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Lower Brockhampton: A Survey of the Moated Site Complex, Bromyard, Herefordshire.



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Lower Brockhampton: A Survey of the Moated Site Complex, Bromyard, Herefordshire.

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Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

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Summary:

The survey data for this report was collected during 2003. A computer malfunction rendered the geophysical data unusable shortly after collection and the report was therefore not produced. A hard copy of both data plots has recently come to light enabling the completion of this piece of fieldwork.

The earthwork survey comprised a plane table and alidade survey of the area immediately around the northern and eastern sides of the moated site. The results of the survey traced a partially filled in ditch, approximately 5m wide, that had previously been noted in a whole estate survey. The ditch runs from the north-western corner of the present moat to the north-western corner of the small, adjacent, moat. It is suggested that this may relate to an earlier moat which enclosed a large area. An alternative to this idea is that the ditch was created as a feeder channel for the smaller moat in order to maintain its water level.

A geophysical (electrical resistance) survey was undertaken covering two 20m grids. Grid 1 was located to the north of the ruined chapel and appears to show a series of regularly spaced and sized anomalies within its north – eastern corner. It is possible that these relate to burials, although, this can only be tested by excavation. The second grid was located over a lawned area to the west of the manor house but within the former moated area. A series of anomalies were recorded which may support the belief that there was a west wing to the manor house.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

Figures contained within this report contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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Introduction

This report provides an account of carried out by Herefordshire Archaeology at Lower Brockhampton moated manor house in 2003. An earthwork survey of the immediate environs of the moated manor house was undertaken together with a targeted geophysical, (resistivity) survey. Unfortunately the geophysical data was corrupted soon after the survey and rendered unusable. However a hard copy of the data has recently come to light, enabling the production of the report.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the work was to follow up on a whole estate reconnaissance survey undertaken in 2002/3, (Ray 2003/10). In particular, this survey had identified a series of previously unrecorded earthwork within the close environs of the moated manor. A scheme of works was agreed with the National Trust to map these observations and to investigate two areas using geophysics in order to help resolve questions concerning the development of the manor house and the use of the chapel.

Location

The National Trust's Brockhampton Estate is situated a mile to the east of Bromyard, and close to the border of Herefordshire with Worcestershire to the east. While most of the estate lies within the civil parish of Brockhampton, a detached part lies within Tedstone Delamere parish to the north. Lower Brockhampton House is situated at SO 688 560.



Figure 1: location of Lower Brockhampton within the county of Herefordshire.

Background History and Previous Archaeological Work

The place-name, which means simply 'Brook settlement', is first recorded in its present form in 1283. An earlier record of 1166 renders it *Brochant(one)*, held by one Bernard. Brockhamptons were the first recorded owners of the manor, from the 12th century, and Richard de Brockhampton passed the ownership of the manor to Robert de Furches in 1283. The manor was in the hands of Lawrence de Sollers by 1349 and Sir Thomas de Moigne was in possession from 1350. By 1383 it had in turn passed into the hands of John Domulton. Throughout the medieval period the parish church for Brockhampton was St. Peter's Bromyard although by the 17th century it appears that Whitbourne was regarded as the parish church for the area.

The earliest fabric of the chapel at Lower Brockhampton dates to the 12th Century. Meanwhile the open hall of the manor house can probably be dated to the early years of the 15th century. A deserted settlement at The Grove is thought to be the Studmarsh (or Stubmarsh) mentioned in the Red Book of the Bishop of Hereford in 1268-1275, but it is not mentioned in the Lay subsidy Rolls of 1334-6 and may have been deserted by then.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the estate passed to the Habingtons of Wichford in Worcestershire, and in 1545 Richard Habington left the property equally to his three sisters. One of these sisters, Mary, married Richard Barneby of Bockleton in Worcestershire just to the north-east of Bromyard in 1552, and lived at Brockhampton.

In 1731 a nephew of the last of the male Barnebys, Bartholomew Lutley, inherited the estate. Following a change of surname from Lutley to Barneby and his marriage to Betty Freeman of Gaines in 1756, Bartholomew Barneby began building a new house at Brockhampton Park, in an elevated position to the south of the estate near the Bromyard to Worcester road. This is thought to have been designed by the renowned architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard.

Bartholomew's son John Barneby built a new chapel close to the house in 1799. At this point Lower Brockhampton reverted to use as a farmhouse, and the medieval chapel was no longer maintained. The restoration of Lower Brockhampton House in the Victorian image of half-timbered Gothic domestic style has been proven to be the work of J.C. Buckler from around 1871.

The estate was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1946, and it formally took possession in 1950, with a further purchase in 1968 and the sale of various lands south of the A44 soon thereafter. The house, Brockhampton Park, is rented on a long lease.

Lower Brockhampton moated manor, chapel and settlement.

The Lower Brockhampton group of structures is widely, and correctly, regarded as comprising the core group of key historic assets on the Brockhampton Estate. The moated manor and its detached ornamental gatehouse regularly feature on National Trust and English tourism

promotional literature. One reason for their doing so relates to the timbered close-studding that was such a marked feature of wealth display during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, and that is represented both on the main building of the manor-house and on the gate-house.

Manor house. This comprises accommodation on two storeys through the length of the east range. A main early fifteenth century hall of two bays open to the timber roof trusses and wind-braces following J.C. Buckler's restoration is set broadly east-west with a former screens-passage to the east. The fifteenth century east range is set at the perpendicular to the eastern end of the hall. The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England survey published in 1932 (Herefordshire East) noted that the house was originally arranged on an H-plan with a parallel west range, but that this was destroyed at some point, although its foundations were said to survive (RCHME 1932, 32). No trace of these foundations is visible today, but geophysical survey in 2003 may have located the footprint of this long-vanished west range.

The two or three claimed northern extensions to the east wing that are dated by RCHME to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are in need of re-assessment. The two most northerly of these structures are stone-founded and their internal arrangements indicate some substantial rebuilding at some point. In view of what was observed concerning the possible succession of moats, it is proposed here instead that this most northerly structure formed part of the original stone and timber medieval manor house. This was substantially demolished and the remains altered to ancillary structures c. 1400 when the new hall and cross-wings were built and the ornamental pond/moat created. It was then re-commissioned and linked to the east wing and hall sometime after the west wing was demolished. The brickwork in this most northerly structure is most likely of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century date and this is likely to be the date of re-construction.

Moats. The literature on the site notes the existence of the moat surrounding the manor house, but does not as yet record either the character or the developmental sequence of moats at the site.

The gatehouse was once thought to be of late fifteenth century date, but is now dated both stylistically and through dendro-chronology to the period 1545-50. The two-storey structure is, like the moated island to the north-east of the main moat, a miniature. It should properly also be seen also therefore as something of a visual pun, this time setting off the close-studded eastern elevation of the manor house.

The chapel is as described by the RCHME in 1932, with 12th century fabric to the undivided nave and chancel, and with traces of a contemporary south door and round-headed single-light window. In the 13th century this latter was converted into a narrow lancet and two other lancets were inserted, one in each of the south and north walls of the chancel. The south door was modified at this time. Larger and more elaborate windows were inserted into the east and west ends of the chapel in the 15th century.

The fabric is however of more complex build than described in the 1932 account, with large blocks of tufa and of dressed limestone, along with narrow carefully laid courses of almost purple red sandstone and patches of coursed limestone amid an otherwise rubble build. This complexity, and particularly a different build in the lower courses that those higher up in each elevation, especially on the southern elevation, suggests the possibility of a pre-mid-12th century phase to the structure.

Fieldwork in 2002 and 2003

The Walk-over and earthwork surveys

Walk over surveys by Herefordshire Archaeology in 2002 and 2003 added considerable detail to the known record of the site. The complex comprises the manor house partially surrounded by an ornamental moat with a further possible, minor moat to the north-east, the ornamental gatehouse to the south spanning one arm of the moat, the ruined medieval chapel to the west of the moated site, and a possible area of settlement earthworks to the north in the adjacent orchard.

After the initial walk-over survey a plane table and alidade survey was undertaken in order to record the features noted in the walk-over survey in more detail.

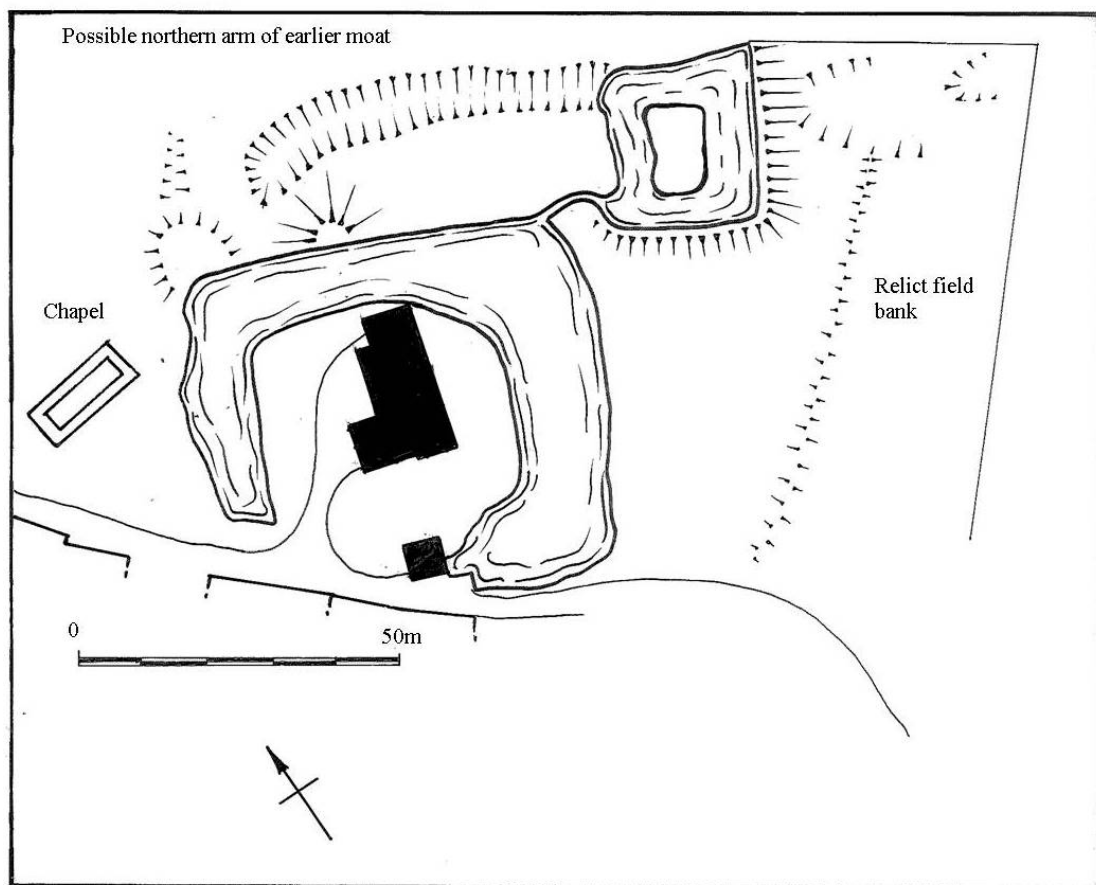


Figure 2: Plan showing the earthworks recorded during the survey

The survey visit and survey of 2002 and 2003 produced a significant new perspective on these features. The moat that exists today is markedly broader on the eastern flank of the manor house than the west, and curves around with a flourish to mark out the location of the gate-house on the southern side opposite the screens passage. This is a very carefully designed position, but the plan of the site reveals that the house does not sit squarely within the moat, and it seems likely that the present form of the moat is, rather, designed also to enhance the prospect of the house from its principal southerly to south-easterly approach (which is defined by a north-south aligned hollow-way recorded in the survey of 2003 in the fields to the south of the manor house and farm).

During 2002, *Herefordshire Archaeology* survey recorded the former northern arm of what may have been the moat which survives as a largely filled-in curving broad gully to the north of the present northern arm of the moat. This infilled ditch is more strictly aligned east-west than the present northern arm, and this aligns much more closely with the stance of manor house. Just as the stone-founded northern 'extension' of the represents the sole surviving above-ground trace of the former, pre-1400 medieval manor house, so the infilled northern arm may represent therefore the sole surviving element of the defensive moat that once surrounded that earlier manor house. An alternative to this is that this feature was excavated as a feeder ditch for the decoy island and was fed by a sluice from the moat.

The post-1400 ornamental moat is designed, then, to look most impressive from the south-east and this sense of a designed micro-landscape of the environs of the manor house is enhanced by the addition of two other elements that are probably contemporary with each other, dating to the mid-sixteenth century. The ornamental gate-house will be discussed below, but the other feature is a miniature moat with a central island that is located to the north-east of the present moat and is connected to it by a small overflow channel. This miniature moated site is presumably a folly designed as a pun on the larger moated site, and a dam in the dingle to the west would have created another watery element, perhaps of the eighteenth century, to further add to the tranquil scene.

The orchard to the north of the manor house was found in the survey to contain a marked concentration of subtle earthworks. The latest of these are a series of north-south aligned broad ridges that represent at least two phases of orchard creation. A more pronounced feature is a hollow representing a track or former ditch that crosses the orchard from east to west around 50m north of the boundary fence with the manor, and parallel with it. Beneath all these features are a series of levelled areas and rectangular platforms that approximate the form of building and yard locations within deserted medieval and later settlements. An area of mole-heap activity close to one such level area within the orchard but just to the north-east of the chapel was found to have revealed an area of brick foundations and floor levels from an eighteenth century barn which itself may have disturbed earlier settlement activity.

The geophysical surveys.

Two twenty metre square grids were surveyed. Grid 1 was located to the north of the chapel in a level grassed area. This was located in order to see if there were any ancillary buildings surviving below ground, which could have been associated with the settlement to the north. It was also anticipated that the data from this grid might give some indication as to the nature and extent of any graveyard.

Grid 2 was located to the west of the present manor house within the garden area and enclosed by the western arm of the moat. This was located in order to provide information concerning the possible existence of a west wing.

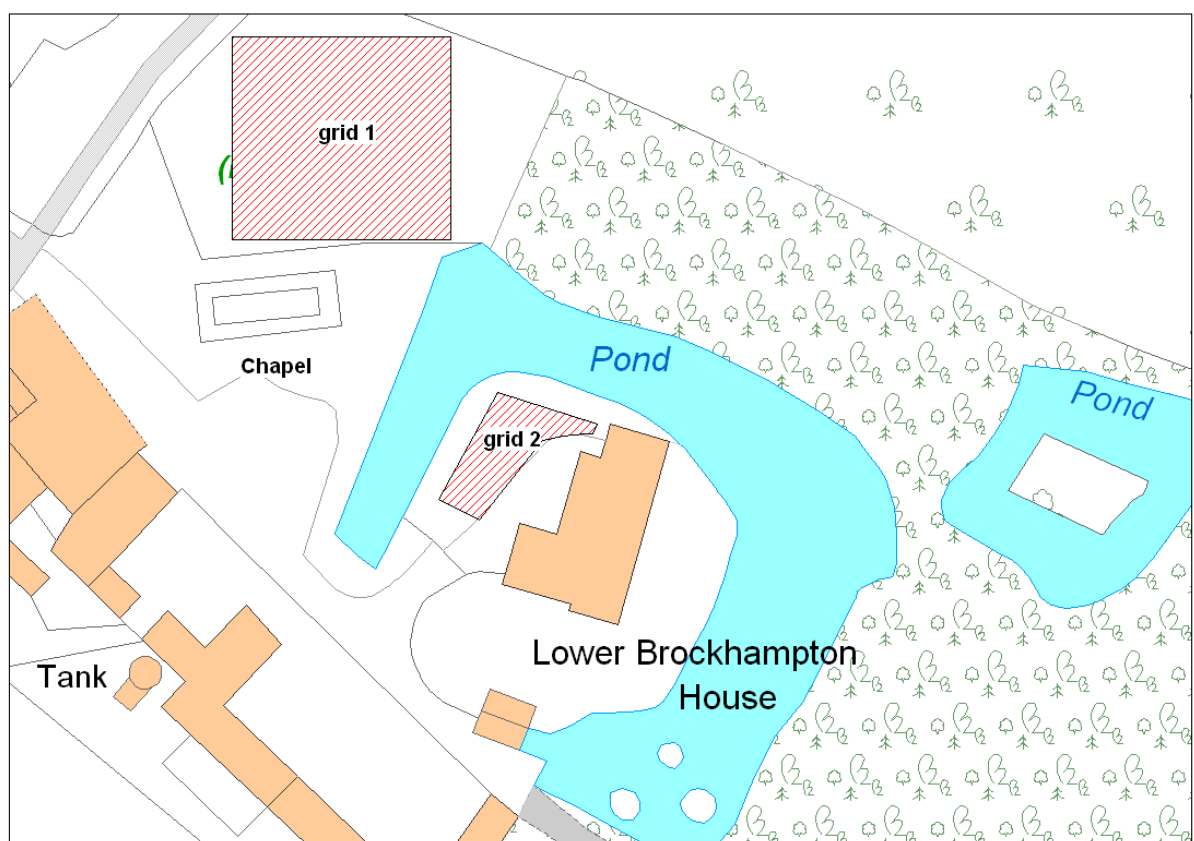


Figure 3: Plan showing location of geophysical survey grids

Grid 1

The chapel has been supposed to have served primarily as a private chapel for the inhabitants of the manor house. While it was known that some family members had been interred within the chapel, and that a settlement had probably existed close by before c.1500 (see below), it had been assumed that most of the local deceased had been buried either in the churchyard of St. Peter's Bromyard or St. John the Baptist in Whitbourne. The resistivity survey undertaken to the north of the chapel, however, appears to indicate the presence of possible burials across at least all of the area south of the orchard and with a marked concentration towards the north-eastern part of the area. Evidence for this can be seen in regularly spaced, localised areas of high resistance aligned on an east / west axis. Each anomaly appears to be approximately 2m in length and 1m wide.

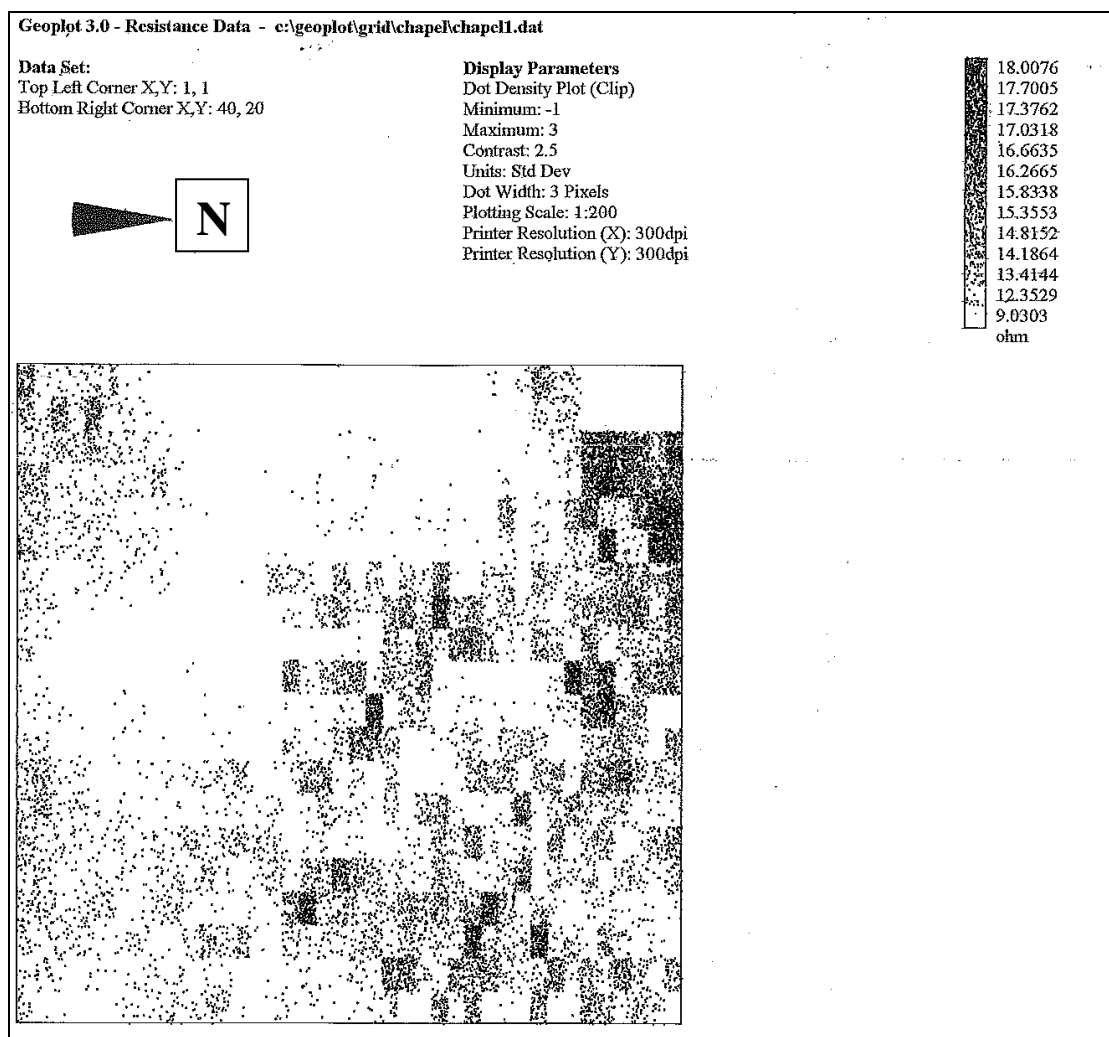


Figure 4: Resistivity data plot of grid 1 to the north of the chapel.

Grid 2

Only a partial 20m was surveyed due to the presence of a tarmac driveway covering the eastern portion of the survey area. Three distinct areas of high resistivity were apparent. Although not resolving themselves into distinct wall lines, they do appear to run parallel to the extant walls of the present manor (both north / south and east / west). Therefore the possibility that some or all of these linear anomalies relate to a demolished west wing or other structure cannot be discounted.

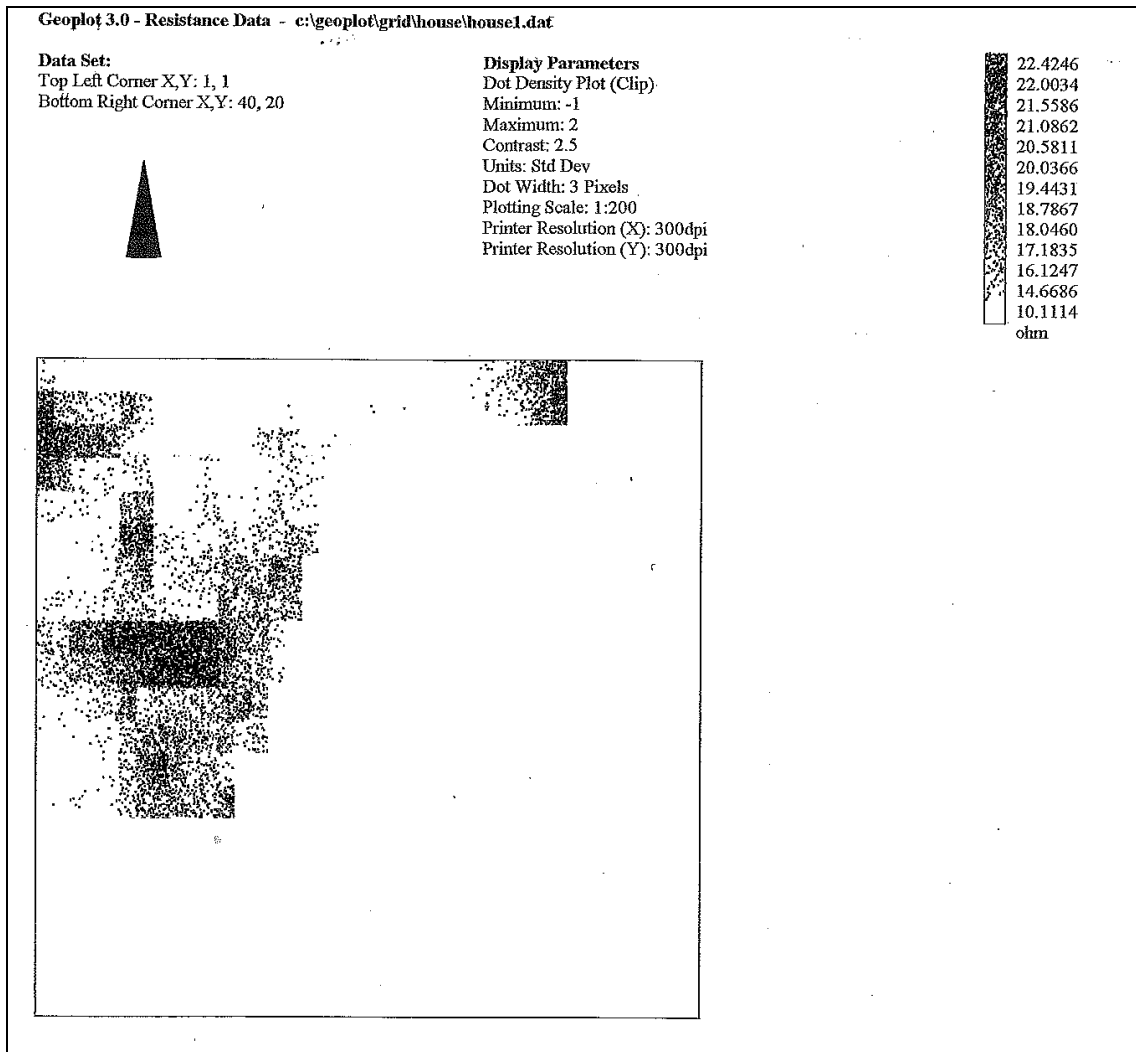


Figure 5: Resistivity data plot of grid 2 to the West of the manor house.

Discussion

The survey work at Lower Brockhampton in 2002/3 has for the first time, drawn attention to the existence of an earthwork to the north of the present moat. This raises some intriguing possibilities concerning the origins and development of the moated site. It also highlights the potential for achieving an improved understanding of the medieval and later standing structures at Lower Brockhampton. Pursuit of this potential through further fieldwork could contribute to an improved understanding and presentation of this significant heritage asset.

Site Archive

1 sheet of survey drawing
2 Geoplot plots (print out only)
1 sheet of inked drawing
This document

Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of the National Trust staff at Lower Brockhampton.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: location of Lower Brockhampton within the county of Herefordshire.

Figure 2: Plan showing the earthworks recorded during the survey

Figure 3: Plan showing location of geophysical survey grids

Figure 4: Resistivity data plot of grid 1 to the north of the chapel.

Figure 5: Resistivity data plot of grid 2 to the west of the mansion.

Bibliography

Morriss, R. K., and Hoverd, T. (1994) Lower Brockhampton near Bromyard, Herefordshire: an Outline analysis. Hereford Archaeology Series 201

Ray, K. (2003/10), "An Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of the Brockhampton Estate, Bromyard", Herefordshire Archaeology Report 71

Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Dr. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist