

Archaeological Recording at
Claybrooke Mill, Frolesworth Lane,
Claybrooke Magna, Leicestershire



March 2007

Report 0712

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March 2007

Warwickshire Museum Field Services

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Warwick

CV34 4SS

Summary

Archaeological observation of groundworks for alterations to a late 19th-century stable was undertaken at Claybrooke Mill, Frolesworth Lane, Claybrooke Magna. No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were recorded, although the work lies within the known site of medieval Claybrooke Mill. A photographic record was made of the stables building, some of whose elements appeared to be remnants of an earlier building. Any early archaeological remains in the area of the new building may have been removed during previous ground reduction.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Harborough District Council (06/01451/LBC) for alterations to stables and the construction of a swimming pool and associated plant room at Claybrooke Mill, Claybrooke Magna, Leicestershire. It was thought that the site of the proposed works might contain significant archaeological remains, associated with the medieval mill site of Claybrooke Mill Listed Building ref 1323/74/2/27). It was therefore a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of an historic building photographic survey and archaeological observation of the groundworks associated with the development, in accordance with the *Brief for Historic Building Photographic Survey and Archaeological Attendance* (January 2007) issued by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Projects Group and carried out in January-February 2007. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service under accession number X.24.2007. The Warwickshire Museum site code was CM07.

2. Location

2.1 The site lies on the south side of Frolesworth Lane approximately 650m north-east of the village of Claybrooke Magna and is centred around national grid reference SP 4988 8912 in the district of Harborough.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Alluvium and Till, brown or reddish brown pebbly clay (British Geological Survey 1994).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is in the form of a Neolithic (4000BC to 2501 BC) flint horseshoe scraper found to the west of Claybrooke Mill (Leicestershire Historic Environment Record No. MLE 10340). Undated archaeological features have been noted in the area which may indicate prehistoric or later sites. These include a circular feature north-east of Gables Farm (HER MLE1362) which has tentatively been identified as a Bronze Age ring ditch. Three sides of a rectangular enclosure have been identified to the west of the Mill (HER MLE1363). An undated rectilinear enclosure has been identified to the south-east of Claybrooke Mill (HER MLE1377). Cropmarks show three possible enclosures a little further to the east (HER MLE2600).

3.2 There is some evidence for activity in the area during the Roman period; fragments of Romano-British pottery have been found to the south-west of Claybrooke mill in 1995/6 (HER MLE7823).

3.3 The manor of Claybrooke, then *Claibroc*, was recorded in Domesday (1086) when it was held by Fulco, homager to the Earl of Mellent and had a population that can be estimated at 135 people. A mill is recorded in Domesday which is likely to have been the present site. A mill is also recorded in 1279 (HER MLE1364). A windmill, possibly of medieval date, was once part of the mill complex; its foundations have been ploughed up near to the watermill (HER MLE1365). Claybrooke Magna (also formerly called Nether Claybrook, Great Claybrook and Nether Claybrook) is the northerly of the two Claybrookes, with Claybrook Parva to the south having the parish church. Nichols (1795) records that there were 36 families in Claybrook in 1564. A hollow-way and associated house platforms to the north of the village of Claybrooke Magna are believed to be the remains of the shrunken medieval village (HER MLE1369), these lie outside of the historic core of the village (HER MLE 10411), which includes a number of Listed Buildings of 16th- to early 19th-century date (HER MLE11751, MLE11752, MLE11753, MLE11754).

3.4 Deeds record the mill in use from as far back as 1675 when it was bought by James Parker from three Frolesworth men: Andrew Hall, Thomas Townsend and Christian Higginson (Nichols 1795, 113). Parker was succeeded by Marmaduke Fawkes and it continued in the hands of the Fawkes family until at least the 1860s. The mill is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1831 as Claybrook Mill (Ordnance Survey 1831). A detailed map of 1839 (Fig. 2) shows it as Fawkes Mill (LRO D469/8; Fig. 2). The present mill building (HER MLE11224) is reputed to date to 1763 and was extended in 1840. It is a Grade II Listed Building (LBS 392515, see Appendix A for citation). The mill house (HER MLE11225; LBS 392516) was built in 1723 and is also a Grade II Listed Building. The large mill barn (HER MLE11226; LBS 392517) was built in the late 18th or early 19th century and is also a Grade II Listed Building.

3.5 The stables, which have been recorded as part of this project, lie in the south-west part of the site and are not Listed. Maps of 1839, 1889-91 and 1903 show that the layout of the site in general has changed little over the past 170 years (LRO D469/8, Fig. 2 and Ordnance Survey 1889-91, 1903; Fig. 3). The 1839 map shows a building on the site of the present stable and another building, detached from it and running at right angles a small distance away to the north-west. The 1st edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map shows the stable building had been either rebuilt as a longer building or extended to the south-west and the building to the north-west demolished (Ordnance Survey 1889-91). The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (Ordnance Survey 1903) shows that the building to the north-west had been replaced; with what are likely to have been pigsties (Mr Eales, pers. comm.). The building to the north-west and the majority of the 'extension to the stables was subsequently demolished, leaving the rear wall standing as a garden wall.

3.6 Trade Directories record Marmaduke Fawkes as miller and baker in Claybrooke in 1846, 1855, and 1861 (White 1846, 385; Post Office 1855, 27; Drake 1861, 269). Arthur Tyler is recorded in Trade Directories of 1891 and 1900 (Kelly 1891, 554; Kelly 1900, 56) and J. Arthur Kelly and Son as millers in the 1930s and 40s (Kelly 1932, 63; Kelly 1941, 59). The mill is still working as a flour mill.

4. Observation of Groundworks

4.1 The groundworks consisted of the excavation of foundation trenches and the reduction of the ground surface using a JCB-type excavator to the south-west of the existing stables building. The present owner reported that there had previously been

a marl pit in this area, suggesting that the ground may well have been heavily disturbed in the past but this was not the case in the area excavated.

4.2 The short south trench, 0.7m wide and 7.5m long, was excavated from the south-west corner of the stables building and then turned to run to the north-west (Fig. 4). The trenches were approximately 0.7m deep and a layer of natural orange brown silty clay (4) was revealed along the length of the trenches 0.3-0.6m below ground level. (Fig 4, Section A). No features were observed in the top of geological natural.

4.3 A remnant of wall foundation (11) was present in the south trench closest to the surviving end of the stable building. This wall had been standing as a garden wall in January 2007(see Cover). A small segment of this wall survived above ground surface as a continuation of the existing rear wall of the stables. Adjacent to the wall and west side of the stables was an area of brick floor (10).

4.4 In the western foundation trench (Fig. 4, Section A) the natural was cut by a brick wall foundation (5), which extended north-west to south-east. This was composed of machine-made brick bonded by a grey mortar. The wall foundation was 0.42m wide and at least 0.6m deep. It seems likely that this wall belonged to the east-west building erected between 1889-91 and 1903 as a building is shown in this location in 1903 (Ordnance Survey 1903). To the north of the wall was a brick floor surface (6) This was roughly laid, unbonded, on top of the natural and extended for at least 4m along the trench. At the northern end of the trench a further area of brick floor (7) was revealed. This was at a similar level to floor 6 and composed of similar brick. These floors must have belonged to the north-south range shown on the 1903 map (Fig. 3).

4.5 To the west the natural clay (4) was sealed by a layer of grey brown silty clay with brick fragments and large pebbles (3). This appeared to have been a make-up deposit, which was overlaid by a layer of greyish brown loamy clay topsoil (2) and a concrete slab (1).

4.6 In the eastern trench, running from the north-west corner of the stables building, a layer of rubble containing 19th- and 20th-century brick, stone cobbles and concrete fragments (9) overlaid the natural deposit (Fig. 4, Section B). A tree stump against the building was not removed for health and safety reasons, but the size of the trunk indicated that its roots would have caused disturbance to the soil horizons below. At the north-western limit of the foundation trench a layer of cobbles (8) was revealed which did not extend into the north-eastern trench. This was in close proximity to the existing access road to the mill and the cobbles most probably represent the edge of a road or a previous road surface.

4.7 Ground reduction took place over an area of 6m wide and 9m long within the area enclosed by foundation trenches. The ground surface was reduced by approximately 0.2m and brick rubble and topsoil was removed. This revealed brick floor (7) over an area of approximately 3m long and 2.5m wide. Areas of concrete floor slab were also revealed at a similar level. The areas of brick floor were overlaid by a greyish brown loamy clay topsoil (2). This topsoil deposit was 0.2m to 0.25m thick and the layer extended over most of the area. Parts of the topsoil, and the top of wall foundation 5, had patches of concrete over them (12).

4.8 A small trial hole was excavated against the south-western elevation of the stables (Fig. 4). This was 0.3m deep and revealed a further three courses of brickwork forming the apparent foundation of the rear wall.

5. Photographic Survey

5.1 A photographic survey of the exterior of the stables building was undertaken on 7th February 2007 with initial photos taken during the site visit of January 23rd. Between the first and second visits the garden wall to the east of the stables was demolished and part of the south-west gable collapsed. The roof timbers were exposed as the building was not covered in any way.

5.2 Although a building is shown in this location on the map of 1839 the walls of the standing building were largely constructed from a mixture of machine-made brick of later 19th- and 20th-century date, suggesting that the building has been extensively rebuilt. There were some examples of possibly earlier bricks, and these may have been reused from an earlier building.

Front elevation

5.3 General views were taken of the front or north-west elevation looking east and south-east (Fig. 6). The existing stable block was 9.3m long and the front elevation had three stable doors. These were timber plank split doors with iron hinges (Fig. 7). The brickwork immediately north-east of the north-eastern door projected forward of the line of the front wall and appeared to be constructed of older darker brick than the front wall itself.

Side elevation (north-east)

5.4 The north-east gable was partially obscured by a large bush or tree (Fig. 8). A single narrow window, probably a later addition, was located high in the gable. The south-east corner of the building was constructed from older, darker bricks than the main part of the wall (Fig. 9), in a similar manner to the north corner, and it may be that these are the remnants of the building illustrated on the 1839 map. A small three-sided brick structure was butted on to the wall. This was built of 19th-/20th-century bricks and was 0.4m high, 1.2m wide and 0.6m deep. This probably formed a fuel or goods store.

Rear Elevation

5.5 General views were recorded of the south-east elevation looking north and north-east (Fig. 10). A single casement window was present in the middle of the wall which may be a later, higher, insertion into an original opening. There was evidence of two 0.7m wide blocked windows further to the west (Fig. 11). The south-east elevation also had a 1.8m x 1.3m offshot chamber with a pitched corrugated iron roof.

5.6 A buttress was also present at the south-east end. This was constructed of machine-made bricks, but many bricks were showed evidence of spalling, decay and damage. The buttress appeared to have been subject to repair or rebuilding.

Side elevation (south-west)

5.7 The south-west gable had previously had a roughly square window with a segmental brick arch (Fig. 12). However, the upper part of this wall had recently partially collapsed leaving only the lower third of the wall, some 1.3m- 1.8m high. The wall showed evidence of having previously being rebuilt as it was comprised of modern brick and butted up to the rear and front walls. This wall may have been constructed after the building to its south went out of use, effectively shortening the building and leaving the remains of the rear wall standing as a garden wall.

5.8 The roof timbers of the stables were visible from the south-east end and the common rafters appear to be modern, regular sized and machine cut. The principal rafters and trenched purlins were rough, irregular timbers, which were not squared or worked (Fig. 13). It is quite possible that the principal rafters and purlins were re-used from the earlier structure that stood in this area.



Fig. 13: Roof timbers

6. Conclusions

6.1 No evidence for any medieval or early post-medieval activity associated with the mill site was observed.

6.2 The standing stable block appears to be a late 19th-century building. The majority of the bricks are machine-made which suggests its dates to the second half of the 19th century, between 1839 and 1889-91 when map evidence suggests it was rebuilt. It was used as a stable block at the periphery of the mill site complex. There is some evidence of additional phases of repair and alterations and these may be associated with a later change of use. Some elements of the stable block, including areas of brickwork and the principal rafters and purlins, appeared to be the remnants of an earlier building, possibly that shown on the 1839 map. No other significant archaeological features or finds were recovered from the observed area, with the exception of possible 19th- or 20th-century brick flooring and concrete foundation.

6.3 The brick wall foundation and brick floors recorded may have been associated with the stables or adjacent buildings shown on the maps of 1839 and 1903. These may have included outbuildings or a pig sty (Mr Eales pers. comm.). The brick floor surfaces could have been associated with these buildings and the concrete slabs probably represent the repair and continued use of such buildings and the yard area outside of the up to recent times.

6.4 Cobbles revealed at the north-western limit of the observed area were undoubtedly associated with the access road to the mill, but no other dating evidence was present. These could represent part of the base of the existing road or be part of an earlier surface.

Acknowledgements

The Warwickshire Museum would like to thank Mr John Burgoigne of BWD Ltd for commissioning the work on behalf of Mr and Mrs Eales. The Museum would like to thank Mr and Mrs Eales for their help during the project. Work on site was carried out by Catherine Coutts and Peter Thompson. This report was written by Catherine Coutts and Peter Thompson with illustrations by Andrew Isham and Candy Stevens. It was checked by Nicholas Palmer.

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Fig. 5: Western foundation trench from the south



Fig. 6: Front elevation of stables from north-west



Fig. 8: Side elevation (north-east)



Fig. 7: Stable door and corner of wall



Fig. 9: Eastern corner of stables



Fig. 10: Rear (south-east) elevation of stables



Fig. 11: Blocked window (south-east wall)



Fig. 12: Side elevation (south-west) from west

Appendix A: Listed Building Citations

Building Details:

Building Name:
CLAYBROOKE MILL
Parish: CLAYBROOKE
MAGNA
District:
HARBOROUGH
County:
LEICESTERSHIRE
Postcode: LE17 5DB

Details:

LBS Number: 392515
Grade: II
Date Listed: 14/03/1977
Date of Last Amendment: 21/02/2006
Date Delisted:
NGR: SP4993489126

Listing Text:

CLAYBROOKE MAGNA
Claybrooke Mill
SP48NE
1323-0 2/26
14/03/77
(Formerly Listed as: Water Mill)
GV II

Watermill. Reputed to date from 1763 and extended in 1840. Red brick with brick cornice to slate roof. Three storeys; irregular three window front with no windows on second or ground floors to left, all wide segment-headed casements. Two flat-headed casements to left and right of centre. Boarded doors to left of centre on first floor and in centre and to right on ground floor. Five irregularly-spaced timbers rising to the eaves are bolted to the structure as supports. Interior: most of the mill machinery survives, including 12ft diameter overshot waterwheel, sluice, pit wheel, wallower, and spur wheel, one pair of Derby Greystones and provision for a further pair. The mill is still in commercial operation. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N, Williamson E, Brandwood G: Leicestershire and Rutland: London: 1984-: 132).

Listing NGR: SP4991089119

Building Details:

Building Name:
CLAYBROOKE MILL
HOUSE
Parish: CLAYBROOKE
MAGNA
District: HARBOROUGH
County:
LEICESTERSHIRE
Postcode: LE17 5DB

Details:

LBS Number: 392516
Grade: II
Date Listed: 14/03/1977
Date of Last Amendment: 21/02/2006
Date Delisted:
NGR: SP4990889118

Listing Text:

CLAYBROOKE MAGNA
SP48NE Claybrooke Mill House
1323-0 2/27
14/03/77
(Formerly Listed as:
Farmhouse at Water Mill)
GV II

House. Dated 1723 on brick to north, and raised in early C19. Red brick, rendered on east front. Brick cornice to slate hipped roof with two ridge stacks. Two storeys; regular three window front, casements with segment-heads, narrower in centre. Central panelled door with overlight in pilastered surround with flat entablature hood on brackets. Low wing of later C19 to west. The site of the mill has been in use at least as far back as 1675 (deeds) and probably as far back as Domesday; a mill in the Manor of Claybrooke, almost certainly on this site, was recorded in 1086 and 1279. The complex formerly also included a windmill. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N, Williamson E, Brandwood G: Leicestershire and Rutland: London: 1984-: 132).

Listing NGR: SP4991089119

Building Details:

Building Name:
CLAYBROOKE MILL
HOUSE, BARN 20
YARDS NORTH
Parish: CLAYBROOKE
MAGNA
District:
HARBOROUGH
County:
LEICESTERSHIRE
Postcode:

Details:

LBS Number: 392517
Grade: II
Date Listed: 30/09/1993
Date of Last Amendment: 21/02/2006
Date Delisted:
NGR: SP4990389140

Listing Text:

CLAYBROOKE MAGNA
Claybrooke Mill House, Barn 20 yards
SP48NE
1323-0 2/28 north
GV II

Barn. Late C18 or early C19. Red brick with cogged eaves cornice to plain tiled roof. Right hand corner canted. Boarded mid-strey with flat head. Single first-floor boarded stowages flanking and boarded ground-floor door also flanking. Interior: three bays with internal brick buttresses carrying floor beams for each end. Continuous double purlin roof.

Listing NGR: SP4990489138

