

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 132/88

RESISTIVITY SURVEY AT ST. MARY'S
PRIORY, BEESTON REGIS, SHERINGHAM,
NORFOLK, 1984.

A D H Bartlett

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Summary

This survey was carried out at the request of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit following their excavation at the site. The object of the survey was to test for evidence of buried wall footings, and especially any which might relate to the chapter house of the Priory. A well defined resistivity anomaly which appears to represent such a wall footing, and which might correspond to the E wall of the chapter house was in fact located. The southern extent of the structure could not be clearly determined, and no other significant archaeological features were detected in the area covered by the survey.

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Ancient Monuments Laboratory

Resistivity Survey at St Mary's Priory, Beeston Regis, Sheringham, Norfolk, 1984

NG: TG 16774277 (centre)

Date of fieldwork: 19 October 1984

Plans enclosed: 1. Survey location 1:1000
 2. Resistivity plots 1:200

Site

The area covered by this survey is now a lawn in the garden adjoining the ruined priory church. The object of the survey was to test for evidence of masonry or wall footings, especially any which could have formed part of the chapter house, or which might relate to the short sections of buried wall which had been exposed in the excavation by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit.

The survey grid was located by reference to pegs which had been put in place by the excavators. The coordinate scheme as indicated on the plans enclosed is based on the numbering as shown on the pegs. Measurements were also taken to walls etc, which would allow the survey to be relocated independently of the marker pegs. Details of these measurements could be provided on request.

Survey

Resistivity readings were taken using the twin electrode probe configuration with a probe spacing of 0.5m. The readings were located on a 1m grid tied to the site grid, but with intermediate offset readings in the northern part of the survey. (ie Additional readings were taken at the centre of each 1m square to improve the resolution of the survey).

The results are presented on plan 2 as a graphical chart, and as a contour plot. The contour version shows the positive anomalies only (ie readings > mean), and shows the results after slight numerical smoothing, as well as filtering which removes any broad, non-archaeological trends from the data.

Results

The area of particular interest is the NW corner of the survey around the surviving E-W wall at grid line 220. The remainder of the site was surveyed in case anything else might be found, and to discover whether the site is likely to have suffered damage or disturbance at other periods. A large part of the site in fact produced uniformly blank results and showed no evidence of disturbance from archaeological or other causes. This is unusual for a garden where often much extraneous activity is visible in a survey of this kind, and might be a consequence of the nearby ponds. A high water table could mask any less conspicuous features and mean that only the more substantial masonry structures are detectable. One non-archaeological feature was detected at a where the band of high readings was caused by a gravel path.

The only feature of the survey which is likely to be archaeologically significant is therefore the N-S anomaly at **b** which connects with the east end of the surviving wall at grid line 220. To the north of the wall this anomaly is rather broad and irregular, but could represent a wall footing, perhaps associated with a spread of rubble. To the south of the wall at 220 the anomaly is more clearly linear, and perhaps represents the footing of the east wall of the building. A short length of another E-W wall was sectioned in the excavation approximately at grid line 214 (not shown on plan), but this is not visible in the survey, except perhaps for a vestige at **c**, and so perhaps has been more severely robbed.

The exact southern limit to the anomaly **b** is difficult to establish. There is a slight step in the readings which has been marked by a dotted line at **d** on plot 1, and which extends some way to the south of the anomaly as it is visible on the contour plot. Readings to the west of line **d** are higher than to the east, which perhaps suggests that to the west there could be the remains of a floor, even if little survives of the surrounding walls. The evidence on this point is inconclusive.

Conclusions

A wall footing which appears to form part of the same structure as the surviving E-W wall, and which could have formed the eastern wall of a range of buildings appears to have been located, but its southern limit has not been accurately determined. The additional E-W wall which was sectioned in part at approximately grid line 214 was not detected by the survey, and the plan of the range of buildings therefore remains incomplete. The site elsewhere has not responded at all strongly to the survey, and so it is possible that only the most solid masonry has been detected where it lies close to the surface, and other features may have gone undetected.

Surveyed by:

A D H Bartlett

with:

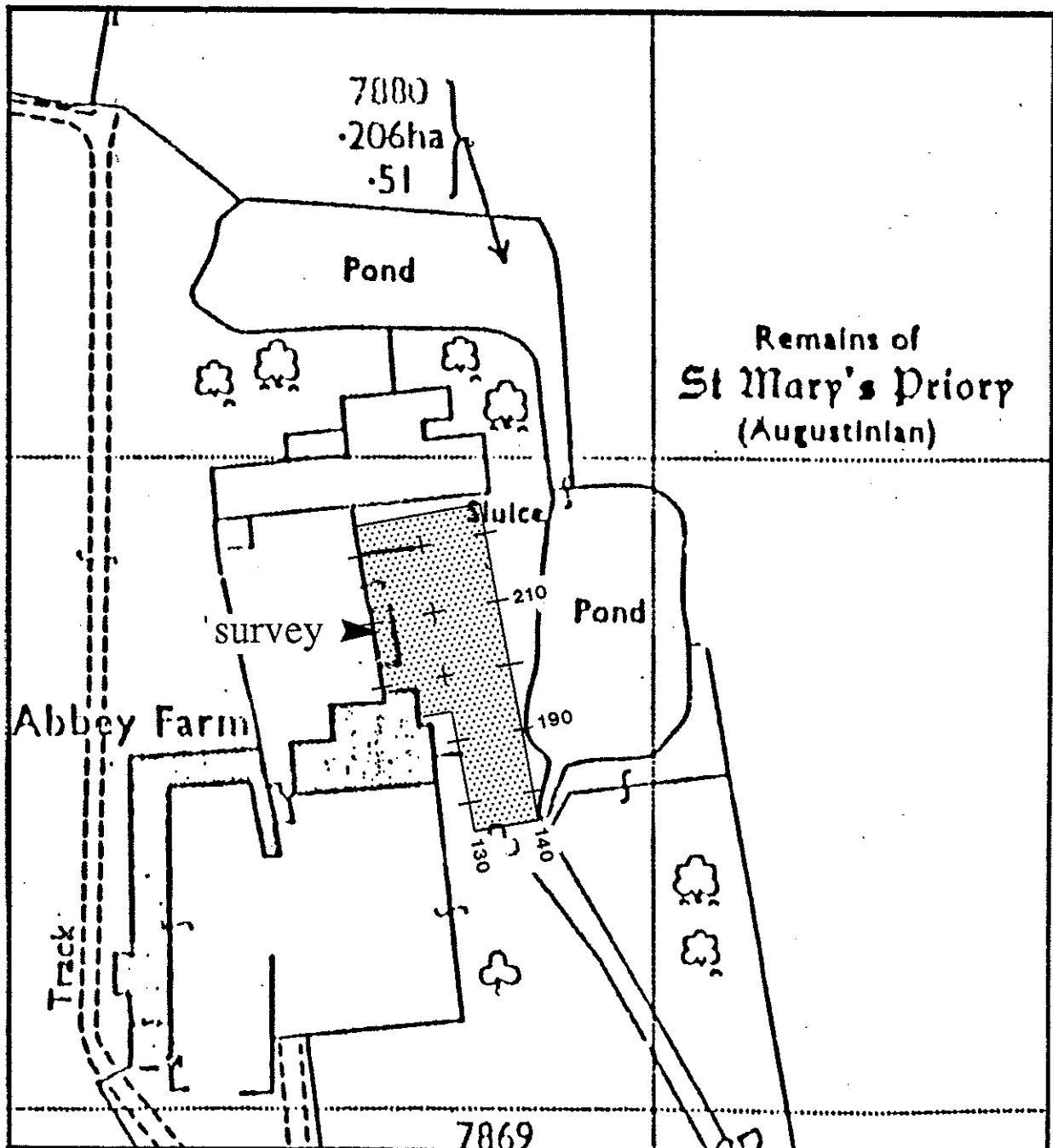
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Date of report:

10 May 1988

BEESTON REGIS, Sheringham, Norfolk

Resistivity Survey 1984



1:1000

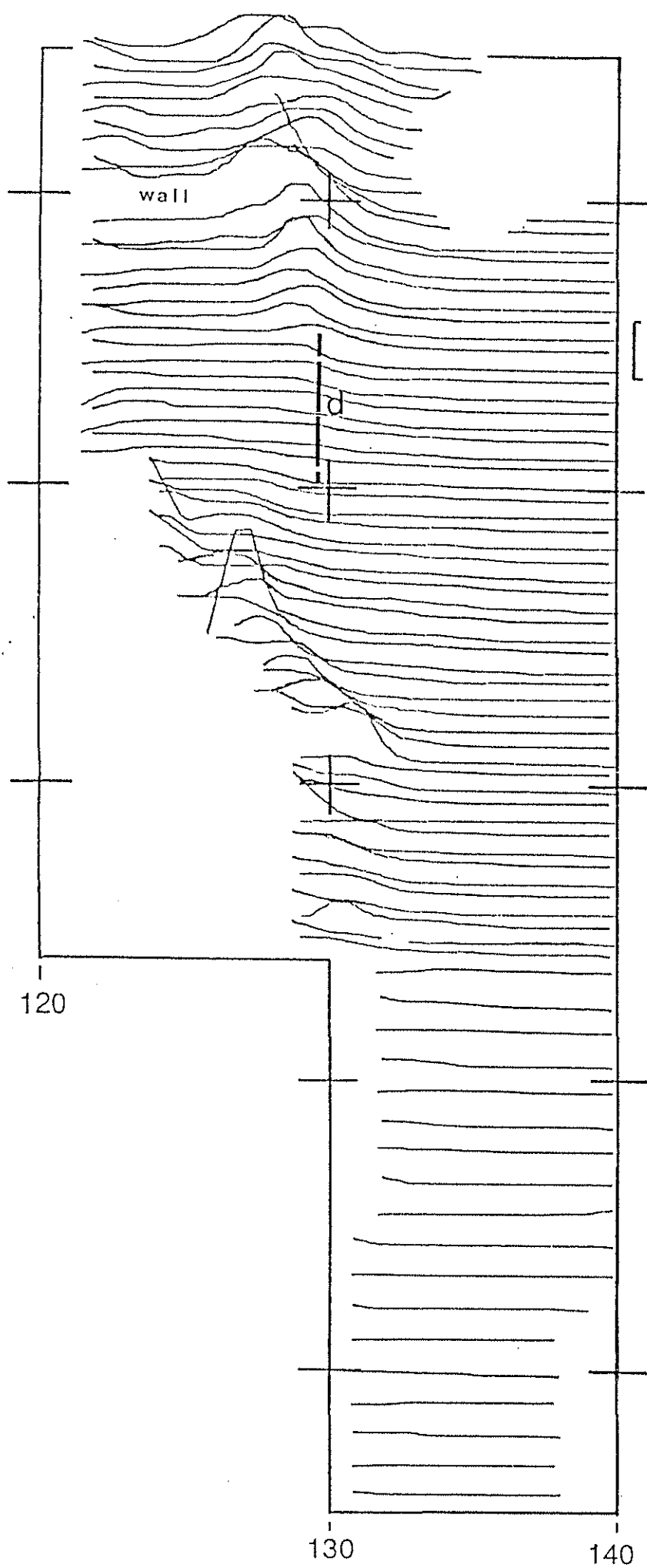
A M Laboratory

AB

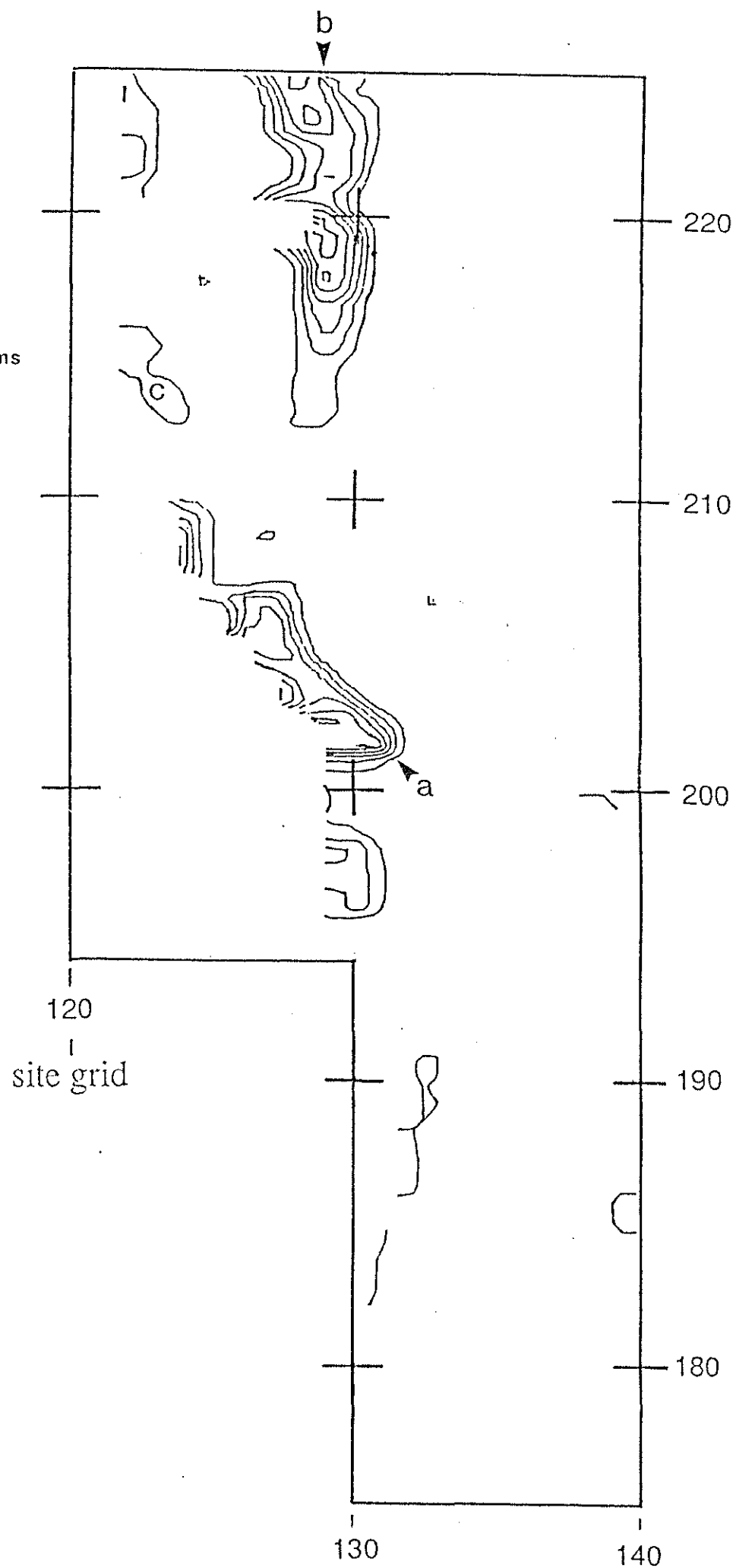
BEESTON REGIS, Sheringham, Norfolk

Resistivity Survey 1984

2



1. Initial data



2. Smoothed and filtered data;
positive anomalies

1:200