ they are covered with modern battens and tiles.
- 8.8.5.4 The interior is a single space and is illuminated by six roof lights to the N slope. There is a walkway immediately adjacent to the S wall and to the N of this is a concrete feeding trough, with hay stalls above, along the full length of the building.
- 8.8.5.5 *Age and significance:* The evidence of the brickwork and other dating evidence, suggests that Building 4 was probably constructed in the early 19th-century, though the roof could be older. The first edition Ordnance Survey map confirms that it had been constructed by 1881. It is of moderate significance as part of the historic farmyard.

8.8.6 Farm Building 5

- 8.8.6.1 *Description:* Building 5 is an early 20th-century open-sided beast shed located towards the west side of the farmyard and projecting north from Building 4.
- 8.8.6.2 The roof is of nailed softwood and is supported by simple king-post trusses in which the king posts extend down to the ground and simple raking struts support principal rafters. The roof is covered by a form of thatch although this is in very poor condition and is set on a corrugated iron base rather than a thatch base (it is believed that this may be a remnant from the use of the farmyard as a film setting). Among the more impressive features of the building is a set of stone feeding troughs (with wood hay stalls above) along the spine of the building.



8.8.6.3 *Age and significance:* The 2nd and 3rd edition OS maps confirm that Building 5 was constructed between 1898 and 1921. It is of limited historical significance and it makes no special contribution to the group of older buildings.

8.8.7 Farm Building 6

8.8.7.1 *Description:* Along the northern side of the yard there are the remains of a recently-collapsed, single-storey farm building towards the west and some surviving, uncovered brick animal pens to the east.

8.8.7.2 *Age and significance:* the collapsed structure does not appear to be of great age or significance and was probably of late 19th-century date.

8.8.8 Farm Building 7

8.8.8.1 *Description:* A further shed was added to the group of building in the early 20th century, to the south of the yard. The southern half is single storied while there is a hay loft above the northern half. The ground floor is open-fronted to the west and weatherboarded (on vertical studs with diagonal bracing) to the other three sides. The taller northern half of the roof is half-hipped and the southern half is gabled. The five posts to the west front appear to have been reused and have inconsistently arranged stop-chamfers to their corners. There is no access to the hay loft due to the external staircase to the door in the north wall having collapsed. The roof above the southern half is supported by two king post roof trusses each with two purlins to each slope supported on triangular shaped wedges resting on the principal rafters.

8.8.8.2 *Age and significance:* the carpentry and other structural evidence strongly suggests that the building is of late 19th or early 20th-century date and the Ordnance Survey maps confirm that it was constructed between 1898 and 1921. It is therefore of relatively limited significance.

8.9 GATE LODGES

8.9.1 Two Grade II listed entrance lodges survive in a poor state. To the south-west of the house is the South (or London) Lodge and to the north-west is the North (or Thame) Lodge. Of the two lodges the Southern is in the better condition and with the original impressive wrought iron gates with gothic tracery. The gates are flanked by octagonal battlemented piers and to each side of the piers are further flanking walls (again battlemented) and relatively plain lodges. Each lodge is rendered and with a slate-covered double gabled roof. Among the more interesting features of the two southern lodges are decorated stone chimneys.

8.9.2 The North Lodge has relatively plain iron gates flanked by a large pointed arch, battlemented gateway. The lodges to either side have long been in a ruinous state but with the potential to be rebuilt.

8.9.3 Both lodges are believed to have been added between 1820 and 1840 although their different design suggests they were not constructed at the same time. Despite their poor condition they are of moderately high significance as integral features of Thame Park.



9 SUMMARY OF THAME PARK BUILDINGS

9.1.1 Thame Park House is Grade I listed and is therefore by definition of national significance for a number of reasons:

- Firstly the house is known to incorporate substantial surviving elements from the medieval monastic buildings. Much of the North Range (including the roof) is believed to be 14th century in date and the South Range is believed to partly date to the 14th century and partly to the later monastic period. The late medieval buildings for the abbot's house are of interest, and the renaissance decoration of the Abbot's Parlour is of exceptional importance.
- It is also of significance for the potential that further previously unknown monastic-period structures survive either below the floor or hidden within the walls of the largely later building. For example it is known that previous (possibly monastic) buildings were demolished to allow the construction of the 18th-century West Range and that at the south-west corner of the house the Palladian building is set on a foundation of much older (possibly monastic) stone.
- Although the monastic period structures are of the greatest interest the 18th-century house and other buildings are of high significance in their own right. The West Range is a highly impressive Palladian house of interest both for its external architectural design and its elaborate surviving interiors (although many of the interiors are probably of 19th-century date).
- The house is also significant for its contribution to the group value of the park and for increasing the overall understanding of the park complex. The house adds to the significance of the surrounding parkland and to each of the surviving individual park structures and conversely the survival of the parkland and the park structures increases the significance of the house.

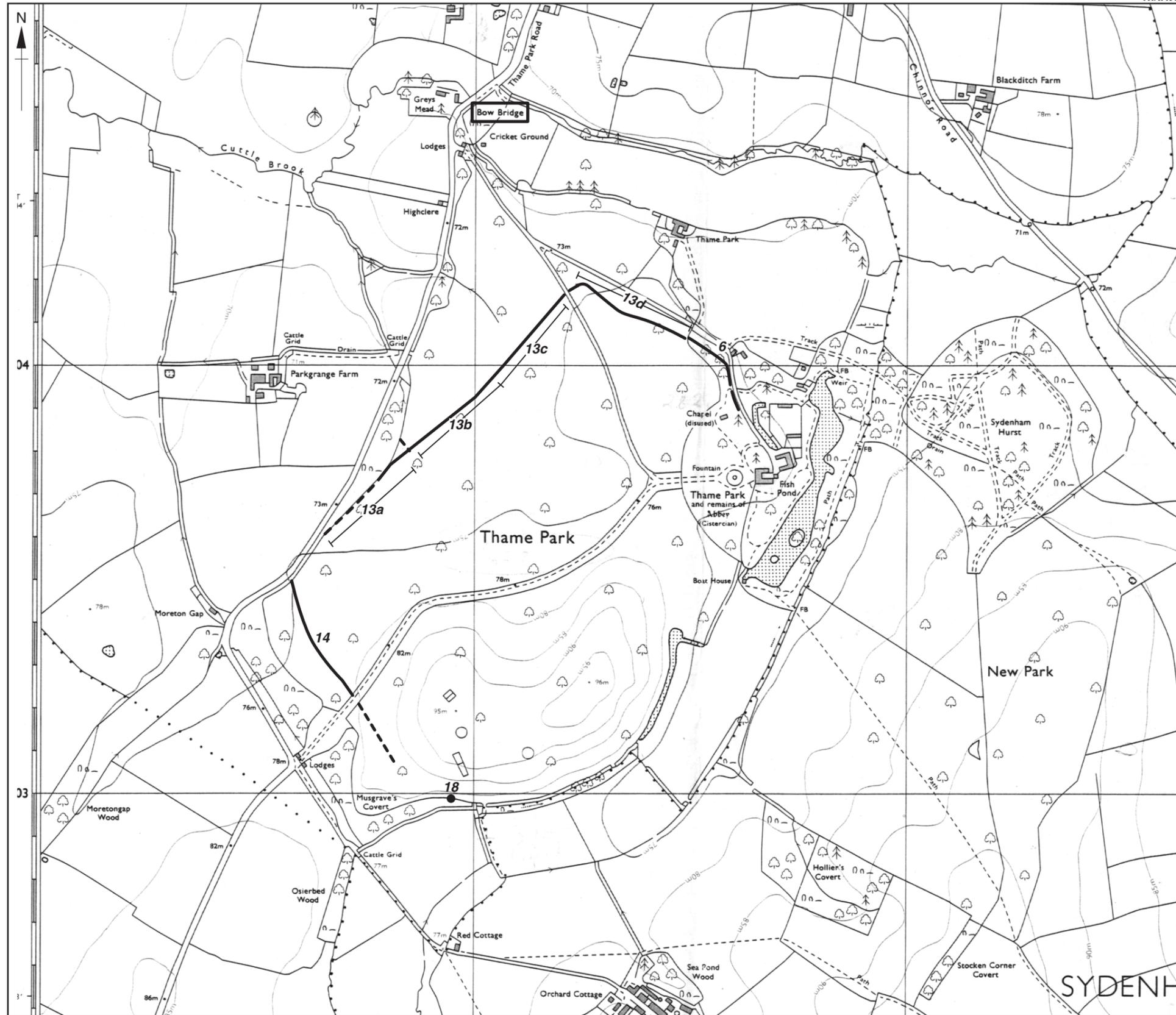
9.1.2 There are a number of other park buildings at Thame each of which contributes to the overall significance of the park. The chapel is the most significant as it is believed to survive from the monastic period, although it was heavily restored in the 19th century. The stable court is also of high significance as a impressive, prominent structure which would have been among Thame Park's most important buildings in its hey day. The other structures (farm buildings, cottages, laundry, lean-to, lodges) are each of relatively lesser intrinsic significance but they are still of interest and they contribute to an understanding of the operation of the estate.

Oxford Archaeological Unit

April 2001



Figure 2.1: Extract from Davis's *Map of Oxfordshire*, 1797.



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Figure 5.1: Thame Park - Pre-Monastic.

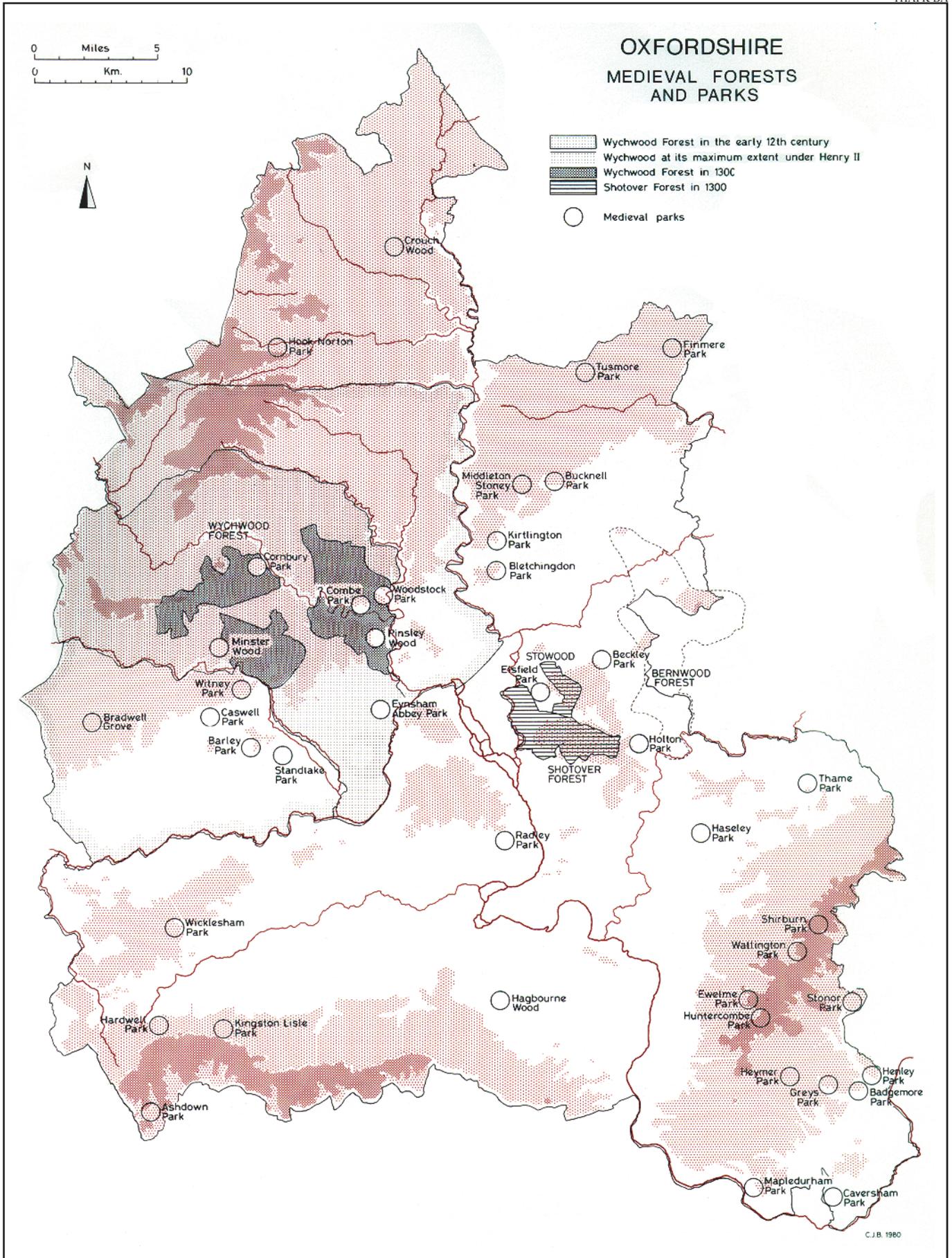


Figure 5.2: Medieval parks and Forests in Oxfordshire, taken from Briggs, Cook and Rowley 1986, 189.

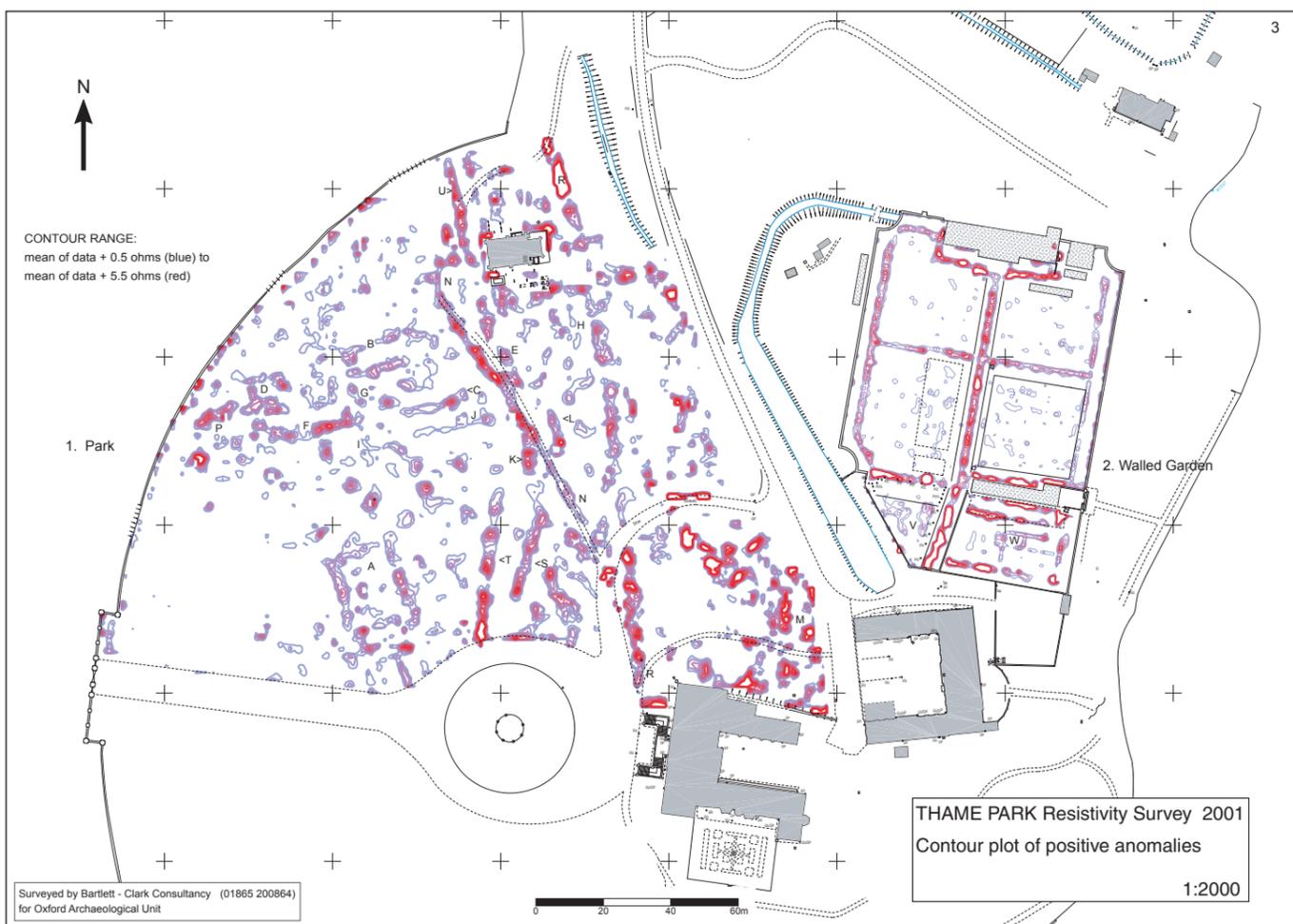
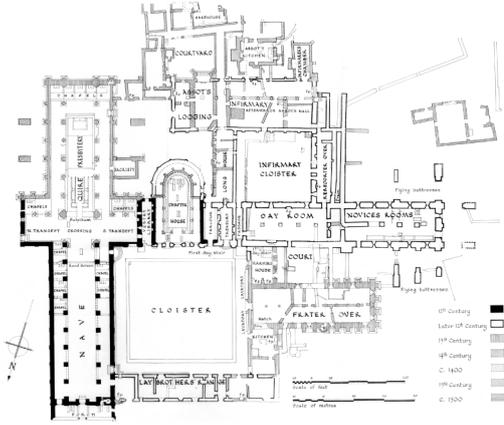
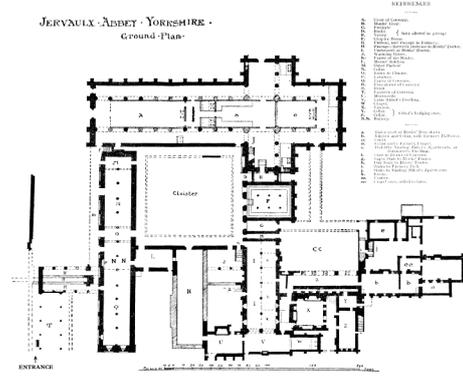


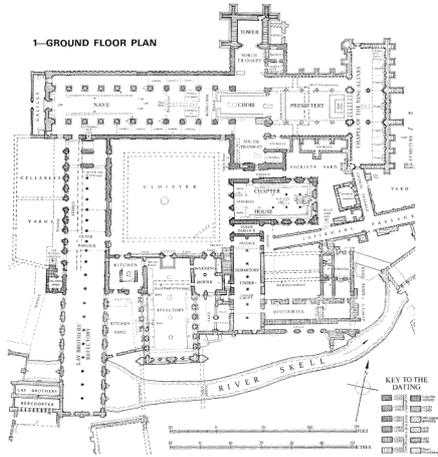
Figure 5.4: Geophysical Survey Plot of North Front Lawn



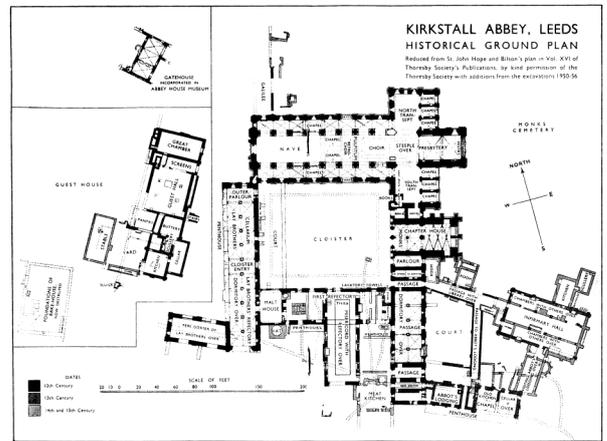
Rievaulx



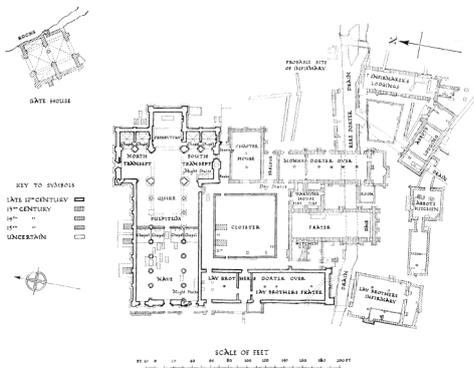
Jervaulx



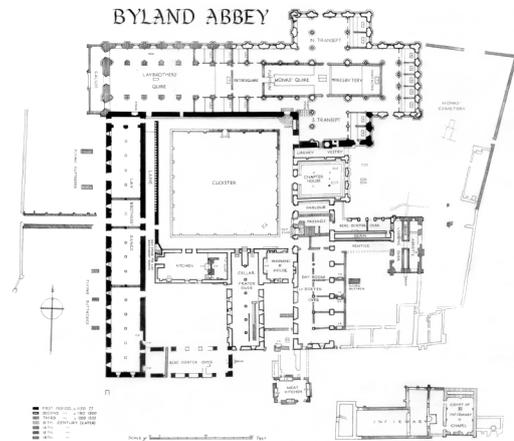
Fountains



Kirkstall



Roche



Byland

Scale 1:2500

Figure 5.5: Cistercian Sites from around England.

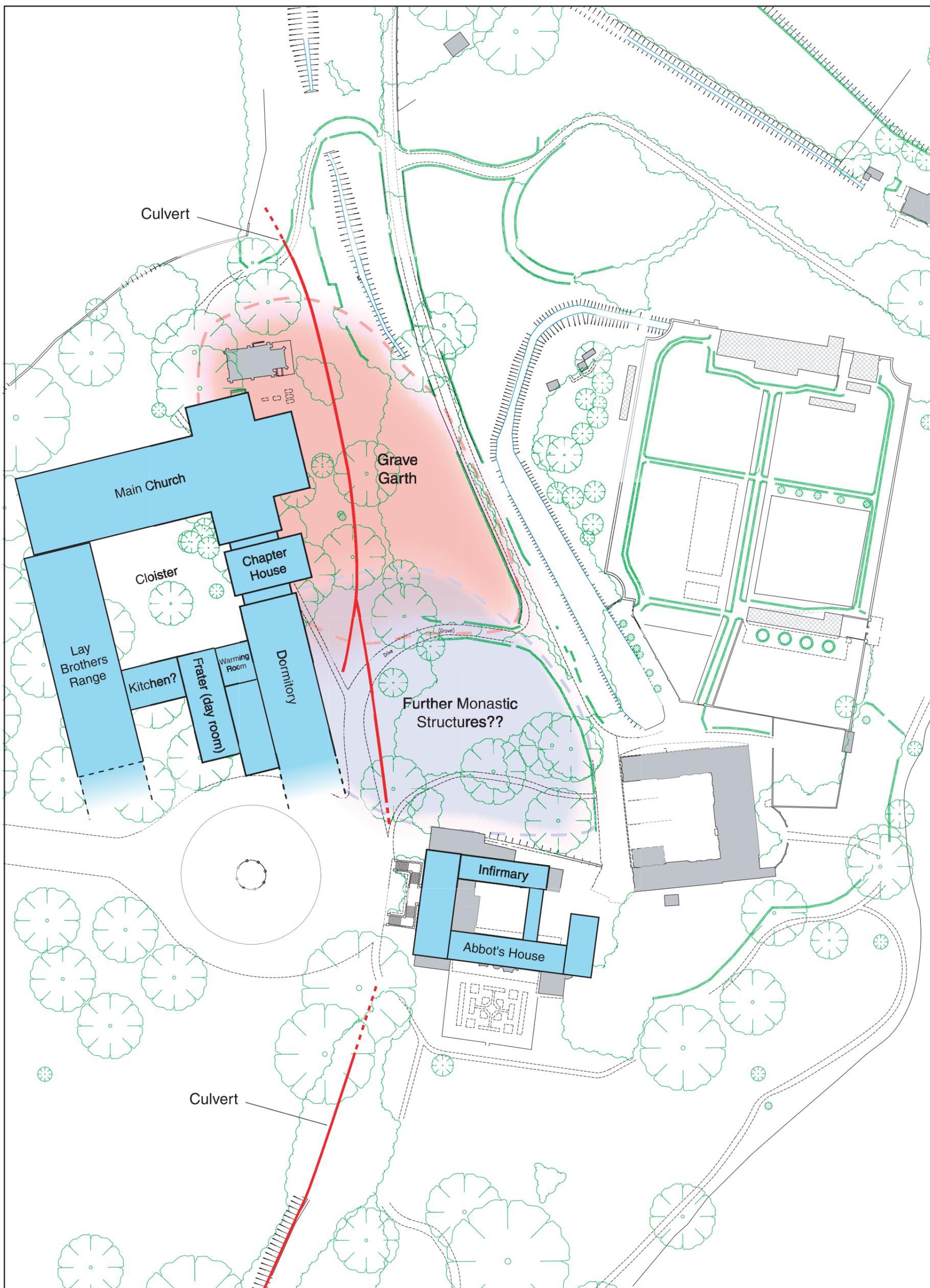
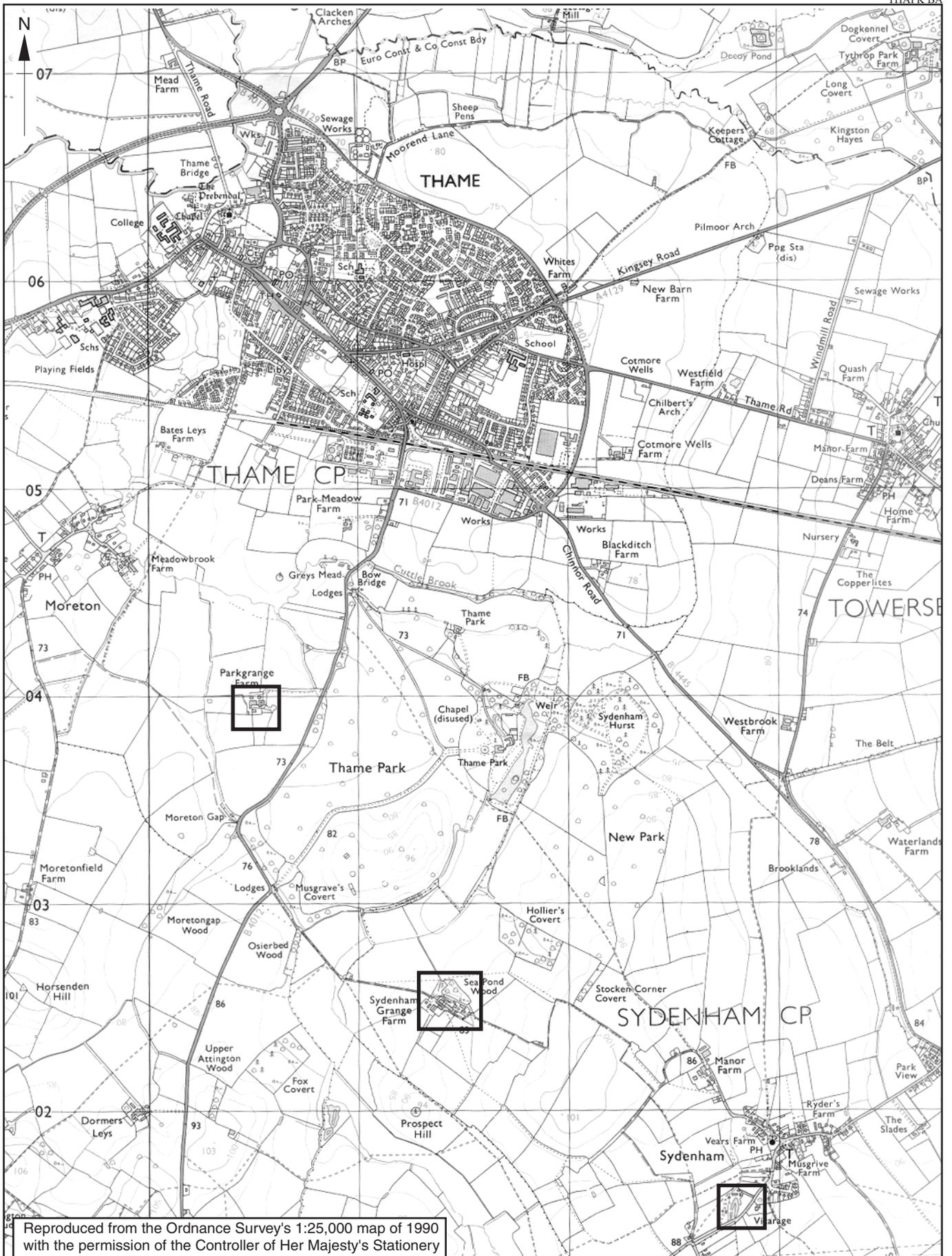
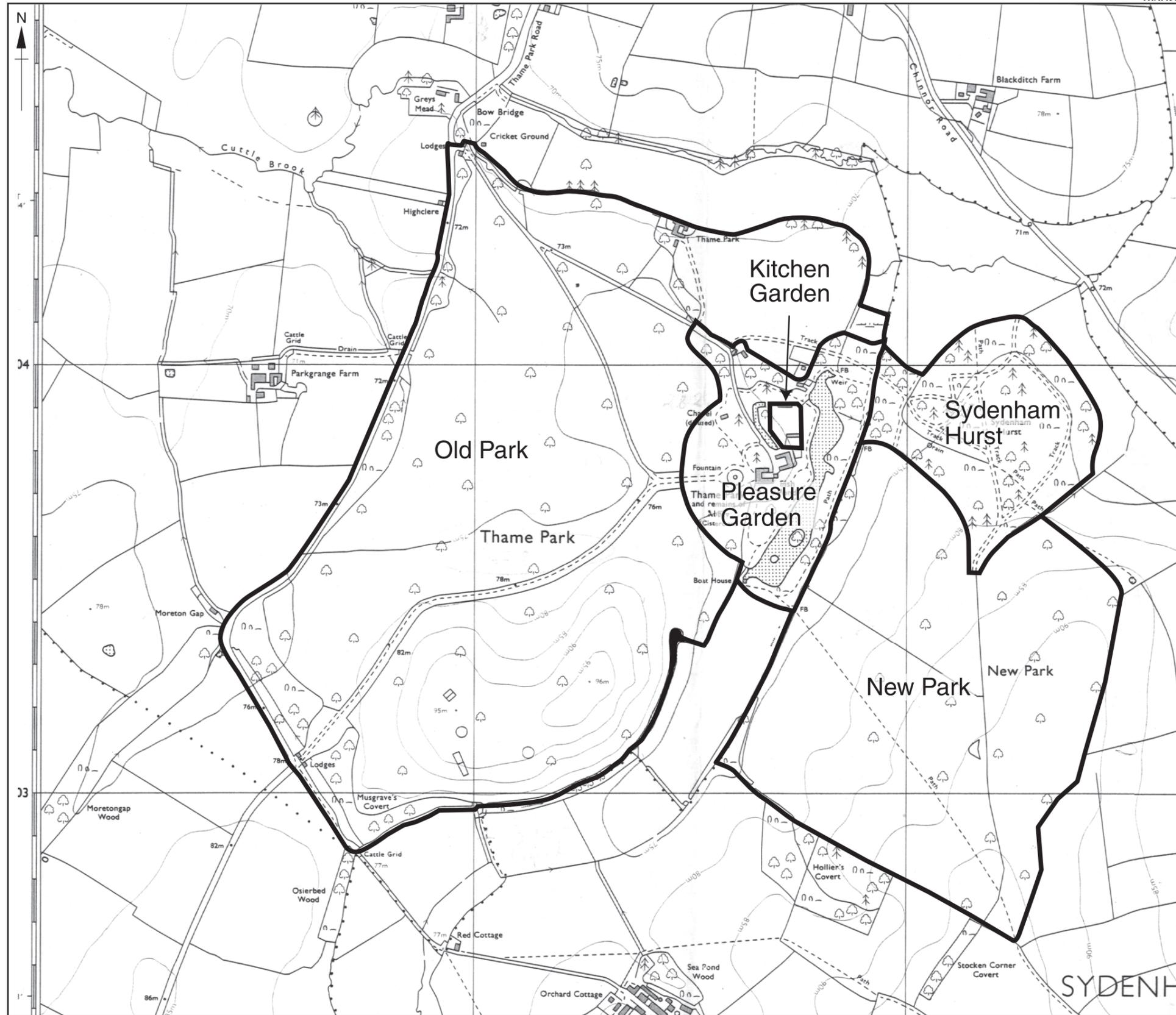


Figure 5.6: An interpretative diagram of the layout of the Thame Park Abbey site



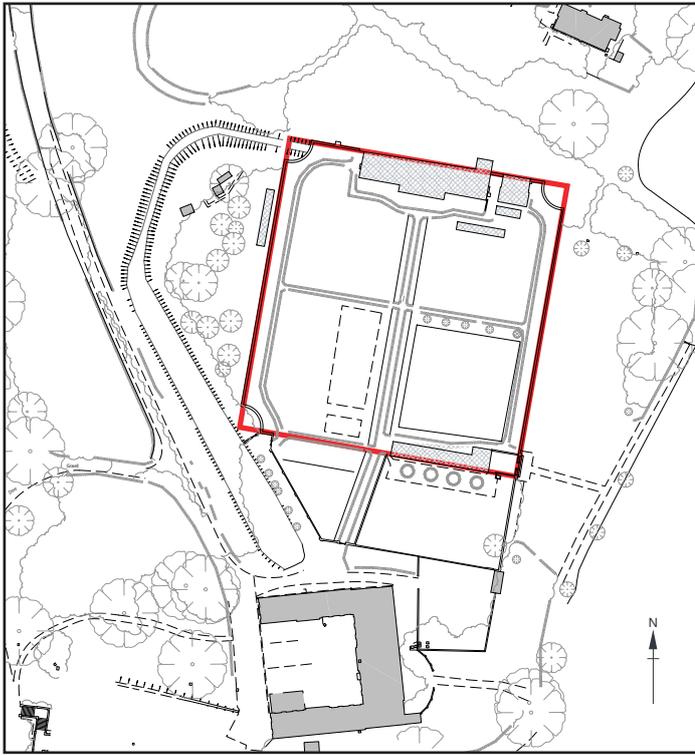
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Figure 5.7: Known Granges.

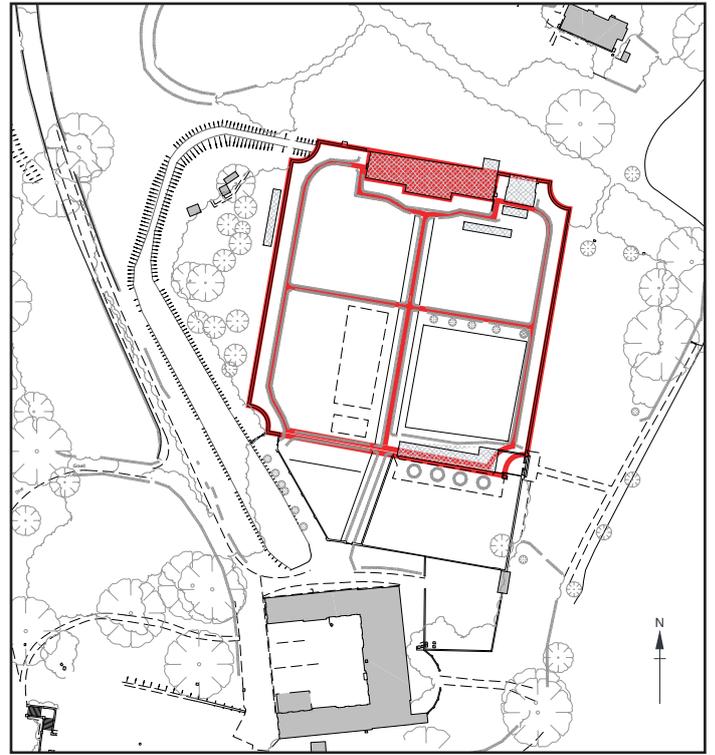


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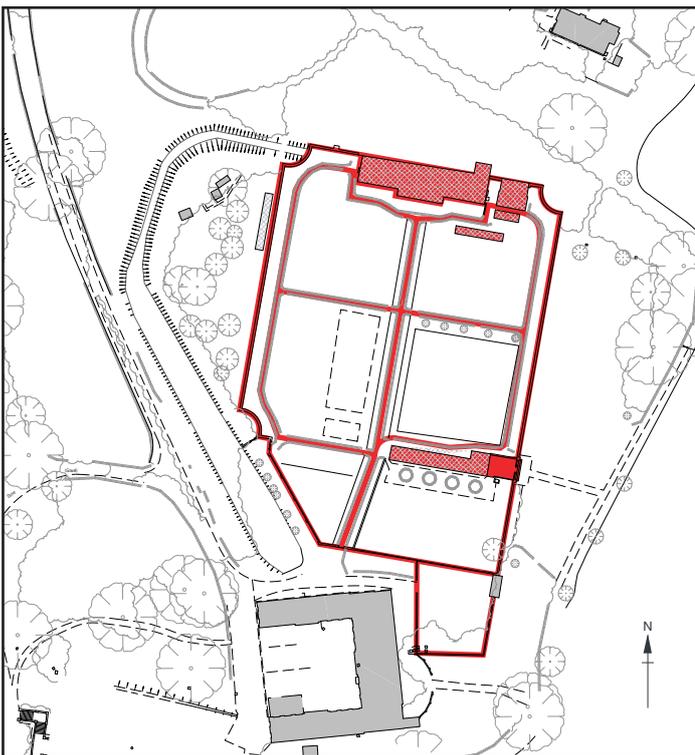
Figure 6.1: Arbitrary Areas of the Estate.



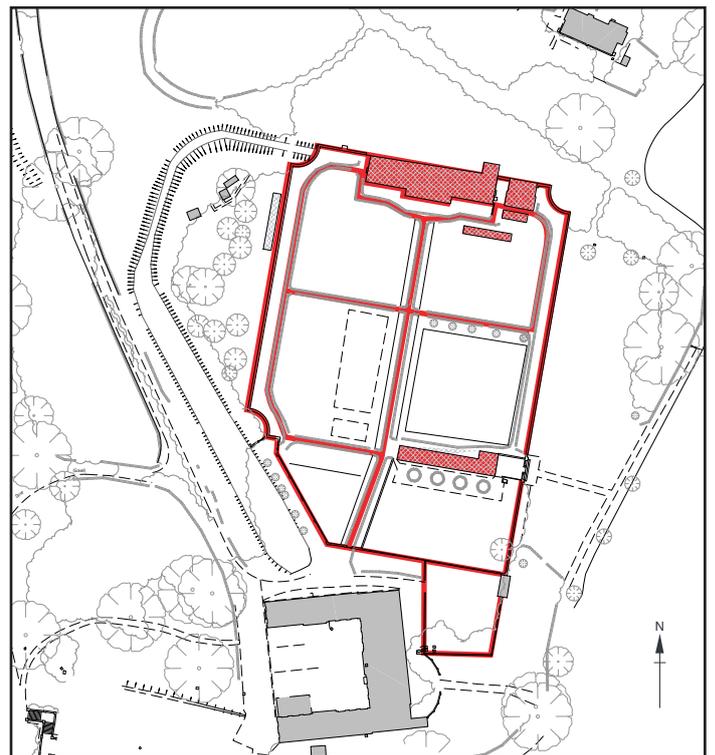
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



Phase 4

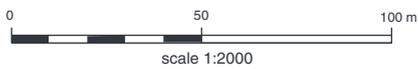


Figure 6.2: Phase plans of kitchen garden

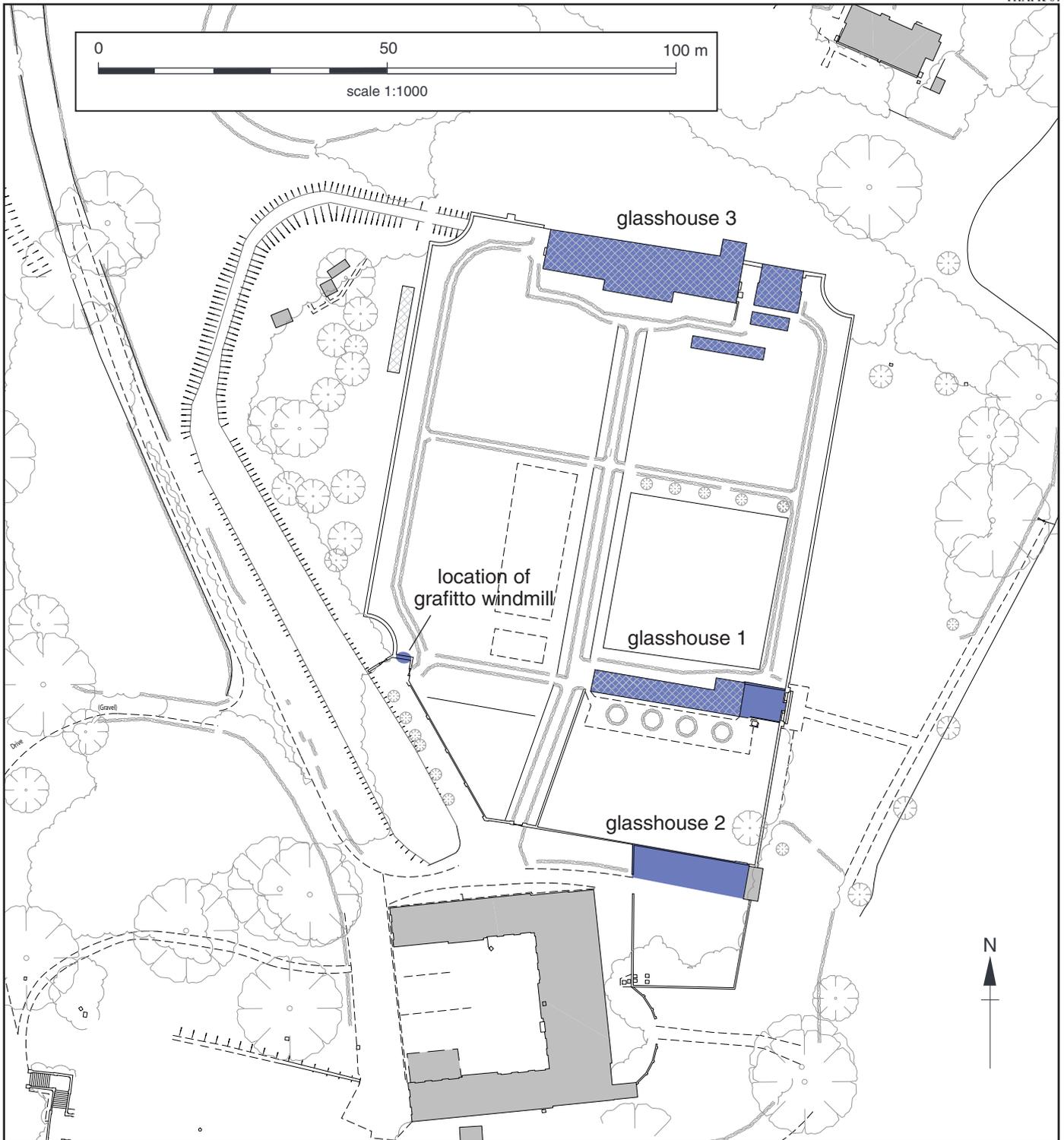


Figure 6.3: Location of glasshouses



- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- Early 16th Century
- 1530's
- 16th / 17th Century
- 1745
- 18th \ 19th Century
- 20th Century

KEY TO MATERIALS

- Stone
- Brick
- Concrete block

**OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT**
Janus House, Osney Mead,
Oxford, OX2 0ES



Scale at A3	NOT TO SCALE
Figure:	7.1

THAME PARK PHASING
DRAWING
LOWER GROUND FLOOR



- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- Early 16th Century
- 1530's
- 16th / 17th Century
- 1745
- 18th \ 19th Century
- 20th Century

KEY TO MATERIALS

- Stone
- Brick
- Concrete block

**OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT**

Janus House, Osney Mead,
Oxford, OX2 0ES



Scale at A3 **NOT TO SCALE**

Figure: 7.2

**THAME PARK PHASING
DRAWING
UPPER GROUND FLOOR**

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496
email : postmaster@oau-oxford.com
www.oau-oxford.com



- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- Early 16th Century
- 1530's
- 16th / 17th Century
- 1745
- 18th \ 19th Century
- 20th Century

KEY TO MATERIALS

- Stone
- Brick
- Concrete block

**OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT**
Janus House, Osney Mead,
Oxford, OX2 0ES



Scale at A3	NOT TO SCALE
Figure:	7.3

**THAME PARK PHASING
DRAWING
FIRST FLOOR**



- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- Early 16th Century
- 1530's
- 16th / 17th Century
- 1745
- 18th \ 19th Century
- 20th Century

KEY TO MATERIALS

- Stone
- Brick
- Concrete block

**OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT**

Janus House, Osney Mead,
Oxford, OX2 0ES

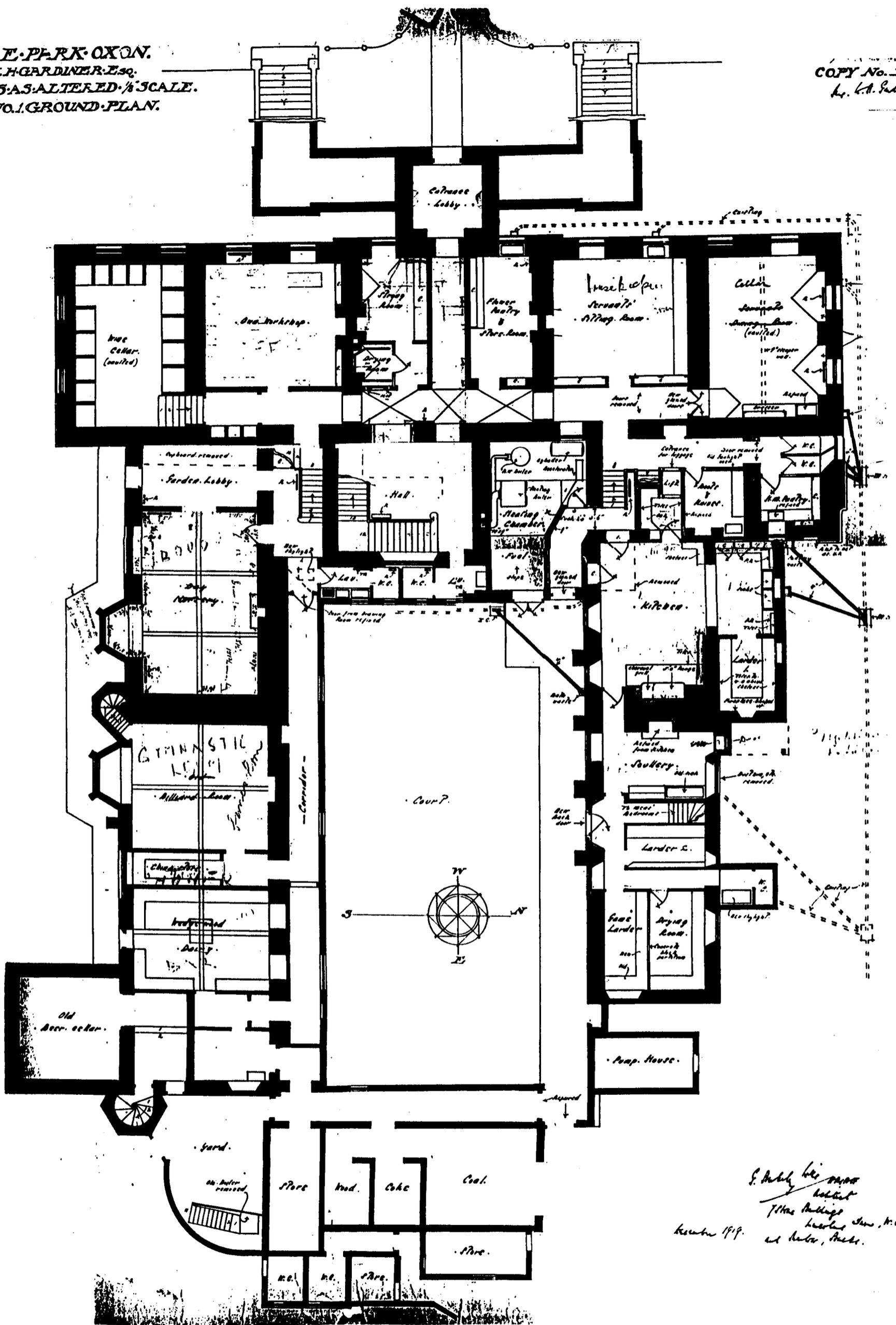


Scale at A3	NOT TO SCALE
Figure:	7.4

**THAME PARK PHASING
DRAWING
SECOND FLOOR**

AME. PERK. OXON.
 W. H. GARDNER, Esq.
 PLANS AS ALTERED - 1/8" SCALE.
 NO. 1. GROUND PLAN.

COPY No. 2.
 by L. A. Parker.



*E. Parker has drawn
 the building
 according to
 the plans
 of the
 architect,
 L. A. Parker.*

Figure 7.5 1919 Lower Ground Floor plan

HEME PARK OXON.
 W. H. GARDNER, Esq.
 PLANS AS ALTERED
 1/8" SCALE
 NO. 2. FIRST FLOOR PLAN.

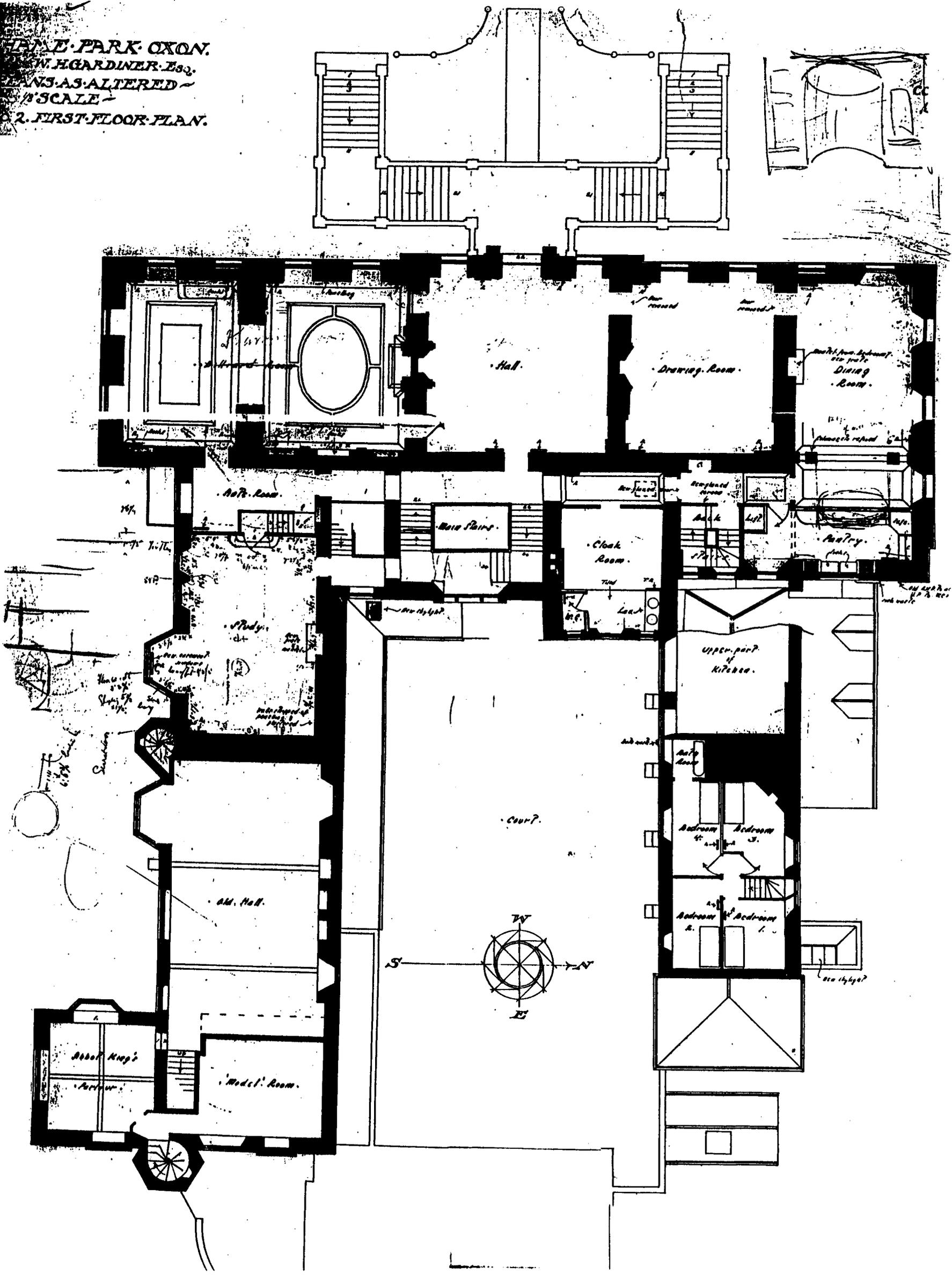
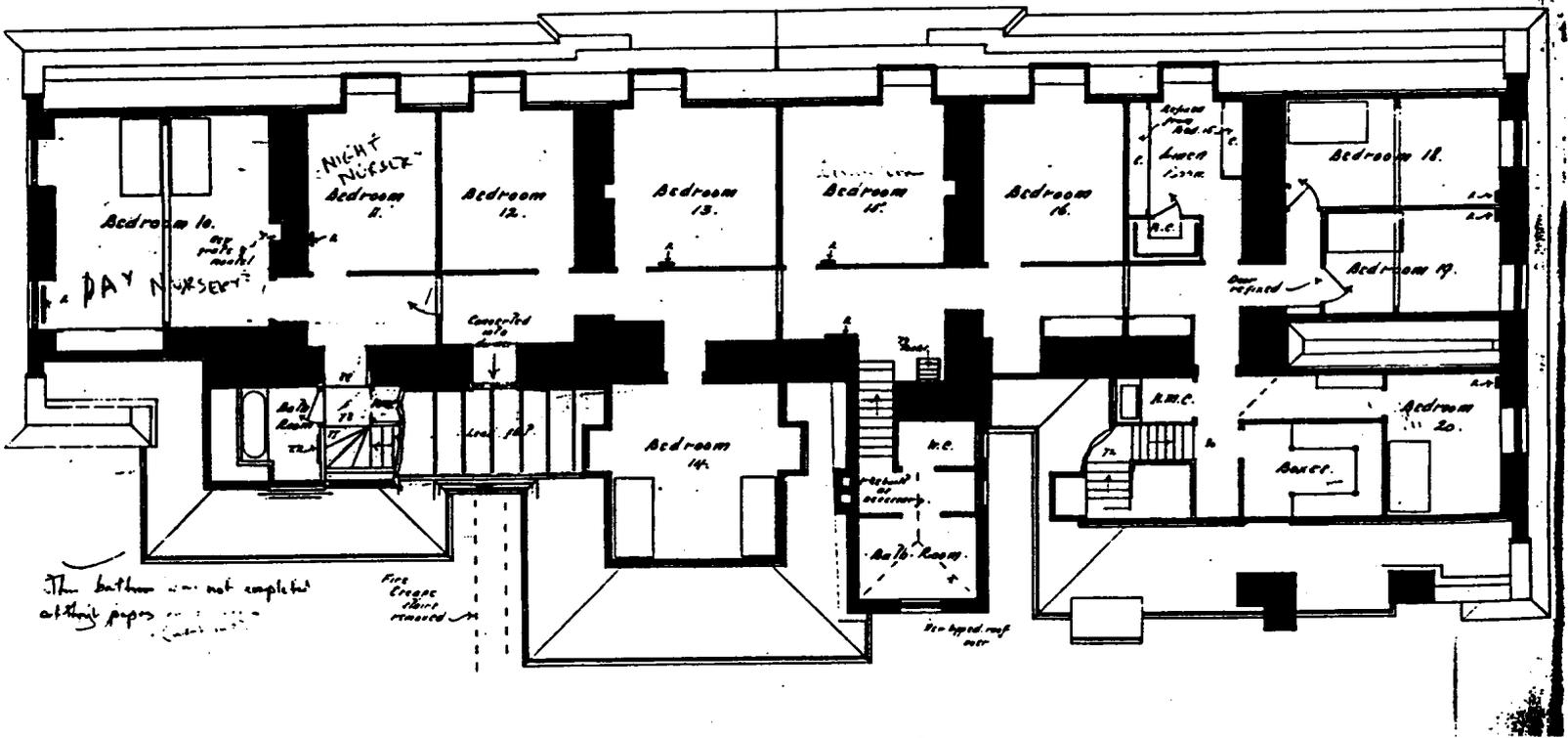
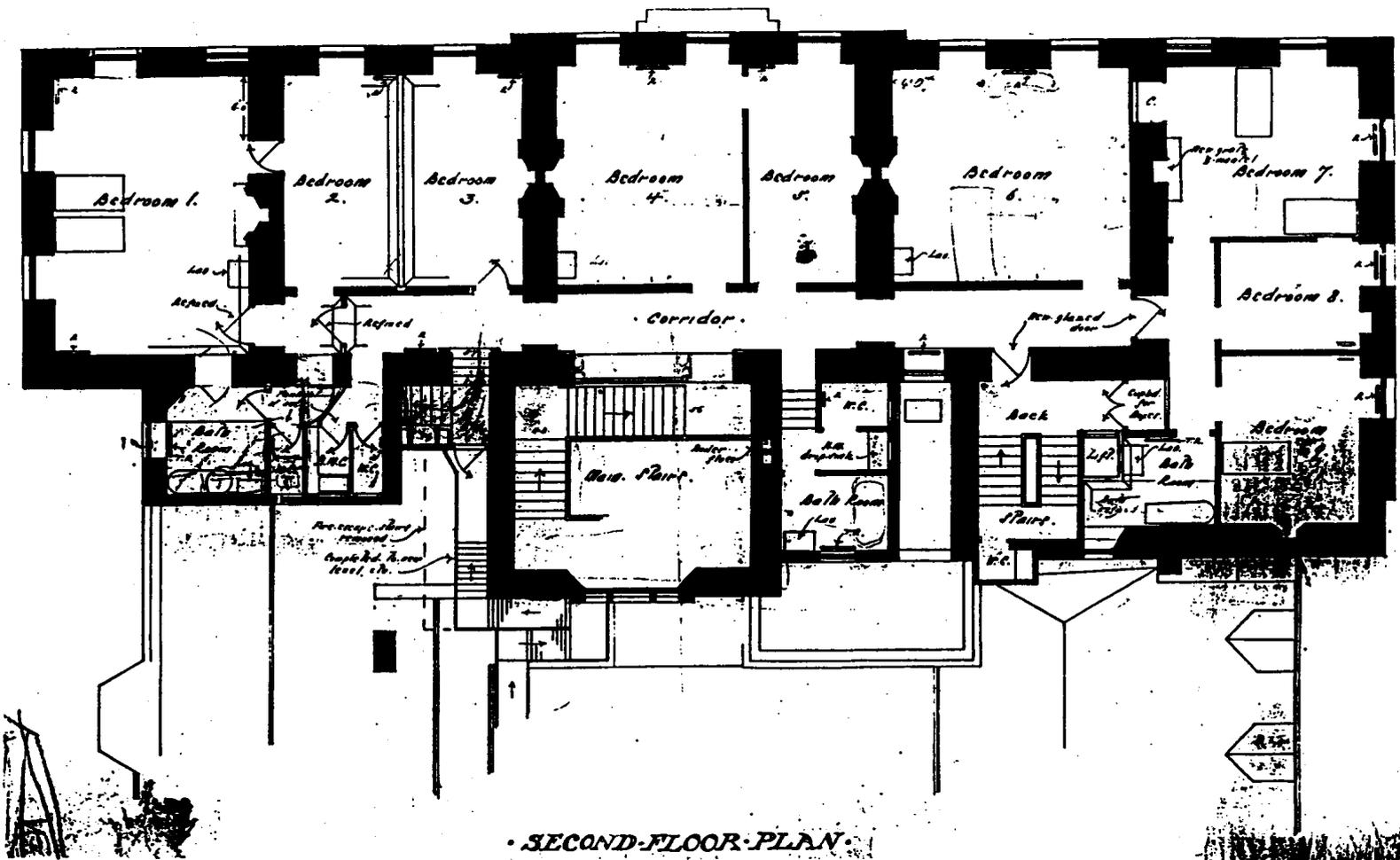


Figure 7.6 1919 Upper Ground Floor plan (then called first floor)



THIRD-FLOOR PLAN.



SECOND-FLOOR PLAN.

G. Fisher by order.
 77th Street, New York
 1919

Figure 7.7 1919 First and Second Floor plans (then called second floor and third floor)

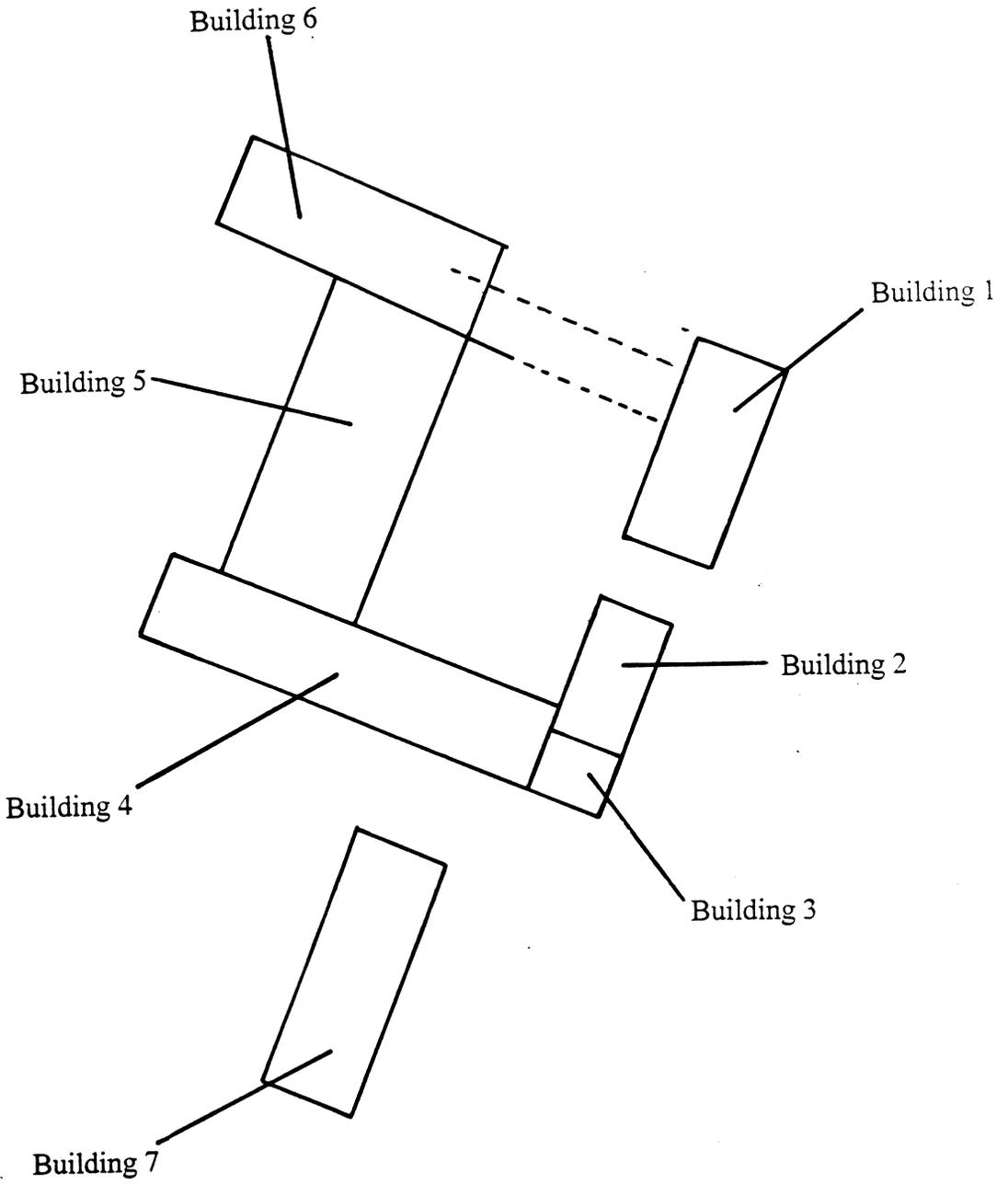
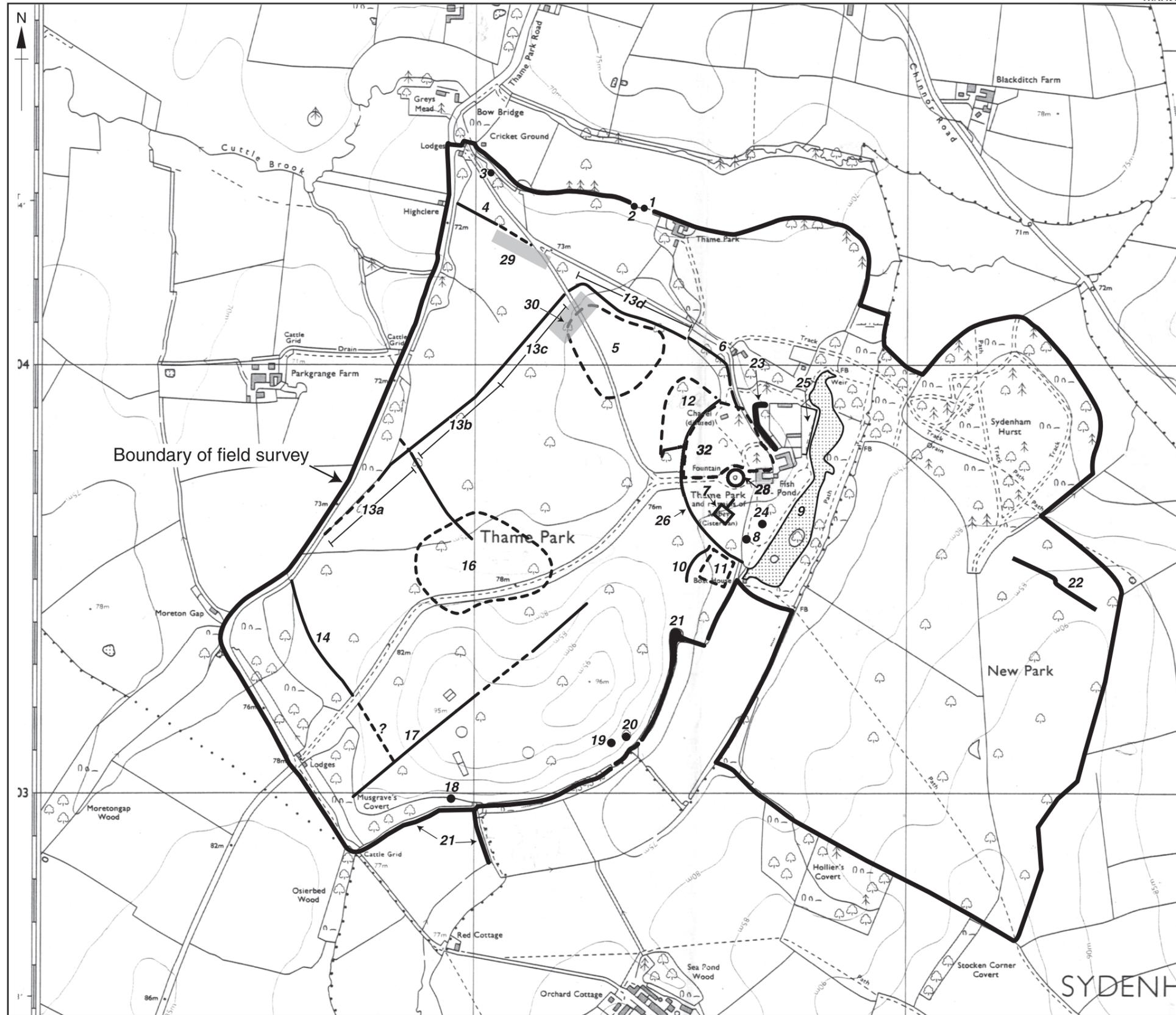


Figure 7.8: Plan showing farmyard buildings



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Licence No. 854166

Figure A2.1 : Location of sites mentioned in Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites.

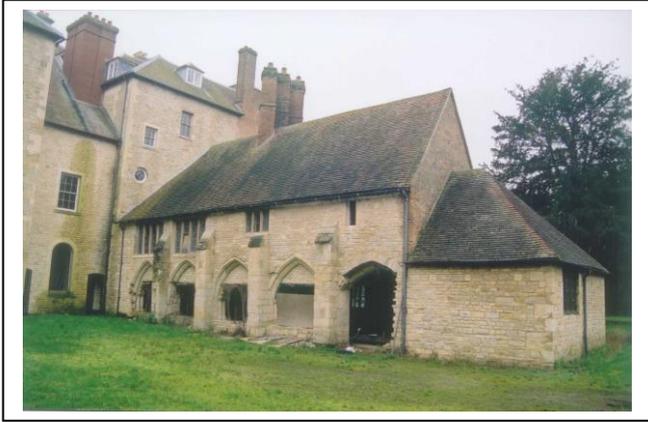


Plate 1: South elevation of North Range



Plate 2: North elevation of North Range



Plate 3: East elevation of West Range



Plate 4: North elevation of South Range

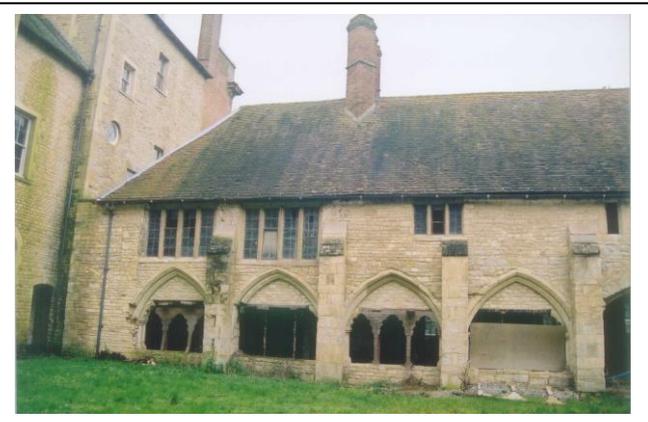


Plate 5: Detail of south elevation of North Range



Plate 6: Rebuilt north-east corner of West Range



Plate 7: East elevation of South Range



Plate 8: West elevation of West Wing

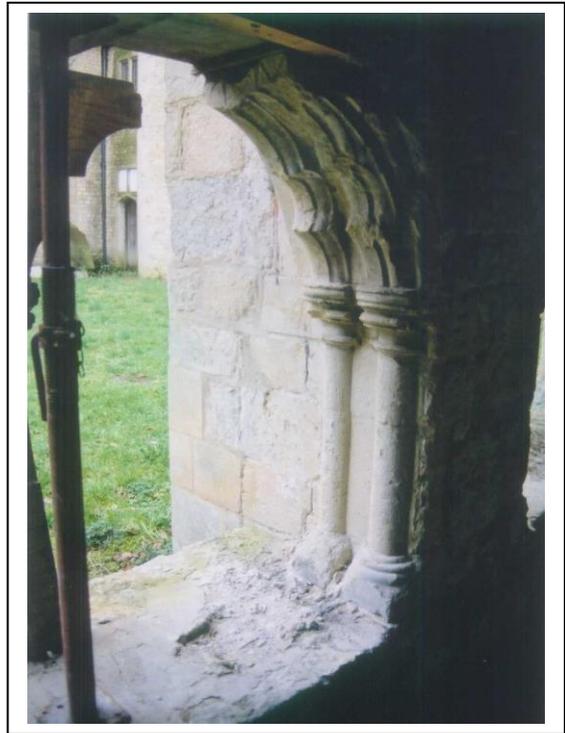


Plate 10: Detail of cloister arch in North Range

Plate 11: Secondary staircase at N end of West Range



Plate 9: South elevation of South Range

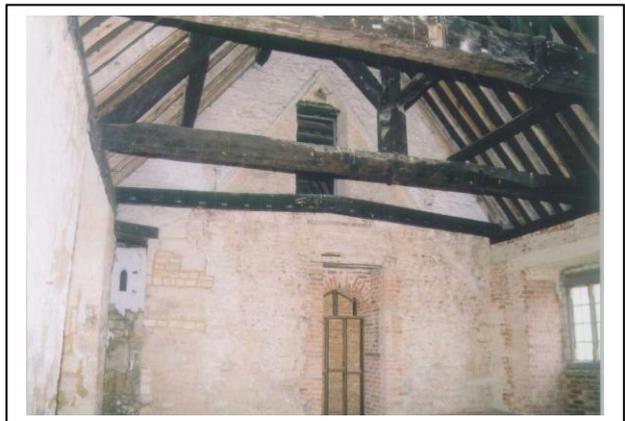


Plate 12: Roof of North Range

Plate 13: Panelling within Abbots Parlour (South Range)



Plate 14: Imprint of former roof in South Range



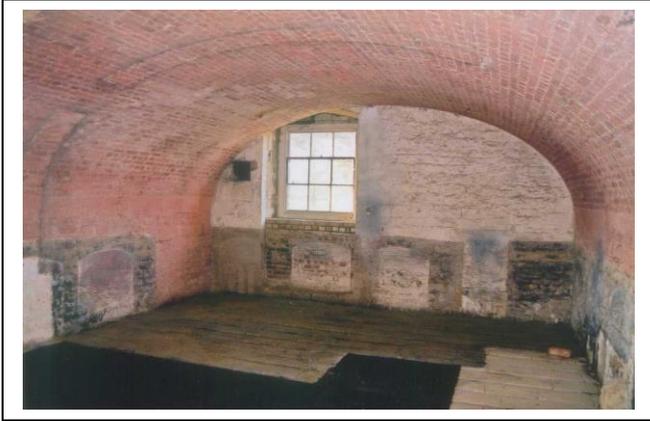


Plate 15: Wine cellar in West Range of house



Plate 16: mantelpiece in Drawing Room



Plate 17: Upper Stone Hall



Plate 18: Foot of main staircase



Plate 19: Lower Stone Hall

Plate 20: Trussed partition within West Range

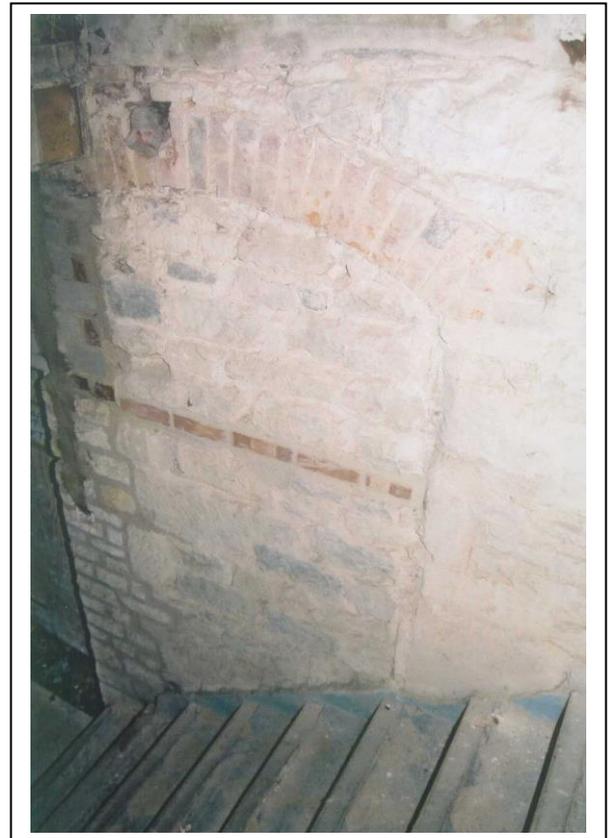


Plate 21: Former doorway blocked by lowest section of stairs towards north end of West Range



Plate 22: Stable block



Plate 23: Truss in stable block with curved inner principals



Plate 24: Queen post truss within stable block



Plate 25: Interior of East Range of stable block

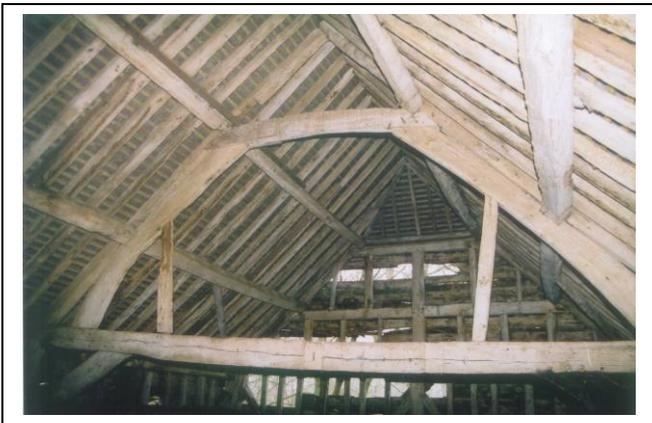


Plate 26: Truss within building 1 of farmyard

Plate 27: Farmyard buildings viewed from south-east

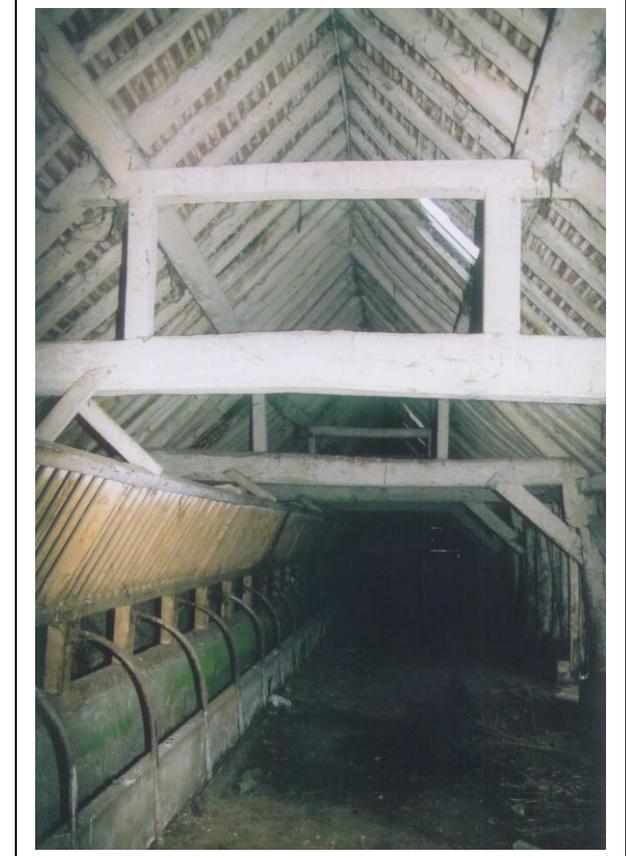


Plate 28: Interior of Building 4 of Farmyard.



Plate 29: North elevation of Chapel



Plate 30: South elevation of chapel

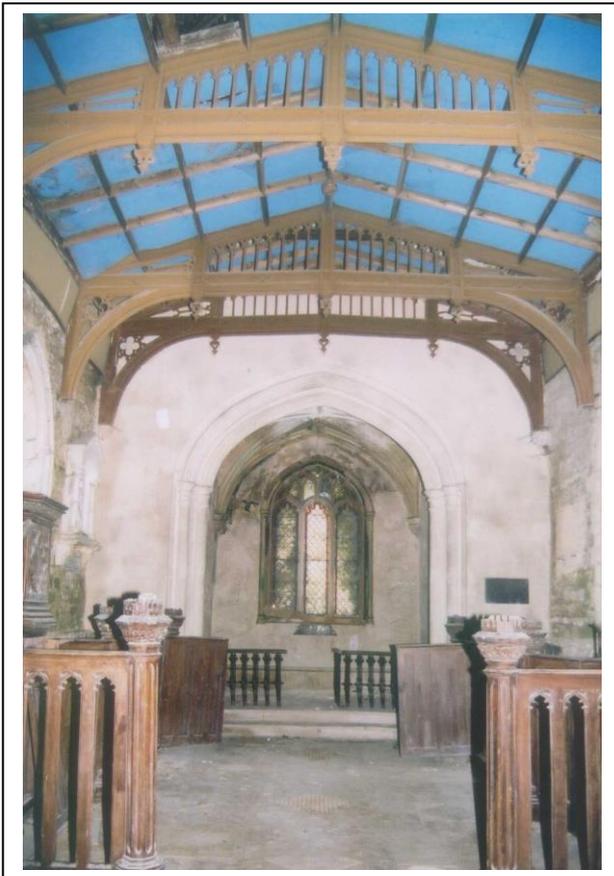


Plate 31: Interior of chapel

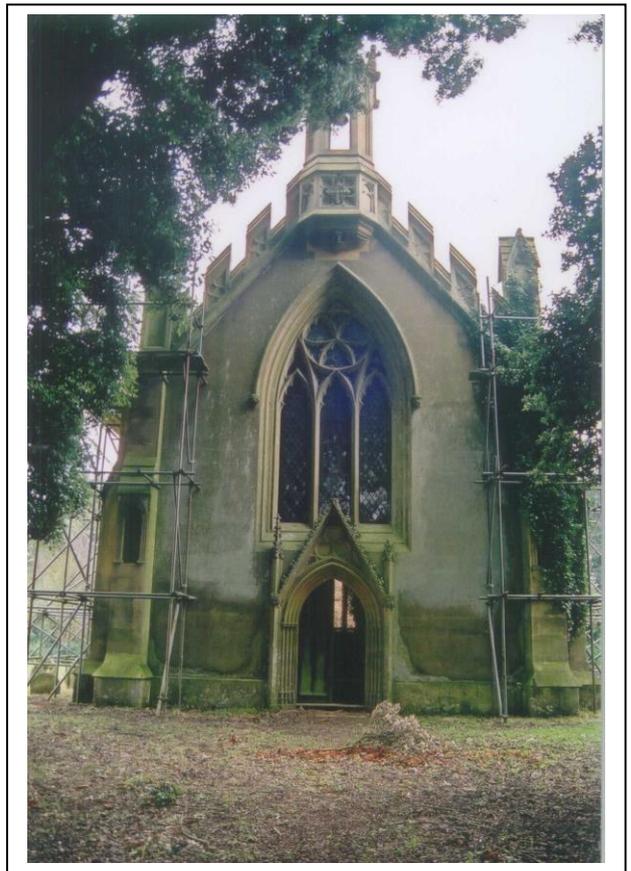


Plate 32: West front of chapel



Plate 33: South Lodge



Plate 34: Woodman's cottage



Plate 35: Grove Cottage



Plate 36: The laundry

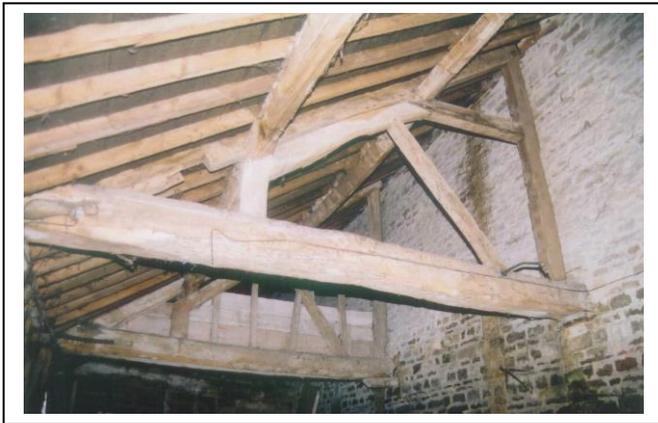


Figure 37 Truss with curved inner principal in lean-to to rear of stables



Plate 38: Brick copper and oven in lean-to to rear of stables



Figure 39: South end of lean-to to rear of stables



Figure 40: North end of lean-to to rear of stables.



Plate 41: Loft above South Range looking west



Plate 42: Loft above South Range looking east



Plate 43: Floor within loft over South Range



Plate 44: *Thame Abbey Chapel and Thame Park in 1823* from the engraving by F. Mackenzie in Joseph Skelton, *Illustrations of the Principal Antiquities of Oxfordshire* (reproduced in the *Victoria County History Vol VII*)

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- Sale Particulars 1917
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***Map Sources***

OS 1st edition 25" 1881 Sheet XLI. 7
OS drawing 1811
OS 1st edition 1" to the mile. 1830 Sheet 13
OS 2nd edition 25" 1898 Sheet XLI. 7
Bryant, Map of Oxfordshire 1826
Davies, Map of Oxfordshire 1797

Identified Sources, Currently Unseen

Oxford Times 1933 Diary extracts of Lord Torrington
The Wykeham-Musgrave Papers in the Bodleian Library:
(NRA 1033), c.26, c.27, c.28, b.9
MS.Top.Oxon.b.261, e.476
MS.Charters.Oxon.CS c66, c68, c72

Photographic archive held at the National Monuments Record, Swindon. Most of the photographs (c.125 black and white and c.10 colour) were taken in 1987 prior to or during the late 1980s redevelopment. However the archive also contains a number of photographs from the early 20th-century including one from c.1904. Most of these early photographs were taken by Nathaniel Lloyd.



Appendix 2. GAZETTEER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

OAU Number	1
Site Type	Bridge
Location	7140 0436
Description	A small post-medieval brick built single span bridge. Approx. 3m wide. The site is potentially associated with the old Sydenham road, as marked on the Davis Map.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking. Present on OS 1881 25" map Maybe present on 1797 Davis Map
OAU Number	2
Site Type	River Access Point
Location	7137 0437
Description	A small shallow cutting leading down to the river. The sides of which are reveted with stone. The site is approx. 7m wide, 8m long and 1m deep. It was probably built to allow livestock access to drinking water.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking.
OAU Number	3
Site Type	Earthworks
Location	7103 0446
Description	A small area of earthworks located near the Northern Lodges (OAU 3). The site consists of a series of linear earthworks that may be the remains of ridge and furrow and a semicircular ditch which seems to cut the ridge and furrow. The ditch is approx. 30m in diameter and is up to 0.5m deep. The ditch is probably the remains of a post-medieval landscape park feature, perhaps a tree ring.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking



OAU Number	4
Site Type	Bank
Location	7095 0438 to 7108 0431
Description	A long low linear bank dividing two areas of ridge and furrow. The bank runs roughly east-west and becomes increasingly vague towards its eastern end. The bank is c. 6.5m wide and 0.3m high with a flat profile. The site is aligned with the northern service road and is clearly visible on aerial photographs (see Appendix **). The site probably marks an earlier course of the entrance road onto the estate prior to the construction of the present driveways. The new carriageways are present on all maps from 1824 onwards although it seems that there were not present on the 1797 Davis map. Therefore it is possible that this section of the old carriageway went out of use between 1797 and 1824. Its date of construction is however uncertain.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photograph, OS / 73057
OAU Number	5
Site Type	Area of earthworks
Location	7130 0405
Description	A large extent of relatively complex earthworks including the remains of ditches, banks and platforms. The site could be relatively recent in origin or early in date, however the main carriageway does seem to cut through the earthwork complex, possibly indicating a relatively recent date. At present the lack of a detailed survey prevents any further interpretation.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking
OAU Number	6
Site Type	Ditch
Location	7150 0407 to 7162 0388
Description	A deep and substantial ditch which is water filled for almost its entire length. The ditch is broken by a stone culvert with earth causeway just north of the church. The site cuts under the north carriage way and possibly joins OAU 23 (Channel near Stables), although this relationship was not demonstrated due to ground cover. The ditch is seemingly part of a wider ditch complex that encloses a significant portion of the Old Park (OAU 13, 14, 21). It is felt that the ditch is possibly part of the medieval boundary bank associated with the park. This section has been significantly enhanced and deepened at some later date, its character changing from double ditch bank to single ditch, although the southern ditch may continue outside of the copse towards the chapel (see aerial photographs).



SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photograph, OS / 73057 Marked on OS 1881 25" map
OAU Number	7
Site Type	Area of Earthworks
Location	7155 0365
Description	A very faint but fairly well defined series of rectilinear earthworks located on the southern part of the front lawn. The features appear on aerial photographs and are probably modern in origin. Although they may overlie earlier remains.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photograph, OS / 73057
OAU Number	8
Site Type	Revetted Ditch
Location	7164 0368
Description	The ditch runs along the western edge of the front lawn and has been reveted on its western face, this is now partially collapsed in places. The ditch's current character is probably 19th Century in origin although its line may be far earlier based on current understandings of the park's development. The line appears on the 1881 map
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photograph, OS / 73057 Marked on OS 1881 25" map Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest
OAU Number	9
Site Type	The lake
Location	7175 0367 (centred)
Description	The lake was probably constructed in the mid-eighteenth century and its current form is primarily due to that event, although the brick revetting along its edges may be later. The lake is likely to overlie earlier medieval fishponds, most probably at its southern end although they may extend under the entirety of the flooded area. The idea that Capability Brown created the lake is not backed by any evidence, so far collected or seen. The serpentine style is very common for that period and reflects a general rather than personal style. The lake has a different shape on the 1797 map, this may indicate a 19th century realignment or more likely an inaccurate survey by Davis.



SMR	11678
NMR	SP 70 SW 14
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Davis Map of 1797 Marked on OS 1881 25" map Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest Country Life 1957 Country Life 1909
OAU Number	10
Site Type	Earthwork / Ditch.
Location	7150 0356 (centred)
Description	A 100m length of ditch running down the slope towards the front lawns. The ditch is c.7m in width and up to 0.5m deep. It has a relatively flat bottomed profile. The site's function and date are unknown but it may be connected with the Monastic water system of some form of later gardening activity.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS / 73057 & OS / 73056
OAU Number	11
Site Type	Area of Earthworks
Location	7155 0353
Description	A very faint and not particularly well defined series of rectilinear earthworks. They may mark the location of sub-surface archaeological remains possibly connected with Abbey or some later phase of activity, the lack of a ground plan and or further archaeological work prevents further interpretation at this stage.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking
OAU Number	12
Site Type	Area of Earthworks
Location	7150 0390
Description	An area of ill-defined and irregular earthworks including banks, ditches and shallow depressions. The lack of detailed survey prevents further interpretation. The remains could date from any period but may be connected with monastic developments. One particularly obvious ditch feature with a prominent elbow is visible on aerial photographs.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS/73057, OS/73056 & SP7103/1



OAU Number 13
 Site Type Linear Earthwork
 Location 7070 0365 to 7150 0407
 Description This substantial earthwork feature is perhaps one of the more significant elements to be identified in the initial stages of the project. It can be broken down into four sections with different physical characteristics.

a) The continuation through this area is extremely difficult to trace on the ground as it has suffered considerable disturbance. The line is however visible on aerial photographs and early maps.

b) This section is comprised of a very well defined and distinct bank, platform and ditch arrangement and probably represents the remains of a carriageway, its course is clearly marked on the Davis map of 1797. Its southern end is truncated by OAU 15, a later ditch, and the profile of the feature (OAU 13b) can be clearly seen. Some trees still mark the course of 13b but the majority of its avenue has now been removed.

c) This area has seen significant disturbance and the character is difficult to determine. Overall it seems very similar to section 13b but the disturbance and vegetation made tracing the monument difficult in places, especially on its western side. It is however clear on aerial photographs and early maps.

d) The final section was markedly different in character being a double ditch and bank feature and less like a carriageway. The ditches and features were generally shallower and once again are vague and disjointed in places. The northern ditch of the pair seems to continue along the line of OAU 6.

At present it is felt that OAU 13 marks part of the original boundary of the deer park from the early 12th century AD. Its size, shape and character would all be consistent with this interpretation. Sections of the site (a, b and c) were reused as a carriageway during later periods and at one time seem to form the park pale. The above interpretation is based on an assumption that the relationships between this site and OAU 14 and OAU 7 are real. Although this has yet to be formally proved, their geographic relationships and physical similarities do seem to support it.

SMR 11678
 NMR SP 70 SW 14
 Listed Building ---
 Sources / References Identified during field walking
 Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS/73057, OS/73056 & SP7103/1
 Davis Map of 1797
 Marked on OS 1881 25" map
 Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest



OAU Number	14
Site Type	Linear Earthwork
Location	7058 0349 to 7080 0307
Description	Due to extensive arable activity in the area this feature has been highly disturbed and its current form does not necessarily reflect its early physical form. The feature currently consists of a long low rounded bank. The feature may have connected with OAU 13 but the area around the northern end of OAU 14 is highly disturbed and under significant vegetation and hence the relationship could not be traced. This feature does seem to be cut by the main carriageway running from the southern lodges to the house. The continuation of the feature across the carriageway and on towards OAU 17 and 18 is difficult to trace although it was just possible to see the remnants of a highly eroded bank. At present it is felt that this feature forms part of the original boundary associated with 12th century deer park.
SMR	11678
NMR	SP 70 SW 14
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS / 73057 & SP 7103 / 1
OAU Number	15
Site Type	Linear Earthwork
Location	7085 0381 to 7100 0361
Description	A relatively modern looking ditch running roughly NW-SE and cutting through OAU 13. The site is up to 4m wide and is well defined except at its southern end where it terminates in the earthwork complex (OAU 16). The site is visible on aerial photographs and may be marked on the 1881 OS map by an avenue.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS/73056, OS/73057, & SP7103/1 1881 OS 25" map
OAU Number	16
Site Type	Area of earthworks
Location	7100 0360
Description	A confused and irregular series of earthworks covering an area just east of formerly arable land. The site is cut by numerous ditches and hollows and without a plan interpretation is impossible. The remains could date from any period in the estate's development.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Visible on Aerial Photographs, OS/73056, OS/73057, & SP7103/1



OAU Number	17
Site Type	Linear Earthwork / Avenue
Location	7072 0300 to 7125 0346 (current)
Description	A single ditch running in a straight line up the hill. Although the site was not traced running through the woods on the northern slope it did seem to appear on the flatter ground north of the hill. Along its length numerous holes marking the sites of trees were noted. On the Davis map of 1797 there seems to a similar avenue running along this line and almost up to the approximate location of the Ha Ha (OAU 26). A remnant line of trees can also be seen on the 1881 OS map.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Davis Map 1797 1881 OS 25" map
OAU Number	18
Site Type	Earthwork
Location	7097 0298
Description	The truncated remains of a small section of earthwork were noted running under the present field boundary at this point. These remains perhaps mark the continuation of OAU 14. The site consists of a small section of ditch and bank c.20m long and 7m wide. This could possibly be part of the original deer park boundary.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking
OAU Number	19
Site Type	Extraction
Location	7122 0313
Description	A sub-circular extraction site measuring c. 30m in dia. and 3m deep. The site is presently planted with beech of a substantial age. The trees seem to be marked on the 1881 OS map
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking 1881 OS 25" map



OAU Number 20
 Site Type Possible Extractions
 Location 7135 0314
 Description A small group of earthworks that probably mark the remains of small cluster of extraction sites.
 SMR ---
 NMR ---
 Listed Building ---
 Sources / References Identified during field walking

OAU Number 21
 Site Type Linear Earthwork
 Location 7100 0295 to 7150 0335
 Description A significant and substantial watercourse running along the lower slopes of the hill. The site has been cut into the hillside and its eastern side is a constructed bank of considerably volume. The character of the site changes as one moves from the south to the north with it becoming larger and better defined. The southern extent was difficult to trace due to scrub woodland cover and will need further exploration. As the northern end a series of brick built dams have been constructed, probably in the 19th century, in a style similar to the dam / weir at the northern end of the main lake (OAU 9). These dams may be the remains of a series of small fishponds. It is presently felt that this site (OAU 21) is related to the monastic water system and could date from that period although a later date is not impossible. A reference in the VCH (Viii p116+119) indicates that a Richard de Vernon granted the monks permission to cut a channel linking the 'Sydenham stream' to their water supply in the 12th century. It is currently assumed that OAU 21 is part of this water supply. This does however require further investigation.
 SMR 10855
 NMR ---
 Listed Building ---
 Sources / References Identified during field walking
 Davis Map 1797
 1881 OS 25" map
 VCH VIII pp. 116-119



OAU Number	22
Site Type	Earthwork Banks
Location	7225 0358 to 7245 0340
Description	Due to extensive arable activity these banks are highly eroded and in poor condition. They are probably headlands marking the break between previously ploughed areas, possibly from the medieval period.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking Aerial Photograph SP 7103 / 1
OAU Number	23
Site Type	Channel
Location	7165 0385 (centred)
Description	An extremely substantial and well defined water course running from near the stables to a point alongside the present kitchen garden where it seemingly disappears into an underground channel. The site's form and location seem to make little logical sense in terms of the later landscapes and the line, at least, of this monument may mark the course of an earlier water course related to the monastic settlement. At present little is understood about this feature although it is fair to say that its current physical character is the result of recent activity, probably dating to the 18th/19th centuries. The brick revetment used to line this channel looks on first examination to be very similar to that used to line the lake (OAU 9).
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking 1881 OS 25" Map OS drawing 1811 Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest
OAU Number	24
Site Type	Fountain, site of
Location	7168 0363
Description	A shallow circular depression indicates the location of a fountain marked on the 1st 1881 OS map
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking 1881 OS 25" Map



OAU Number	25
Site Type	Formal Gardens, Site of
Location	7178 0387
Description	An area of undulating ground that marks the location of a small area of previously formally arranged gardens now under lawn. The formal arrangement is marked on the 1st ed. 1881 OS map.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking 1881 OS 25" Map
OAU Number	26
Site Type	Ha Ha
Location	7162 0354 to 7156 0392
Description	A substantial brick revetted Ha Ha, with a semi-circular from dividing the pleasure gardens from the park land. This site is currently in a poor state of repair. It is up to 3m across and 1.5m deep. It is probably 18th century in origin. The site is marked on the OS 1st ed. 1" 1830 maps and also the 1881 25" map, it also appears on the Ordnance Survey Drawing of 1811.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Identified during field walking 1881 OS 25" Map 1830 OS 1" map OS drawing All Aerial Photographs
OAU Number	27
Site Type	Pond, site of
Location	7110 0400
Description	A large pond situated in an area of parkland marked on the OS 1881 25" map but not located during the field survey.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	1881 OS 25" Map



OAU Number	28
Site Type	Fountain, Grade 2 listed
Location	7160 0373
Description	At present the only the central basin of this mid-nineteenth century fountain survives. The holes marking the location of the urns can be seen around the perimeter of the site. The site is described as formerly consisting of “a central stone pedestal supporting a cast-metal Figure of Mercury. There is also a circular basin which has square stone pedestals supporting cast iron vessels.” (NMR entry). The eight peripheral cast iron vases were not present when examined in 1997 by the Register of Parks and Gardens.
SMR	---
NMR	SP70 SW27
Listed Building	248232
Sources / References	Identified during field survey 1881 OS 25” map Register of Historic Parks and Gardens
OAU Number	29
Site Type	Site of possible building
Location	c.7110 0426
Description	Possible location of a building as noted on the 1797 Davis map of Oxfordshire, no remains noted during field survey
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Davis Map of Oxfordshire 1797
OAU Number	30
Site Type	Site of possible building
Location	c.7125 0410
Description	Possible location of a building as noted on the 1797 Davis Map of Oxfordshire, no remains noted during field survey
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Davis Map of Oxfordshire 1797
OAU Number	31
Site Type	Site of possible mill
Location	c.72 03
Description	Possible location of a windmill as noted on the 1797 Davis Map of Oxfordshire. Site may lie within the bounds of New Park but no remains were noted in the field. The inaccuracy of the Davis Map makes locating this feature extremely difficult. An area is marked on Figure A.1 that possibly covers the location of the site.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Davis Map of Oxfordshire 1797



OAU Number	32
Site Type	Location of main monastic structures
Location	716 038
Description	The northern half of the front lawns were subject to extensive geophysical survey in January / February 2001. This revealed the vaguely discernible extents of the main abbey church and elements of the main cloister. The focus of these remains was between the house and St. Mary's Chapel. At present no direct physical evidence for the interpretation has been located. Lee's (1888) article outlines the extent and nature of the church and was based on early 19 th -century work by Twopeny, this broadly corresponds with the geophysical results.
SMR	---
NMR	---
Listed Building	---
Sources / References	Geophysical Survey Report (Appendix 8) Lee 1888

Appendix 3. SUMMARY OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY SYMM & CO

Between 1986 and 1992 Symm & Co undertook a substantial programme of renovation at Thame Park before the unfinished project was abandoned. This summary is based on a document produced by Symm & Co (*A presentation on Thame Park*) after the abandonment of the project and on discussions between OAU and Adrian Mortimer of Symm & Co. in February 2001

The project largely consisted of the removal of many 19th and 20th-century additions, particularly to the east side of the West Wing and within the rear yard. The most substantial internal work was undertaken within the West Wing although work was also undertaken within the other two wings.

West Range

Roof recovered and insertion of strengthening steel into roof and at attic level

New lift shaft and stairwell

Stonework to central bay of west elevation replaced

Insertion of a dummy chimney stack adjacent to the lift shaft

Construction of new staircase at south end of West Range replacing previous staircase

Replacement of leadwork throughout

Removal of several small 19th/20th structures from east elevation (eg toilet projection) and replacing with new stonework

Overhaul to all windows

New concrete and suspended floors in basement

New heating, plumbing, alarm, telephone and electrical installation

New joinery and general redecoration to second and first floors including partially installation of many bathroom suites.

South Range

Oriel window in west elevation of tower (at SE corner of range) rebuilt

Removal of 'Bowden's Corridor' a link added in 1939 along the north face of South Range which allowed direct access from the Upper Ground Floor level of W Range to the lower level of the South Range

Substantial restoration of stonework to north facade

Re-roofing, including leadwork and rainwater goods

Removal of internal finishes from eastern half of range

New concrete floor to ground floor

Specialist timber repair and conservation work to the Abbots Parlour

**North Range**

Removal of secondary stone blocking from south elevation to reveal cloister arches

Roof re-covered

Extensive repair and repointing to stonework

Removal of all internal finishes

Restoration of stone work to north, south and east facades

Underpinning

New concrete floors

General

Removal of various structures between the east ends of the north and south ranges. Included among these structures was a boiler house and several garden walls.

Removal of a large mid-20th-century concrete floor slab from within the court to the rear of the house on which war-time Nissen huts possibly stood.

Other buildings

Only limited works were undertaken in the other park buildings. No work was undertaken in the chapel other than removal of tiles and covering with tarpaulin.



Appendix 4. THAME PARK - HISTORIC ROOM INVENTORY

This section provides a brief description of each of the rooms within the house together with an inventory of their main features and information relating to them from the known historical sources. These include:

Lee's *Building News* description in 1888; Berkeley plans of 1919; *Architectural Review* 1922; Sale Particulars of 1925; *Country Life* article 1957; Sale Particulars 1983.

LOWER GROUND FLOOR

Current Name: Lower Stone Hall (West Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Lower Stone Hall
Description: 4 Doric columns (plaster enclosing stanchion) create open space with Doric masonry pilasters at each end. Stone flag floor. Plain stone fireplaces to N and S and 4 semi-circular niches. Impressive carved stone skirting. Berkeley's drawing from 1919, prior to adaptations made by Mr and Mrs Bowden, show the area of the lower stone hall as encompassing a strong room and drying room to the right and a flower pantry and store room to the left.
Fittings & Furnishings: Two painted stone fireplaces, four illuminated display niches and two radiators (1983).

Current Name: Staircase Hall (West Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Inner Staircase Hall
1925 Sale Particulars: Lower Hall
Description: A stone flag floor has been laid (1983).
Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Former Office (West Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Office
Description: Formerly single room with two rooms immediately to south. Modern brick partitions inserted in 1980s work. Four large Corinthian plaster pilasters not in-situ within room on floor (not from this room). Simple historic fireplace. Frame for modern ceiling (but ceiling not installed) which partially obscures historic cornice. Large heavy door (historic). Shutters to window. Modern concrete floor slab with drainage pipes protruding. Described by Berkeley as a workshop (1919) with a marble fireplace in a carved wood surround (1983).
Fittings & Furnishings: -



Current Name: Wine Cellar (West Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Wine Cellar
1925 Sale Particulars: Wine Cellar
1919 plan: Wine cellar
Description: Similar to Beer Cellar at opposite end of W wing. Original floor c. 1 m below current concrete joist floor. Brick vault and stone sleeper walls. Red stain/paint on surface. Outline of individual wine vaults visible on walls. Former door in E wall (lintel 80 cm above current floor level). Said to have been fitted as a pub in the 1983 sales particulars. Steps shown descending to room in 1919 plan.

Current Name: Garden Lobby (South Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Garden Lobby
1919 Berkeley Wills Plans: Garden Lobby
Description: Walls clad in plastic imitation linenfold panelling of 20 th -century date. Cornice with bosses and ceiling older but probably 19 th century. Doors and floorboards appear Edwardian.
Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Former Morning Room (South Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Morning Room
Description: Decorated box beamed ceiling and leaded light windows, one with a seat (1983). Walls clad in C20th panelling. Mantel lost from fireplace.
Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Former Dining Room (South Wing, Lower Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Dining Room and Music Room
1925 Sale Particulars:
Pictures in 1888: <i>Gothic dining room</i> (perhaps the former dining room on the Lower Ground Floor) - Half-length portrait of Sir Thomas Wenman, in armour; half-length portrait of a lady of the Wenman family at the time of Charles II; half-length portrait of Richard, Lord Viscount Wenman, who died in 1741; half-length portrait of Charles II; whole-length portrait of Elizabeth Jephson, daughter of Thomas Norris Esq.; half-length portrait of Philip, Lord Viscount Wenman, who was born in 1596; half-length portrait of a lady unknown, in the costume in the time of Queen Elizabeth; a three quarter portrait of a gentleman unknown, in a velvet dress trimmed with sable; half-length portrait of Sir Francis Wenman, of Carswell, Kut.; half-length portrait of Mr Francis Wenman, who died in 1657; full length portrait of Isabel, daughter of Lord Williams of Thame, seated; portrait of Lord Wenman in the robes of a peer.
Description: N wall largely of brick and possibly of 18 th century date with much later phasing evidence. As detailed elsewhere N wall apparently stepped out from original alignment by c.1 m. Floor concrete and believed to have been inserted in 1980s. S wall of stone but abutted by later tower. Floor above consists of 4 N-S principal joists (wall to wall)



supporting bridging joists along spine and N-S common joists tenoned into bridging joist. Among the potentially most significant features of the room is a 1.5 m tall moulded door jamb in the cross wall dividing the room from the former Morning Room. The door to which the jamb relates would have abutted the existing W wall of the Former Morning Room and it must therefore predate the wall which is believed to be of 16th-century date.

This room has a shuttered bay window, marble fireplace in a carved wood surround, enclosed ceiling beams and a doorway to the stone spiral staircase which leads to the armoury above. This room has in the past been subdivided to form a games room, china store and Wedgewood Dairy (1919).

Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Beer Cellar (West Wing, Lower Ground Floor)

1983 Sale Particulars: Staff Sitting Room

1919 plans: Staff dining room.

Description: walls of painted rubble stone with brick barrel vault. Small stone footing of potentially older stonework at N end of W wall. Existing floor of concrete blocks supported by concrete joists (probably inserted in 1980s) at main ground floor level but 95 cm above primary brick paved cellar floor. Primary floor just visible through small hole accessible via set of steps at E end of room. Old stone infill beneath window in W wall suggesting it may have originally been a doorway. Sloped sills to both windows in N walls which would have illuminated the low cellar.

Current Name: room to E of Beer Cellar

1919 plans: Pantry, Boots and knives room, WCs

Description: north half of room created when NE corner of W Wing rebuilt (and extended) in the mid 19th century. The formerly external E-W wall survived within the building into the 20th century and was shown on the 1919 plans dividing the room in two. Wall removed (in 1980s?) and replaced by steel joist supported at each end on rebuilt brick piers within the stone walls. N half of W wall (also formerly external) of stone above brickwork. Much phasing evidence within E wall. Floor filled by large concrete bases (for plant not installed in 1980s) and deep trench towards N end of room. Underside of floor structure above visible. Deep N-S principal joist with E-W tenoned common joists and ceiling joists (only towards NE corner). Battens fixed to sides of common joists (towards top) which support laths and layer of plaster (presumably for soundproofing) just below the floor boards.

UPPER GROUND FLOOR

Current Name: Upper Stone Hall (West Wing, Upper Ground Floor)

1983 Sale Particulars: Upper Stone Hall

1925 Sale Particulars: Entrance Hall

Country Life: Upper Hall

Description: The walls are panelled and enriched with plaster swags and pendants in the manner of Grinling Gibbons, and a finely carved stone mantelpiece, surmounted by a handsomely carved wood overmantel, encloses an open stone fireplace. The room has a decorated plaster ceiling and cornice. The carved doorcases are distinguished by their bold



pediments and consoles (1925). Stone floor with slabs diagonally set. Main front door to W with historic lock mechanism intact and shutters and bars.

Fittings & Furnishings: Panelled dado and one shelved cupboard

Current Name: Small Drawing Room (West Wing, Upper Ground Floor)

1983 Sale Particulars: Small Drawing Room

1925 Sale Particulars: Drawing Room

Country Life: Pine Room

Pictures in 1888: *Saloon* (perhaps the small drawing room on the Upper Ground Floor) - 'The Rape of the Sabines'; 'The Horatii and Curiatti' after Le Brun.

Description: This room has finely decorated cornice, panelled walls and carved Adam-style mantelpiece. Over the mantelpiece, the wall is adorned with carvings of fruit and flowers in the style of Grinling Gibbons (1925). The floor is polished oak (1983).

Fittings & Furnishings: three radiators (1983).

Current Name: Dining Room. (West Wing, Upper Ground Floor)

1983 Sale Particulars: Main Dining Room

1925 Sale Particulars: Dining Room with Butler's Pantry and Gentlemen's cloakroom

Country Life: Dining Room

Pictures in 1888: *North dining room* (perhaps the dining room on Upper Ground Floor) - 'The School of Athens' after Raphael; a gentleman of the Wenman family in a velvet dress

Description: room divided into two sections either side of wide opening. Two ionic columns and two ionic pilasters to each side of opening, each of which was inserted in the early 20th-century works to replace previous Corinthian columns located further to the east. (*Architectural Review* Jan 1922). All walls repainted in modern works and ceiling replastered (but unpainted). Elaborate bracketed cornice also apparently unpainted modern plaster (pink colour). Plain dado, skirting, sash windows and shutters all historic but not primary (19th or early C20th). Carved stone fireplace (in the process of having black paint stripped from it) with fruit/floral festoons around mantel and sea chariot scene at centre (Neptune, sea horses, mermaids etc). Six panelled doors: architrave to E door painted to look like stone; that to W door stained dark. Floorboards varnished; some secondary some probably primary.

The influence of Grinling Gibbons is again visible in the fruit and flowers carvings of the mantelpiece and on the frieze supported by two Ionic columns. This room used to be divided to include a butler's pantry and gentleman's cloakroom (1919).

This room is said to have been redecorated during the early 1920's, and a carved wood chimney piece from one of the bedrooms bought into it (1957).

Fittings & Furnishings: three radiators (1983).

Current Name: Drawing Room (West Wing, Upper Ground Floor)

1983 Sale Particulars: Main Drawing Room



1925 Sale Particulars: Billiard Room and Lounge
Country Life: Drawing Room
Pictures in 1888: a three-quarter portrait of a lady of the Wenman family of the time of Charles I and a three-quarter portrait of Thomas, second Lord Wenman.
Description: Room divided in two halves with large opening flanked by 4 plaster ionic pilasters to each side. Entablature and frieze above pilasters. Highly decorated floral cornice. Pilasters, cornice etc painted pink with gold paint. Plaster decoration to both halves of ceiling - oval design to N, rectangular design to south. Very impressive carved wood fireplace. Egg and tongue mouldings to doors. Previously used as a Billiard Room and Lounge. This room was redecorated during the early 1920's, and given an imported Georgian chimney piece (1957).
Fittings & Furnishings: walls are covered in silk and there is an illuminated display niche (1983).

Current Name: Library (South Wing, Upper Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Library
1925 Sale Particulars: Smoke Room
Country Life: Library
1919 Berkeley Wills Plans: Study
Pictures in 1888: a lady with high collar, face to the left, with a fan in her right hand; a three-quarter portrait of Edward Butler, LL.D, president of Magdalene College, Oxford; portrait of Sophia, daughter of Viscount Wenman, who married Humphrey Wykeham, of Swalcliffe, her face to the right, with scarf over a gown of embroidered white satin; over one of the mantlepieces, a portrait of Frances daughter of Thomas, Lord Viscount Wenman, wife of Thomas Samwell Esq; a lady in white satin, her face to the left, in evening dress; a lady in white satin, trimmed with blue satin; a gentleman of the time of Charles I, wearing an embroidered doublet with lace collar, with a sword in his left hand; a full length portrait of Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas, Lord Viscount Wenman, and wife of Grenville Verney, Esq.; Penelope, daughter of Thomas, Lord Viscount Wenman, and wife of Sir Thomas Cave of Stanford, Northamptonshire; Jane, daughter of Sir Thomas Wenman, who married, firstly, Mr James Cressie; and secondly, Sir Thomas Tasburgh; a three quarter portrait of Philip, fifth Viscount Wenman; Mary, daughter and co-heiress of James Herbert, of Tythorpe, by Hudson.
Description: probably once the Abbot's private dining room, maintains a boarded ceiling with intersecting ribs divided into three sections by moulded cross beams. On the wall above the fireplace is a carved frieze engraved with the name ROBERTVS KING the last abbot of Thame Abbey (1957). Large stone fireplace to N wall. Below the frieze the walls are covered with oak panelling known to have been added in the 1919 refurbishment. Some linenfold panelling also probably dating to the early 20 th century. Bookcases with apparently fake woodworm to front. Fitted oak bookcases with cupboards under, radiator under the large bay and leaded windows (1983). Apparently fake woodworm to front of drawers.

Current Name: Armoury (South Wing, Upper Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Armoury
1925 Sale Particulars: Old Refectory



1919 plan: Old Hall
Country Life: Armoury. (A photograph in Country Life (Nov 28 1957) shows the armoury in the mid 20 th century with exposed trusses, plastered walls, a long central table, a model ship and various swords and suits of armour).
Pictures in 1888:
Description: Main room furthest E in South Range now a single open space after removal of stairs and separate room at E end in 1980s work. Floor height 60 cm above that in the adjacent Morning room further confirming that they are of different building phases. N wall entirely exposed - brick to W stone to E, both sections strongly appear to be post-monastic and probably 18 th /19 th century. Upper section of wall clearly rebuilt (possibly at same time as roof). Straight joint in E wall towards N end confirming evidence on external face of wall. Stone arch over historic (primary?) stone fireplace. Possibly primary 3-light stone-mullion window and 2-light mullion window above. Later window also above which would have lit the removed attic. S wall entirely stone - windows historic although mouldings not entirely consistent. W wall largely of old stone (with some rebuild). Clear line of previous pitched roof (beneath existing roof line) which coincides with section of old stone in N wall. Eaves height of previous roof beneath any of existing windows. Existing roof of several phases all of which date to mid 18 th century or later. Two king-post trusses to W with 2 tiers of butt purlins. Four bays to E half of unequal width with probably 19 th -century trusses - those to E with 3 sets of purlins and 1 tier of wind braces. Room sometime referred to as the Old Refectory.
Fittings & Furnishings: The collection of arms and armoury is chiefly Oriental. There are two display niches (1983).

Current Name: Abbot's Parlour (South Wing, Upper Ground Floor)
1983 Sale Particulars: Abbot's Parlour
1925 Sale Particulars: Abbot's Parlour
Country Life: Abbot's Parlour
Pictures in 1888:
Description: The room is entered through an internal porch, suggested to be the earliest surviving example in the country. This would have acted as a draft excluding device and as a screen to shield the way into what may have been the kitchen at the east end of the hall. The door is original, decorated with linen-fold panelling and retains its original lock. On the west side of the parlour is the oriel recess, and opposite stands a typical Tudor fireplace. To the right of the fireplace is a door in the panelling which may have provided access to a wardrobe now destroyed. Linen-fold panelling covers two-thirds of the height of the room, the space above is filled with carved Renaissance panels each (except for those with shields of arms) having a roundel with heads, varied at times with a mitre in high relief, set into moulded frames. An arabesque frieze adds to the decoration, again its design is centred on roundels, echoing those on the panels. Arabesque carving also appears on the underside of the ceiling beams. The frieze incorporates the initials R K into the design. The ceiling is carried by two beams that cross one another. At the intersection of the ceiling beams there is a hexagonal pendant. Fragments of the plaster ribs which at one time would have adorned the ceiling remain in a fragile state. The whole room would have originally been coloured and gilded; greenish-blue ground was recorded as remaining in the upper part by Godfrey (1930).
The heraldry on the east wall of the Abbot's Parlour illustrates the friendships held by Robert King at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries. They include major landholders of



Oxfordshire and surrounding counties, the patron of Abbot King and the royal arms of Henry VIII. Some limited restoration is known to have been undertaken on the panelling and ceiling in the later C20th (shown by photographs in Country Life and Godfrey articles) and a fuller analysis of what work was undertaken should form part of a wider programme of recording on the room prior to any further refurbishment.

Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Room to E of Library (Upper Ground floor, South Wing)

Description: Small room at top of stairs from Library (S Range) to W Range. Now blocked by 2 toilet cubicles (1980s) Southern room retains original high ceiling but other 2 areas have modern lower ceiling and hatch in one reveals old floral wall paper and cornice.

FIRST FLOOR

Current Name: Nursery

1919 Plans: bathroom. Lift inserted

Description: Large modern boards cover the floor other than in window alcove where some primary boards survive. Walls, ceiling and elaborate cornice all modern. Window and shutters historic but probably not primary. No skirting.

The existing ceiling is a secondary insertion, c.0.5 m below the primary ceiling and below the height of the ceilings throughout the rest of the first floor (c.3.75 m above floor). Adjacent staircase was an secondary insertion truncating the Nursery to its current smaller size. The high original ceiling would have been inappropriate for the small Nursery and a lower suspended ceiling was been inserted in the C20th. This has preserved elements of the previous floral wallpaper (together with lath marks to the underside of the original joists) within the ceiling space. The window in the E wall of the Nursery, which now awkwardly abuts the wall adjoining the staircase, would originally have been central to the E wall of the room.

Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Master bedroom

1919 plans: Bedroom 1. Doors refixed in works. Shutters in window to W apparently reformed.

Description: Secondary floorboards screwed down with small peg inserted above screw flush with boards. Skirting and dado as elsewhere on first floor. Windows with different glazing bars to others on floor. Carved wood fireplace. Bracketed plaster cornice.

Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Guest bedroom

1919 plans: Area divided into 2 Bedrooms (Beds 7 and 8). Shutters in window to W apparently reformed in works.

Description: Windows and shutters historic although probably not primary. Highly decorative plaster cornice possibly primary. Wood dado and skirting historic. Elaborate fireplace – carved wood painted gold – with a sun-god Figure at centre (inserted in 1919



works). Several phases of floorboard: some probably primary, some screwed in and with small pegs inserted above screws.

Fittings & Furnishings:

Current Name: Bedroom 2 and adjacent bathroom (bathroom 2)

1919 plans: Bedroom 3.

Description: Elaborate bracketed plaster cornice in bedroom. Carved wood fireplace. Primary floorboards largely in-situ. Shutters, dado, skirting similar to those throughout first floor (historic but possibly not primary). Windows with wedge-shaped softwood glazing bars.

Almost certainly formerly a single room with adjacent Bathroom 2 –suggested by subtle difference in cornice along dividing wall between rooms.

Primary floorboards to W side of bathroom; large modern boards to rest of room due to insertion of pipes for modern bathroom suite. No fire suggesting the room was formerly a single space with Bedroom 2 (or fire removed). Elaborate secondary plaster cornice around all 4 walls. Skirting and dado similar to elsewhere on floor (Historic but probably not primary)

First-floor bedrooms as described in 1888

Pictures in 1888: there are a number of paintings which are known to have been on this floor but it is uncertain from which particular room.

Crimson bedroom - a half-length portrait of a lady, one of the Wenman family in the style of Sir Peter Lely. A half length portrait of a gentleman of the Wenman family.

Bedroom number 2 (First floor) - a whole length portrait of a child with a battledore. A half length portrait of a gentleman in a black velvet dress, and flowing, of the time of Charles I.

Dressing room 3 (First Floor) - a half-length portrait of a lady in a blue dress, one of the Wenman family.

Pink room (First Floor) - a three-quarter portrait of Richard, Lord Viscount Wenman, 1640.

White bedroom (First Floor) - a three-quarter portrait of a lady, of the time of Charles II.

White dressing room (First Floor) - a three-quarter portrait of Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I.

Chintz bedroom (First Floor) - a three-quarter portrait of Sir Richard Wenman, in a black dress.

Dressing room (First Floor) - a half-length portrait of a lady in a brown dress.



Appendix 5. NORTH WING EVALUATION REPORT

Strutt and Parker

North Wing Evaluation. Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

Pre-Planning Assessment

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February 2001**

North Wing Evaluation. Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

Pre-Planning Assessment

Prepared by: D. Sykes
A. Croft

Date: January 2001

Checked by: A. Croft

Date: January 2001

Approved by:

Date:

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February 2001



North Wing, Thame Park

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation in the North Wing of Thame Park, a Grade 1 listed building, on behalf of Strutt and Parker. The evaluation revealed extensive archaeological deposits of potential medieval and post-medieval origin including multiple wall lines and some limited artefactual evidence, which confirmed the medieval occupation of the structure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Location and scope of work*

1.1.1 In January 2001 OAU carried out a field evaluation in the North Wing of Thame Park on behalf of Strutt and Parker as part of a pre-planning assessment program 2000 based on a WSI drawn up by OAU (OAU 2001). The work consisted of opening up two trenches, measuring 3m by 2m and 2m by 2m respectively, within the eastern half of the North Wing.

1.2 *Geology and topography*

1.2.1 Thame Park (SP 7172 0377) is situated approximately 1 mile south of Thame, lying on a flat river plain which is bordered to the south and east by the Chiltern hills (Figure 1). The park is generally flat in nature with rising ground to south of the house and also across the extent of New Park to the south-east.

1.2.2 Thame Park is situated on a geological drift boundary between the Gault formation of grey mudstone with sporadic layers of phosphatic nodules and pebbles, and the geologically more recent deposit of clay head. A band of Alluvium runs on an approximate north to south alignment through Thame Park. (BGS 1994 sheet 237).

1.2.3 The excavation took place within a standing structure situated at approximately 75m OD. The basic geology consists of younger Clay head drift deposits overlying Gault formations. (BGS 1994 sheet 237).

1.3 *Archaeological background*

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a desk based study which is currently ongoing (OAU 2001). The results from this evaluation have been incorporated into that study and this report appears as an independent appendix at the rear of the main archaeological assessment report for the Thame Park site.

1.3.2 The evaluation trenches were located within a verified medieval building, now a Grade 1 listed structure, that is possibly part of the infirmary cloister range of the Cistercian abbey that once occupied the site. The purpose of the trenches was to determine whether significant deposits from that period, or later periods, were located below a recent concrete floor.

1.3.3 Full details about the nature, character and extent of the building and the surrounding archaeological and historical background of the site can be found in the main report.

1.4 *Acknowledgements*

1.4.1 Thanks to Symm and Co. for their technical engineering and site support. Also to William Laughlin and Michael Randles for arranging access, supplying facilities and general help.



2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 Summary

- 2.1.1 The principal aims of the evaluation were to determine the nature, extent, character and complexity of any archaeological deposits that may have existed beneath the late twentieth century concrete floor of the North Wing. The results from the evaluation could then be used to influence the findings of the Building Assessment, Desk Based Assessment and the potential development plans for the property.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches within the North Wing (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 *Trench 1*, a 2m x 2m trench in the north east corner of the existing building,
- 3.1.3 *Trench 2* a 3m x 2m (north-south to east-west) trench located just west of the central hearth,
- 3.1.4 The overlying concrete slab in each case was removed under archaeological supervision.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated and cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their nature and extent and also to retrieve artefactual evidence. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated, their sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film.
- 3.2.2 Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).
- 3.2.3 Trench 1 incorporated an earlier test pit in its north eastern corner that was probably excavated for the purposes of examining the foundations at some time prior to OAU's involvement with the project. This measured 0.75 x 1.2m (east-west - north-south). This was fully cleaned and recorded before Trench 1 was extended.

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and recorded by context where possible.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site is located within the existing north wing of Thame Park House. Ground conditions were good.



5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.88m below the top of the concrete slab (Figure 3). Natural alluvial clay was encountered from a depth of 0.7m (context 106). This was overlain by a “dirty” natural (context 105) containing slightly more silt and c.5% charcoal content, this was the earliest deposit of archaeological significance.
- 5.1.2 Context 111, a stub of roughly coursed limestone wall, located in the south-east corner of the trench appears to have been constructed in an unseen construction cut/trench which cut through contexts 105 and 106. Wall 111 measured >0.6m by >0.8m and >0.5m deep. This was faced on the north side and bonded with a reddish sand/clay mortar/bonding agent. The wall continues both to the south (under wall 110) and to the east (under wall 107). The construction of both walls 110 (south) and 107 (east) (construction cuts 116 and 108 respectively) have truncated and overlain wall 111. On the west side a “robber” cut (context 118) has truncated wall 111 a third time, leaving fill 119 - a mixture of clay/mortar and small (unusable?) limestone rubble.
- 5.1.3 A layer of limestone rubble (context 120) extended approximately 0.5m into the trench from the east facing section, sloping down from north to south for c.1.1m to where it has been truncated by an east-west linear cut (113). Cut 113 has also truncated wall robber cut 118 and fill 119. Only the north side of this cut was visible. It also appears to follow the line of the north face of 111. This cut was not bottomed.
- 5.1.4 Fill 114 and deposit 120 were overlain by a clay/lime mortar/limestone rubble layer 104, in turn cut by 116, an east-west aligned flat-bottomed linear construction cut for wall 110.
- 5.1.5 Wall 110, up to 0.3m deep, consisting of one to three courses, ran east to west at the southern edge of Trench 1 with up to 0.15m of its width exposed, continuing into the north-facing section. This was constructed of fairly well squared limestone blocks bonded with a whitish-grey lime mortar. This wall continued into section to the west, where it was abutted by layer 112 (a silty clay with charcoal and mortar inclusions) and overlain by deposit 109, redeposited “natural”. To the east this wall was truncated by north-south construction cut 108.
- 5.1.6 Cut 108 truncated walls 111 and 110. Cut 108 is related to the foundations 107 that form part of the existing building. Wall foundation 107 was constructed from irregularly coursed limestone blocks and formed the eastern and part of the northern boundary of the trench. Wall foundation 107 abutted wall 110 and both abutted and partly overlaid wall 111.
- 5.1.7 A make-up layer 103 covered wall 110 and the rest of the trench, which was then sealed by aggregate 102 and finally a concrete slab 101.

5.2 Trench 2

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.82m below the top of the late twentieth century concrete slab (Figure 4).
- 5.2.2 The natural alluvial clay (context 225) was encountered from a depth of 0.55m. Overlying this was a make-up/leveling layer 224, for floor surface 223. This was 30mm thick and composed of limestone fragments and lime mortar. This extended 1.78m from the southern edge of the trench (within the sondage along the east facing section) where it was truncated by construction cut 219.



- 5.2.3 Cut 219, a steep sided linear cut for the east-west aligned wall 218, was not bottomed but was at least 0.5m deep (i.e 0.82m from top of concrete slab) and greater than 0.90m wide (north-south). Wall 218, within this cut (219), was also not bottomed but measured >0.48m high by >0.40m wide (north-south) by >0.60m long. This was constructed of roughly hewn limestone blocks, randomly coursed and bonded with a clay-rich earth mortar. This wall was faced on the south (exposed) side. The construction cut 219 was sealed by layer 203. A robber cut (221), cut through 203 and truncated wall 218 at a depth of 0.35m below the top of the concrete slab. This was back-filled with 220.
- 5.2.4 A sub-circular cut 205, cut through 220, contained hearth 204, which consisted of limestone fragments and a charcoal-rich clay/silt deposit.
- 5.2.5 Cut 213, an east-west aligned parallel-sided linear construction cut, running roughly through the centre of the trench, cut both 203 to the north and dump deposit 226 to the south. This (cut 213) contained wall 212 which sat upon a clay levelling/base 216. Wall 212 was made of squarely-hewn limestone blocks laid end to end in a single course wide ($\leq 0.22\text{m}$), of which just one course high.
- 5.2.6 At the eastern edge of the trench, running into the section, wall footing 206 sat in construction cut 208. This cut ran north-south truncating the eastern end of wall 212. Wall footing 206 consisted of single course of red bricks (200mm by 110mm by 70mm), laid flat, side by side, bonded with a white lime mortar, overlain in part with the remnants of a slate damp-proof course.
- 5.2.7 A north-west/south-east aligned pipe trench truncated 206 in the north-east corner of the trench. A trample layer 214, aggregate 202 and concrete slab 201 sealed the trench.

5.3 Finds

5.3.1 Pottery

5.3.2 The following were recovered during the evaluation:

- *Medieval Grey Sandy Ware* (MK MS3). Mid 11th – late 14th century.
- *Brill/Boarstall Ware* (MK MC9). 1200-?1600. 2sherds, 122 g.
- *Oxford ware*: L 11th – 14th century. Oxfordshire fabric OXY (Mellor 1994). Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. 1 sherd, 9 g.
- A single sherd (41g) of residual Romano-British Greyware was noted in context 109.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	RB		MS3		MC9		OXY		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
103					1	120			15thC?*
104					1	2			13thC?
105			1	28					M11thC?
109	1	41					1	9	L11thC?
Total	1	41	1	28	2	122	1	9	

* Dated on form grounds



5.3.3 With the exception of the Roman sherd, all the pottery was medieval. The large sherd of Brill / Boarstall-type ware from context 103 is from an internally glazed pancheon, a typical 15th or 16th century product of the industry.

5.3.4 **Ceramic Building Materials**

- Two Floor tiles (context 203) -late 14th century AD.
- One Floor tile fragment (context 103) - late 13th / early 14th century AD.

5.3.5 These are provisional dates and may require revision in light of more detailed analysis and examination.

5.4 ***Environmental Remains***

5.4.1 No deposits considered suitable for environmental analysis were encountered.



6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 *Reliability of field investigation*

6.1.1 Excavation in both trenches revealed well stratified sequences of deposits, including multiple phases of wall / floor construction. A fair but limited amount of dating evidence from secure contexts has been retrieved, mostly in the form of building materials.

6.2 *Summary of results: TRENCH 1*

6.2.1 Trench 1 was located within the internal north-east corner of an existing addition to the north wing, presumed to be of late 19th century AD date. The construction of this building has truncated two earlier phases of wall construction, contexts 110 and 111. The earlier of these two walls (111) having been truncated and surmounted by wall 110. Wall 111 is cut through a disturbed clay deposit (105) down into the clay natural. This deposit (105) is of interest as it obviously predates the wall cut through it and therefore the stratigraphic sequence above it. One base sherd of sand tempered pottery was retrieved from this deposit (105) and has been dated from the mid 11th to 14th centuries AD.

6.2.2 Assuming that this pottery date is correct, then the *terminus post quem* afforded by this date fits well with the presumed medieval origins of the North Wing. It is a possibility therefore that one or indeed both of the earlier walls in this trench could be contemporary with the Cistercian Abbey. Although the walls could be considered to be situated too far east to be part of the 'cloister range', the possibility of them forming part of an adjoining/conjoining structure cannot be ruled out at present.

6.3 *Summary of results: TRENCH 2*

6.3.1 At the east edge of Trench 2 is a north-south orientated red brick wall footing (206). The size and style of the bricks and the fact that they are surmounted by a slate damp-proof course indicates a 19th or 20th century date. The line of the wall corresponds to one recorded in Steane and Taylor's article on Thame Park (Steane and Taylor 1987).

6.3.2 The rather crude hearth positioned to the north of the wall is cut through similar deposits and is assumed to be of a corresponding date, although perhaps slightly earlier than the partition wall (206).

6.3.3 The two east-west aligned walls in Trench 2 are of potential significance.

6.3.4 The uppermost wall in the stratigraphic sequence (212) is a relatively recent construction compared to the cloister wall and undoubtedly has a later construction date. Also the wall is too ephemeral in nature to be anything more than a partition and probably served as such, creating a corridor between it and the cloister wall some 1.5m to the south.

6.3.5 The larger of the two walls (218) located over 2.5m to the north of the cloister wall would seem substantial enough to be load bearing, it could also be contemporary with the external wall to the south. However, the presence of two floor layers (223 and 222) to the south of wall 218 (with floor 223 running into section and possibly butting the cloister wall), being cut by the construction of 218, means that such a relationship is unclear.

6.3.6 It is also possible that wall 218 is related to wall 111 in Trench 1, but this relationship is speculative.



6.4 Significance

- 6.4.1 The evaluation has revealed a series of potentially very significant deposits in terms of understanding the construction and utilisation of the structure throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. The excavation and disturbance of these deposits during the evaluation has been necessarily limited to protect the integrity of the archaeological resource. Therefore it is not yet possible to develop any detailed understanding of the development of the structure and its overall significance

7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1.1 As of yet (29th of January 2001) no detailed development plans have been drawn up.
- 7.1.2 Any development inside the North Wing would require detailed archaeological mitigation due to the nature and significance of the deposits.
- 7.1.3 The potential archaeological knowledge that could be gained through this process would be considerable.

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APPENDIX 1

Archaeological Context Inventory

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	101	Layer		0.1	Modern concrete slab			
	102	Layer		0.20	Modern aggregate			
	103	Layer		<0.10	Charcoal/sandy clay	CBM- late C 13 th -early C14 th .		
	104	Layer		<0.18	Lime mortar/clay	CBM		
	105	Layer		<0.28	“Dirty” natural	Pot-?C11 th -C14 th .		
	106	Layer			Natural			
	107	Struct	>0.3	>0.70	Wall foundation			
	108	Cut	>0.3	>0.70	Construction cut for 107			
	109	Layer		<0.10	Redeposited natural	Pot/CBM		
	110	Struct	>0.10	<0.30	E-W wall			
	111	Struct	>0.80	>0.50	Wall stub			
	112	Layer		<0.06	Charcoal/Clay			
	113	Cut	>0.06	>0.15	E-W cut			
	114	Fill	>0.06	>0.15	Fill of 113	CBM		
	115	Fill		>.0.15	Fill of 108			
	116	Cut	>0.80	0.10	Construction cut for 110			
	117	Fill	>0.65	0.10	Fill of 116			
	118	Cut	0.60	0.50	Robber cut for 111			
	119	Fill		0.50	Fill of 118	Pot/CBM		
	120	Layer		<0.18	Rubble layer			
002								
	201	Layer		<0.10	Modern concrete			
	202	Layer		<0.10	Modern aggregate			
	203	Layer		0.15	Dump deposit	Bone/CBM- late C 13 th		
	204	Struct	</= 0.75	?	Hearth			



	205	Cut	≤ 0.75	?	Cut for hearth			
	206	Struct	> 0.20	0.15	C19 ? partition wall			
	207	Fill		> 0.15	Fill of 208			
	208	Cut	> 0.30	?	Construction cut for 207			
	209	Service			Mod. Pipe trench			
	210	Layer			Damp proof course			
	211	Fill		< 0.10	Fill of 213			
	212	Struct	≤ 0.22	≤ 0.18	Wall			
	213	Cut	1.00	≤ 0.22	Construction cut for 212			
	214	Layer		< 0.04	Make-up/trample			
	215	Fill		< 0.10	Fill of 213			
	216	Fill		0.05	Fill of 213			
	217	Fill	< 0.50	> 0.50	Fill of 219	CBM		
	218	Struct	> 0.40	> 0.50	East-west wall			
	219	Cut	> 0.90	> 0.50	Construction cut for 218			
	220	Fill	> 0.80	< 0.24	Fill of 221			
	221	Cut	> 0.80	< 0.24	Robber cut for 218			
	222	Layer		0.08	Levelling/floor			
	223	Layer		≤ 0.04	Floor			
	224	Layer		< 0.30	Levelling for 223			
	225	Layer		< 0.30	Natural			
	226	Layer		< 0.22	Dump deposit			



APPENDIX 2

Pottery assessment/ spot dating

by Paul Blinkhorn

Details

The pottery assemblage comprised 5 sherds with a total weight of 200g. Where appropriate, the pottery coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series was used (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

Medieval Grey Sandy Ware (MK MS3). Mid 11th – late 14th century.

Brill/Boarstall Ware (MK MC9). 1200-?1600. 2sherds, 122 g.

In addition, the following was noted:

Oxford ware: L 11th – 14th century. Oxfordshire fabric OXY (Mellor 1994). Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. 1 sherd, 9 g.

A single sherd (41g) of residual Romano-British Greyware was noted in context 109.

Contexts 4 and 5 each produced a single small sherd of glazed medieval tile, but no pottery.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	RB		MS3		MC9		OXY		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
103					1	120			15thC?*
104					1	2			13thC?
105			1	28					M11thC?
109	1	41					1	9	L11thC?
Total	1	41	1	28	2	122	1	9	

* Dated on form grounds

Chronology

With the exception of the Roman sherd, all the pottery was medieval. The large sherd of Brill / Boarstall-type ware from context 103 is from an internally glazed pancheon, a typical 15th or 16th century product of the industry.



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APPENDIX 3

Summary of Site Details

Site name:	North Wing Evaluation, Thame Park
Site code:	THAPK01
Grid reference	SP 7166 0375
Type of evaluation:	Trenches
Date and duration of project:	8 th of January 2001, 5 days
Area of site:	10 square metres
Summary of results:	Two trenches were excavated inside a standing 13 th /14 th century AD monastic structure. They revealed a series of complex stratified deposits including six independent wall lines, at least two floor layers, one hearth and limited artefactual evidence in the form of probable medieval floor tiles. Many of the contexts are probably post-medieval in date and relate to the continued usage of the building up to and including the present day.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: <i>Forthcoming</i>

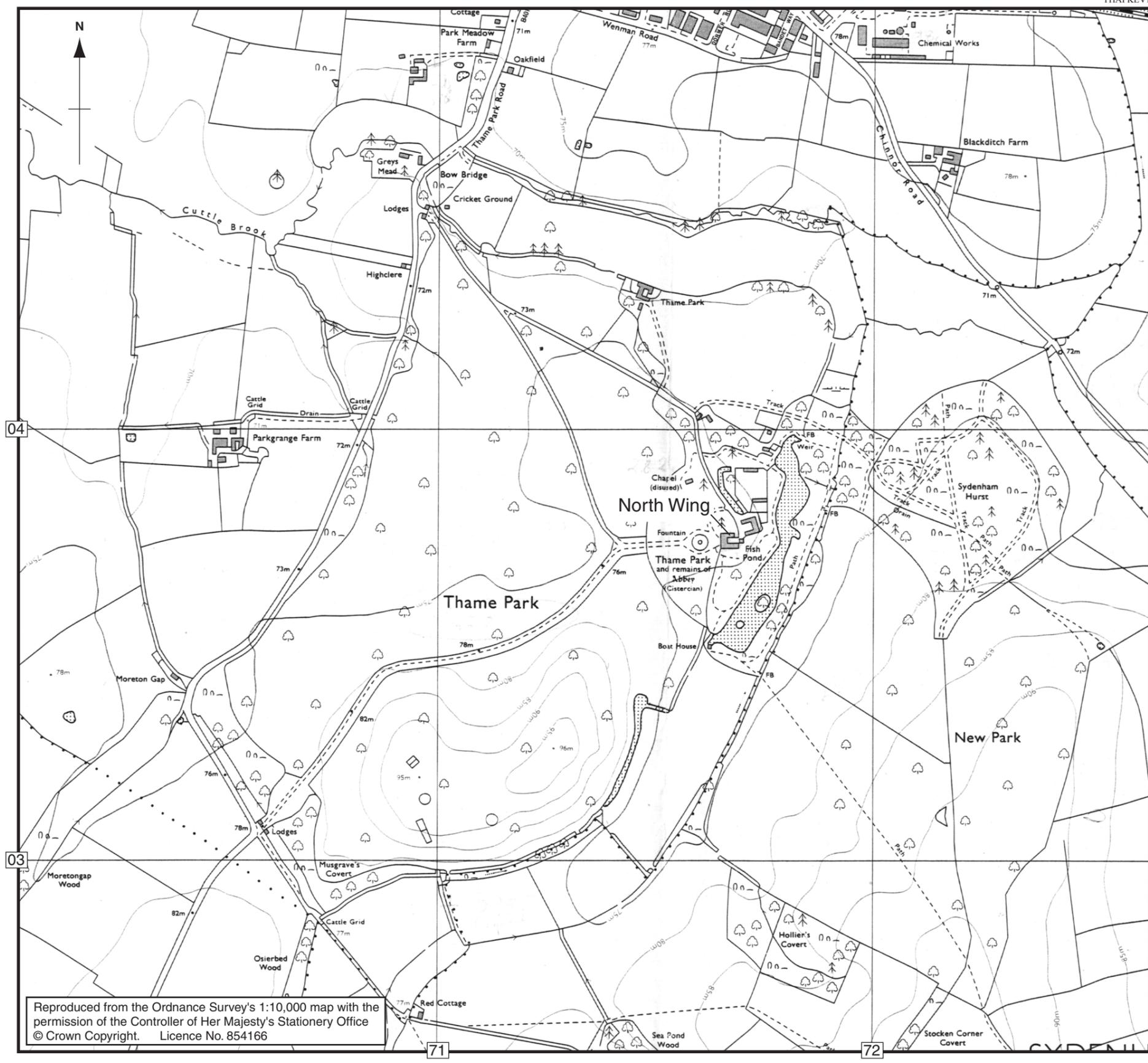


Figure 1: Site location plan

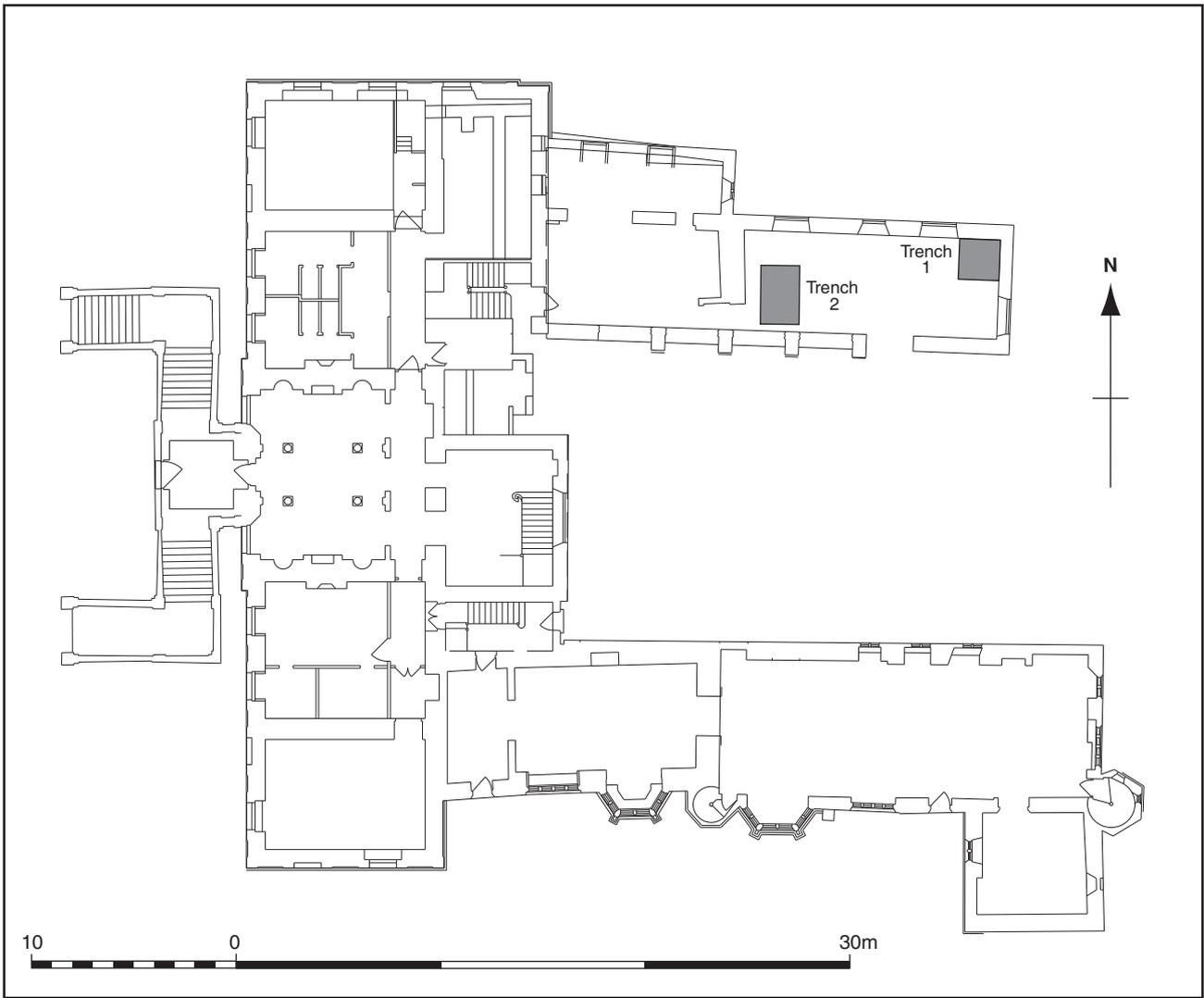
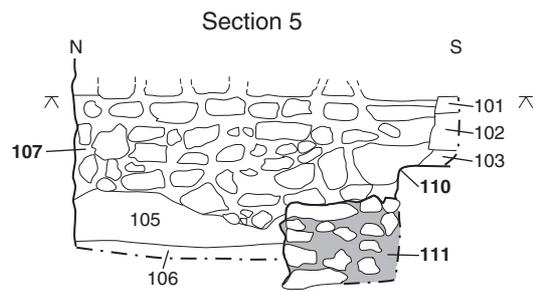
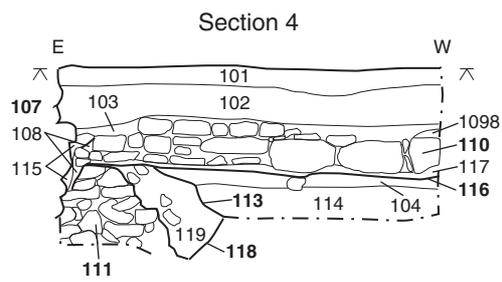
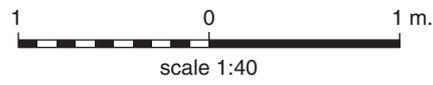
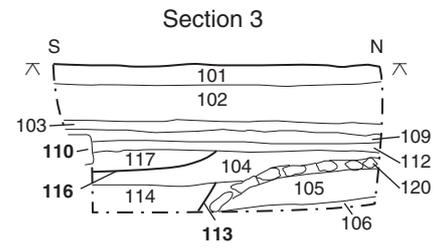
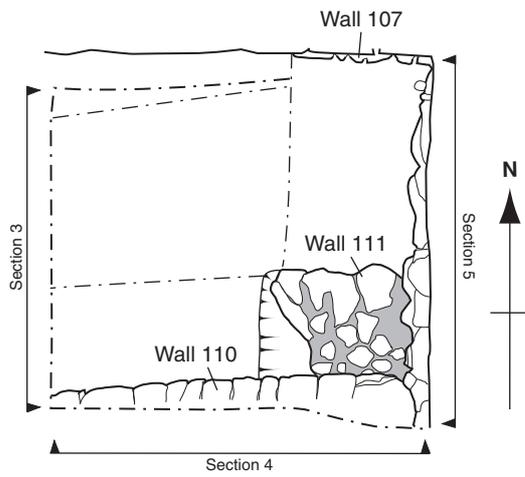


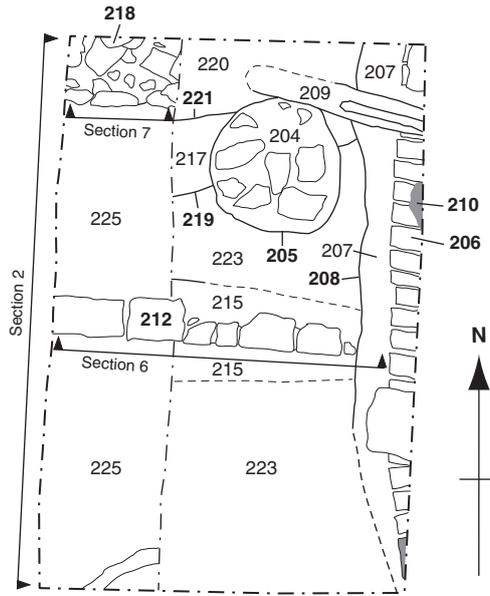
Figure 2: Trench locations

Trench 1 Plan

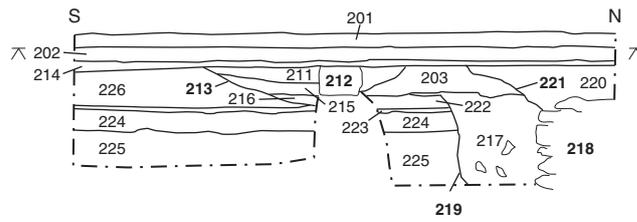


Figures 3: Trench 1 plan and sections

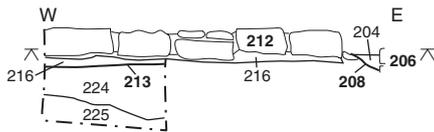
Trench 2 Plan



Section 2



Section 6



Section 7

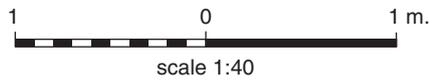
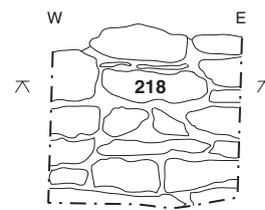


Figure 4: Trench 2 plan and sections



Appendix 6. ELECTRIC CABLE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Strutt and Parker

**Electric Cable from Stable to Chapel, Thame Park,
Oxfordshire.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

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February 2001

**Electric Cable from Stable to Chapel, Thame Park,
Oxfordshire.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

Prepared by: M. Bradley Date: January 2001
Checked by: A. Croft Date: January 2001
Approved by: Date:



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Summary

In January 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief as part of on-site works at Thame Park. The watching brief monitored the topsoil reduction and excavation of an electric cable trench from the potentially medieval chapel to the stable block, see Figure 1. Some potential archaeological features were observed and recorded. These were not excavated as they lay below the impact of the trench.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 As part of the on-site works at Thame Park an electric cable was excavated from the stable block to the chapel (Figure 1). The trench followed the line of the existing driveway to the stable block, cutting across the lawns to the chapel by the shortest route to minimise potential impacts. The route of the trench crossed a probable boundary ditch (OAU 6 see main report) of the medieval deer park, adjacent to the driveway and potential structures and burials adjacent to the chapel.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 For the archaeological background to the site see the main report.

3 AIMS

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken by means of on-site inspection; all digging was undertaken by mechanical excavator.
- 4.1.2 Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the features and deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, and also recorded by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on *proforma* sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Section A - see figure 1

- 5.1.1 The stretch of trench beside the driveway revealed tarmac (017) over made ground (016) consisting of sand and hardcore from its' construction. Part of a brick wall (015) was revealed, but appeared to have been dumped in as part of the hardcore and not *in situ*. A sample of the wall was taken.

5.2 Section B - see figures 1 and 2

- 5.2.1 Where the trench cut across to the chapel from the driveway a general stratigraphic sequence was revealed of made ground (003), consisting of light yellowish grey silty clay with small quantities of building material present, overlain by a mid yellowish brown silty clay (002), overlain in turn by modern topsoil (001). There was no impact below the made ground.



- 5.2.2 The top of an existing culvert was revealed, the outlet of which was visible 5m to the north, 4.2m to the east of the driveway. A 1.36m wide discreet deposit of mixed red brick and tile (008) was exposed 3.2m to the east of the culvert. A structure of some kind may lie immediately underneath this.
- 5.2.3 Next to the chapel a general construction debris layer (009, 010, 011, 012 & 013) was revealed consisting of mid yellow brown silty clay which produced a substantial quantity of building material.
- 5.2.4 This layer abutted a number of concentrated dumps of building material, consisting of mostly of tile (006, 007), 0.4m and 0.45m wide, and 16.7m and 4.3m west of the chapel respectively. These concentrations were visible in both sections of the trench and may overlie walls or structures. These were all truncated by the mid yellowish brown silty clay layer (002), suggesting this layer is deliberately made ground dating from, at the earliest, the restoration of the chapel (c.AD1830). The debris layer probably also dates from this restoration. Samples of building material were taken from these deposits.
- 5.2.5 Two walls (004, 005) were also found within 0.64m of each other and 14m west of the chapel. These were of similar construction, consisting of irregularly faced, roughly hewn, mid grey sandstone blocks with a light yellow core, of 0.1-0.3m diameter, loosely bonded with a mid yellow brown silty clay. Both were 0.8m wide and running north-south. These may represent the top of a culvert or possibly foundation walls, although no foundation cuts were visible.
- 5.2.6 These were also abutted by the debris layer (009-013) and truncated by the mid yellowish brown silty clay layer (002), suggesting a partial destruction contemporary with the debris layer (009-013). Samples of building material were also taken from these walls, including a piece of glazed tile immediately on top of wall 004.
- 5.2.7 A further brick wall (014), with 0.8 by 0.4m visible in section, was found butting a stairway leading down to a crypt entrance on the north side of the chapel. This consisted of a mixed stretcher and header bond, four bricks wide, of light red bricks with a slightly lighter core with dimensions of 0.08 by 0.04 by 0.1m, with a light yellow grey mortar matrix 0.01m wide, no pointing was evident and there was no visible foundation trench. This was also abutted by the debris layer (009-013) and overlain by the mid yellowish brown silty clay layer (002), and seemed to be part of the integral structure of the chapel, probably dating from its' restoration.

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 Samples were taken of tile and other building material from a number of deposits as outlined above. However these were too fragmentary for a specific date to be given.
- 6.1.2 The tile consisted exclusively of flat roofing material of 12th to 20th century date.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

- 7.1.1 No environmental soil samples were taken as no suitable deposits were observed.



8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1.1 Although a number of potential archaeological features have been recorded within the trench, these have not been compromised due to the limited impact of the trench. No archaeological features were evident along the driveway or at the stable end of the trench as this had already been disturbed by the construction of the driveway.
- 8.1.2 Two walls, which may represent a culvert were found near the church, but appeared to have been disturbed and truncated by the Victorian restoration of the chapel. All other deposits around the chapel appeared to be of Victorian date, and result from construction debris from the restoration of the chapel.
- 8.1.3 No further evidence of the boundary ditch was recovered because of the low impact of the trench.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed.) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

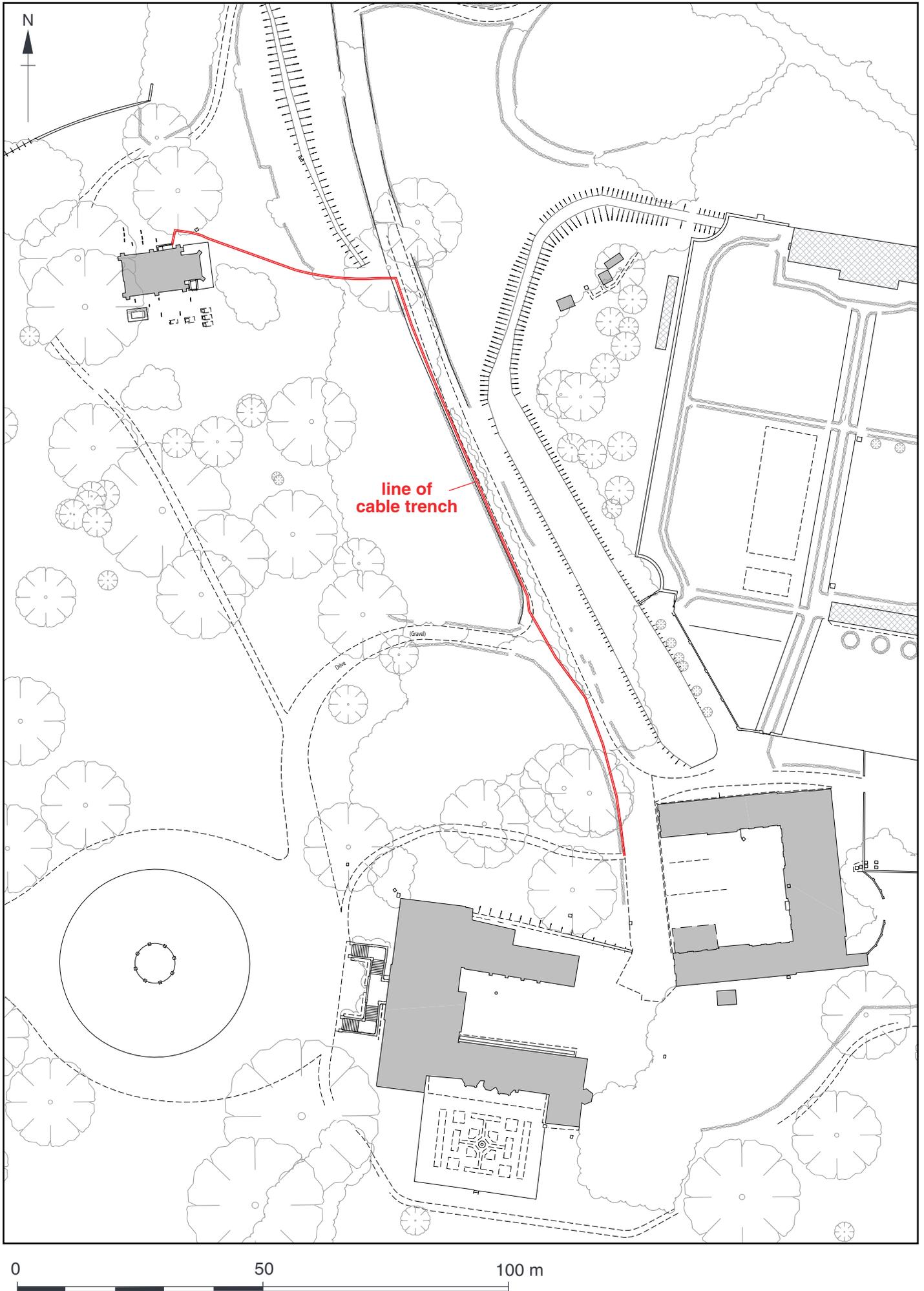


Figure 1: Site location

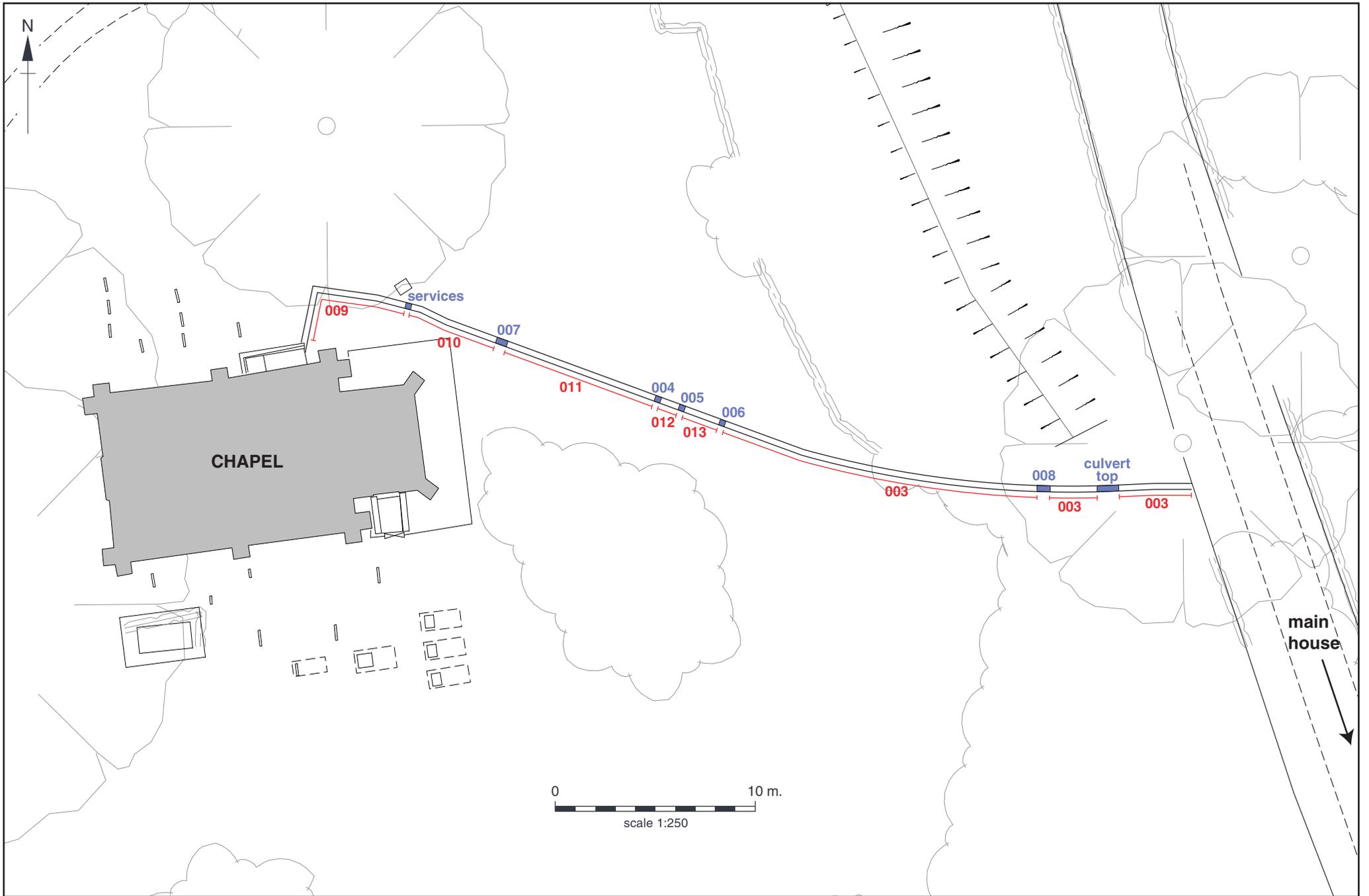


Figure 2: Site map showing contexts recorded



Appendix 7. KITCHEN GARDEN ASSESSMENT REPORT

Strutt and Parker

Kitchen Garden. Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

NGR SP 7170 0385

Pre-Planning Assessment

**© OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
February 2001**

Kitchen Garden. Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

NGR SP 7170 0385

Pre-Planning Assessment

Prepared by: A. Croft

Date: February 2001

Checked by: A. Croft

Date: February 2001

Approved by: J. Munby

Date: February 2001



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Summary

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a Desk Based Assessment and Geophysical Survey of the Walled Kitchen Gardens at Thame Park, Oxfordshire on behalf of Strutt and Parker. This was designed to answer pre-planning questions in connection with the potential development of the southern annexe of the kitchen garden.

The research revealed approximately four phases of construction dating from at least the 18th century. No archaeological deposits associated with the monastic period were located within the bounds of the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location

- 1.1.1 Thame Park is situated approximately 1 mile south of Thame, lying on a flat river plain which is bordered to the south and east by the Chiltern hills (see Figure 1). The park is generally flat in nature with rising ground to south of the house and also across the extent of New Park to the south-east.
- 1.1.2 The kitchen gardens lie north-east of the main house at Thame Park and consist of a walled garden of approximately 1 hectare in area.

1.2 Geology

- 1.2.1 Thame Park is situated on a geological drift boundary between the Gault formation of grey mudstone, and the geologically more recent deposit of clay head. A band of Alluvium runs on an approximate north to south alignment through Thame Park (BGS 1994 sheet 237). The kitchen gardens are situated on the clay head deposits.

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 The proposed development lies in the walled kitchen gardens (a grade II listed structure) within the curtilage of a Grade 1 listed building, Thame Park Mansion. The site is also part of a grade II Registered Park and Garden.
- 1.3.2 The Thame Park estate has a long history of occupation and usage stretching back to at least the 11th century AD when the site probably formed part of a deer park. The primary phase of archaeological interest lies in its usage as the site of a Cistercian abbey from c. 1138 to 1536. Some structures from this period still survive at the rear of the house. After the dissolution of monasteries the site became a private residence and has remained in private hands until the present day.
- 1.3.3 The house and probably the parkland landscape were extensively remodelled from c.1750 until the early part of the twentieth century. This remodelling is reflected in the history of the kitchen gardens.
- 1.3.4 A more detailed account of the estate's development and history can be found in the main report.

1.4 Proposed development

- 1.4.1 The development is currently envisaged as involving the construction of an outdoor swimming pool with associated services and works, accompanied by the renovation and conversion of a glasshouse into changing room facilities.



1.5 Nature and structure of archaeological investigation

- 1.5.1 The project involved two stages namely desk-based assessment and geophysical survey. The desk-based assessment was carried out by OAU during January 2001. The geophysical survey was conducted by Alistair Bartlett, an experienced geophysicist, during the week of the 29th of January 2001.
- 1.5.2 This report forms the primary output of that process and is designed to present the results for the purposes of informing pre-planning decisions in connection with the development within a small annexe of the kitchen garden (see Figure 2). A further detailed geophysical report will be presented in early March 2001 when the continuing programme of geophysical survey has been completed.
- 1.5.3 The findings of report presented here have been included within the main report of which this report forms an appendix. This report is not designed to replace any planning requirements that may be required by the relevant authority.

2 DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

2.1 Methodology

- 2.1.1 The desk-based assessment involved the detailed examination of already identified sources, as outlined below, with particular reference to all available mapping information. It also involved a detailed field inspection of the kitchen gardens.
- 2.1.2 The project was managed by Andrew Croft, Research Officer OAU, who also undertook the majority of the research. Further assistance was supplied by Jill Hind (OAU) and Susan Reeve (OAU), both experienced Research Assistants.

2.2 Sources consulted

- 2.2.1 The following sources were consulted:

Lee, F.G. 1888 The Abbey and Mansion House of Thame Park in *Building News*
1888, 30th March. p455-57
The Twopenny papers at the British Museum
Davis's Map of Oxfordshire 1797
Ordnance Survey drawing of 1811
Ordnance Survey map of 1830 1" to the mile
Ordnance Survey map of 1881 6" 1st ed.
Ordnance Survey map of 1920 6" 2nd ed.
Sale Particulars 1925 agents Knight, Frank and Rutley
Sale Particulars c.1983 agents Knight, Frank and Rutley

- 2.2.2 The assessment also included a detailed examination of the Kitchen gardens along with a comprehensive photographic record of the structural features. These photographs are currently held by OAU.

2.3 Results and discussion

- 2.3.1 The results of the desk based assessment can be broken down into two sections, firstly an analysis of the potential phasing and development of the kitchen gardens and secondly a partial description of the gardens in 1925 based on the sale particulars.



2.4 *Phases of Construction*

- 2.4.1 The development and phasing of the garden development is more complex than the uniform brick walled interior would suggest (see Figure 3). The study has enabled OAU to identify four potential phases of construction within the Kitchen Garden complex.
- 2.4.2 *Phase 1* was probably a rectangular structure along similar lines to the present main body of the garden. This would have had a stone built wall probably with a quadrant layout of paths and beds. This phase is still visible in the kitchen garden today. The majority of the west wall of the garden, on its external face, is probably representative of this phase. Other smaller sections of this earlier wall can be seen at the base of the eastern wall and at the south western corner of the southern greenhouse. In both of these locations the stones marking the line of the earlier wall can be traced running under the present wall.
- 2.4.3 It is currently felt that this phase is probably connected with the redevelopment of the estate by Lord Wenman in the mid 18th century. Another possibility that should be considered is the potential for a monastic origin for elements of this phase.
- 2.4.4 *Phase 2* involved a radical and substantial overhaul and remodelling of the garden. This phase involved the rebuilding of all the walls in brick, the construction of the concave corners and probably the building of the northern greenhouse. This layout seems to be visible on the 1811 Ordnance Survey drawing, however the poor quality of reproduction makes this interpretation somewhat debatable.
- 2.4.5 The evidence for these first two phases is primarily derived from field inspection. This is especially true of determining the phasing of the concave corners. The junction between the western wall (external face only) and the south-western concave corner can be clearly seen, indicating that this corner was an insert. However internally the brick facing continues uninterrupted around the entirety of the site, potentially indicating continuity between the brick facing and the construction of the corners.
- 2.4.6 Overall it is felt that Phase two occurred in the late 18th / early 19th century.
- 2.4.7 *Phase 3* saw the remodelling of the garden into a form that is recognisable today. The primary events of this phase being the demolition of the southern wall of the rectangular garden and the building of the southern annexe, southern greenhouse and further annexes and greenhouses to the south.
- 2.4.8 This phase is currently felt to have occurred, probably not as a single event, between 1830 and 1881. The latter date is easily established by examination of the 1st edition 25" Ordnance survey map which clearly shows the current garden layout. Unfortunately the 1830 1" 1st edition Ordnance survey map is at an unsuitable scale for detailed analysis. However it does outline the approximate extent of the garden and seems to indicate that it had a rectangular form, although seemingly with convex corners.
- 2.4.9 *Phase 4* involved only a small degree of alteration in the north eastern corner of the southern annexe. Here an ornamental gateway was constructed opening up an entrance between the kitchen gardens and the former formal garden to the east (OAU 25). This involved the partial demolition of a glasshouse.
- 2.4.10 It is likely that this occurred after 1925, when the greenhouse is mentioned in the Sale particulars but before 1936 when the path and gateway appear on an aerial photograph (CCC 5234 / 26878 NMR ref).



- 2.4.11 Overall the phasing of the kitchen gardens is interesting in so much as it identifies a relatively early date for their current form. The southern annexe seems to be a mid 19th century addition perhaps associated with Lady Wenman's rehabilitation of the estate. The main garden is possibly associated with mid-18th century revival under Viscount Wenman. The wall fabric is for the most part contemporaneous with these periods although the west wall is probably comprised of older material, however this may not be in situ.
- 2.4.12 Finally a small feature noted during the examination of the wall fabric is worth mentioning. A carved graffito windmill can be seen on the wall one of the entrances on the western side of the southern annexe (see figure 4). This carving is relatively crude and is although may be ancient in origin it is probably of 18th / 19th century in date. What its purpose was and who carved it is still unknown.

2.5 *1925 Sale Particulars*

2.5.1 The second area of interest mentioned above was the description of the garden structures in the 1925 sale particulars. This brief but detailed description is difficult to directly relate the surviving elements due to the lack of a plan. The 1925 particulars mention three ranges of glass houses:

1. *"... two division Peach and flower house, Peach House, Vinery stocked with Hamburgh, Foster and Alicante vines;"*
2. *"Second vinery, recently replanted with late Alicante;"*
3. *"Peach house, range of six-light cold frames, two twelve-light cold frames and a twelve light heated frame, and three division Melon house, with stoke hole ad Ideal Boiler."*

2.5.2 Figure 4 shows the probable locations of the these three ranges of glasshouses. Although it must be emphasised that this may be incorrect.

2.5.3 The primary interest lies not in the structures but in the surviving plants located in the most northern glasshouse (no. 3). The current structure has living vines and peach (?) that date from at least this period and may be earlier, it is felt that it would be beneficial to maintain and propagate these.

2.6 *Conclusion*

2.6.1 The desk based assessment has demonstrated that the current form of the kitchen garden is at least 120 years old. The majority of the garden complex does seem however to date at least to the early 19th century, hence c.200 years old. With one element, the west wall, perhaps dating to an earlier period in the site's history.

2.6.2 The area planned for development, see figure 1, was enclosed within the gardens at a relatively late date, probably between 1830 and 1881, and as such is not as historical significant as the main area of the garden, it is however an integral element of the garden complex.

2.6.3 Another interesting aspect has been the identification of surviving early twentieth century, or older, plant stock. This presents considerable potential for historically informed garden restoration and heritage plant propagation.

2.6.4 Overall the kitchen gardens, although in a mixed state of repair, are remarkably intact and represent a good example of their type. They merit their listing as a Grade II structure.



3 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The geophysical survey was undertaken by Alistair Bartlett in the week commencing the 29th of January on behalf of OAU. The survey utilised resistivity as the sole geophysical technique as this was felt to supply the best solution to the situation and circumstances encountered.

3.1.2 A more detailed report on the results and methods of the survey will be submitted upon completion of the ongoing programme of geophysical survey. The results discussed here are based on preliminary plots created upon completion of the fieldwork. These results are unlikely to change in any substantial manner upon completion of the forthcoming report. Therefore it is acceptable to draw conclusions from the plots presented here.

3.2 Discussion and Analysis

3.2.1 The results of geophysical survey (see figure 5) revealed no direct evidence of buried archaeological deposits within the bounds of the walled kitchen garden. The small rectangular traces plotted in the southern annexe have been verified in the field to be the visible upstanding remains of formalised planting beds of modern construction.

3.3 Conclusion

3.3.1 The lack of evidence revealed during the geophysical survey does not preclude the possibility of archaeological deposits being present within southern annexe.

3.3.2 The potential for substantial structural or cultural deposits is however reduced by negative results produced.

4 OVERALL CONCLUSION

4.1 Significance, Condition and Archaeological Potential

4.1.1 The kitchen garden walls are currently listed as Grade II structures. The greenhouses and associated structures are currently not listed. The garden complex lies within the curtilage of the Grade I listed mansion and hence forms an integral part of the setting of the site.

4.1.2 The southern annexe forms a significant and substantial part of the present kitchen garden layout but represents a relatively recent addition to the kitchen gardens as a whole. Visually its external layout forms an important aspect of the mansion's setting and should be maintained.

4.1.3 The greenhouse situated along the northern edge of the annexe is in very poor condition and requires conservation and/or restoration. Its character should be preserved as it reflects a major period of change and development in the garden complex. There is potential for the recovery of the earlier Phase 1 and 2 wall lines from beneath the greenhouse should substantial engineering works be carried out.

4.1.4 The archaeological potential for buried deposits within the annexe is difficult to assess at this stage. The lack of identifiable remains from the geophysical survey would indicate that it is unlikely that substantial structural remains or archaeological deposits are located beneath the annexe. However it is possible that some archaeologically significant deposits are present.



4.2 Assessment of Impact

- 4.2.1 At present the exact details of development have not been drawn up. Based on current understandings the development would involve the construction of an outdoor swimming pool of unknown size, associated services and the renovation and conversion of the greenhouse into changing room facilities and general leisure facility.
- 4.2.2 These developments will have an impact upon the identified archaeological resource as well as affecting the setting of a historic building.
- 4.2.3 At present the proposals, if correctly mitigated for, will not adversely affect setting of the mansion. They may affect as of yet unknown archaeological deposits and this will require mitigation.

4.3 Mitigation

- 4.3.1 A detailed mitigation strategy cannot be drawn up without detailed development plans. Some issues can however be raised in respect to the design, nature and extent of the development.
- Firstly no significant alteration to the fabric of the garden walls should be made.
 - The pool should maintain a low profile to prevent visual intrusion.
 - The greenhouse should be restored in a manner sympathetic to the site.
 - The overall layout of the kitchen garden and its relationship to the annexe and main house should not be significantly altered.
 - Archaeological mitigation measures should be employed during and prior to construction due to the potential presence of archaeological deposits.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The kitchen garden complex is a significant and fundamental element of the Thame Park Estate both in terms of its historical value, visual qualities and group value. As such the proposed development will need careful planning to prevent adverse impact.
- 4.4.2 The development as currently envisaged would, with mitigation and informed design, be suitable for the annexe. The enclosed and separate nature of the annexe lends itself to this form of compact and self-contained development. The walls also prevent any significant visual intrusion into the setting of the mansion.
- 4.4.3 Further archaeological evaluation within the annexe may be required prior to any development, this will however be dependent on the exact nature of the development.
- 4.4.4 Overall the desk-based assessment and the geophysical survey has not revealed any archaeological, historical or setting issues significant enough to rule out this form of development based on current understandings of both the archaeological potential and development proposals.



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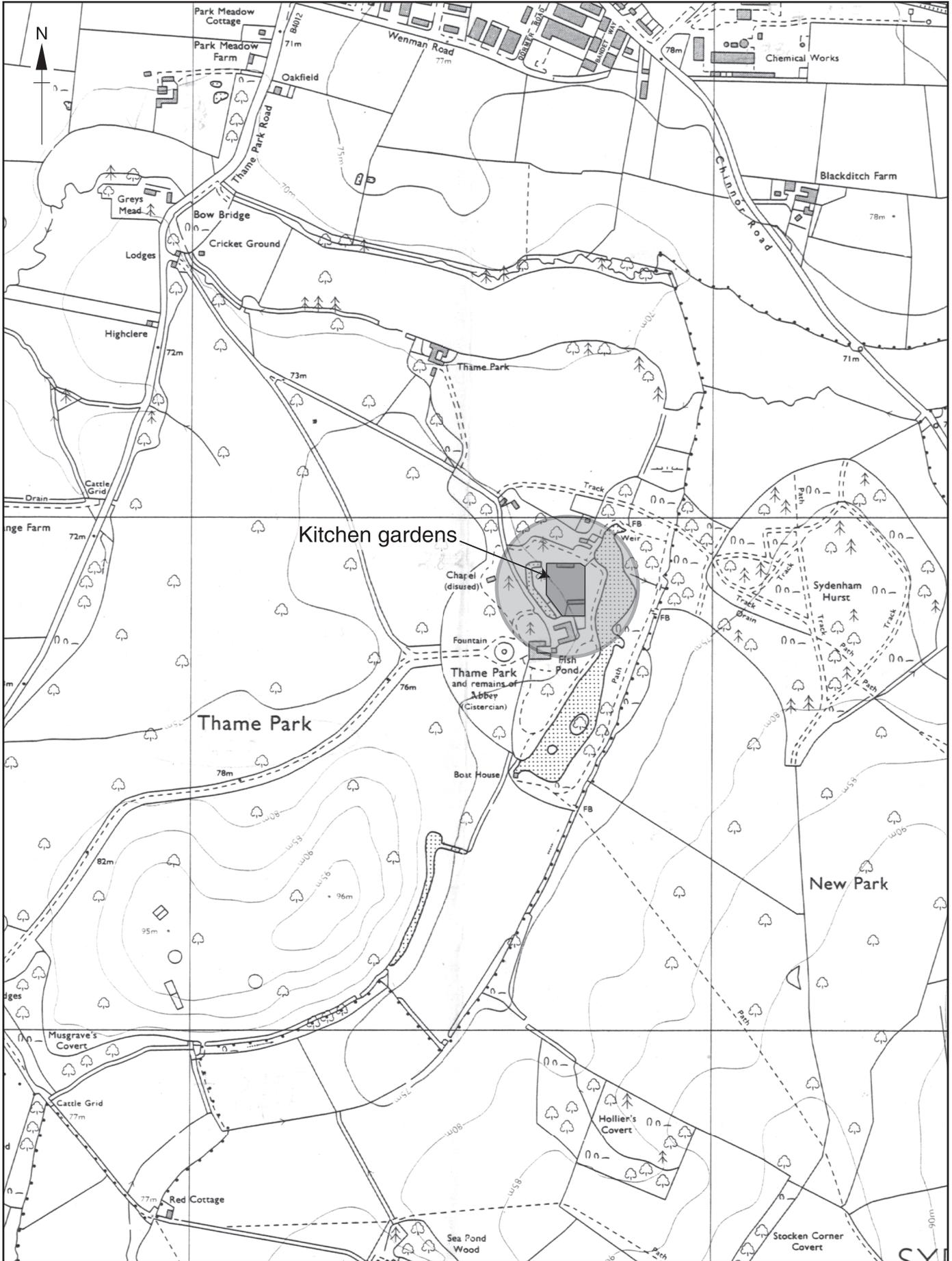
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Thame Park, Oxfordshire, a seat of Mr. W. A. Wykeham-Musgrave in *Country Life* 1909 July-Dec vol. 26: 90-97

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Sale Particulars c.1983 agents Knight, Frank and Rutley
The Twopenny papers at the British Museum
Aerial photographic collection held by the NMR, Swindon

Mapping Sources

- OS 1st edition 25" 1881 Sheet XLI. 7
OS drawing 1811
OS 1st edition 1" to the Mile. 1830 Sheet 13
OS 2nd edition 25" 1920 Sheet XLI. 7
Bryant, *Map of Oxfordshire* 1826
Davies, *Map of Oxfordshire* 1797



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Figure 1: Site location plan

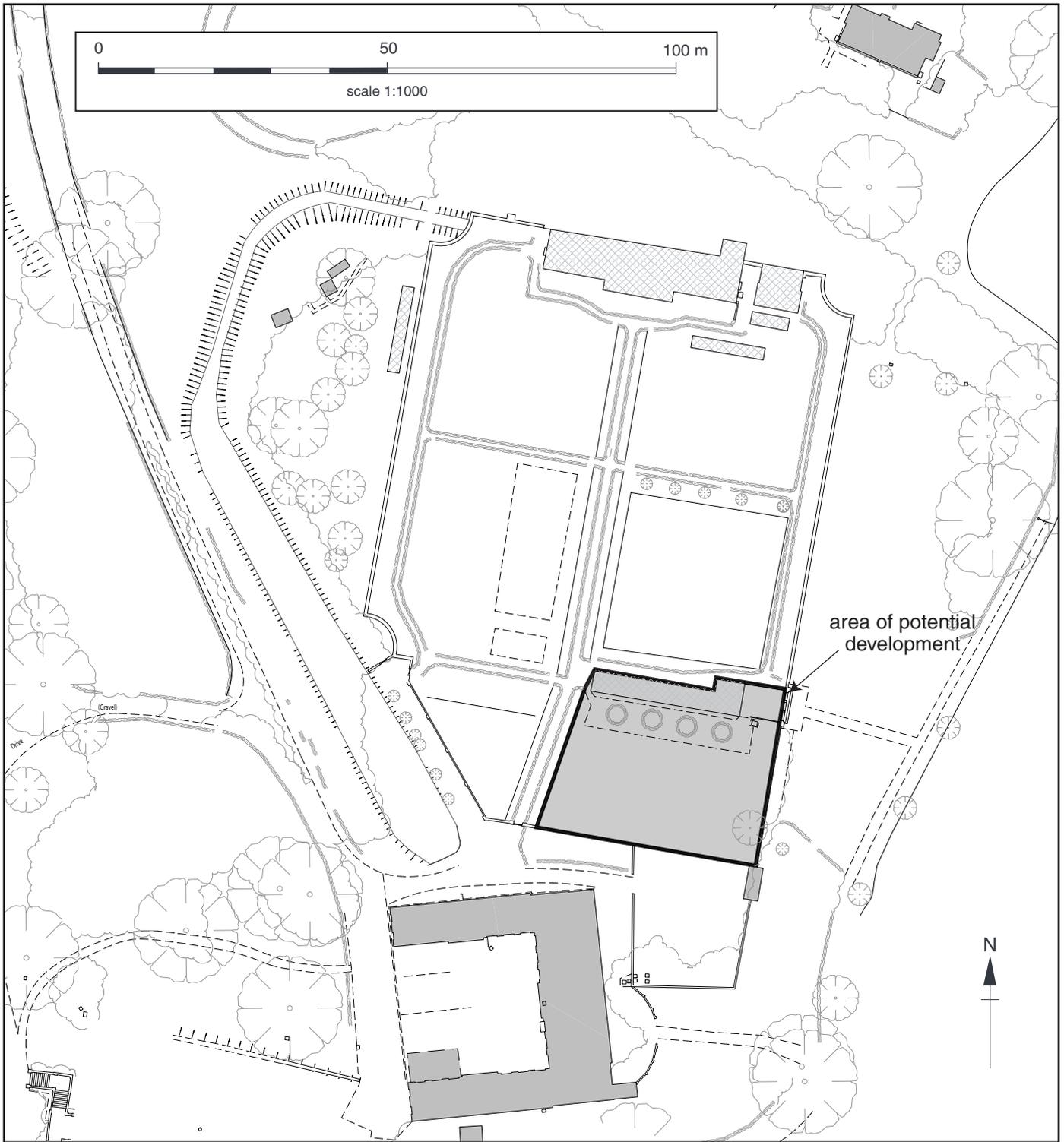
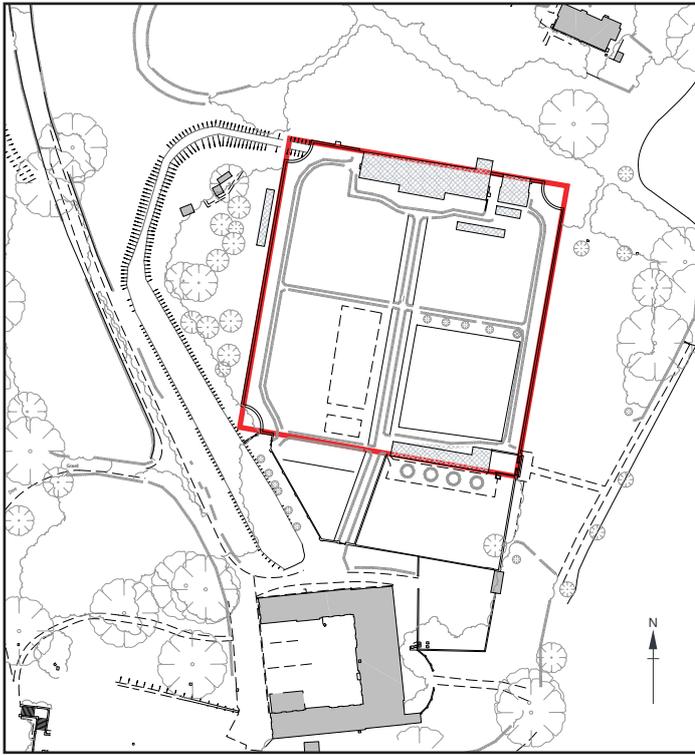
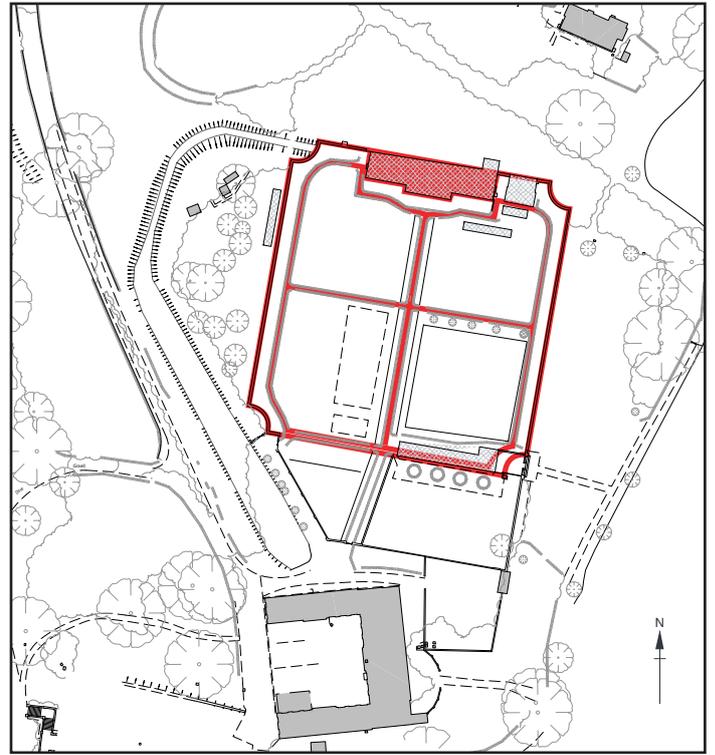


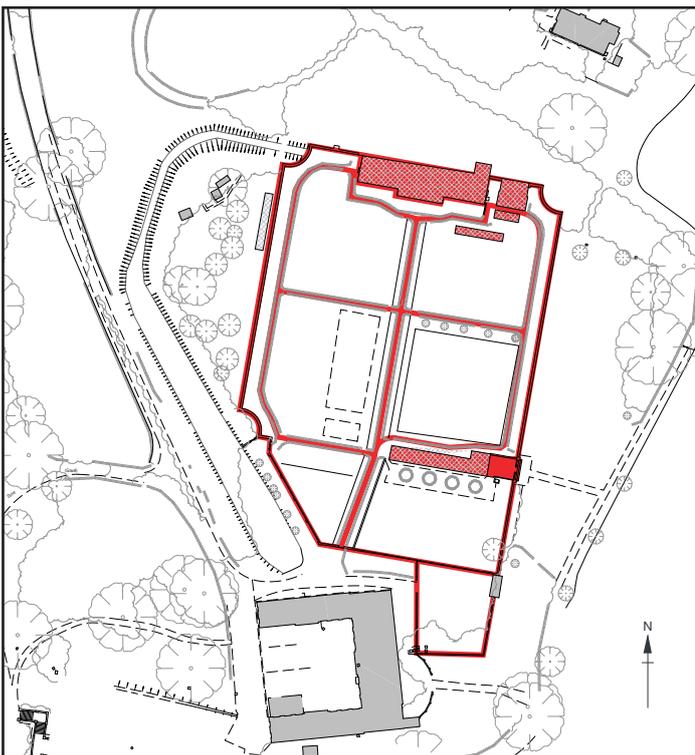
Figure 2: Area of potential development



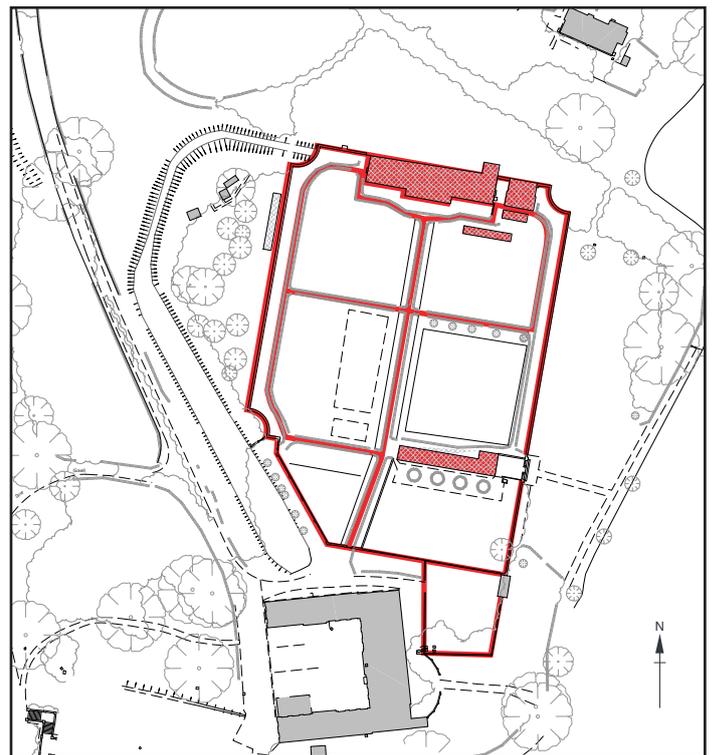
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



Phase 4

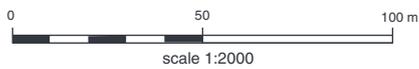


Figure 3: Phase plans of kitchen garden

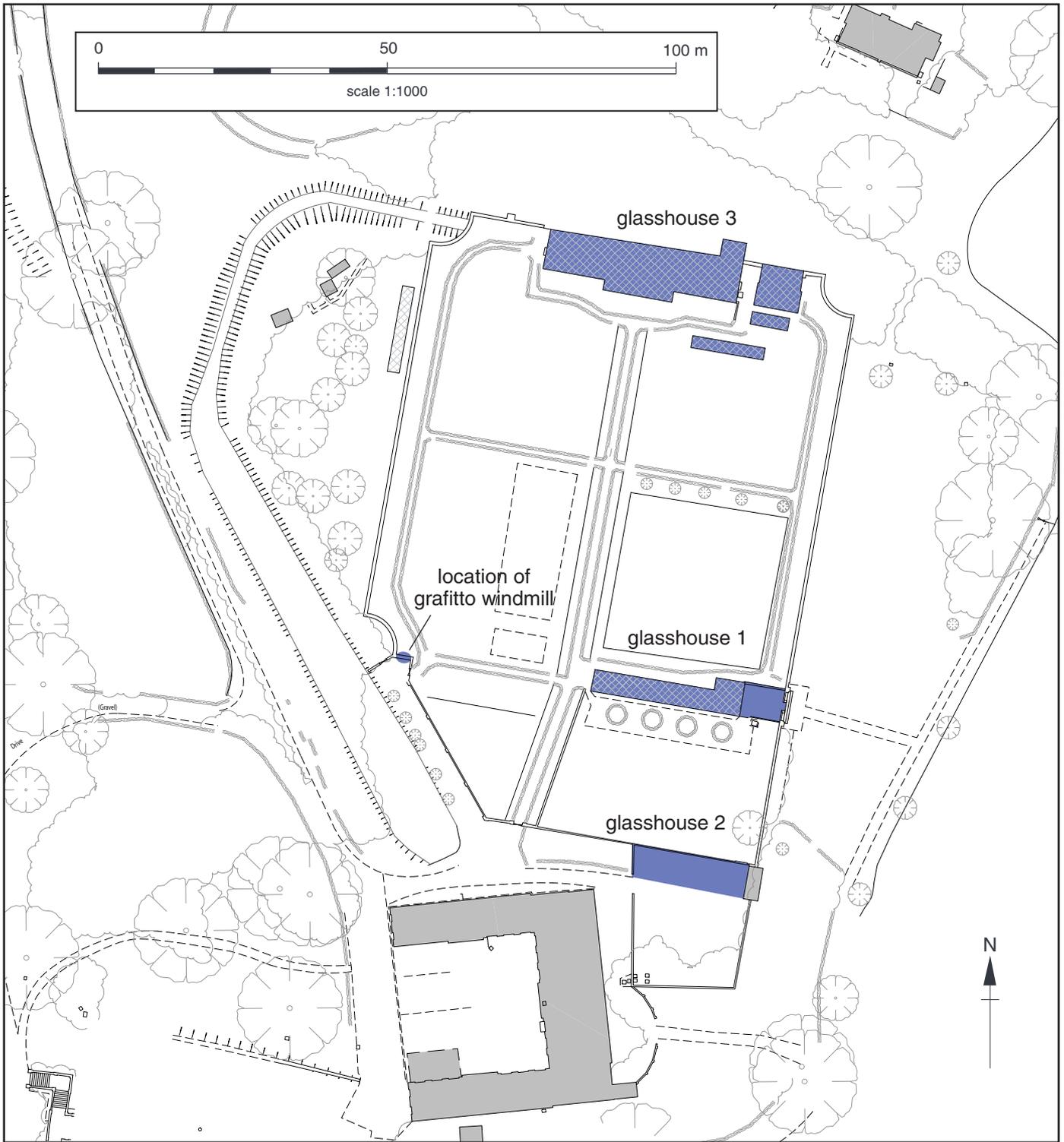


Figure 4: Location of glasshouses



Appendix 8. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

**THAME PARK,
OXFORDSHIRE**

**Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey
2001**

A.D.H. Bartlett

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Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey, 2001

Introduction

This survey was commissioned by the Oxford Archaeological Unit as part of an archaeological evaluation being undertaken at Thame Park. One purpose of the evaluation is to identify any surviving remains of the Cistercian abbey founded on the site in 1138. The present 18th C house incorporates two ranges of the earlier monastic buildings, but there is no clear record of the location of the abbey church, or of the other main buildings of the monastic complex.

It is noted in the draft report on the project as prepared by OAU that parts of the abbey buildings were referred to as standing in 1785, although these may have been outbuildings, possibly on the site of the present stables. The outline of the church apparently remained visible and was examined by a Mr Twopeny in 1840. No plan of this investigation survives, although a description was published in 1888. This mentions buildings arranged around three main courts, with the guest house in an outer court to the north. There is no detailed description of the church, but it lay to the north of the house, and its dimensions are recorded (230 x 70 feet, with a lady chapel extending 45 feet to the east).

The purpose of the resistivity survey was, if possible, to clarify or extend this rather limited available information. Resistivity surveying is the standard technique for locating buried masonry foundations, but the quality of the results necessarily depends upon the state of preservation and depth of burial of any features present.

Survey Procedure

The survey was carried out in two stages, with initial coverage of the walled kitchen garden. This was shortly afterwards extended to take in the area of enclosed parkland to the north and north west of the house. This area should, on the evidence of the records mentioned above, include the site of the abbey church. Fieldwork for both surveys was undertaken in February 2001.

The survey methodology in each case followed usual resistivity procedures with readings collected at 1m intervals using the twin probe configuration and 0.5m mobile probe separation. This separation provides penetration to about 0.75m depth, and is the standard configuration employed unless there is reason to expect that the tops of the wall footings lie at unusual depth. Readings were recorded using Geoscan RM15 meters and multiplexers.

Survey readings were located by reference to a 30m grid. This was measured to the surrounding walls in the kitchen garden, and tied to the 50m site grid in the park. This grid is indicated by crosses on the digital site plan which was supplied to us, and

used as the basis for the plans in this report. (This is a local site grid and does not correspond directly to the Ordnance Survey national grid.)

The plans enclosed show plots based both on the initial resistivity readings (after edge matching between sections), and on the data after treatment with a high pass filter. Filtering removes large scale background variations by subtracting a mean of surrounding values from each reading in turn, and so allows smaller scale features of possible archaeological interest to be seen against a uniform background.

Results

Plots of the survey data and findings from the park and kitchen gardens are shown together on figures 1-4.

1. Survey of Park

The location and extent of the survey is shown by the grey scale plot reproduced at 1:1000 scale on figure 1. Plots of the unfiltered data are included for comparison (at 1:1250 scale) on figure 2. The plots all show a large number of resistivity anomalies, some of which clearly represent linear and rectilinear structures, although various other features and disturbances have also been detected.

An attempt has been made on figure 3 to identify individual features. This plan is based on a contour plot of the filtered data, and shows positive anomalies (variations above the mean of the filtered data) only. Features presented in this way may show less continuity than in the grey scale plots, but can more easily be identified and labelled. Some of the anomalies as labelled on figure 3 are represented by broken lines and schematic outlines on figure 4. These are intended to indicate the approximate location and orientation of particular features, and to provide an interpretative summary of the findings.

Features identifiable in the plots include a rectilinear outline with other linear features extending to the south at A. This, depending on the interpretation placed on the church and cloister, could be a domestic building to the south or south west of the cloister.

A number of features have been detected which appear to relate to the plan of the church. They are too weak and fragmentary for the full ground plan to be reconstructed, but they are consistent in their orientation. Together they offer a reasonably clear indication of the position of the church, but with some uncertainty as to its east - west extent. The reasons for this incomplete response could include poor preservation, burial at a greater depth than expected, and later landscaping and ground disturbances. There were alterations to the landscaping at the time the main west wing of the house was constructed in 1745, and the front lawns and drive were also rearranged at a date subsequent to the 1830 1" OS map. The survey readings may also have been affected by the exceptionally wet ground conditions at the time of the survey. Masonry foundations remain more readily detectable than earthworks in these conditions, but the response may be weakened.

Features which appear likely to relate to the structure of the church include linear anomalies B and C. These follow a similar near east - west alignment to the chapel, and their separation (70' = 21m) corresponds to the recorded width of the church. The strong anomalies at D could perhaps be taken to define the north west corner of the church, but if so the east end remains unresolved. Anomaly E is some 73m (rather than 230' = 69m) east of D. This scheme would place the cloister in the gap between F and A with no clear evidence for the surrounding ranges of buildings.

An alternative possibility would be to place the west end of the church at G, and the east end 69m away at H. This would allow anomalies I, J, K to relate to the cloister, with L as part of the chapter house or other structure to its east. Anomalies D and F would then indicate paving or a courtyard to the west of the church. There is little clear indication of the lady chapel or transepts in either scheme. It is probable, given the incomplete nature of the evidence, that further investigation will be required to indicate which may be the more reliable of these alternative interpretations.

The west wing of the house is unlikely, under either interpretation, to occupy the site of one of the main cloister ranges, as has been suggested, although it could form part of a secondary courtyard. No clearly interpretable response was obtained from the area adjacent to the medieval north wing of the house, which may have been part of the monastic infirmary. This area gave disturbed readings, as seen at M, but they lack any clear or regular plan. The change in level immediately to the north of the north wing suggests this ground could have been built up during later landscaping, and that any surviving structures are too deeply buried to be detectable.

Additional features detected by the survey, some of which impinge upon and may partially obscure the church, include the extant gravel path to the chapel, which produced the strong linear anomaly N. Tree roots can affect resistivity readings, and appear to be responsible for various detected anomalies, including some of the disturbances to the west of the presumed site of the church at P. Other apparently non-monastic findings include the extended linear feature R, which follows a curving path from the northern edge of the survey towards the house. This continues the alignment of the pre-monastic deer park boundary as identified in fieldwork by OAU, and also corresponds to a stone culvert seen in a recent trench near the chapel. It could perhaps therefore indicate a culvert or infilled ditch on the line of the original ditch and bank.

Other linear features at S and T converge on the fountain, and could perhaps be former drains or paths. The linear anomaly to the north of the survey at U could perhaps be a similar feature, but it lies at a right angle to the orientation of the church and chapel, and could therefore perhaps be structural.

2. Survey of Walled Garden

The survey here produced minimal findings, with uniformly low readings from much of the garden, except for the gravel paths. There is an area of slightly raised readings at V, but this shows no regularity of plan and could be an effect of cultivation. Some of the linear markings at W correspond to visible paths between the planting beds, and the others are probably of similar origin.

The survey findings would therefore be consistent with the possibility, as noted in the OAU report, that the walled garden could occupy the site of an earlier monastic garden.

Conclusions

The resistivity survey of the park has detected a succession of features and disturbances, some of which clearly relate to the monastic buildings. Some of the linear features noted above can plausibly, on the basis of their separation and orientation, be identified with the outer walls of the church. The east and west ends of the structure are less clearly defined, and cannot at present be unambiguously located on the basis of the survey evidence alone. Other structures appear to have been detected to the south of the church.

The methods as used for this survey have produced more clearly defined ground plans of similar structures on other occasions, and so it appears likely that the wall footings of the church are incompletely preserved. It is, however, possible that a more detailed resistivity survey of the church (perhaps with readings taken at 0.5m rather than 1m intervals), and carried out in a dryer season, would offer improved resolution of the surviving parts of the structure.

Other features detected in the survey are likely to include paths, and drains or ditches, one of which continues the alignment of the 12th C deer park boundary.

There were only minimal findings from the walled garden. Recent planting beds were detected at the south end, but there did not appear to be any clear evidence for structural remains.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Andrew Croft of OAU for discussion of the possible interpretations of the church and other survey findings.



Appendix 9. EVALUATIONS IN THE REAR COURTYARD

Strutt and Parker

The Rear Courtyard, Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

Pre-Planning Assessment

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April 2001

Strutt and Parker

The Rear Courtyard, Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SP 7166 0375

Pre-Planning Assessment

Prepared by: D. Thomason,
B. Matthews

Date: April 2001

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The Rear Courtyard, Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out three phases of field evaluation in the Rear Courtyard of Thame Park, Thame on behalf of Strutt and Parker. The evaluation revealed limited but significant archaeological deposits of potential medieval origin in the form of wall lines, wall foundations and a cut feature which may be a construction or robber trench, later post-medieval activity was also noted. The medieval wall lines were related to a covered walkway linking two monastic structures and a potential monastic range to the east of the courtyard. The evaluation also demonstrated that the construction of the eastern extension of the north wing post-dated the removal of the covered walkway.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between February and April 2001 OAU carried out three phases of field evaluation in the rear courtyard of Thame House, Thame Park, (Figure 1) on behalf of Strutt and Parker as part of a pre-planning assessment for a proposed private leisure complex (Figure 2).

1.1.2 Phase 1 consisted of two hand dug trenches measuring 5m by 1m aligned east-west along the centre of the rear courtyard (Trenches 3 and 4). Phase 2 joined and extended these two trenches, this involved an additional 13.20m by 1.5m of machined trenching (Trench 3 extensions). Phase 3 comprised a further four trenches in the vicinity of the eastern extension of the North Wing, covering an area of approximately 20 sq. metres (Trenches 5, 6, 7 and 8).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on a flat river plain which is bordered to the south by the Chiltern Hills. Thame Park itself is generally fairly flat with gentle breaks in slope forming a slightly undulating landscape to the west of the main house. The present ground level within the courtyard area is 74.36 m above OD. The site is situated on a geological drift boundary between the Gault formation of grey mudstone and the geologically more recent clay head deposit. A band of alluvium (probably post-glacial) overlies these deposits on an approximate north-south alignment (BGS 1994, sheet 237).

1.2.2 The rear courtyard is presently covered in a high grade gravel surface which is mostly overgrown with invasive moss and grasses. The courtyard was previously enclosed by buildings at its eastern end and therefore some demolition deposits were anticipated. The area to the east of the North Wing was formerly occupied by a boiler house and subsequently significant demolition debris were present.

1.3 **Archaeological background**

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study and building assessment program (OAU 2001). The results of this part of the pre-planning evaluation process will be added into the overall desk study, with this report appearing as a separate appendix at the rear of the main Heritage Assessment report (OAU 2001b).

1.3.2 The evaluation has produced limited but significant archaeological evidence. The evaluation trenches were located in the curtilage of a verified medieval building (now part of the north wing of the overall Grade I Listed Building), which was probably an element of the infirmary cloister of the medieval Cistercian Abbey that previously occupied the site of the mainly post-medieval manor house.

1.4 **Acknowledgements**

1.4.1 Thanks are given to Michael Randles and William Laughlin for arranging access to the site and for their general help.

2 **EVALUATION AIMS**

2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the bounds of the estate, and in the highlighted areas of interest.

2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.

2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

2.1.4 To make available the results of the evaluation.

2.1.5 To use the results of these investigations to inform the restoration and redevelopment of the estate, in reference to its buildings, park and gardens.

3 **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

3.1 **Scope of fieldwork**

3.1.1 *Phase 1* of the evaluation consisted of two 5m by 1m rectangular trenches located within the rear courtyard of the main building, being on an approximate east-west alignment between the north and south wings of the manor house (Figure 2). These trenches were hand-dug by archaeologists to an average depth of c. 0.50m from the present ground level. Three sondages were excavated (two in Trench 3 and one in Trench 4) to a maximum depth of 1m, so as to gain a clearer understanding of the underlying stratigraphy of the area of investigation.

3.1.2 Initially a further north-south aligned trench was dug to the south of the hand excavated trenches. This trench was excavated to a depth of c. 0.20m below the present ground surface. No archaeology was located within this trench and it was abandoned after a change in the planned trench locations.

3.1.3 *Phase 2* involved an additional 13.2m of trenching. This was machined to join and extend the original east -west aligned trenches to the east. The trench was 1.5 m wide and was carefully machined down to the first archaeological horizon. A single small section was excavated to investigate the depth of located archaeological deposits. The section was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.0 m beneath the present ground level.

3.1.4 *Phase 3* comprised a further four trenches in the vicinity of the eastern extension of the North Wing, these covered an area of approximately 20 sq. metres. These were machined to a maximum depth of 0.30m, for the careful removal of the top hardcore surfaces and the rubble demolition spread noted within the *Phase 1* evaluation.

3.2 **Fieldwork methods and recording**

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and if necessary environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 **Finds**

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 **Palaeo-environmental Sampling**

3.4.1 Samples from any organic, waterlogged, occupation or worked deposits were to be sampled to a volume of 40 litres.

4 **RESULTS**

4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

4.1.1 Trenches 3 and 4, opened in Phases 1 and 2, were located on a level surface of hardcore make-up and gravel which overlay a compacted spread of demolition debris, below which a sequence of re-deposited and alluvial clays were encountered. Ground water was reached at c.1m below ground level (73.45m OD).

4.1.2 Trench 5, opened in Phase 3, was located on the southern face of the North Wing on a level surface of hardcore make-up and gravel which overlay a compacted spread of demolition debris.

4.1.3 Trenches 6, 7 and 8, opened in Phase 3, were located to the east of the North Wing extension, where the surface level slopes upwards to the north. These were excavated through layers of re-deposited/dumped top soil and clay material which were abutted by the sequence of compacted demolition debris encountered in Trenches 3, 4 and 5.

4.2 **Distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 4.2.1 Archaeological deposits were located within all of the east - west aligned trenching of Phases 1 and 2. Although features were limited within the trenches, probable re-deposited layers were encountered through both trenches.
- 4.2.2 The *Phase 3* trenches encountered archaeological deposits and features in all four instances of investigation. The features located within these trenches were fairly limited and evidence of truncation had occurred in each excavated area.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITS

5.1 Trench 3 (Phase 1)

- 5.1.1 Trench 3 (Figure 3) originally consisted of a east-west aligned trench whose eastern end was located in line with the eastern corner of the northern wing. This trench measured 5.0 m long x 0.8 m wide and was excavated to a general depth of 0.30m across its length. A 1.0 m deep sondage was dug at each end of this initial trenching.
- 5.1.2 The earliest deposit located within this trench was a natural alluvium (307) which was of an unknown thickness and whose extent could be followed through to Trench 4. This alluvium was a compact blue green silty clay deposit which was overlain by a second possible natural alluvial deposit (306) of a compact mottled green silty clay. This was found to be c. 0.30m thick. (306 = 403, 307 = 404)
- 5.1.3 The primary archaeological feature found within the confines of Trench 3 was the mortar rubble core foundation (308). This was very compacted with a weathered softer surface mortar. It was found to be 1.10m wide and excavation to a depth of 0.66m alongside it did not reach its base. This foundation was orientated north-south approximately at a right angle to the North Wing. This foundation was constructed from a coarse lime mortar with a compacted limestone, flint and ceramic building material core packing.
- 5.1.4 This wall appeared to be abutted by a re-deposited clay deposit 305 (= 402). This was moderately compacted brown green clay which was heavily mottled and seemed to contain a residue of degraded ceramic or building material supporting its anthropogenic origin. This was found within the sondages at both ends of Trench 3 and therefore its extent was at least 5m east to west and 0.20m thick.
- 5.1.5 Deposit 309 was a loose mid white/grey deposit of mortar debris located only within the sondage at the eastern end of Trench 3. It was recorded as having a thickness of c. 0.10m and an extent of c. 0.50m.
- 5.1.6 Deposit 309 was overlain by the mixed clay deposit 304 (= 401) which was a compact green silty clay with <5% mortar, <2% CBM and 1% charcoal inclusions. This was probably derived from re-deposited natural (possibly from layer 306) and was found to be c. 0.22m thick and extended along the length of the trench.
- 5.1.7 Deposit 303 (= 415) was a moderately compact dark brown clay which contained a notable amount of debris material (possibly related to destruction or phase of

clearance). This deposit was c. 0.05m thick and its extent was the length of the trench.

- 5.1.8 Overlying 303 was a very compact layer of rubble (302) found to be c. 0.20m thick and extending through the dimensions of the trench. This was a mixed layer of brick, mortar and sand and had been deposited recently (probably within the last 20) and was recorded as 414 in Trench 4.
- 5.1.9 This in turn was overlain by the make-up layer 301 and the gravel surface (present ground level) 300. These deposits were very compacted with a combined thickness of c. 0.16m (301 = 400, 300 = 413).

5.2 Trench 3 extensions (Phase 2)

- 5.2.1 After the initial phase of investigation, Trenches 3 and 4 were joined and extended eastwards by an additional 13.2 m of machined trenching (Figures 3 and 4). The results of this trenching is described below.
- 5.2.2 The additional trenching consisted of two areas 2.7 m long x 1.5 m wide and 10.5m long x 1.5 m wide between the original Trench 3 and Trench 4 and extending Trench 3 towards the east.
- 5.2.3 The trenches were carefully machined down to the first archaeological horizon and subsequently hand cleaned.
- 5.2.4 The underlying natural consisted of a pale brown clay (320, 327) that corresponds to context 307 above.
- 5.2.5 Just to the east of Trench 4, a pitched stone surface (310) was revealed running across the trench from north to south.
- 5.2.6 The surface consisted of pitched angular limestone with a worn upper surface. The largest stone incorporated measured 0.27 m long x 1.5 m wide, but typically small to medium sized pieces were used in this construction. The surface was fairly well delineated and measured 1.2 m in width. The pattern of stonework was typically aligned either north-south or east-west. Two possible squared post settings were noted within the overall pattern of the surface. These were aligned north-south, and corresponded to the eastern end of a wall-line visible in the adjacent buildings. As such these may represent the inside of the former covered walkway.
- 5.2.7 To the east of the original hand excavated trenches a number of substantial wall footings (312, 313, 314 and 321) were also revealed.
- 5.2.8 Walls 312, 313 and 314 were probably part of the same construction. As such they consist of a east-west aligned wall, measuring 3.7 m from east to west by at least 0.7m wide, and a corresponding north-south wall, measuring 0.87 m wide by at least 0.7 m deep. Their construction consisted of angular or sub-angular limestone pieces bonded by a hard pale orange sandy mortar. At this level the mortar largely obscured the constructional details of the stone build.
- 5.2.9 Within the south-eastern corner of the extended trenching, a linear area of mortar and occasional stone (321) may represent another wall-line. A single prominent piece of

limestone within this wall had one short straight face which lay parallel and 0.7 m to the south of wall 312. This single stone may represent a former door upright although a single stone is tenuous evidence for such a construction.

- 5.2.10 Wall 321 is generally similar in construction to walls 312, 313 and 314, and is bonded with the same hard sandy mortar. It was visible within the trench for a length of 0.90 m from east to west and 0.56 m from north to south.
- 5.2.11 This wall was on the same alignment as a probable robber trench (316), seen running east-west along the southern edge of the trench.
- 5.2.12 Trench cut 316 was sectioned between the western face of wall 314 and a corresponding shallow parallel stone wall (319) some 1.3 m to the west.
- 5.2.13 The cut of trench 316 was excavated to a depth of only 0.48 m (1.0 m beneath the present ground level) but was not bottomed. It's fills (317, 318) consisted of grey-brown gritty sandy clays containing two potential fragments of medieval pottery and ceramic building material. A post-medieval clay pipe fragment that was originally attributed to these fills was subsequently thought to have come from the fill of a later brick built drain (315, 324).
- 5.2.14 The excavated section revealed that wall 314, to the east, was at least 0.7 m deep and that this cut predated the construction of wall 319, to the west.
- 5.2.15 Wall 319 was aligned north-south across the trench, parallel to wall 314 (above). This wall was relatively shallow and poorly built and consisted of two rough courses of limestone with softer orange sandy mortar bonding. It measured 0.48 m wide by 0.12 m high.
- 5.2.16 Between walls 314 and 319, the construction of a parallel north-south brick built drain (315) cut the fills of probable robber trench 316. This drain was dated as post-medieval by a clay pipe fragment recovered from its primary fill and from examination of the general style of construction.
- 5.2.17 Elsewhere within the machined trenches, the underlying natural clay was partially overlain by generally thin spreads of re-deposited clays (322 and 304) which seem to correspond respectively to wall 319 and pitched stone surface 310. Within the extended trenching these contexts are undated.
- 5.2.18 The trench was sealed by up to 0.26 m of rubble hardcore beneath the present gravel surface.

5.3 Trench 4 (Phase 1)

- 5.3.1 Trench 4 contained the same basic sequence of deposits as found in Trench 3 (Figure 4). The archaeological deposits however were specific to this trench. Cut 409 was seen to cut through the deposit 402 (which was the equivalent of deposit 305 in Trench 3). This cut was 0.37m deep and was excavated to a width of 0.47m (although the true dimensions of this feature could not be ascertained). This cut was aligned roughly north-south with steep almost vertical sides and a narrow concave base. It was filled by deposit 408, a compacted sandy clay containing <20% flint and limestone fragments. Because of the confines of the trench it was not possible to determine the true character of this feature.
- 5.3.2 The fill of cut 409 was overlain by a rubble wall remnant 412, which was aligned NNW-SSE. It was constructed from a single visible course of unworked limestone with isolated lime mortar bonding material. This wall was 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep. Some disturbed material (tumble) from this feature was located on its eastern edge.
- 5.3.3 Cut 405 was cut from just below the rubble dump deposit of 414 (same as 302) and truncated all layers below this level. This was a linear north-south cut for a modern brick culvert (411) of which seven courses were evident of a stretcher bond form. The bricks were frogged and measured 0.21m by 0.70m by 0.10m. The width of the structure was 0.61m with an internal cavity width of 0.26m. It was observed to a depth of 0.70m, but the base of this feature was not reached.

5.4 Trench 5 (Phase 3)

- 5.4.1 The earliest feature within this trench was the location of the continuing line of the north-south aligned medieval wall (506) which was originally observed within Trench 3 (308). This wall foundation was found to have a width of 1.16m with an unobserved depth. It was constructed from rough hewn limestone blocks with a lime mortar bond. No coursing was evident (Figure 5).
- 5.4.2 Wall 506 was abutted and overlain in part by wall 512 which was constructed from limestone square blocks which were worked although undressed. This wall footing was aligned east-west and was revealed to an observed length of c. 0.80m and an observed depth of 0.50m, although not bottomed. The present day visible North-Wing extension was constructed directly over this footing.
- 5.4.3 Trench 5 contained a similar sequence of deposits located within Trenches 3 and 4 in Phases 1 and 2. The earliest deposit located was 503/511 (equivalent to 304) which was a greenish clay deposit, probably re-deposited, that was observed to depth of c. 0.12m.
- 5.4.4 A cut (504) was seen to run east-west across the trench (related to culvert 604, Trench 6). This cut was found to be c. 0.76m wide with an unknown depth. This context cut through wall 506 and deposit 503.
- 5.4.5 Cut 504 was filled by a compact brown green clay (505) which may have derived from the deposit 503.

- 5.4.6 Possibly contemporary with the cut 504, was an uncharacterised cut through the wall 512 which may have been for the insertion of a removed drain. This cut through the wall foundation 512 (513) was >0.50m deep and was seen to be more than 1.12m east-west and was aligned north-south. Cut 513 was filled by a mixed loam deposit of demolition debris.
- 5.4.7 Deposit 502 was equivalent to the rubble deposit 302 (Trench 3) and extended across the trench and was c. 0.40m thick.
- 5.4.8 Deposit 501 was equivalent to the deposit 301 (Trench 3) being a layer of hardcore gravel material c. 0.15m thick.
- 5.4.9 Deposit 500 a topsoil mixed with harsh gravel, similar in character to deposit 300 in Trench 3. This was c. 0.06m thick.
- 5.4.10 Cut 509 was a steep sided feature with a flat base measuring c. 1.10m north-south and c. 0.40m deep. The cut truncates layers 500 (?), 501 and 502. This was filled by (510) a clayey topsoil and rubble fill which surrounded the electric service cable for which this cut was excavated.
- 5.4.11 Cut 507 is a linear trench cut from the present ground surface aligned northwest-southeast for a ceramic storm drain. This cuts through all deposits down to the top of wall foundation 506. This was filled by 508, a gravel surround to the drain pipe.

5.5 Trench 6 (Phase 3)

- 5.5.1 The earliest deposit located within this trench was the deposit 618 which was located within a small sondage to the north of wall 605 (Figure 6). This was excavated to a depth of 0.25m with an unknown extent, but it does appear to the south of wall 606 (first phase of post-medieval wall). This deposit was a layer of mid-grey brown silty clay with some mortar, CBM, and charcoal inclusions.
- 5.5.2 The east-west wall 606 was built over this deposit (618). This was a limestone and lime-mortar construction of a single evident course which was slightly off-set from the line of the North-Wing. It was 1.10m (east-west) and 0.40m wide and c. 0.30m deep.
- 5.5.3 The wall remnant 605 was seen to be a later addition to the initial construction of wall 606 on top of which 605 was situated. This was constructed from limestone fragments and was bonded with a sandy lime mortar. It was recorded as being 0.60m wide and was seen to cover the width of the trench (east-west) continuing into Trench 8, and was only 0.20m thick.
- 5.5.4 603 was a deposit which was probably an equivalent layer to 303 (Trench 3) being a dark grey clay deposit which contained building debris material, possibly destruction/demolition.
- 5.5.5 The deposit 603 was cut by 611, a curvilinear construction cut for the brick constructed culvert 604. The cut was seen to be c. 1m wide, aligned east-west and turning to a northwest-southeast orientation after some 2m. The culvert was of a brick construction with a stone flag capping. The structure was a barrel dome arch leading to a square built soak-away. The bricks were un-frogged forming a single

skin and were 0.20 x 0.10 x 0.06m. The culvert was c. 0.70m wide. Although the cut for the structure was seen, the actual brickwork on the western end of the culvert appeared to have been removed.

- 5.5.6 Layers 602 and 601 are equivalent to deposits 301 and 302 in Trench 3, and overlay 603.
- 5.5.7 619 was a layer of dumped/re-deposited clay material over the hardcore make-up level of 601. Deposit 613 also overlay this deposit as well as the layer 618 described previously. This was another layer of dumping activity which also overlay the walls 605/606.
- 5.5.8 Layer 612 is a re-deposited low grade topsoil deposit which was 0.25m deep and extended c. 3.60m north-south within Trench 6. This deposit seems to have been laid contemporarily with the surface layer 600 (equivalent to 300/500 *etc.*)
- 5.5.9 The final phase within this trench was the cutting of services from the surface level. Cut 607 was for a storm drain from the end of the North Wing extension and truncated the post-medieval walls 605/606. This was filled with gravel and re-deposited material 608. Cut 609 was an uncharacterised feature presumed to be a drain as it was clay lined (610) and featured a limestone capping slab. 614 was a linear cut for a vertical-linear iron pipe (section 600), which reached a depth of c. 0.44m, cutting into deposit 618. This was truncated by 616, a cut for disused electric cables and was filled by 617, gravely loam.

5.6 Trench 7 (Phase 3)

- 5.6.1 The earliest deposit within this trench was 702, which was a clayey loam deposit (equivalent to 613) excavated up to a depth of 0.30m. This was cut by three cable lines running east-west (Figure 7).
- 5.6.2 This deposit was overlain by the cobbled surface 701 (equivalent to 806, Trench 8). These cobbles were of rounded stone and measured an average of 0.15 x 0.10 x 0.10m.
- 5.6.3 The dumped topsoil 703 overlay the deposit 702 and was equivalent to 612 in Trench 6.
- 5.6.4 The layer of cobbles were overlain by the modern tarmac surface (700).

5.7 Trench 8 (Phase 3)

- 5.7.1 The earliest feature within this trench is the wall 807 which is a continuation of the wall described in Trench 6 as 605. The wall here was found to be c. 0.20m deep and 0.76m wide with a length of c. 1.30m (Figure 8).
- 5.7.2 Wall 807 is abutted by the deposit 809 (equivalent to 613, Trench 6) a dark clay debris deposit.
- 5.7.3 Layer 809 is overlain by 805, a moderately compact burnt black sand c. 0.10m thick and extending for c. 0.70m (north-south). This was the first in a sequence of six sandy levelling deposits (800-805). The overlying layer to 805 was 804, which was a

compacted yellow sandy mortar demolition levelling layer c. 0.10m thick. This was overlain by 803, a yellow/green sand deposit c. 0.10m thick with a north-south extent of 1.10m. 806 was the next layer in the sequence and was a black sandy deposit with <20% charcoal with a thickness of c. 0.05m.

- 5.7.4 The cobble floor layer 806 was set into this burnt sand deposit (802) and was equivalent to the surface 701 and was found at a level of 74.56m OD. Only a width of 0.46m remained of this surface in this trench, with four cobbles evident in section (Figure 8).
- 5.7.5 Deposit 801 continued the sequential levels of sand being a yellow sand c. 0.04m thick. This was overlain by the final deposit in this sequence, 800. Both of these layers butted the southern edge of the cobbled surface.
- 5.7.6 The rubble layer 812 was equivalent to the main demolition spread found across the site to the south of wall 807. This was overlain, as elsewhere, by the hardcore levelling deposit 811 and the gravel surface 810 (equivalent to 300 and 301 respectively).
- 5.7.7 The deposit 808 is the dumped re-deposited topsoil layer which is equivalent to 612 and 703. It was recorded to have a thickness of up to 0.20m.

5.8 Finds

- 5.8.1 Several fragments of probable medieval ceramic building material and two sherds of potential medieval pottery were recovered from the fills of the probable robber trench 316 and a single piece of post-medieval clay pipe stem from the primary fill of drain 315.

5.9 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 5.9.1 No deposits encountered were considered suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The excavated trenches revealed well stratified sequences, although a lack of dating material from deposits has made identification by period somewhat tenuous. The same basic sequence of deposits was identified within all phases of the initial evaluation, making any stratigraphic dating through further work in the courtyard area more reliable.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The results gained from the pre-planning evaluation works carried out within the rear courtyard have added considerable information on the relationships and overall ground plan of the Cistercian abbey complex at Thame Park.

6.2.2 The primary features identified include a potential covered walkway linking the North and South Wings and a probable further medieval range to the east of the courtyard that was once probably connected to the eastern end of the South Wing. The relationship between the covered walkway and the eastern end of the present north wing was also explored and this seems to demonstrate that the extension post-dates the covered walkway and hence is probably late monastic or more recent in date. This is supported by the lack of archaeological evidence from under the former boiler house for earlier medieval activity that would have indicated a possible continuation of the North Wing.

6.3 **The covered walkway**

6.3.1 The covered walkway was anticipated in the desk study and wall 308 aligned remarkably well with the probable original corner of the cloister. This wall (308) was very substantial and its construction is indicative of the foundations of a major structure and hence it probably marked the external wall of the walkway (Figure 9). The internal face of the covered walkway corresponds to pitched stone surface 310 and found post settings probably indicate that the construction, at least initially, had wooden uprights on the inside of the eastern cloister walk. A fossilised roofline can be clearly seen on the southern elevation of the North Wing linking these two wall lines.

6.3.2 No associated floors were located between surface 310 and the outer wall (308) and it is assumed that these were subsequently removed and truncated. No construction cut was located for wall 308, although it is possible that the wall could have been trench built. Because of this, the relationships between the wall and the lower clay deposits are unclear. This feature however, does seem to be a part of the medieval building as at least the lower anthropogenically deposited clays (304, 305) butt the excavated western face of the wall.

6.3.3 The relationship between the covered walkway and the North and South Wings has been explored by excavation and building analysis. This approach has enabled an interpretation of the relative phasing of the structures to be developed. At present it is felt that the western half of the South Wing represents the earliest phase of construction. Then an extension was built to the east of this, as far the probable line of the covered walkway, this has been inferred from analysis of the roof and fabric of the South Wing. This extension was probably contemporary to or slightly earlier than, the covered walkway. The covered walkway seems to form a continuation of the North Wing's eastern wall and is therefore probably contemporary with the construction of that structure. This final phase occurred during the during the 14th century.

6.4 **The eastern extension of the North Wing**

6.4.1 The eastern extension of the North Wing's phasing and date was considered through a process of evaluation (Trench 5) and fabric inspection. Unfortunately the fabric has been extensively remodelled during earlier restoration works and subsequently presented a relatively homogeneous and uninformative elevation. However the

evaluation revealed that the footings of the eastern extension post-date the construction, and probably the removal, of the covered walkway.

- 6.4.2 This would place the construction of the eastern extension outside of the main phases of monastic construction and most likely in a post-monastic or late-monastic time frame.

6.5 **Probable medieval range east of the courtyard**

- 6.5.1 Walls 312, 313 and 314 form part of the substantial footings of a building to the east of the courtyard (Figure 9). This is probably the base of an additional and previously unrecorded medieval range that was later reused as the coal store for the main house.

- 6.5.2 Wall footings 321 and probable robber trench 316 indicate the presence of a later wall-line. The cut of 316 runs up to north-south wall 314, but there were no signs of a former east-west wall stub. This may indicate that this is possibly the cut for a proposed wall line that was uncompleted. Further excavation would clarify the function of this feature.

- 6.5.3 The north-south wall (319), which lays parallel to wall 314 to the east, overlay the fills of cut 316 and is likely to be post-medieval. It is possible that the deposits described as re-deposited clays were used as in-fill, or levelling layers associated with the medieval and post-medieval building works on the site.

6.6 **Other features and deposits**

- 6.6.1 Feature 409 was seen to cut through the deposit 402 (same as 305), making this feature post-date the first re-deposited clay layer. This feature was uncharacterised but was butt ended with a narrow concave base forming a possible channel. It is possible that this feature (if indeed of a linear form) could be part of a clay lined drain or run-off system, possibly associated with the infirmary cloister itself.

- 6.6.2 Wall remnant 412 overlay the fill of the cut 409 with an approximate orientation of NNW-SSE. This wall does not align or associate with any visible or projected section of the infirmary cloister and therefore makes interpretation difficult. The feature may not represent a wall line and may be associated with the cut below (409). Therefore it is possible that this is a consolidation capping layer to the in-filled feature below.

- 6.6.3 The shallow layer described as 303 and 415, is almost definitely associated with clearance and/or destruction. It contains significant quantities of charcoal and structural debris which supports this interpretation. The layer lies directly under the 20th century deposits and probably relates to a phase of activity from maybe the mid-18th century or later.

- 6.6.4 The overlying rubble dump layer (302 and 414) is almost certainly associated with the demolition of the corridor adjoining the north and south wings of the main building during the 1980's. The demolition of the utility/fuel storage buildings located to the eastern end of the courtyard area (present on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition OS maps) could also coincide with this demolition activity. These outer buildings

were removed in the latter half of the 20th century, possibly as the same sequence of demolition as the north-south corridor. The large scatter of compacted material and structural brickwork seems to support this, as does the stratigraphic sequence.

6.7 Significance

6.7.1 The evaluation works have revealed an extensive series of archaeological features associated with monastic and post-monastic occupation of the site. These features although representing significant elements of the abbey are heavily disturbed and truncated by the later demolition layers. The lack of surviving floor surfaces and the absence of significant depths of archaeological deposits limits the cultural heritage value of the archaeological resource so far uncovered.

6.7.2 The results of the evaluation have however revealed the locations of previously unrecorded monastic structures and these have significantly improved our understanding of the site and its layout. The work has also significantly aided the interpretation of the phasing of the standing structures, especially the North and South Wings.

7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

7.1.1 Although no detailed engineering standard development plans have yet been issued, final outline plans for the development have been examined. These, in their current form, will impact upon the archaeological resource identified during the evaluation programme.

7.1.2 The proposed works will result in the demolition of the eastern extension of the North Wing and the partial removal of its foundations and any archaeologically deposits contained within it. These deposits have been evaluated (OAU 2001b) and are broadly similar in character and significance to those identified here.

7.1.3 The development will also potentially impact upon the physical remains of the covered walkway as the proposed works reuse these remains as the footings for a new covered walkway.

7.1.4 Overall the development proposal will have a significant adverse impact upon the identified below ground archaeological resource contained within the rear courtyard area. There also exists the potential for presently unrecorded archaeological deposits to be adversely impacted upon by the development process, however these deposits are likely to have been removed, truncated or severely disturbed by modern activity and development in the area.

7.1.5 Archaeological mitigation will be required prior to and during the development process this should be accompanied by protection measures to prevent damage to significant architectural and archaeological elements.

7.1.6 Archaeological excavation and recording of the sub-surface remains will be required prior to the construction of the main building, pool, corridors and associated services. This should be undertaken in a manner agreed with the County Archaeologist.

- 7.1.7 Where possible, foundations should be designed to minimise impact upon known and potential buried archaeological resources.
- 7.1.8 Archaeological deposits revealed during the development should, where possible, be conserved in-situ using appropriate and approved conservation measures.

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 3				
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
300	Layer		0.06	gravel surface
301	Layer		0.1	make-up
302	Layer		0.2	Rubble
303	Layer		0.05	Destruction?
304	Layer		0.22	re-deposited clay
305	Layer		0.2	re-deposited clay
306	Layer		0.24	nat. alluvium?
307	Layer			nat. alluvium
308	Structure	1.1	>0.66	North-south wall
309	Layer	0.6	0.09	Mortar debris
310	Surface	1.50+	0.2	Pitched stone surface
311	Cut	1.50+	0.2	Construction cut
312	Structure	0.64+	Unknown	East-west wall
313	Structure	0.60+	Unknown	East-west wall
314	Structure	0.86	0.70+	North-south wall
315	Structure	0.47	0.24	North-south brick drain
316	Cut	0.40+	0.48+	Robber trench?
317	Fill		0.23	Fill of 316
318	Fill		0.36	Fill of 316
319	Structure	0.48	0.12	Shallow north-south wall
320	Layer			Natural? Clay
321	Structure	0.56+	Unknown	Wall
322	Layer		0.1	re-deposited clay
323	Fill		0.1	Drain fill
324	Cut	0.46	0.4	Drain cut
325	Fill		Unknown	Fill of robber trench?
326	Fill		Unknown	Fill of robber trench?
327	Layer		Unknown	Natural clay

Trench 4				
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
401	Layer			same as 304
402	Layer			same as 305
403	Layer			same as 306
404	Layer			same as 307
405	Cut	1.15	>0.8	cut for 411
406	Layer		>0.8	fill of 405
408	Fill	>0.47	0.37	fill of 409
409	Cut	>0.47	0.37	undefined cut
411	Structure	0.61	>0.70	brick drain
412	Structure	0.8	0.15	wall remnant/capping
413	Layer			same as 300
414	Layer			same as 302
415	Layer			same as 303

Trench 5				
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<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
500	Layer		0.06	Same as 300
501	Layer		0.18	Same as 301
502	Layer		0.4	Same as 302
503	Layer		0.5	Probably same as 304
504	Cut	>0.76	>0.2	Possible cut for drain
505	Fill		>0.2	Fill of 504
506	Structure	1.16	>0.4	Same as 308
507	Cut	>0.6	>0.5	Modern drain cut
508	Fill			Fill of 507
509	Cut	>1.1	0.4	Cut for electric cable
510	Fill	>1.0	0.4	Fill for 509
511	Layer	1.1	<0.26	Probably same as 503
512	Structure		>0.5	Eastern Annexe foundation
513	Cut	>1	>0.5	Modern cut through 512
514	Fill	>1	>0.5	Fill of 513

Trench 6				
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
600	Layer		0.04	Brick / Gravel Surface
601	Layer		0.2	Hardcore
602	Layer		0.15	Rubble
603	Layer		<0.15	Clay / Debris Layer
604	Structure	0.7	>0.4	Culvert
605	Structure	0.6	0.15-0.2	East-West Wall
606	Structure	0.4	>0.2	East-West Wall
607	Cut	0.7		Cut for late drain
608	Fill			Fill of 608
609	Cut			Possible drain = 504 ?
610	Fill			Fill of 609
611	Cut	1		Cut for 604
612	Layer		0.3	Topsoil
613	Layer		0.26	Clay fill / dump
614	Cut	0.28	0.45	Cut for Fe pipe
615	Fill		0.45	Fill of 614
616	Cut	0.46	0.16	Cable cut
617	Fill		0.16	Fill of 616
618	Layer		>0.24	Clay deposit
619	Layer	>0.9	0.14	Grey clay dump

Trench 7				
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
700	Layer		0.02	Tarmac
701	Layer		>0.15	Cobbled surface
702	Layer		>0.30	Clay deposit
703	Layer		0.2	Topsoil

Trench 8				
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
800	Layer	1.1	0.03	Sandy deposit
801	Layer	1.1	0.04	Yellow sand
802	Layer	1.1	0.05	Burnt sand deposit?
803	Layer	1.1	0.1	Yellow / green sand
804	Layer		0.1	Demolition material
805	Layer		0.1	Burnt sand deposit?
806	Surface			Cobbled surface = 701
807	Structure	0.7		Wall = 605
808	Layer		0.2	Topsoil = 612
809	Layer	0.9	>0.12	Dump Material
810	Layer		0.05	Gravel Surface = 300
811	Layer		0.15	Hardcore = 301
812	Layer		0.2	Demolition material = 303

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Bond, J 1986 *The Oxford Region in the Middle Ages* pp 135-159
 Brown, H and Guest, W 1935 *A History of Thame*
 Coppack, G 1990 *Abbeys and Priors*
 OAU 2001 *Thame Park, Oxfordshire. Heritage Assessment and Survey*
 OAU 2001b *Evaluation in the North Wing, Thame Park, Oxfordshire.*
 Wills, G.B. 1922 *Thame Park, Alterations : Architectural Review* 16-19
 Wilkinson, D (ed.) 1992 *OAU Field Manual*

APPENDIX 3 SITE DETAILS

Site name: Thame Park

Site code: THAPK01

Grid reference: SP 7166 0375

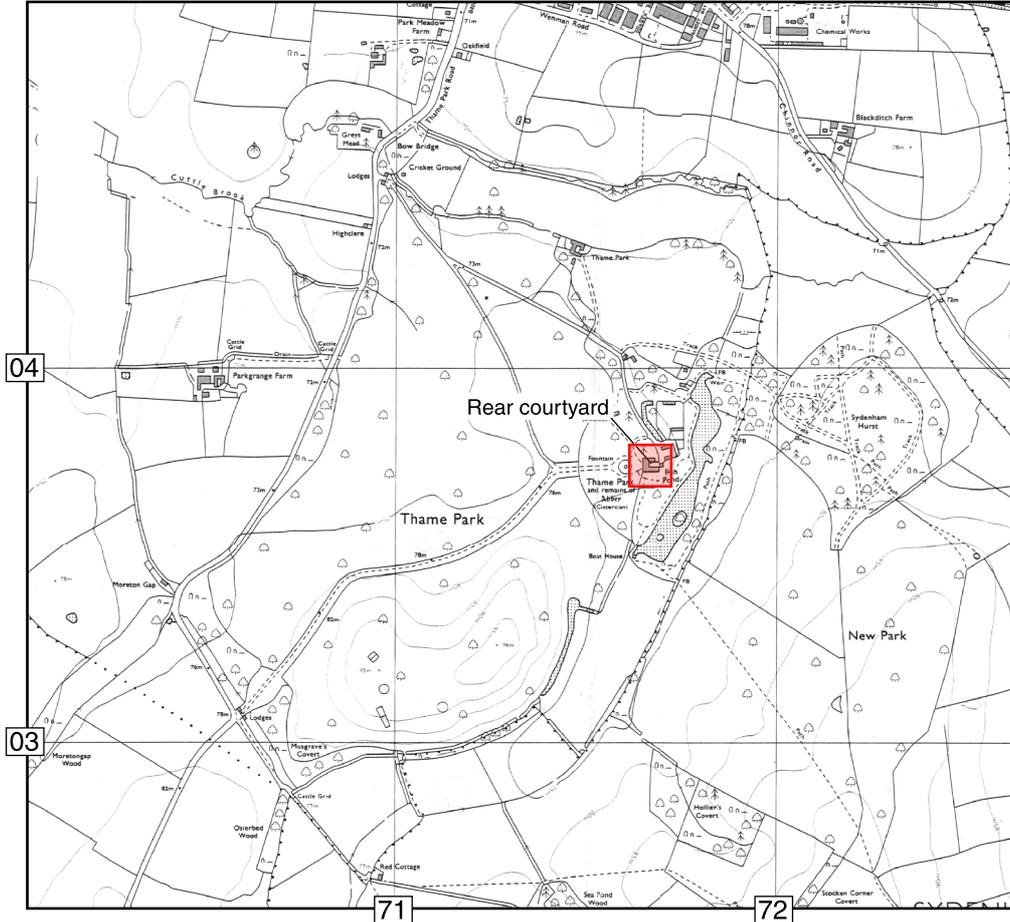
Type of evaluation: Two hand excavated trenches measuring 5 m by 1 m with an additional 13.2 m x 1.5 m of machine trenching. Plus four further trenches, machine dug, covering an area of c. 20 sq. m. to the east of the North Wing.

Date and duration of project: Three phases; 1 week in February, 3 days in March 2001 and 3 days in April 2001.

Area of site: Three areas measuring 10 m², 19.8 m² and 20m²

Summary of results: Two initial hand-dug trenches joined and extended by additional machined trenches, these were followed by a further four targeted machined trenches. Locating possible covered walkway and inner walkway surface. Also a probable substantial stone building to the east of the cloister. Revealed age of eastern annexe of North Wing to be later than the removal of the covered walkway.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: *forthcoming*



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Figure 1: Site location plan

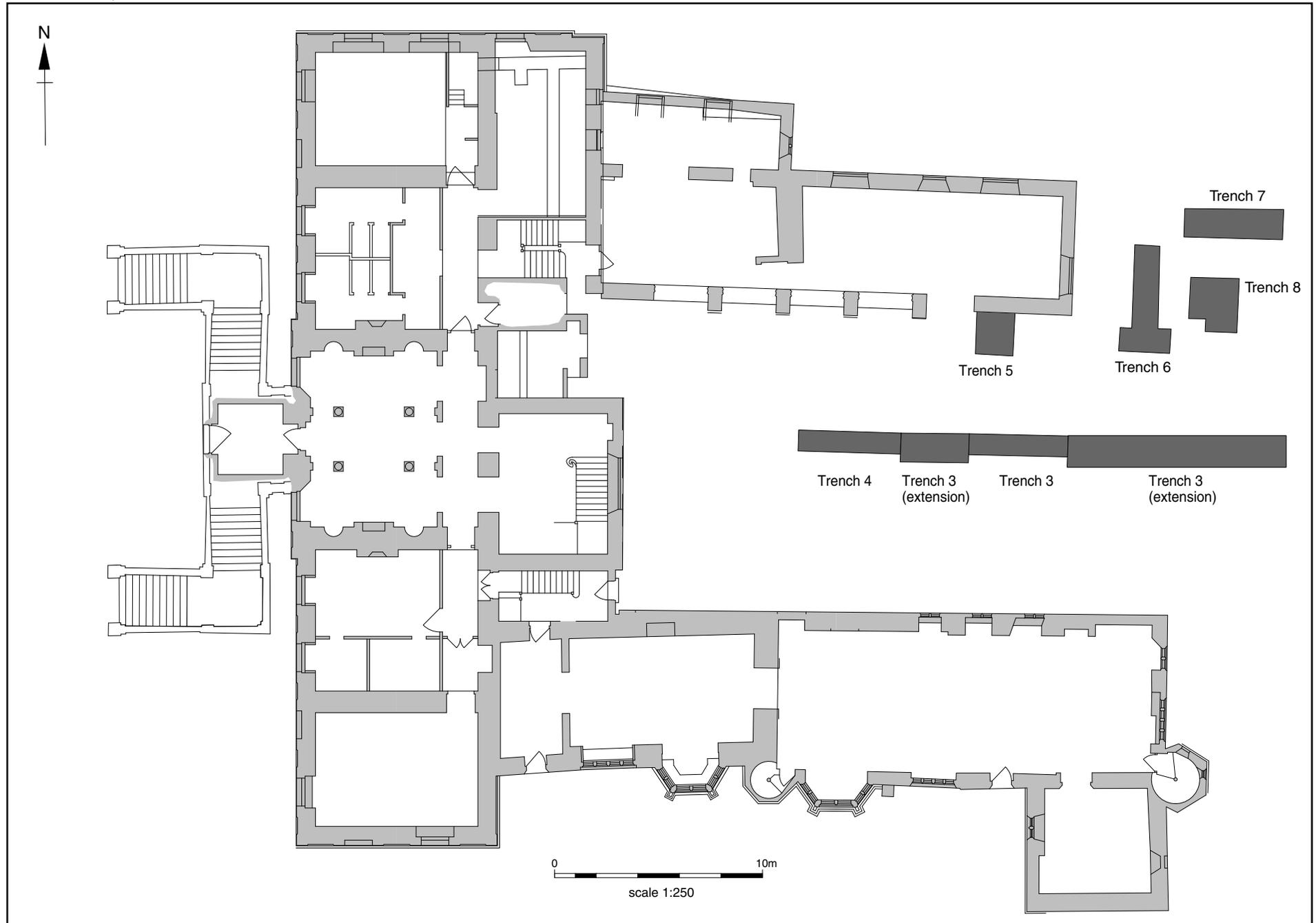


Figure 2: Trench location plan.

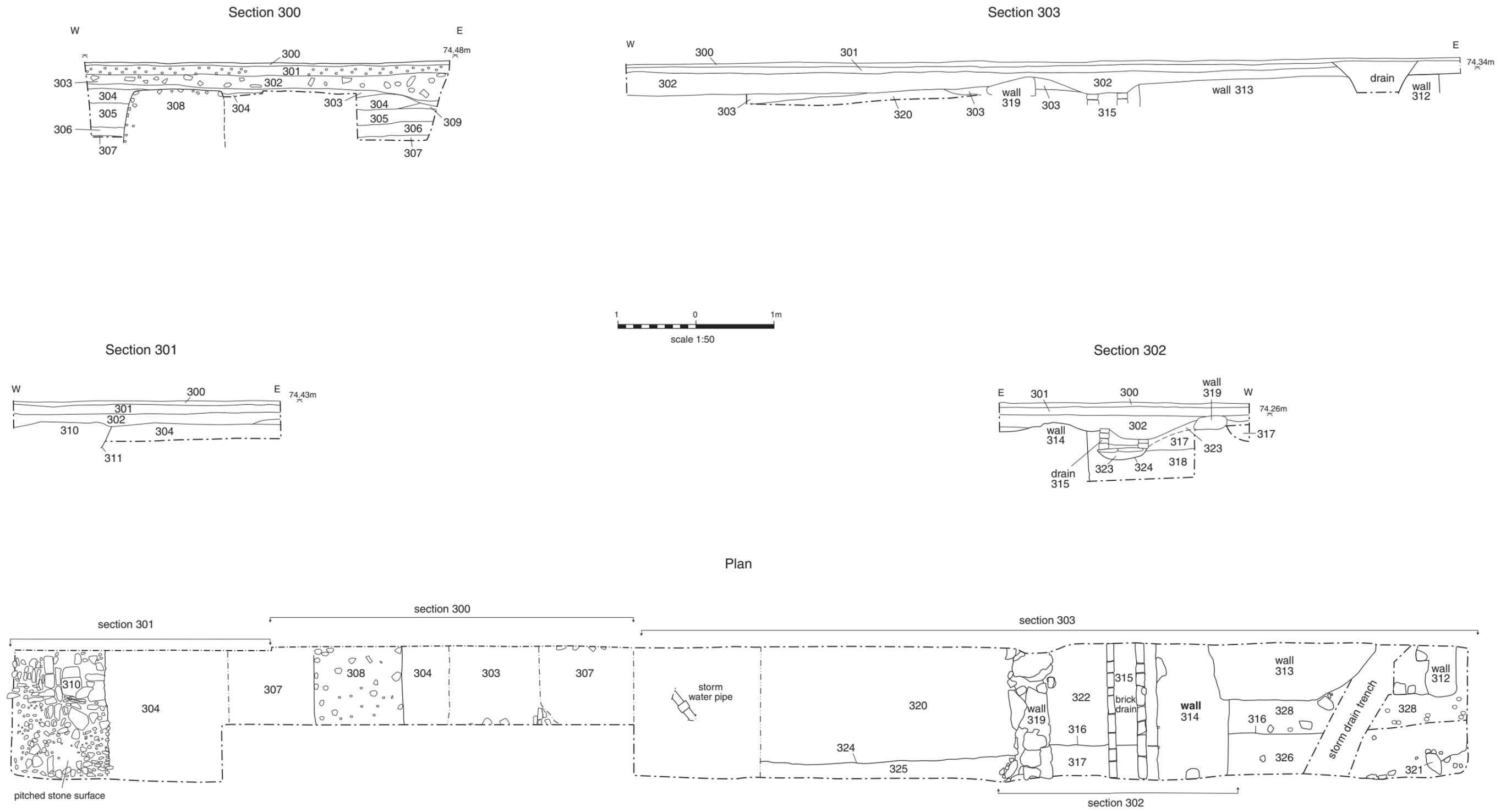


Figure 3 : Trench 3, plan and sections.

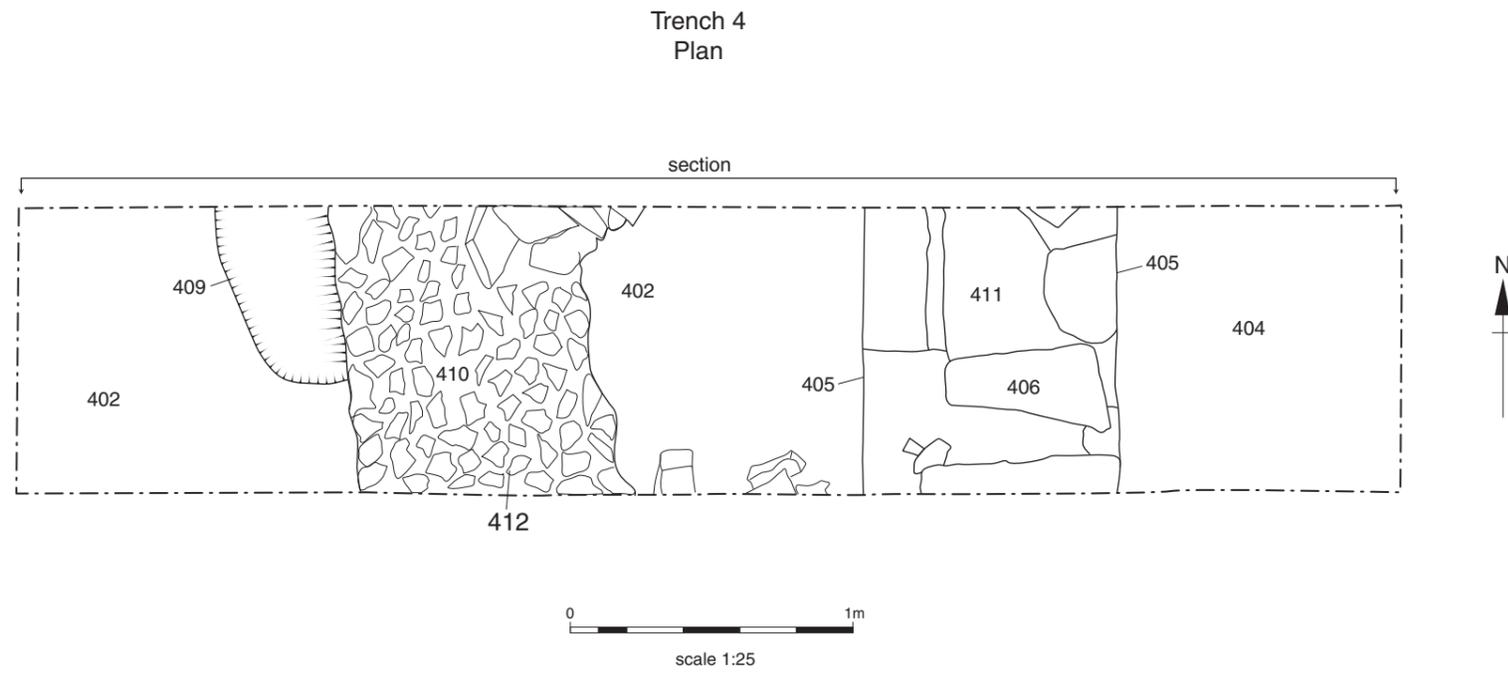
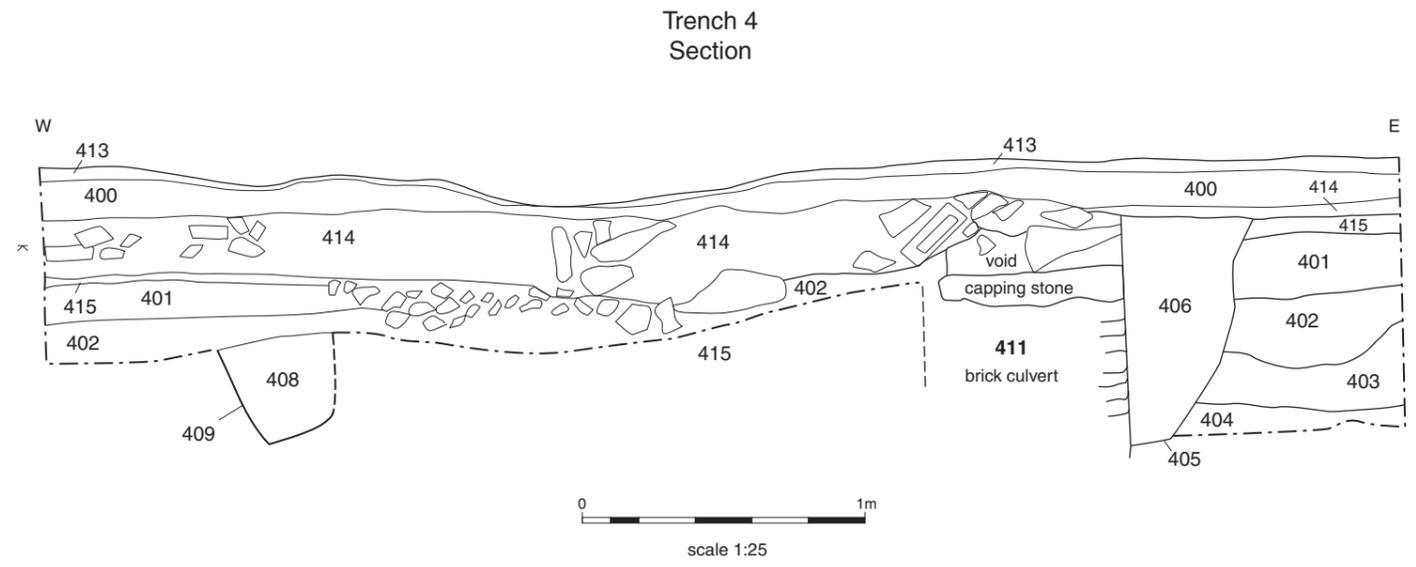


Figure 4: Trench 4, plan and section.

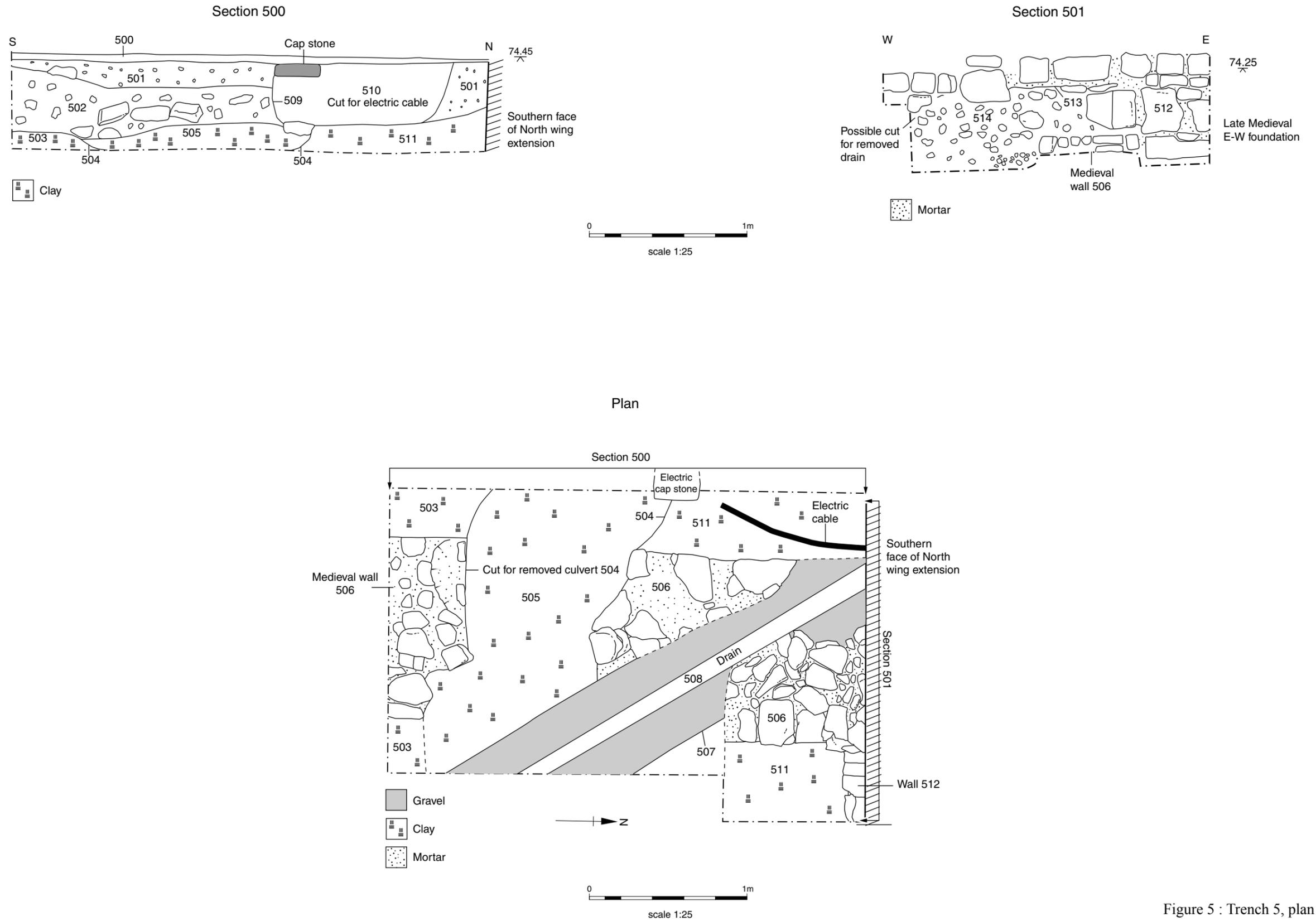


Figure 5 : Trench 5, plan and sections

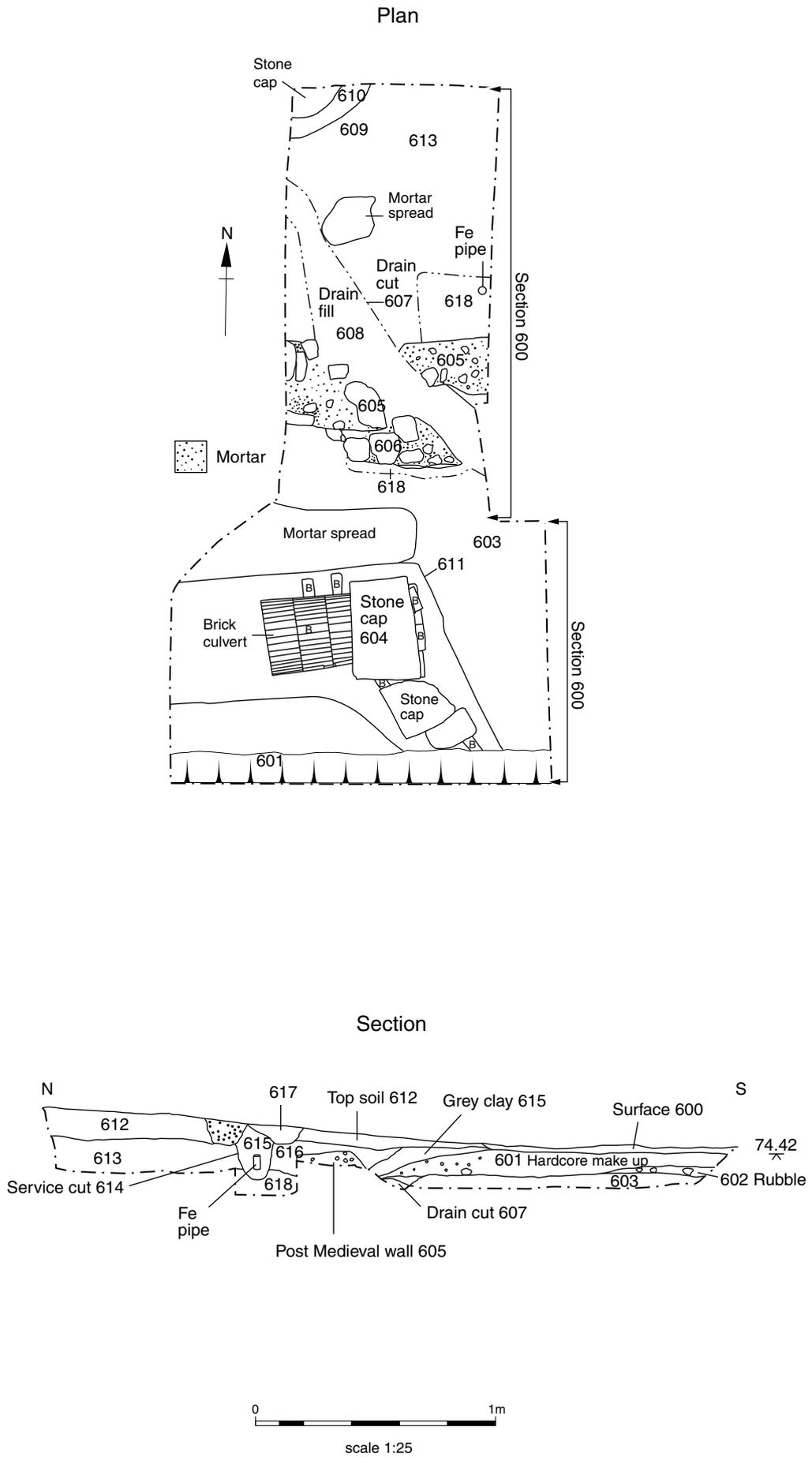


Figure 6 : Trench 6 plan and section

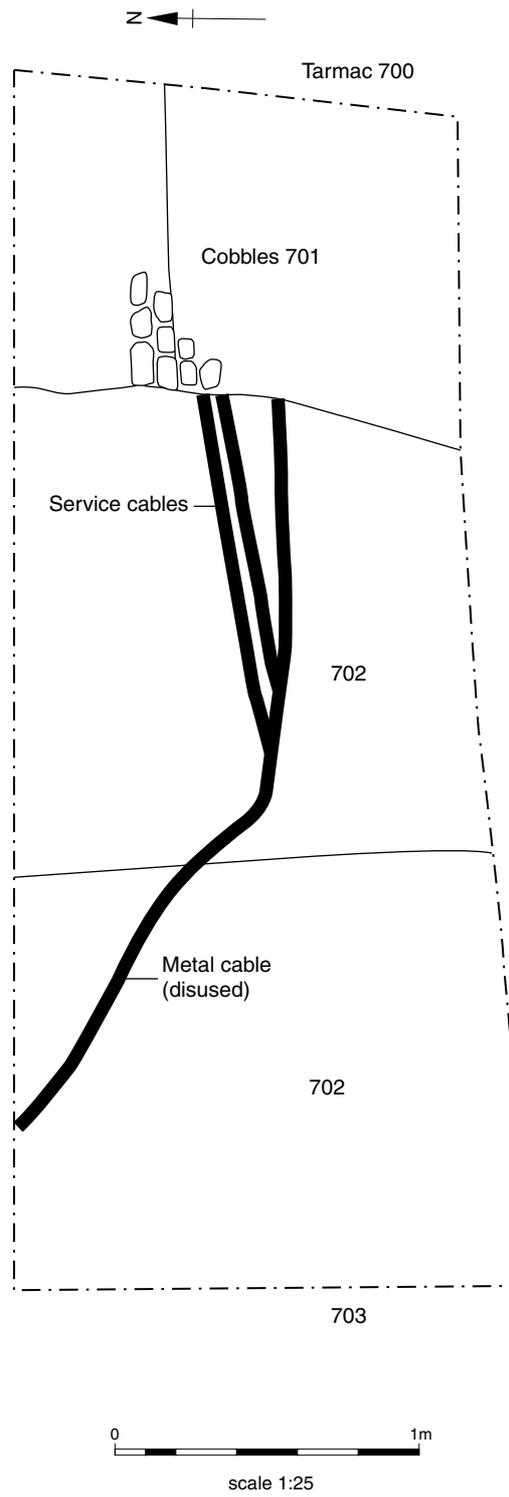


Figure 7 : Trench 7, plan

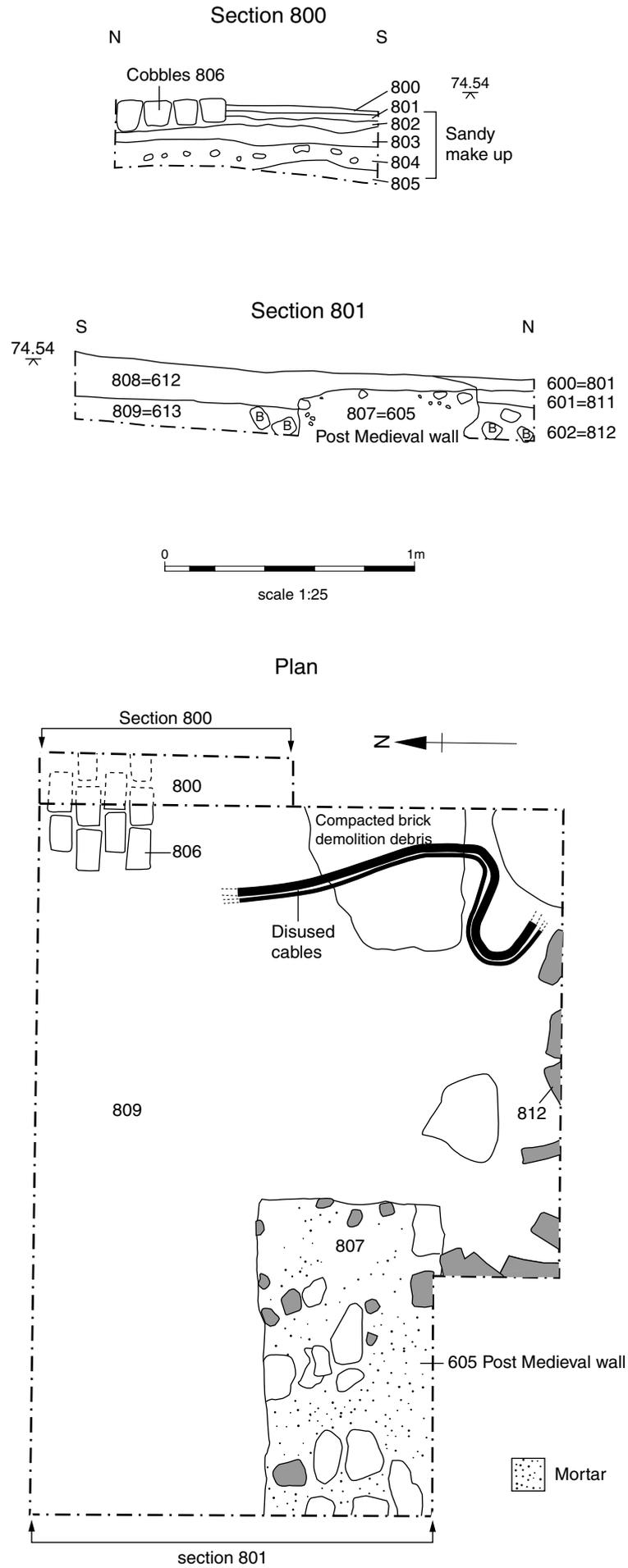


Figure 8: Trench 8 plan and sections

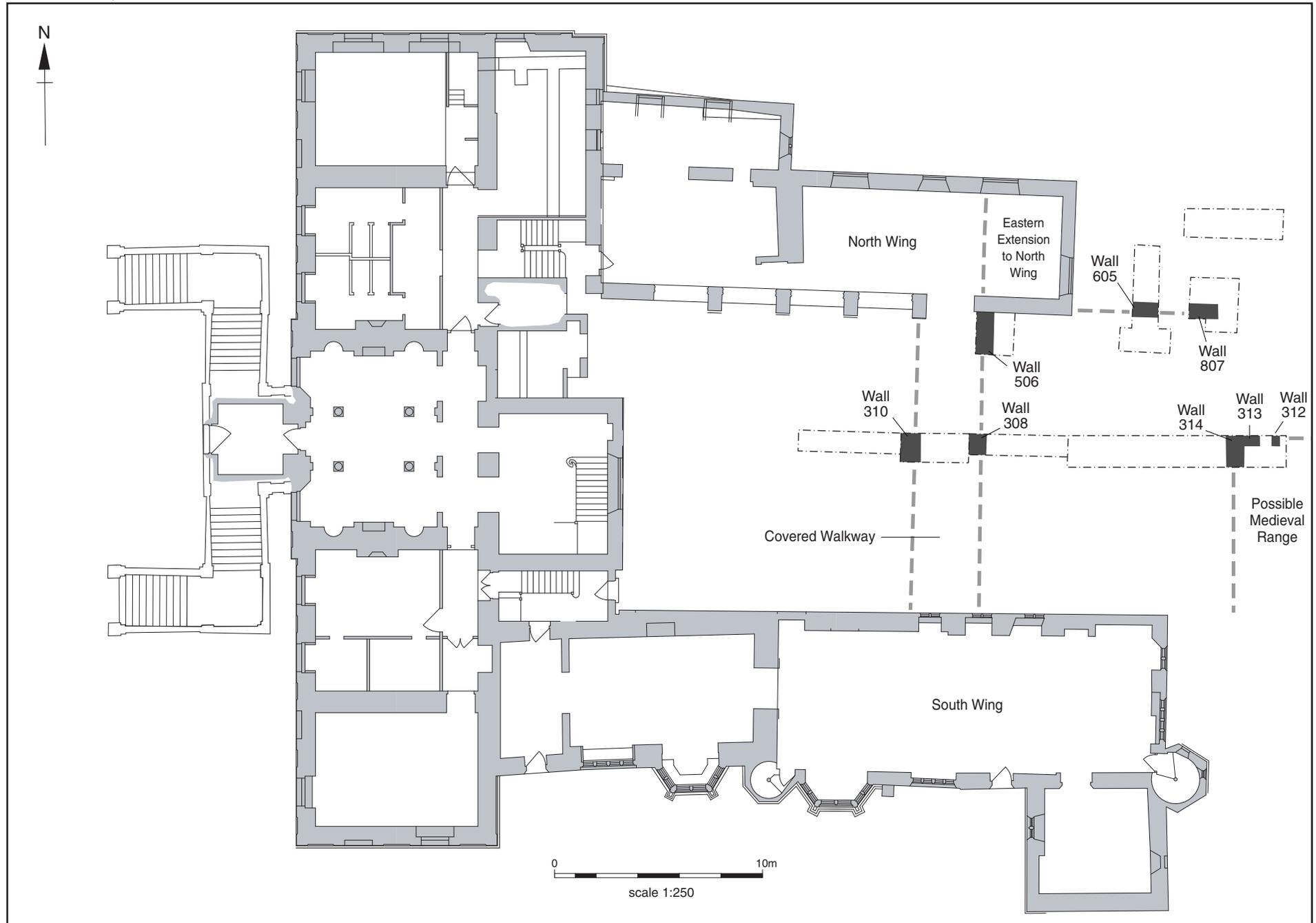


Figure 9: Interpretative diagram showing key features