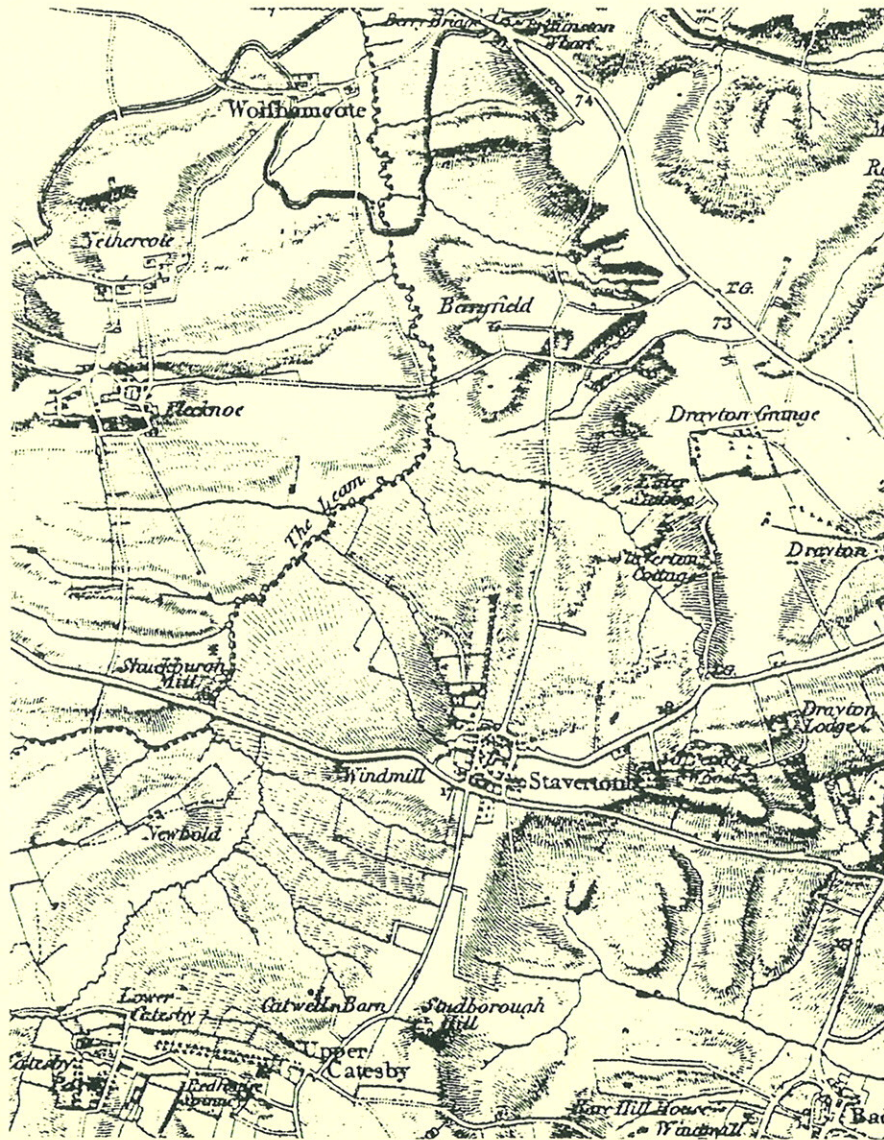


# WARWICKSHIRE

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## MANOR FARM, FLECKNOE.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION.



THE OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



# MANOR FARM, FLECKNOE, WARWICKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## Summary

A field evaluation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) at Manor Farm, Flecknoe. There were four elements to the archaeological deposits; a possible continuation of a hollow way located in a previous evaluation (OAU 1992), a wall possibly associated with the present Manor Farm buildings, Roman ditches at the S of the site and a very recent cobbled surface immediately to the S of the house. The pottery suggests nearby Roman and early medieval activity although no features were found to represent the structures of a settlement.

## Introduction

In November and December 1992 a field evaluation was carried out by the OAU on behalf of Clews Architects Partners who were acting for Mr Hayward, the landowner, in respect of an application for planning permission for the construction of a dwelling and garages. The site was at the E edge of the village of Flecknoe in the parish of Wolfhampcote at grid reference SP 51716348 (Fig. 1).

### **Archaeological background (Fig.1)**

Flecknoe is a shrunken medieval village, possibly Saxon in origin (Dugdale 1730, 304-7), parts of which are visible as upstanding earthworks. No Saxon remains have been found. The village has always been a minor settlement within the parish of Wolfhampcote. The only Roman remains in the area are those of a well at Sawbridge, found in 1689 (VCH vol. 1, 247).

Aerial photographs show medieval ridge and furrow cultivation around Flecknoe and earthwork property boundaries and hollow ways inside the village (sketch plot on Fig. 1). The County Sites and Monuments Record contains information on: a medieval chapel (WA 6372) 200 m to the SW of the site, a post-medieval pillory (WA 2946) 175 m to the W, a post-medieval windmill (WA 2944) and an undated cock pit (WA 1355) to the W of the village. An evaluation carried out by the OAU in June 1992 on the land immediately to the W of the site revealed a hollow way aligned E-W which may have been late medieval.

The original position of the manor house may have been across the road to the E (see Fig. 1) in the NE corner of a plot 100 m E-W by 75 m N-S. This may have been a 12th-century move from a position nearer the centre of the village to a more spacious plot next to the road to Wolfhampcote. The 'decayed chapel' mentioned by Dugdale (1730) may have been the manorial chapel (VCH vol 6, 271) and this chapel lies 200 m to the W of the site, perhaps confirming the relocation of the manor. This type of repositioning is seen elsewhere in medieval villages.

The Manor Farm house is a grade II listed building. The stone gable wall may be 17th century but the main origin of the building lies in the first half of the 18th century. The house was altered in the 19th century. The wall and railings at the front are also 19th-century and are likewise listed as grade II. The line of the road to the N and E of the site may also be 19th-century and cut across the plot previously occupied by the manor. The house converted from a barn at the E of the site is 18th-century in origin and is a grade II listed building.

### **Topography**

The site lies on the E end of the hilltop on which Flecknoe is built. The site slopes down from the S to the N from 141 m OD to 138 m OD and is approximately 0.88 hectares in area.

The site had been a farmyard and is currently disused. The topsoil had recently been stripped off and heaped up at the W of the site. The natural subsoil across the site was clay, with occasional inclusions of limestone, which overlay limestone bedrock.

### **Assessment strategy (Fig.2)**

The assessment strategy was based on a 2% sample of the area. The sample consisted of five trenches all 1.6 m wide; two were to be 7 m long, two were to be 5 m long and one trench was to be 3 m long. These lengths were extended to

clarify the deposits encountered: trench 3 was 9 m long, trench 2 was 7 m long and the other three were 5 m long. The trenches were aligned in relation to the proposed development: trench 1 was in the area of the garden, trench 2 ran through the centre of the house, trench 3 was in the area of the garages, trench 4 was to the front of the house and trench 5 was to the S of Manor Farm house on the line of the proposed wall extension.

The trenches were dug by a JCB type mechanical excavator. The remnants of the topsoil were removed by machine down to the subsoil or archaeological deposits. The archaeological features encountered were sampled by hand to determine their nature and depth and to recover dating evidence. The features were planned and their sections drawn at a scale of 1:20 where they were excavated. The deposits were recorded by giving each a unique number in sequence. The trench number acts as a prefix ie 101 is the first context in trench 1 etc.

As the topsoil had been removed it was considered that an earthwork survey would be fruitless. Where the depth of topsoil which had been removed could be determined it appeared to be around 0.32 m.

Poor weather conditions persisted throughout the evaluation. Heavy rain occurred for much of the time and most of the trenches were at least partially flooded. Trench 1 was completely flooded from the afternoon of the first day and could not be drained.

## **Results**

### **Soils**

The general soil type was a slightly silty clay loam.

### **Archaeology**

Trench 1 was flooded almost immediately after mechanical stripping and hand cleaning and interpretation was impossible, although it can be said that the layer at the N of the trench (105) was similar to that over the hollow way seen in the 1992 evaluation in the next property.

The natural clay subsoil in trench 2 was overlaid by 204 and 203 which appeared to be a disturbed portion of the clay and contained 19th-century pottery. A possible wall (211) was parallel to the S end of the range of storehouses at the W of the farmhouse. Finds from the matrix (212) were 19th century. There was no construction trench. A layer of stones to the W (207) had no clear construction and did not seem to be part of a building. Both these stone deposits sat upon 204 and had matrices identical to 202. The upper layers (201 and 202) in this trench were modern although 201 contained a sherd of medieval pottery.

The ditches in trench 3 (Fig. 3) show 3 phases of boundaries. The Roman ditches cut the subsoil and were overlaid by 301 a possible old cultivation soil 0.15 m thick under 0.15 m of topsoil. Only the 19th-century ditch 309 cut the old cultivation soil. The NW-SE Roman ditch 305 was unclear in plan due to the bad weather and may have been the same feature as 311. It may have been an enclosure ditch curving to the N. The other two ditches 308 and 309 are parallel,

aligned N-S, and may be an indication of a long-term boundary. Ditch 308 then contained one sherd of Roman pottery, cut ditch 305, and was overlaid by the cultivation soil 301; the other ditch was 19th century but also contained medieval sherds. Both these N-S ditches are on the same alignment as the W wall of the farmhouse. The sherds of Roman pottery are not very abraded which implies that they are not likely to be residual deposits in later features.

Trench 4 did not contain any archaeological deposits.

Layer (508), in trench 5, contained 19th century pottery and was similar to the disturbed natural clay in trench 2. 508 was cut by the modern drain running along the trench at a depth of 0.90 m. Over 508 was a recent cobbled yard surface (506) which in turn was overlaid by modern garden soils (504/505). A robber trench for a continuation of the extant wall to the E was the latest feature under the modern topsoil and gravel drive surface.

## **Finds**

Sixty-five sherds of pottery weighing 936g and 28 pieces of tile weighing 680g were recovered. Of the sherds of pottery nine, weighing 98g, were Roman and four, weighing 36g, were medieval. The rest of the sherds were post-medieval.

The Roman pottery came from the three ditches in trench 3 and was identified by Paul Booth. The medieval pottery was identified by Cathy Underwood-Keevill. Seven Roman sherds came from fill 306 in ditch 305. They were: four sherds of grey Wappenbury ware, one sherd of sandy grey ware and two sherds of sandy grog tempered ware. Although these sherds are not closely datable they are probably not later than the 2nd century. One sherd of oxidised sandy ware came from fill 307 in ditch 308 and is not inconsistent with the 2nd-century date of the rest of the Roman material. Fill 312, in ditch 311, contained one sherd of greyware from Wappenbury, one 12th-century sherd and one sherd of a coil built cooking pot of shell tempered fabric similar to Oxford OXB which is hand made and knife trimmed and dates to the 10th or 11th century. Two late 19th-century sherds and the medieval sherds from this context were probably intrusive due to the layer being indistinct in excavation because of the weather conditions as the stratigraphic position of the ditch, under 301, indicates that it should be contemporary with the other Roman features. The sherds of Roman pottery are relatively unabraded ie less damaged than would be expected had they been worn down by cultivation activity. This suggests that the sherds are contemporary with the ditches and were not present in a cultivation soil.

The four medieval sherds came from three contexts; two from 312 (see above), one sherd of wheelthrown sandy fabric with occasional limestone which may be 12th-century from 310 and one residual sherd of wheelthrown shelly tempered pottery from layer 201.

## TABLE OF CONTEXTS AND DATE OF POTTERY

Context	Fabric	Number	Date
101	Creamware	3	19th
201	Shell tempered ware	11	11th-12th
202	Blue and White printed ware Whiteware	6	19th
203	Midlands Brownware	1	19th (butter pot rim)
204	Red earthen ware	1	19th
212	Blue and White printed ware Whiteware	9	19th
	Staffs Mocha type	1	19th
	Red earthen ware	1	19th
306	Wappenbury greyware	4	2nd
	Sandy greyware	1	2nd
	Grog tempered sandy ware	2	2nd
307	Oxidised sandy ware	1	?2nd
310	Staffs slipware	3	19th
	OXAQ type	1	12th-13th
312	Wappenbury greyware	1	2nd
	OXAC	1	12th
	coil built cooking pot (OXB)	1	10th-11th
	whiteware	2	19th
505	Blue and White printed ware Whiteware	1	19th
	Whiteware printed	4	19th
	Staffs slipware	2	19th
	Staffs type Pancheon large dish	1	19th
507	Blue and White printed ware Whiteware	16	19th
511	Staffs mocha type	1	19th (jug handle)
	Tin glazed chamber pot	2	19th
	Brown glazed midlands ware	7	18th
	Blue and White printed ware Whiteware	1	19th
	Brown salt glazed English	2	19th

The bones were recovered from four contexts. Roman ditch fills, 306 and 307, contained highly fragmented metapodials. The other bone finds, from 19th century contexts 203 and 505, are mostly sawn pieces of parts of the animal which have little meat value. Sawing is not a commonly observed Roman butchery practice. The modern bone is much better preserved than the Roman bone.

### Environmental

Soil samples were not taken as none of the observed deposits displayed environmental potential.

## Comments on the results

### **Reliability of field investigation**

The sample size was sufficient to define adequately and interpret the archaeology in the areas affected by the proposed development. The weather conditions were poor. Rain and flooding hampered excavation.

This report was constructed within two working days and the results may need further consideration.

### **Overall Interpretation**

The possible hollow way seen in trench 1 on the same alignment as that observed in June may have continued on the same line as the current drive to the E. It may have led towards the supposed position of the Manor to the E of the site. The hollow way was at a depth of 0.42 m and is probably below most garden activity. No medieval deposits were encountered to suggest structures. The density of medieval pottery does not indicate domestic occupation immediately nearby. The area was probably used for agriculture when it was associated with the manor. The other deposits were all 19th-century and probably show the use of the area as a working farmyard based around the Manor Farm house. Trench 2 contained modern archaeological deposits which are probably not significant in interpreting the history of the village of Flecknoe or any medieval use of the site.

The ditches in trench 3 appear to show the subdivision of the plot occupied by the medieval manor. The N-S ditches may represent a long term boundary. The early medieval pottery from 201 and 312 suggests activity in the area although no features were located to indicate structures. The quantity of Roman pottery in trench 3 may indicate the proximity of a Roman settlement although no features, such as pits or postholes, were located to suggest that such a settlement was within the evaluation area. The N-S ditches were not present in trench 2.

Any archaeological deposits to the S of the Manor Farm house along the line of the proposed wall extension have been destroyed by drains and a robbed out wall on the same alignment to a depth of 0.90 m. The ditches in trench 3 may well survive relatively undisturbed as they are negative features, cut into the subsoil, and the removal of the topsoil does not appear to have affected them.

G D Keevill  
M R Roberts

OAU  
1992

## **Bibliography**

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Plot adjacent to Manor Farmhouse, Flecknoe, Wolfhampcote, Warwickshire OAU 1992

Victoria County History of the County of Warwickshire volume 1

Victoria County History of the County of Warwickshire volume 6

## **Appendix**

### Trench descriptions

#### Trench 1

This trench was 4.5 m long, 1.7 m wide and up to 0.47 m deep. It was flooded when it was recorded but had been hand cleaned immediately after excavation. The topsoil varied from 0.18 m to 0.11 m deep and contained modern finds. A dumped layer of mid grey brown silt clay with frequent flecks of charcoal and pieces of brick underlay the topsoil but was only visible in the E side of the trench. A tenacious blue-grey clay (layer 103) 0.08-0.22 m thick was under 102 and over a layer of tenacious mottled yellow, brown and blue-grey clay which contained charcoal brick and gravel. This layer was over a layer similar to that seen in June overlying the hollow way (the previous evaluation trenches had not been backfilled) and was an iron stained clay. A linear cut (106) was aligned N-S ran along the length of the trench; from its dimensions and by analogy with similar features in the other trenches it was probably a pipe trench or field drain. This cut was filled by 107. Cut 108 was aligned E-W across the trench and was filled by tenacious grey brown silt clay with frequent charcoal flecks, brick and gravel (109). This may have been an old water pipe trench which had been removed when the topsoil was stripped off the site.

#### Trench 2

This trench was 6.5 m long, 1.5 m wide and 0.42 m deep to the subsoil. The natural clay subsoil (209 and 210) was overlain by 208 a tenacious light brown clay loam with charcoal flecks 0.13 m thick. A tenacious yellowish grey clay, with charcoal flecks, 0.09 m thick (203) and a tenacious light greyish brown clay, with charcoal flecks and pebbles, 0.13 m thick (204) overlay 208. A possible wall footing 211 lay at the E end of the trench on top of 204. 211 was 1.7 m long and 0.35 m wide and consisted of two large pieces of limestone and one flat tile with nine smaller pieces of stone and tile. 211 had no matrix holding the stones together other than 212 which was identical to 202 a tenacious black/brown clay loam with



a lot of charcoal and six sherds of 19th-century pottery. This layer covered the entire trench underneath the topsoil. In the middle of the N side of the trench was a semi-circular layer of 17 stones and pieces of tile (207), 0.8 m long and 0.34 m wide, which also overlay 204 and had 202 between the stones. The topsoil (201) in this trench was a loose very dark brown clay loam between 0.10 and 0.30 m deep. In the centre of the trench was a rectangular depression (205) 0.22 m by 0.20 m which was filled with light brownish grey clay with less than 5% small stones (206). This feature resembled a JCB hydraulic support imprint and this was verified when it was known that the back arm of the JCB had been used to clear the topsoil.

### Trench 3

This trench was 9.8 m long, 1.8 m wide and averaged 0.3 m to the subsoil. There were four ditches cut into the subsoil of the trench. Ditch 305 was aligned NW-SE and was not entirely exposed within the trench. 305 was 0.45 m deep and 1.5 m wide. The N side changed its angle of slope from 30° to 50° and the ditch bottom was rounded. It was filled by 306 a tenacious mid grey-brown clay. 306 was cut by N-S ditch 308 which was 1.3 m wide, 0.55 m deep and filled with a compact mid brown-grey silty clay with charcoal flecks, stone fragments and small pieces of bone (307). At the E end of the trench ditch 311 was aligned roughly E-W but its edge was not clear because of partial flooding. 311 was filled by 312, a tenacious mid grey-brown silty clay. This ditch may have been the same as 305. 312 was cut by an E-W ditch 309 which was not fully excavated because of flooding, but was at least 2 m wide and 0.50 m deep and was filled with a tenacious dark grey silty clay (310). 309 cut a layer (301) overlaid by the topsoil and overlying the subsoil and which overlaid the other ditches. This layer (301) of tenacious light grey/brown clay may represent an old cultivation soil. Drain 304 filled by 303 was aligned N-S and cut through 306.

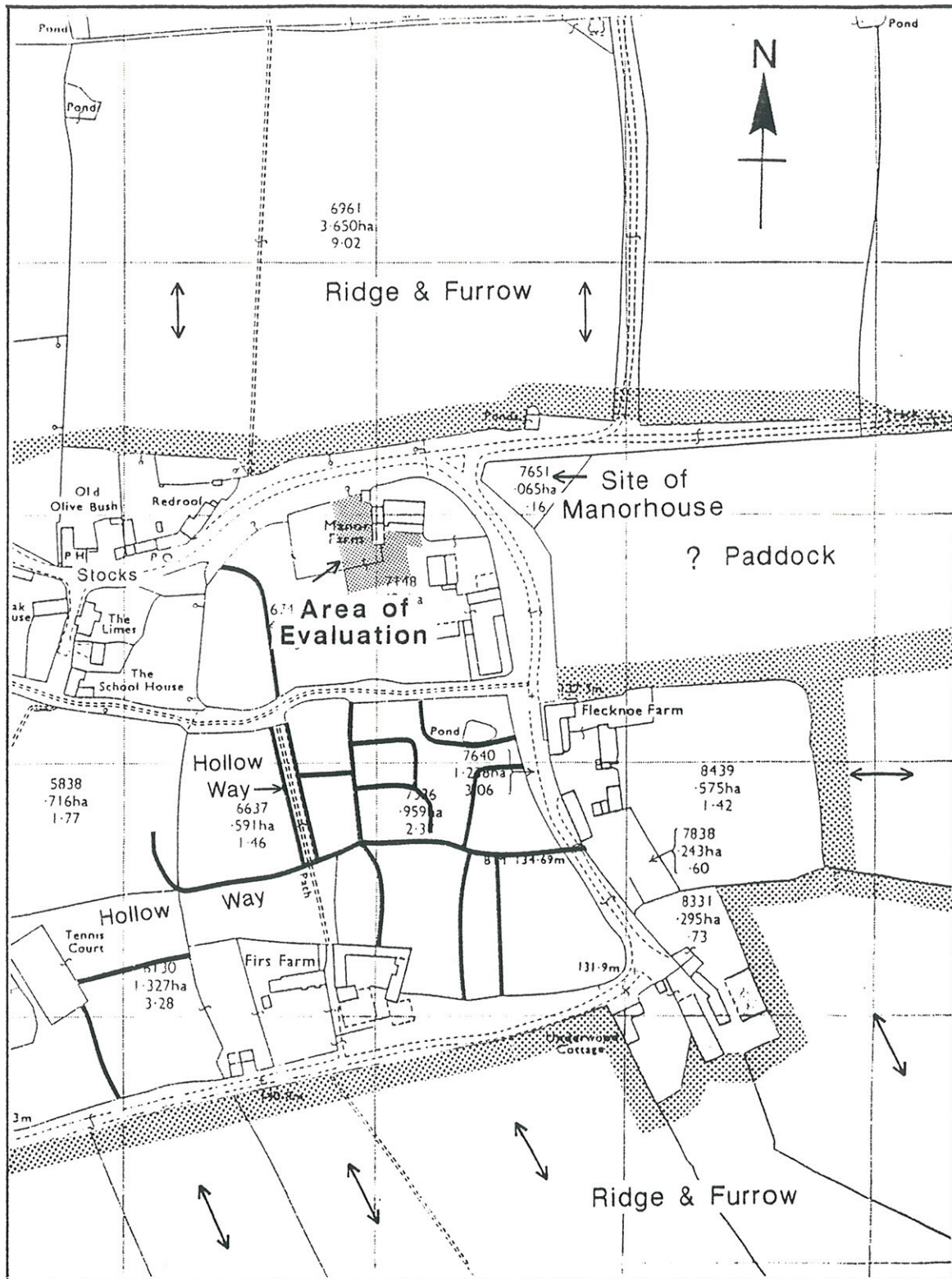
### Trench 4

This trench was 5.0 m long and 1.6 m wide. The topsoil had been stripped from the area of this trench which was 0.05 m deep to the subsoil as a result. There were no archaeological deposits.


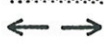

### Trench 5

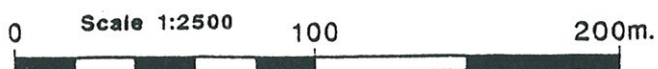
The earliest layer encountered was 508 a compact dark buff clay with occasional tile and stone which resembled the layers in trench 2 above the natural clay (208,203 and 204). This was cut by 509 the vertical cut for a ceramic pipe field drain and 512 the angled cut for a plastic pipe water main. These and their fills were overlain by a cobbled surface 506 consisting of small pieces of limestone and tile. The surface of this cobbling yielded a plastic clothes-peg and a 1950s shilling. These finds were assigned to 505, the lower garden soil of compact light grey-brown silt loam with frequent coal which overlay the cobbles. 505 was overlaid by 504, the upper garden soil of compact dark brown silt loam with frequent charcoal and coal. To the S of the trench and overlying the water main was the robber trench for a continuation of the existing wall to the E of the trench. This

was filled by a mixed buff/grey clay with frequent bricks, limestone fragments and mortar 502 which spilled to the N over the garden soil. This was overlaid by 501, a granite gravel drive surface which could be seen under the current driveway for the barn conversion, and 500, the topsoil.



**Manor Farm Flecknoe  
Site Location & Earthworks from aerial photographs**

- KEY**
-  Areas of Ridge & Furrow
  -  Direction of Ridge & Furrow
  -  Earthworks



**Figure 1.**

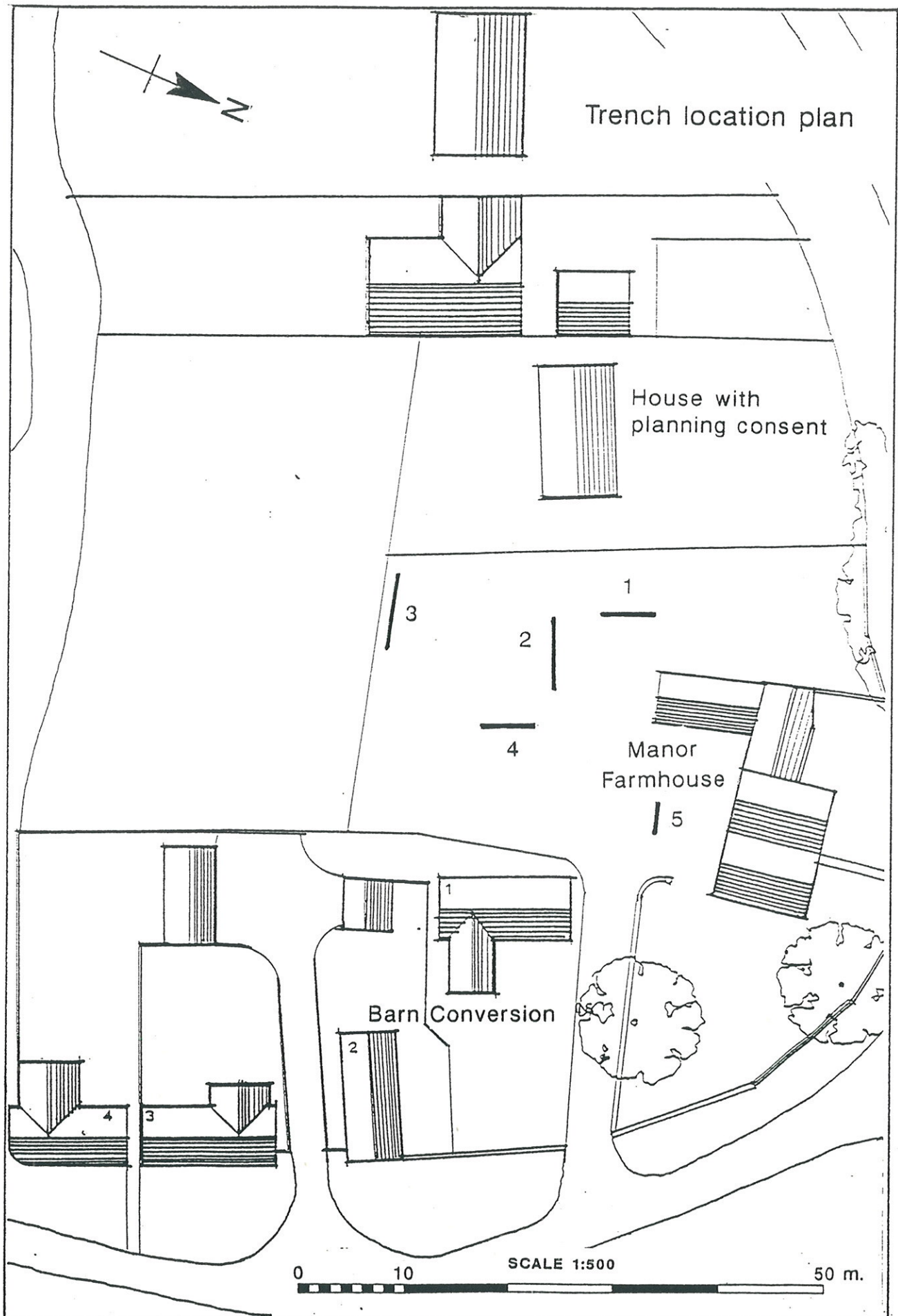


Figure 2.

Manor Farm, Flecknoe  
Trench 3 : Plan, 1:40

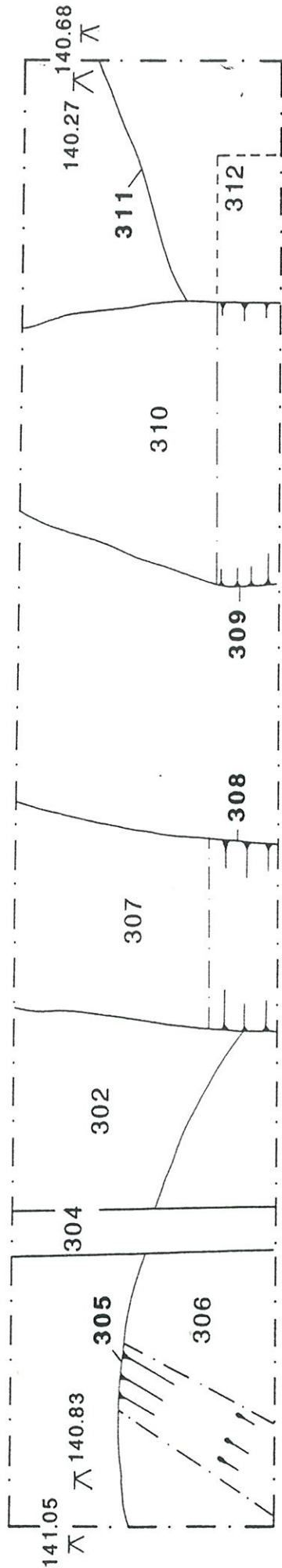


Figure 3.



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