

Chute Manor, Upper Chute, Wiltshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for The Hopton Family**

by M J Saunders

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MFC01/12

March 2001

Summary

Site name: Chute Manor, Upper Chute, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 3005 5400

Site activity: Evaluation trenching

Date and duration of project: 13th and 14th February 2001

Project manager: M J Saunders

Site supervisor: M J Saunders

Site code: MFC01/12

Area of site: c. 1.5 hectares

Summary of results: Post-medieval building remains

Monuments identified: Foundation walls of post-medieval manor house

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Devizes Museum in due course.

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	Melanie Hall-Torrance ✓ 9.3.01

Chute Manor, Upper Chute, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 01/12

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Chute Manor, Manor Farm, Upper Chute, Wiltshire (SU 3005 5400) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steven C Smallman of Dreweatt Neate, Chartered Surveyors, 16–18 Market Place, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5AZ, on behalf of their clients, the Hopton Family, The White Cottage, Wolverton, Nr Tadley, Hampshire.

A planning application has been made to Kennet District Council for the construction of a new manor house on the site of a previous manor house, which was destroyed by fire in 1946. The area was subsequently levelled and made into a garden. As the site has archaeological potential, a field evaluation in the form of trial trenching has been requested. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the District policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Stephanie Chestle, Archaeological Officer for Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Section, who advise the Local Planning Authority on archaeological matters related to planning. The fieldwork was undertaken by M J Saunders and Sian Anthony on the 13th and 14th of February 2001. The site code is MFC01/12.

Location, topography and geology

The village of Upper Chute is situated to the south-east of Marlborough and to the north-west of Andover. The site itself is located on the eastern side of Upper Chute, approximately 100m to the east of the Parish Church, and occupies an irregular plot of land of c. 1.5 hectares (Fig. 1). The area of the site evaluated is generally level and, according to geological maps (BGS 1975), the underlying geology is Upper Chalk overlain by clay with flints.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Section, who advise the Local Planning Authority on matters related to archaeology, and in further papers provided by the client. The site lies within the historic core of the village, close to the Parish Church.

Documentary sources indicate that the Parish Church was in existence by AD 1235 and it contains a Norman font.

The site is that of the destroyed manor house, which was originally of 17th-century date, altered in the earlier or mid 19th century and thought likely to stand on the site of the original medieval manor. Information supplied by the client indicates that the ownership of Chute Manor can be traced back to 1066 when the lands were held by St Peter's Abbey in Winchester. The Ordnance Survey map of 1900 shows the manor in detail, with the entrance drive sweeping round to the south of the farm buildings. The village pond, now filled, is depicted, together with the ha-ha, which separates the formal gardens from the farmland to the south. All that still stands of the manor house itself is the surviving gable end of the house.

More generally, the area is rich in finds and sites of Prehistoric and Roman date, with the Iron Age hillfort of Fosbury Camp and the Roman road from Winchester to Cirencester a few kilometres to the north-east.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. Specific research aims of the project were to determine whether archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site; to determine whether archaeological deposits of any period were present; to determine whether there were any Saxon or medieval settlement deposits present, and to provide detail with which to document the origins and development of the village in late Saxon and medieval times.

This was to be achieved by digging a single trench, 20m long, through the centre of the proposed new/former manor house. The trench was to be excavated using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to the top of the natural or the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. The trench was to be dug under constant archaeological supervision and, where archaeological features or deposits were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be excavated by hand. Sufficient of these were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the terms of the brief but carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits that might warrant preservation in situ or be better dealt with under conditions relating to full excavation. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

A single trench was dug in the position shown on Figure 2. The trench dug was initially 20m long and 1.6m wide but, following a request from Ms Stephanie Chestle of Wiltshire County Council, it was extended to 25m and widened at the northern end (Fig. 3). This revealed the extensive remains of the manor house (destroyed in 1946), including a barrel vaulted cellar. At the northern end, a depth of 2.1m was reached, which exposed the foundations of the cellar. Whereas, at the southern end, clay with flint natural was exposed at a depth of 0.76m (Fig. 4). The trenching revealed the various components of the building, including a tiled floor, service runs, foundation walls, and the demolition debris and damaged contents of the building infilling the cellar. The cellar walls were built of brick of Victorian appearance, but with upstanding fragments of the building walls, including chalk and flint. The gravelled driveway was also present on the south side of the building (Fig. 4).

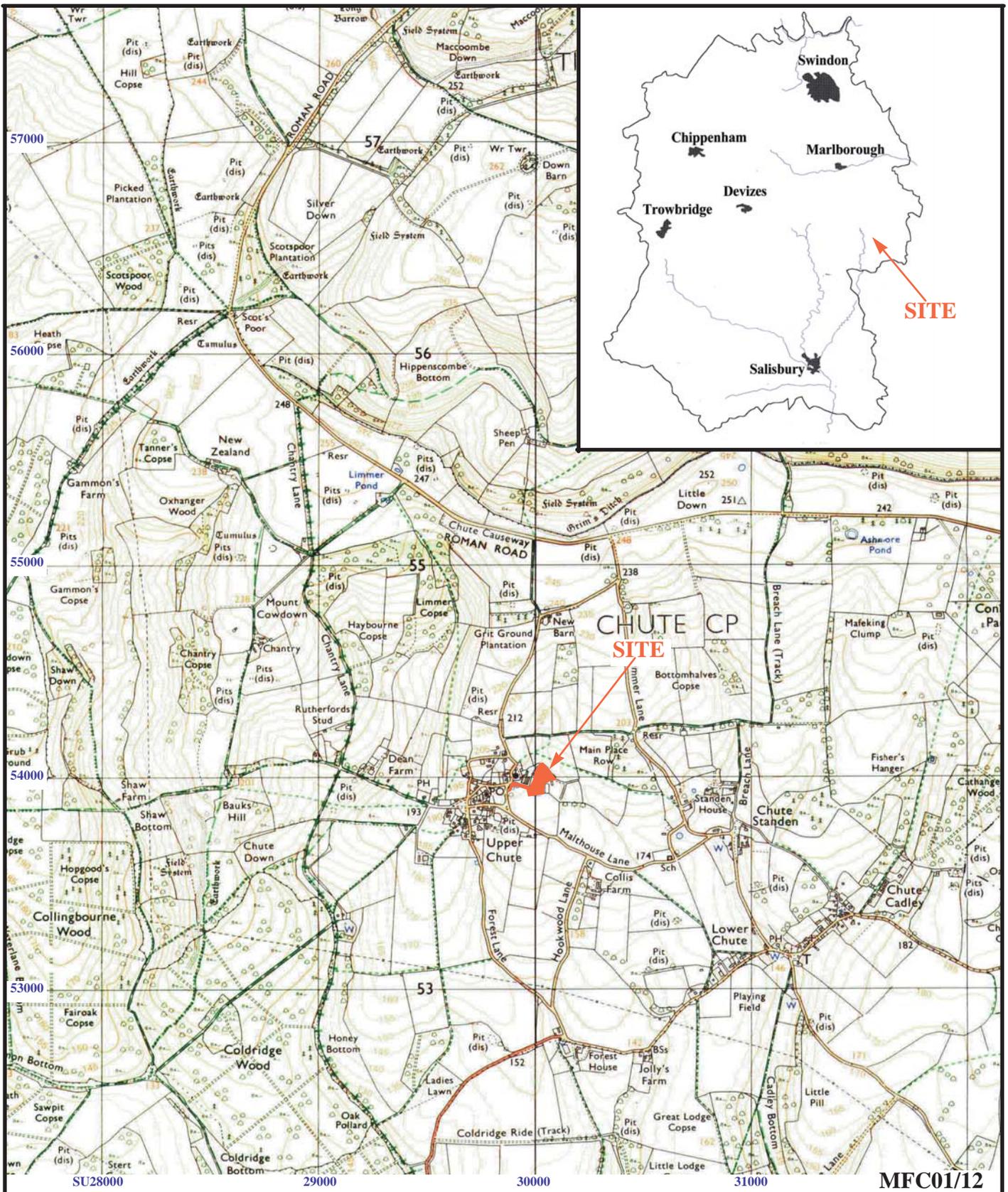
Finds recovered comprise material of 19th/20th century date, such as glass bottles and metalwork (see archive).

Conclusion

No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were made during excavation of the evaluation trench. Construction of the house, which had burnt down in 1946, had disturbed the underlying geology and excavations for the cellar had removed all of the levels of archaeological relevance in its locality. The southern part of the trench was undisturbed but no cut features or finds that might have indicated the presence of a late Saxon or medieval precursor to the latest building were found. On this basis, the site does not appear to have any archaeological potential.

References

BGS, 1975, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 283, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO



Chute Manor, Upper Chute, Wiltshire, 2001

Figure 1. Location of site within Chute and Wiltshire.

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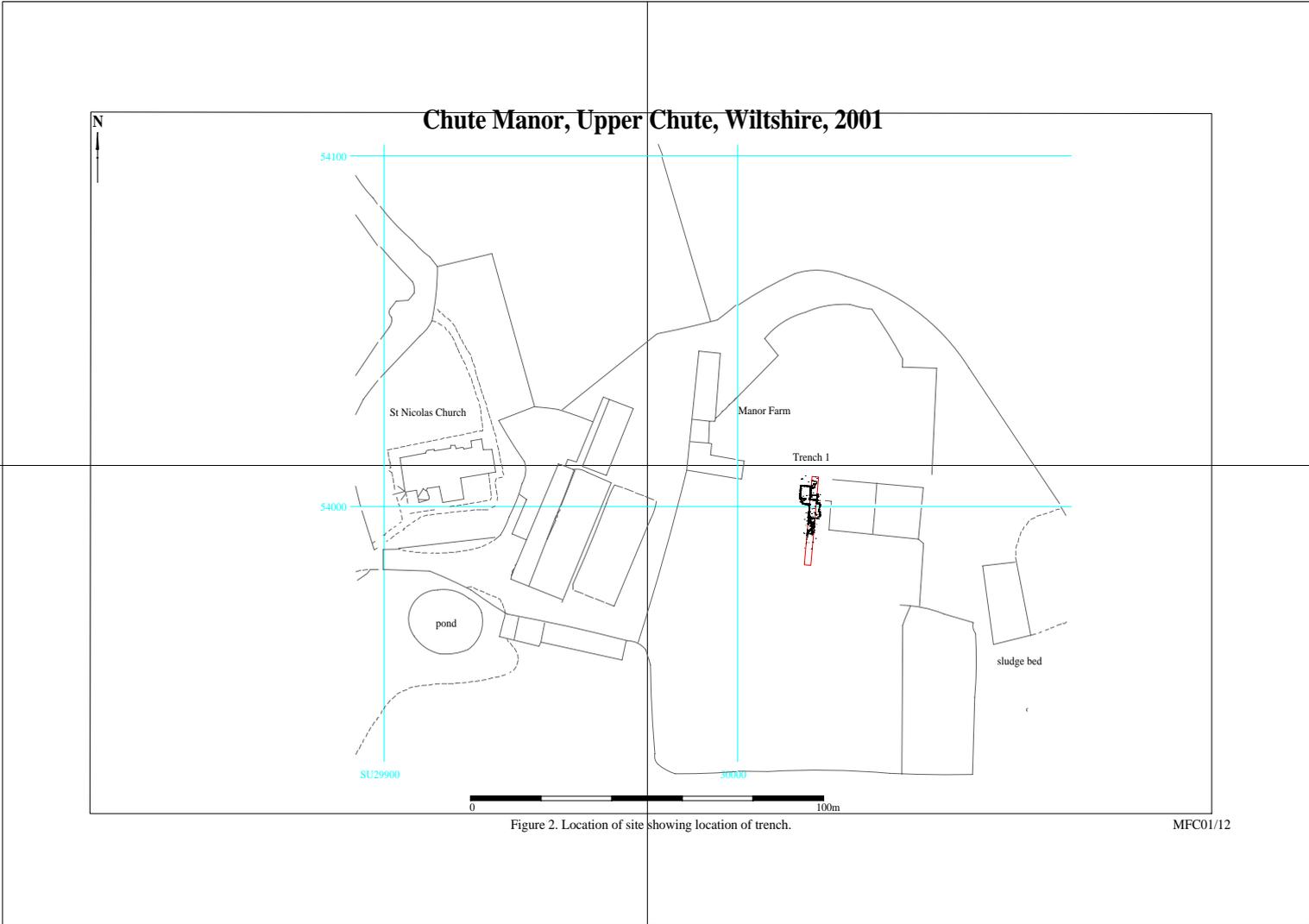


Figure 2. Location of site showing location of trench.

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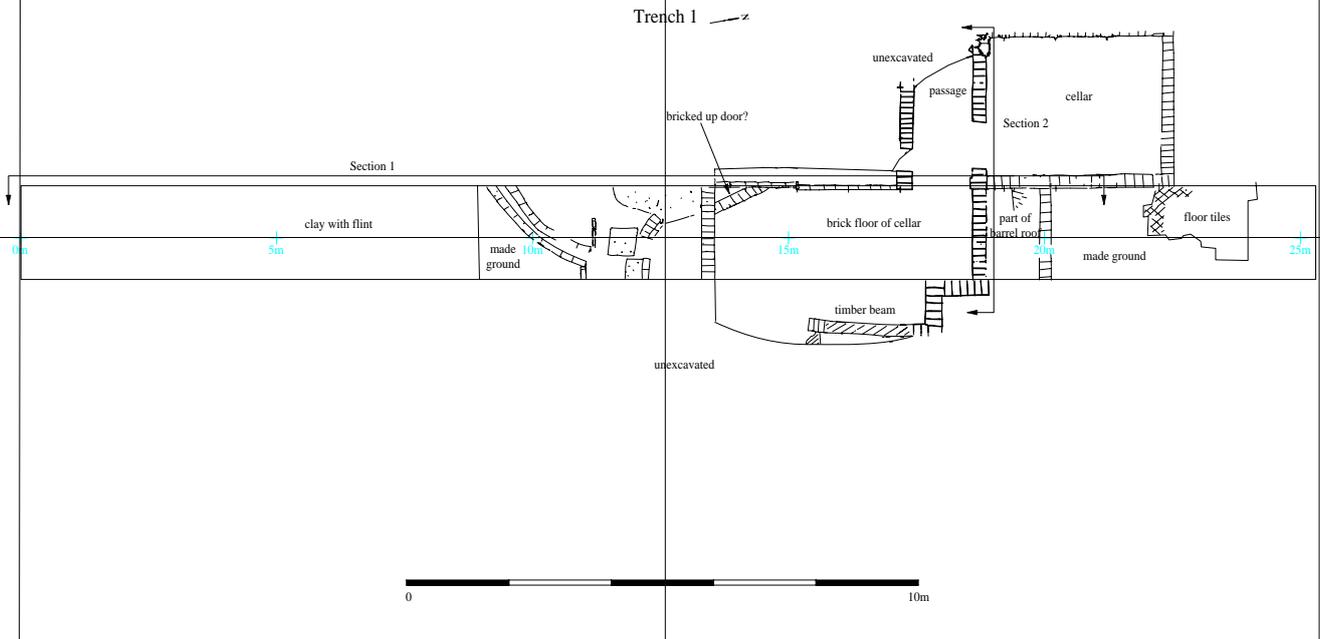


Figure 3. Plan.

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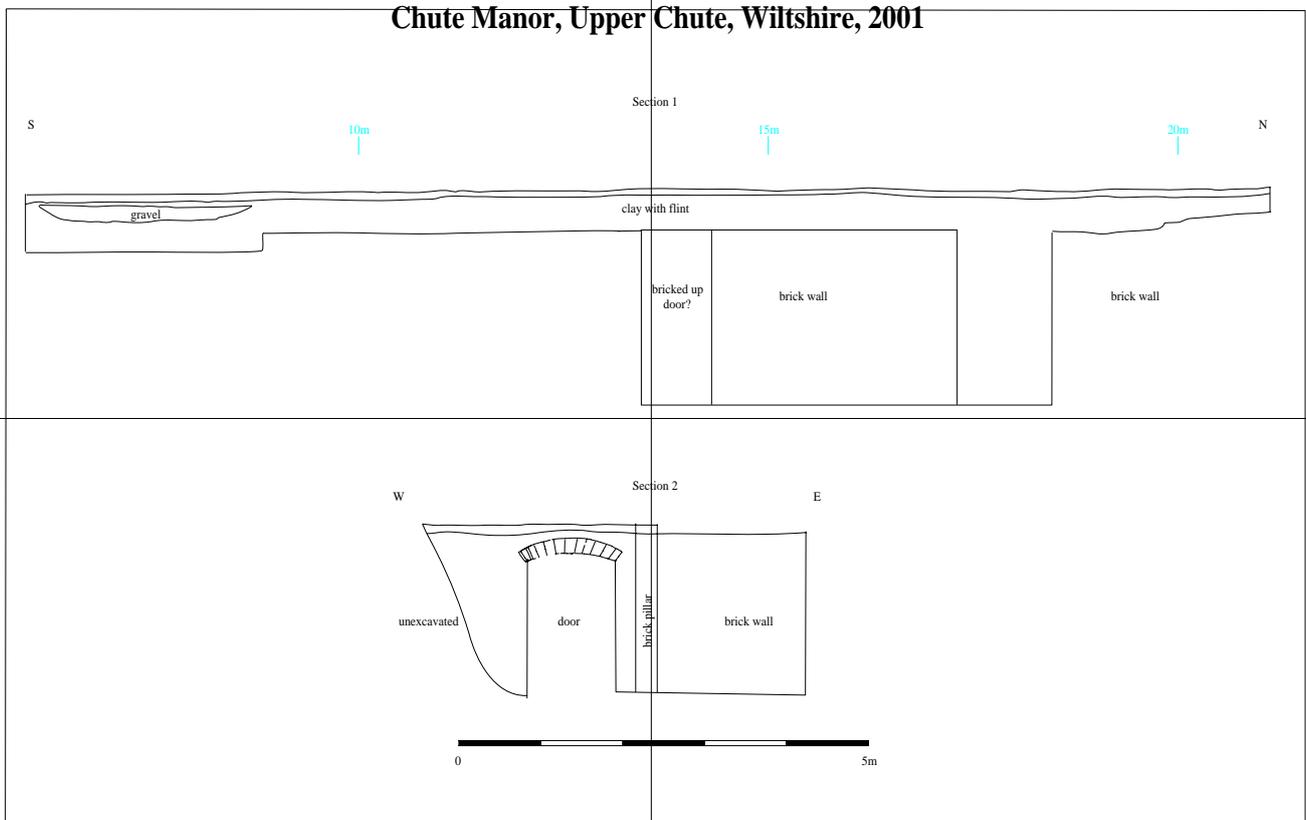


Figure 4. Sections.

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Plate 2. General shot showing trench 1 and remaining walls.