

Cable Trenching at Melford Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk

Planning application: N/A

HER Ref: LMD 265

Archaeological Monitoring Report

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Site details for HER

Name: Melford Hall, The Green East, Long Melford, Suffolk

Client: The National Trust

Local planning authority: Babergh DC

Planning application ref: N/A

Development: Cable trenching between Melford Hall and its gate house

Date of fieldwork: 24 November to 21 December, 2017 (13 visits)

LBS ref: 1033702 (Hall- Grade I)

LBS ref: 1000228 (Park- Grade II*)

Event ref: ESF 25117

HER ref: LMD 265

OASIS: johnnewm1-269599

Grid ref: TL 8660 4628

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Summary: Melford Hall, Long Melford (LMD 265, TL 8660 4628) monitoring of ground works for a narrow cable trench between the hall and its gatehouse recorded evidence for the brick built outer gatehouse to the north of the hall which is shown on the Pierse estate map of 1613. In addition a brick surface and a brick wall foundation of probable 16th-17th century date were revealed under the drive close to the existing 19th century gatehouse which opens onto the High Street and two, or possibly three, similar early brick wall foundations were exposed to the north of the ha-ha that runs parallel and to the south of the drive though nothing is shown in either of these locations on the 1613 map (John Newman Archaeological Services for the National Trust).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 The National Trust commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works for a cable trench that would link Melford Hall with its gatehouse which is some 100m to the north-east close to the High Street frontage.

1.2 Melford Hall is a Grade I listed building of mid-16th century date on the site of a medieval country house that was owned by the Abbots of St Edmundsbury and which is set within a Grade II* listed park and garden that was given to the National Trust in 1960. In relation to this building complex the estate map created by Pierse in 1613 depicts a more extensive plan with an eastern wing, which was later demolished, and an outer gatehouse some 70m to the north-east which was also demolished at a later date. In order to link the hall with the 19th century gatehouse, which forms the main entrance from road to the west, a cable trench was planned that would run along the southern side of the existing drive before turning south at the east end of the ha-ha. As a result, there was considered to be a high potential for encountering heritage assets in the area of the proposed works which would cause ground disturbance that would have the potential to damage any archaeological deposit that might be present. Therefore The National Trust as a responsible conservation charity commissioned the monitoring of these ground works which were not under planning obligations.

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 In total 13 visits were made to Melford Hall to observe the excavation of the cable trench. This work was undertaken using a medium sized 360 machine which was under intermittent archaeological supervision as sequential lengths of the trench were opened and back-filled on mainly successive days so no trench would be left over-night. Where archaeological deposits or structures were exposed in the trench these were investigated and recorded though the narrow width of the trench made full interpretation difficult. Upcast spoil was inspected closely as the work progressed and the contractors also collected archaeological finds when seen and these unstratified finds groups were allocated context numbers between 0012 and 0014 (see below) and the areas relating to these groups are shown on Fig. 2. The ground works and features exposed were recorded in relation to nearby mapped features and a number of digital images were taken in order to record the monitoring though the narrow width of the trench made visibility difficult (see Appendix I). The location of wall foundations 0003, 0004 and 0005 were recorded in relation to the south-east corner of the north wing of Melford Hall (see Fig. 2- point A) and the wall foundations 0007, 0008 and 0009 were recorded in relation to the inner main wall of the existing gate house at the road entrance to the west.

2.2 In addition the location of a short length of red brick foundation that had been exposed in the edge of a flower bed in the garden to the west of the hall was plotted (see Fig. 2) though not enough was revealed for any interpretation for what could have part of a building or a garden wall or ornament base with the brick appearing to be of earlier Post medieval date.

3. Results

(See also Fig. 2, Appendix I- Images & Appendix II- Context list)

3.1 The cable trench was only 300mm wide and 500mm deep with the narrow width making full interpretation of the exposed deposits difficult with various areas of red brick debris in the subsoil also obscuring the clear definition of archaeological features. In addition the locally occurring natural glaciofluvial deposit, which is sandy clay with flints, was only revealed in a short length close to the central part of the east-west aligned drive north of the ha-ha and east of the current gate house.

3.2 In the courtyard area on the eastern side of the north wing the trench revealed 250mm of yard surface and make-up over 250mm of mid brown sandy subsoil and a few brick fragments but no archaeological features. The first definite feature to be revealed in the trench was a red brick wall foundation (0002) which was 450mm wide and 250mm deep and was located 800mm south of the path that runs north of the north wing. In the next 40m of the trench while brick debris and other stray finds (0012) were present in the upcast spoil no archaeological features were revealed. However to the east of the ha-ha and raised walk a number of red brick foundations were revealed. From the south these comprised a 240mm wide east-west aligned red brick wall foundation (0003) then nearby to the north a 800mm wide brick foundation (0004) again on an east-west alignment and then, again nearby, a north/north-east to south/south-west red brick wall foundation (0005) in the eastern side of the narrow trench. Adjacent to the latter wall foundation on its northern side a 5m length of rammed chalk surface (0006) was exposed at the base of the trench. In this length of the cable trench east of the ha-ha the upcast trench spoil and trench sides contained a lot of brick debris making the identification of brick foundations difficult but it is felt with some confidence that the wall foundations described above (0003, 0004 & 0005) were clear enough to be identified as such. In addition a few stray finds (0013) were recovered from the upcast spoil in this area.

3.4 To the north of the ha-ha on the main east-west length of the cable trench further red brick wall foundations were exposed with one (0007) being c600mm wide on a north-south alignment as was another probable foundation nearby to the west (0008) which was again c600mm wide. Slightly further to the west another possible brick wall foundation (0009) was identified running on a north/north-west-south/south-east orientation at an oblique angle to the narrow trench making secure identification of this feature difficult.

3.5 The subsequent 70m length of trench along the southern side of the drive proved to be very quiet with no archaeological features revealed and the only stray finds of note were two steel pointed fence posts one of which still had a trace of barbed wire attached confirming a World War II date when the hall and park were occupied by the army.

3.6 The remaining red brick built structural evidence that was exposed in the base of the 500mm deep trench was in that part of the cable trench which cut across the drive on the inner side of the existing gate house at the entrance to the park from the road to the west. The larger of these features (0010) was 2.20m from the southern edge of the drive and was 1600mm wide on its north-south dimension. At this width the feature (0010) is probably better interpreted as part of a brick surface though the possibility of it being a very wide wall foundation cannot be ruled out. The smaller feature was a red brick wall foundation (0011) that was 900mm from the northern edge of the drive and was 500mm wide on an east-west

orientation. These two features were made out of 2 inch thick red bricks which were relatively soft and similar in form and fabric to the brick foundations revealed to the east of the ha-ha (0003, 0004 & 0005) and those to the north of the ha-ha (0007, 0008 & 0009). In addition these bricks are all similar to those examined in the hall itself confirming a 16th to 17th century date for these foundations and possible floor surface.

4. The Finds (Sue Anderson)

(See also Appendix III- Finds catalogue)

4.1 Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected during the fieldwork. A full quantification by context is provided in Appendix III.

Find type	No.	Wt/g
Pottery	21	324
Clay pipe	5	22
Glass	4	92
CBM	2	131
Iron	7	446
Copper alloy	1	11

Table 1. Finds quantities.

4.2 Twenty-one sherds of pottery weighing 324g were collected from two unstratified contexts (0012 and 0014). Table 2 shows the quantification by fabric, and a summary quantification by context is included in Appendix III.

Description	Fabric	Date range	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV
Hedingham coarseware	HCW	M.12th–E.14th c.	1	5		1
Colchester-type ware	COLC	13th–15th c.	1	6		1
Creamwares	CRW	1730-1760	2	7		2
European porcelain	PORC	18th–20th c.	2	17		2
Refined white earthenwares	REFW	L.18th-20th c.	11	98		9
English stoneware	ESW	19th c.+	3	182	0.18	3
Late post-med unglazed earthenwares	LPME	19th–20th c.	1	9		1
<i>Totals</i>			<i>21</i>	<i>324</i>	<i>0.18</i>	<i>19</i>

Table 2. Pottery quantification by fabric.

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (eve). The minimum number of vessels (MNV) within each context was also recorded. All fabric codes were assigned from the author's post-Roman fabric series. Medieval and later wares were identified following Jennings (1981). Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG classifications (1998). The results were input directly onto an MS Access database, which forms the archive catalogue.

An abraded body sherd of Hedingham coarseware and a body sherd of Colchester-type ware with spots of clear glaze were collected from 0012. Both are of medieval date.

Nineteen sherds were of 18th-century and later date. This material is recorded in detail in the archive catalogue, but in summary it comprised body sherds of creamware, porcelain, stoneware including a jar rim and a bottle base (with a stamped label for a Derbyshire manufacturer), a fragment of plantpot and several plain and transfer-printed whiteware vessels, mainly plates but also a plain mug handle of a utilitarian 20th-century type.

4.3 Two fragments of CBM (131g) were collected from 0013 (Appendix III). A fragment of post-medieval pantile in a fine sandy fabric with chalk inclusions was glazed dark brown and probably of 18th/19th-century date. A worn floor tile, 18mm thick, with copper green glaze over a white slip was similar to Flemish floor tiles of 14th/15th-century date but is probably of more local manufacture. The fabric is similar in appearance to some Colchester-type ware medieval pottery.

4.4 Five fragments of four clay pipes were recovered from 0012 (Appendix III). Bore measurements of three stems and the shape of a bowl fragment all suggest a 17th–18th-century date.

4.5 Four fragments of glass (92g) were recovered (Appendix III). A fragment of denatured and abraded post-medieval bottle glass, possibly part of the base kick, was recovered from 0012. Two joining fragments of another green bottle base of 17th/18th-century date came from 0013. A fragment of ?19th/20th-century white glass from a vessel with a cavetto rim (100mm diameter) was found in 0014.

4.6 Eight metal objects were recovered (Appendix III), all of post-medieval date. From 0012 there was a rifle cartridge, two handmade nails, a rectangular ?staple, and a probable ox shoe. Fragments of two horseshoes and a hook or catch from a door, window or shutter were recovered from 0013.

5. Conclusion

5.1 From the results of this monitoring it is clear that the red brick foundations (0003, 0004 & 0005) revealed to the east of the ha-ha and 60m north-east of the north wing of the hall mark the site of the outer gate house shown on the Pierse map of 1613. The middle wall foundation (0004) in particular being quite substantial with a width of 600mm suggesting that this marks the line of one of the main gate house walls with the nearby north/north-east to south/south-west wall (0005) being of an unknown width as it ran obliquely along the line of the cable trench. In addition the wall foundation (0002) near the north wing is probably the line of another wall on this map which ran east from the north-east corner of the north wing before turning north to run to the south-western corner of the outer gate house. It is also likely that the rammed chalk surface (0006) directly to the north of the outer gate house foundations is related to this structure.

5.2 However the brick foundations (0007, 0008 & 0009) to the north of the ha-ha do not mark the site of any structure shown on the Pierse map so must be earlier or later than this date though the soft fabric of the red bricks is very similar to the nearby outer gate house foundations so perhaps this is the location of a building cleared away before 1613. Similarly the possible brick surface (0010) and the wall foundation (0011) exposed where the cable trench cut across the drive just inside the park entrance immediately to the east of the existing gate house cannot be identified on the Pierse map but can be suggested as evidence for a gate house that pre-dated the present 19th structure but was demolished before 1613 or built after that date.

5.3 A small number of finds were recovered from the upcast spoil and these comprised two small medieval pottery sherds, 19 sherds of 18th century and later date, a fragment of a late medieval floor tile and an assorted group of clay pipe fragments, iron finds and glass fragments all of relatively recent date plus a World War II rifle bullet cartridge.

5.4 For an understanding of Melford Hall in the early Post medieval period when it was at its zenith the Pierse map is clearly invaluable as it allows for the interpretation of the wall foundations to the east of the ha-ha. However as it captures the hall and park at a particular moment in time evidence for structures which were demolished before 1613 or which post-date the map are more difficult to interpret. In addition it should be noted that the cable trench was a very narrow and relatively shallow intervention which was sensible as below ground disturbance should be kept to a minimum at a site of such significance. Therefore given the limits of visibility for archaeological features in the narrow trench when trying to define brick walls in areas of subsoil containing numerous fragments of loose brick debris the conclusions above should be seen as probable rather than definitive though in the area east of the ha-ha the outer gate house was located though which walls were exposed is uncertain though the widest (0004) could represent one of the main walls on the southern side of this structure. Similarly the location of the features (0010 & 0011) just inside the entrance to the park would strongly suggest evidence for an earlier gate house of 16th or 17th century date at this point but which could pre- or post-date the Pierse map.

References

- Jennings, S., 1981, *Eighteen Centuries of pottery from Norwich*. E. Anglian Archaeol. 13, Norwich Survey/NMS.
- MPRG, 1998, *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*. Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 1.
- MPRG, 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*. Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2

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Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008
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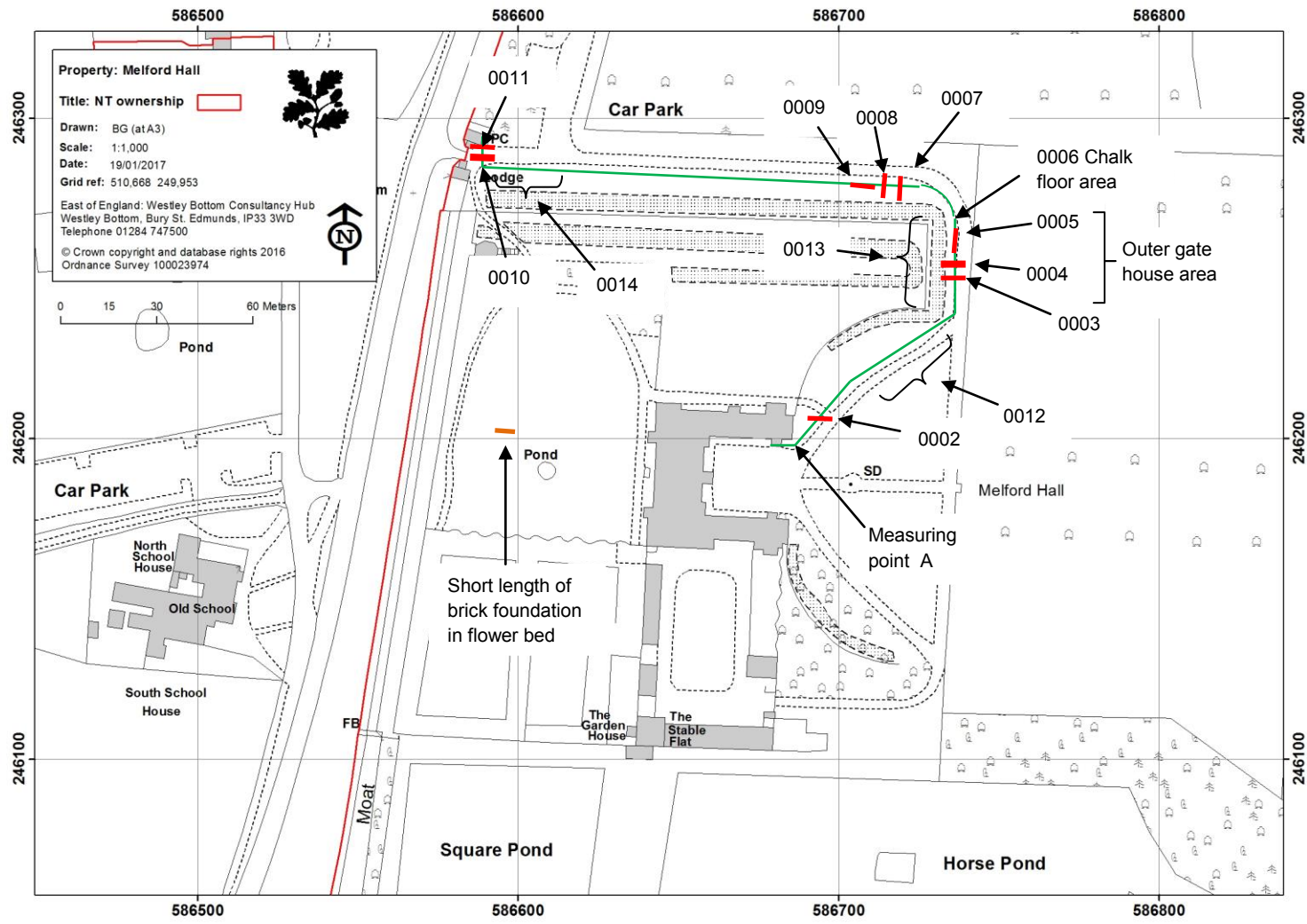
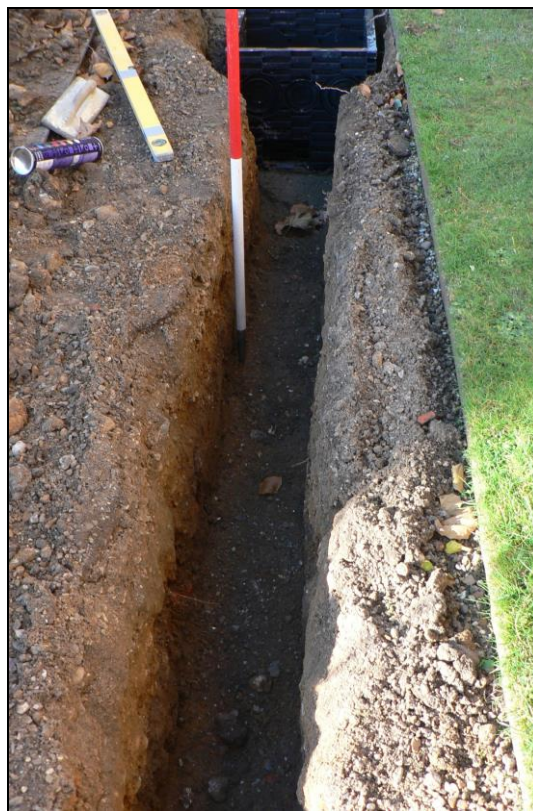


Fig. 2 Location of monitored cable trench- green (red-brick wall foundations, 0012, 0013 & 0014- areas of stray finds from spoil)

Appendix I- Images



General view of cabling works from northwest



Cable trench in courtyard



Brick wall foundation 0002 in base of trench



Brick wall foundation 0003 in base of trench



Brick wall foundation 0004 in base of trench



Brick wall foundation 0005 running along eastern side of trench



Possible brick wall foundation running along side of trench



Brick wall foundation/floor 0010 just inside entrance to park at gate house

Appendix III- Context list

Melford Hall LMD 265 cable trench

Measuring point A- south-east corner of north wing of Melford Hall (see Fig. 2)

Number	Type	Part of	Description	Date
0001	U/S		Unstratified finds from near hall	
0002	Wall	0002	Brick wall foundation 450mm wide, 250mm below ground level, east-west orientation (800mm south of path to north of hall)	16/17C
0003	Wall	0003	Brick wall foundation, 240mm wide, 300mm below ground level (61 m from measuring point A)	16/17C
0004	Wall	0004	Brick wall foundation, 800mm wide, 200mm below ground level, east-west orientation, probably southern side of outer gate house to east of ha-ha (63.50m from measuring point A)	16/17C
0005	Wall	0005	Brick wall foundation almost on same orientation as north-south trench at this point, exposed along eastern side of trench, probably part of outer gate house (southern end 65m from measuring point A)	16/17C
0006	Floor?	0006	Area of rammed chalk at base of trench 300mm from ground level, over 5m length of trench, ?part of outer gate house	?16/17C
0007	Wall?	0007	Probable brick wall foundation, 600mm wide, east-west orientation, partially obscured by a lot of brick debris (1.80m east of 0008)	16/17C
0008	Wall?	0008	Probable brick wall foundation, 600mm wide, north-south orientation (139.90m east of eastern wall of existing gate house at road entrance)	16/17C
0009	Wall?	0009	Possible brick wall foundation running on NNW-SSE orientation (western end 137m east of eastern wall of existing gate house at road entrance)	16/17C
0010	Floor/ surface?	0010	Possible brick surface in base of trench, 1600mm wide, (or possible very wide foundation) in centre of drive just behind current 19C gate house, possible earlier gate house but not on Pierse map of 1613, brick fabric similar to outer gate house to east which is on this map, 2.20m from	?16/17C

			southern edge of drive	
0011	Wall	0011	Brick wall foundation 500mm in northern part of drive behind current gate house, 900mm from northern edge of drive, not on 1613 map but brick fabric similar to now demolished outer gate house to east	?16/17C
0012	U/S		Finds from trench spoil over 30m length directly north of NE corner of hall	
0013	U/S		Finds from trench spoil in area of demolished 16/17C outer gate house	
0014	U/S		Finds from trench spoil in 20m length of trench behind current gate house	

Appendix III- Finds catalogue

Sue Anderson, January, 2017

Finds list

ctxt	Pot		Glass		CBM		Clay pipe		Iron		Miscellaneous/Notes	Spot date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		
0012	2	11	1	28			5	22	4	86	1 copper alloy (11g)	19th-20th c.
0013			2	61	2	131			3	360		18th c.+
0014	19	313	1	3								20th c.

Pottery

Context	Fabric	No	Wt/g	MNV	Form	Rim	Decoration	Notes	Spot date
0012	HCW	1	5	1					M.12-E.14
0012	COLC	1	6	1					13-15
0014	CRW	1	4	1					18
0014	CRW	1	3	1			blue slip ext, part of applied prunt		18-E.19
0014	PORC	1	15	1			moulded medallion	small globular vessel	19+
0014	PORC	1	2	1					19+
0014	REFW	1	55	1	mug	loop			E.20
0014	REFW	1	4	1					L.18-20
0014	REFW	1	4	1	plate?				L.18-20
0014	REFW	3	18	1	plate	everted	TP blue floral border, scalloped edge		L.18-20
0014	REFW	1	8	1	plate?		TP blue floral int		L.18-20
0014	REFW	3	7	3			TP blue int		L.18-20
0014	REFW	1	2	1			blue line int		L.18-20
0014	ESW	1	15	1				matt glaze	20?
0014	ESW	1	7	1	jar	upright beaded			19-E.20

0014	ESW	1	160	1	bottle			partial manufacturer's label ...DERBYSHIRE / ...[ST]ONE BOTTLES, &c. / ...BOURNE, / PATENTEE / WARRANTED NOT TO ABSORB / EX 7	19-E.20
0014	LPME	1	9	1	plantpot			micaceous	19-20

CBM

Context	Fabric	Form	No	Wt	Abr	T	Mortar	Glaze	Notes	Date
0013	fsc	PAN	1	49				dk brown	fine to coarse yellowish chalk & streaks	17-18?
0013	ms	FT	1	82		18	ms cream	white slip copper green	sparse ms, occ cp, reduced centre	14?

Fabrics: ms – medium sandy; fsc – fine sandy with chall

Clay pipe

Context	Frag	No	Wt (g)	Bore diam	Abrasion	Notes	Date
0012	stem	2	6	2.6		joining frags	M.17-M.18
0012	stem	1	3	1.7-2.1		oval bore	L.17-M.18
0012	stem	1	4	2.1			L.17-M.18
0012	bowl	1	9				L.17-18

Glass

Context	Type	Colour	No	Wt/g	T	Notes	Date
0012	bottle	?	1	28	9.5	poss part of base, v denatured	pmed
0013	bottle	green	2	61	7-9	joining shards, base frag, 110mm diameter	17-18
0014	vessel	white	1	3	2.8	cavetto rim frag, 100mm diam, 11%	19-20

Metalwork

Context	Material	Find type	No	Wt	Description	Date
0012	CuA	rifle cartridge	1	11	14mm diam at base, 56mm long (303 calibre)	modern
0012	Fe	nails	2	8	43mm & 51mm long, square shafts, sub-square sheet heads	pmed
0012	Fe	staple?	1	31	rectangular-section bar, 90+mm long, centre 12 x 6mm, tapering slightly to curved ends	pmed
0012	Fe	ox shoe?	1	47	89mm long, wide end 28mm wide, tapering to point	pmed
0013	Fe	horseshoe	1	182	incomplete, c.110mm long, c.120mm wide, web max 30mm at centre	pmed
0013	Fe	horseshoe	1	89	arm frag with fullered groove, web 20mm wide, square tip	pmed
0013	Fe	looped hook	1	89	165mm long, sub-square section up to 10mm wide, end hoop 40 x 47mm, loop hook (at right-angles to shaft) 20mm wide, small tab on shaft 10mm long. Shutter/door/window hook?	pmed

OASIS ID: johnnewm1-269599

Project details

Project name	Melford Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk- Archaeological Monitoring Report
Short description of the project	Melford Hall, Long Melford (LMD 265, TL 8660 4628) monitoring of ground works for a narrow cable trench between the hall and its gatehouse recorded evidence for the brick built outer gatehouse to the north of the hall which is shown on the Pierse estate map of 1613. In addition a brick surface and a brick wall foundation of probable 16th-17th century date were revealed under the drive close to the existing 19th century gatehouse which opens onto the High Street and two, or possibly three, similar early brick wall foundations were exposed to the north of the ha-ha that runs parallel and to the south of the drive though nothing is shown in either of these locations on the 1613 map.
Project dates	Start: 24-11-2016 End: 21-12-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ESF 25117 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	LMD 265 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	1033702 - LBS No.
Any associated project reference codes	1000228 - LBS No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status	National Trust land
Site status	English Heritage List of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	SURFACE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval

Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	IRONWORK Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK BABERGH LONG MELFORD MELFORD HALL
Study area	40 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 8660 4628 52.082892374432 0.723664340395 52 04 58 N 000 43 25 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 37m Max: 38m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	John Newman Archaeological Services
Project brief originator	National Trust
Project design originator	John Newman
Project director/manager	John Newman
Project supervisor	John Newman
Type of sponsor/funding body	National Trust
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	National Trust
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Digital Contents	"Metal","Ceramics","Glass"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk CC Archaeological Service
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal"
Paper Media	"Report"

available

Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Melford Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk- Archaeological Monitoring Report
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Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	John Newman Archaeological Services
Place of issue or publication	2017
Description	Loose bound client report and pdf
Entered by	John Newman (johnnewman2@btinternet.com)
Entered on	10 February 2017