



**FRY ART GALLERY**

**EXTENSION TO THE FRY ART GALLERY, CASTLE STREET,  
SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX**

**WATCHING BRIEF**

**NOVEMBER 2021**

**DATE ISSUED:** NOVEMBER 2021  
**JOB NUMBER:** BE10027  
**ESSEX HER SEARCH:** 19/11/2021  
**OASIS NO.:** wardella2-503277  
**PLANNING APPLICATION REF:** UTT/19/1995/FUL  
**REPORT NUMBER:** BE10027/0002  
**STATUS:** FINAL

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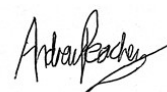
**WATCHING BRIEF**

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**REVIEWED BY:**

Andrew Peachey Associate Director



**APPROVED BY:**

Rhodri Gardner Technical Director



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## **SUMMARY**

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) was commissioned by The Fry Art Gallery to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1BD (NGR TL 53628 38662). The Watching Brief was required in compliance with a planning consent condition which required a programme of archaeological work. A WSI was prepared for the approval of the ECC Historic Environment Advisors (ECC HEA) and LPA. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The investigation revealed a back-filled post-medieval or Victorian basement containing a brick culvert and a brick well which was left in situ; no finds were recovered.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) thanks the client for commissioning the project, and for assistance throughout the work. WA also thanks Richard Havis archaeological officer of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisors (ECC HEA) for advice and for providing the HER information. The archaeological watching brief was supervised by Vinny Monahan and the report written by Peter Thompson. The figures were produced by Kathren Henry. The project was managed by Rhodri Gardner and the report edited by Andrew Peachey.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 On the 26<sup>th</sup> August and the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 Wardell Armstrong (WA) undertook an archaeological watching brief for an extension to the Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1BD (NGR TL 5365 3866); Figures 1 & 2. It was commissioned by the client the Fry Art Gallery who had planning permission to erect new single-story extensions to the building following demolition of existing extensions.

### **1.2 Project Documentation**

1.2.1 The watching brief was required in compliance with the planning consent which required a programme of archaeological work (Uttlesford Planning Approval UTT/19/1995/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 was prepared in response to a brief issued by the Historic Environment Adviser of Essex County Council (ECC HEA, *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring at the Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden*, Richard Havis, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018). The WSI Provided a specific methodology for a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording. This is in line with the government advice as set out in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021). The archaeological watching brief was required to allow observation of the ground works associated with the new building, to identify and record any archaeological features or finds that may have been present.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Standards and Guidance**

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2020a), and in accordance with the WA excavation manual (2017). The watching brief was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2020a) and the *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2020b).

### **2.2 Documentary Research**

2.2.1 A brief outline of the historic and archaeological background of the immediate area of the works was provided in the WSI (1.1.3) using available online sources and Historic England listing and scheduling descriptions (WA 2020). This has been supplemented in Section 3 of this report through consultation with the Essex Historic Environment Record.

#### **2.2.2 Archaeological Watching Brief**

2.2.3 As stated, the archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor groundworks during the small-scale development. Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by a mechanical excavator with toothless ditching bucket without archaeological supervision. The foundation trenches were inspected once they had been opened.

#### **2.2.4 Site Archive**

2.2.5 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited with a suitable repository, with copies of the report sent to Essex HER, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier (site code: BE10241).

2.2.6 Wardell Armstrong LLP supports the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and



access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: wardella2-503277.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Location and Geological Context**

3.1.1 The site lies on the northern side of Castle Street in the historic core of Saffron Walden. It comprises existing buildings and the rear garden area of the Fry Art Gallery.

3.1.2 Saffron Walden is situated less than a mile of the east bank of the north-south flowing River Cam or Granta, and the site is located at approximately 53m aOD on the south-east slope of the tributary stream valley of The Slade. The solid geology is Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation, and the overlying superficial geology comprises glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits.

#### **3.1.1 Historical and Archaeological Background**

3.1.2 There is archaeological evidence indicating almost continuous settlement in or near Saffron Walden since the Neolithic period, including the Roman small town of Great Chesterford to the north. However, the earliest evidence in close proximity to the site dates from the early medieval period.

3.1.3 In the late 11th century, the de Mandeville's built a castle, originally a motte and bailey with a keep on the motte within an oval inner bailey which also contained domestic buildings, and an outer bailey to contain a town. Saffron Walden castle was located 200yds east of the existing parish church and was surrendered to Stephen in 1142 and destroyed in 1157-1158, although the keep was refurbished later (EHER 411). The remains of the castle are Grade I listed and the site is a Scheduled Monument (SAM 14341). In 1141 the de Mandeville's were able to bring a market to Saffron Walden from Newport. In the early-mid 13th century a large area was enclosed to the south and west of the town bailey and new streets laid out (mainly High Street and its back lane, Gold Street). This was enclosed by an earthwork-the Battle or Repell Ditches which is also a Scheduled Monument (EHER 443, SAM 54).

The earlier town ditch was infilled to give more area. This extension may be associated with the grant of a new charter in 1236 and was carried out by the de Bohuns (successors of the de Mandeville's) (EHER 408). The Church of St Mary the Virgin 90m to the south-east of the site dates from the late 13th century and is Grade I listed (EHER 511); it was restored in 1792-3 and the spire was added in 1831 (EHER 512). The church was laid out on the axis of the enclosing banks and two streets were laid out named Church Street and Castle Street.

- 3.1.4 An archaeological excavation and watching brief carried out at 63a Castle Street, 120m to the north-east of the site, identified a large ditch, 6.4m wide and 4.0m deep, aligned north-east/south-west and cut into the natural chalk bedrock. This was the outer bailey of the 12th century castle within which the medieval town was initially established. This length of ditch remained in use in the 13th and 14th centuries, when it was incorporated within the enlarged circuit of the later town enclosure. Later archaeology identified on the site included garden soil and a small brick structure which both dated to the 19th/20th centuries (EHER 47155).
- 3.1.5 A watching brief was carried out on an extension to the rear of 39 Castle Street making access in its existing cellar and re-aligning the drainage system. A depth of c. 2.5m of top-soil and sub-soil had been removed down to the depth of the bottom of the cellar and for a distance of 5m into the garden. All of this material was fill the only evidence of natural consisted of chalk located approximately 5m from the house. No dating evidence was visible although the quantity of backfilled material would seem to be too great to relate to the construction of the cellared buildings on the Castle Street frontage. This therefore may have been related to the town defensive ditch but it was not possible to confirm (EHER 18543).
- 3.1.6 An archaeological monitoring at Myddleton Place 130m south-west of the site recorded several features and at least three phases of occupation of the site, from the 12th century to the 18th century. This included pits, levelling layers, a brick built oven, a brick-lined well and a flint and mortar wall (EHER 13945).
- 3.1.7 In the early Post-medieval period the favourable local soil and climate allowed saffron to be grown which gave the prefix to the town's name. Number 15 Castle Street which abuts the Fry Art Gallery is a Grade II listed 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house (EHER 26896). Immediately to its east, numbers 17 and 19 Castle Street are also listed late 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed cross winged and 18<sup>th</sup> century street range buildings (EHER 26898). Number's 10, 12 and 14 Castle Street which are across

Castle Street to the south of the site are a row of Grade II listed early 16th century timber framed terraced houses (EHER 26893). Number 8 Castle Street is a Grade II listed early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick house, and former public house owned by the Fordham brewing family (EHER 26892). Number 11 Castle Street is a mid 15th century and later timber framed house (EHER 26984), and number 13 Castle Street is a 17th century timber framed house with an early 19th century rear addition (EHER 26895).

- 3.1.8 Foundations of several substantial masonry structures were found 30-35m north-east of the site, in contractor's trenches at the turn of the century. In Lower Square, to the rear of 33-35 Castle Street, a trench dug in c.1895 cut a "massive wall foundation of flint and mortar, several feet thick" with "no trace of brick or tile work, the national grid reference places it 17m south-east of the site (EHER 480). A pair of Grade II chest tombs is situated 37m west of the church tower and 13m from the north churchyard wall which would put them in the existing church yard (EHER 27180). In the same area a wall with reset tombstones is located on the north side of the churchyard (EHER 27182). The early 16<sup>th</sup> century Youth Hostel at 1 & 2 Bridge Street is Grade I listed (EHER 15272), and additionally there are a further 45 Grade II and Grade II\* listed buildings within approximately 100m of the site.

#### *The Site*

- 3.1.9 There has been no previous archaeological work carried out on the site. The historic OS maps (Figs.4-6) show a building, or group of buildings on the site with gardens or a yard on the north-eastern part. The EHER also records a large structure stood close to the site (EHER 480).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 The site was visited on 26<sup>th</sup> August and the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Most of the intrusive work was carried out in the smaller area to the south comprising the "kitchen" area and the area adjoining it to the west. Some groundworks had been completed prior to arrival, the area to the south closest to Castle Street saw the removal of the "kitchen" room with the roof removed and external wall grubbed out. The removal of the kitchen wall uncovered an earlier lower floor surface for a basement which was just beyond the south edge of the site (Fig. 3). It was aligned

south-east towards Castle Street and had a brick archway, probably for a drainage culvert adjacent, which was cut by a modern wall which was evident in both Sample Sections 1 and 2. The basement also contained a well, which was capped prior to the basement being levelled in the later 20th century, after which a new concrete path was installed (L1000). The area may also have spent time as a lawn before the path to the gallery entrance was installed.

- 4.1.2 In the larger area to the north there was removal of external walls and a concrete slab floor but no archaeological remains were present.
- 4.1.3 North-west facing Sample Section 1 opposite the kitchen door (Fig, 3) commenced with a concrete Path L1000, which was a compact pale grey-white slab foot path on a south-west to north-east alignment which was 0.10m thick. It overlay basement backfill L1001 which was a friable dark red brown silty sand containing modern mixed demolition debris which was 0.81m deep. L1001 overlay floor or sub-floor L1002 which was a compact pale-yellow white and mid red grey brick mortar and tile and at a depth between 0.87m and 1.33m. L1002 was abutted by an external wall of an unknown structure S1003 which contained lime mortar bonding of unfrogged brick (Plate 5).
- 4.1.4 When the basement backfill was removed, the stratigraphic sequence for the kitchen area at Sample Section 2 (Fig. 3, southeast of SS1) was revealed (Plate 6). Made Ground L1004 comprised a grey compact concrete surface/floor with frequent subrounded/sub-angular stones 0.08m thick. Underneath was Made Ground L1005 consisting of friable yellow sand which was a levelling layer under concrete L1004 and was 0.16m thick. Beneath L1005 was Made Ground L1006 a mixed loose hardcore/rubble layer 0.28m deep. L1006 overlay Made Ground L1007 which was a thin layer made up of mixed silt and hardcore consisting of dark grey-brown friable silty sand and rubble, with moderate small to medium sub-angular rubble 0.06m deep. Beneath Made Ground L1007 was Made Ground L1008 made up of mid grey-brown friable silty sand. It was a mixed silt and hardcore with moderate small to medium sub-angular to sub-rounded stones and flints and rubble 0.80m deep. Beneath Made Ground L1008 was Made Ground L1009 comprising mixed silt and hardcore and described as a friable mid grey-brown silty sand with moderate small sub-rounded chalk inclusions which was 1.08m in depth. All of the above layers of made ground overlay remains of a red brick archway structure S1015 which was cut

by a modern wall. This in turn overlay the Natural substrate L1016 which was a firm white and grey chalk 1.08m-1.48m+ in depth.

- 4.1.5 Cut into the Natural substrate L1016, through the basement floor was Well S1010. It contained red and yellow brick and concrete/ lime mortar and was 1.3m deep. It was located in construction cut F1011. The well had a cap of brick S1013 and concrete S1014.

## **5 FINDS ASSESSMENT**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 There were no archaeological finds recovered from the site.

### **5.2 Methodology**

- 5.2.1 All finds were to be dealt with according to the recommendations made by Watkinson & Neal (1998) and to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2020b). All artefacts have been boxed according to material type and conforming to the deposition guidelines recommended by Brown (2011) and the Hertfordshire County Store.
- 5.2.2 The material archive has been assessed for its local, regional and national potential and for its potential to contribute to the relevant research frameworks.

## **6 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

- 6.1 The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with the Essex Archaeological Archives. Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the local museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 The site had strong potential for medieval and or post-medieval remains as evidenced by its location within the historic core of the town, the location of buildings on the historic OS maps, and from structural finds identified nearby (EHER

480). The historic OS maps show that the Site was located over an irregular L-shaped building or group of buildings which remained unchanged between 1877 and 1921, with the southern edge of the Site following that buildings footprint (Figs. 4-6).

- 7.2 The archaeological monitoring found evidence for an earlier building in the form of walls and a basement. The removal of the kitchen wall uncovered an earlier lower floor surface for a basement running south-east towards Castle Street which contained a brick well and a brick arched drainage culvert. There was initial thought that it might be the entrance to the basement, but it can be seen in both SS1 and SS2 as being a linear feature too small to be a corridor, which is cut along its length by an outer wall, of the existing site building. The basement does not appear to have been located beneath the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century building, but adjacent to it. It was probably late post-medieval or Victorian in date and was backfilled in the later 20th century, leveled and then had a new concrete path installed.

## 8 **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Wardell Armstrong carried out an archaeological monitoring at the Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1BD. The watching brief identified evidence of earlier buildings; the most tangible evidence being a backfilled basement of Victorian or late post-medieval date which contained a brick well and a culvert. There were no archaeological finds.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLE

Context Number	Context Type	Description
1000	Concrete slab	Concrete slab end footpath – compacted pale grey-white concrete on a SW-NE alignment
1001	Backfill	Friable dark red brown silty sand - contains modern mixed demolition debris
1002	Floor/sub floor	Compact pale yellow white and mid red grey brick mortar and tile
1003	Wall	External wall of unknown structure which is abutted by floor surface L1002. Double wide structure with lime mortar bonding 22mm x 12mm x ? unfroged brick
1004	Made Ground	Grey compact concrete surface/ floor with frequent sub-rounded/sub-angular stones 0.08m thick
1005	Made ground	Friable yellow sand – levelling layer under concrete L1004 0.16m thick
1006	Made ground	Mixed loose hardcore/rubble layer 0.28m deep
1007	Made ground	Mixed silt and hardcore – dark grey brown friable silty sand and rubble with moderate small to medium sub-angular rubble 0.060m
1008	Made ground	Mid grey brown friable silty sand - mixed silt and hardcore. Moderate small to medium sub-angular to sub-rounded stones and flints and rubble 0.80m deep
1009	Made ground	Mixed silt and hardcore friable mid grey brown silty sand with moderate small sub-rounded chalk inclusions 1.08m deep
1010	Well	Red and yellow brick and concrete/ lime mortar 1.3m deep
1011	Construction cut	Wall cut 0.6m deep post-medieval/Victorian
1012	Concrete opening for well	Compact mid brown grey to grey compact concrete with frequent sub-rounded/sub-angular stones and flints
1013	Brick cap for well	Red and yellow brick cap 0.3m wide by 0.3m deep
1014	Concrete cap	Grey compact concrete covering over the brick cap for well [1014] 0.70m
1015	Brick archway	Red brick 0.11m wide and 0.07m high, with concrete/lime mortar
1016	Natural	Firm white and grey chalk 1.08m-1.48m+

### APPENDIX 2: PLATES



**Plate 1: General working shot of northern area looking approximately south-east towards the church**



**Plate 2: General working shot of northern area looking east**



**Plate 3: The kitchen area looking south-west. The well (below) is beneath the concrete surface on the left**



**Plate 4: The kitchen area looking north**



**Plate 5: The kitchen area looking north-east**



**Plate 6: The Made Ground stratigraphy of the kitchen area basement with a brick culvert cut by a modern wall, looking south-east**



**Plate 7: Detail of the post-medieval brick archway**



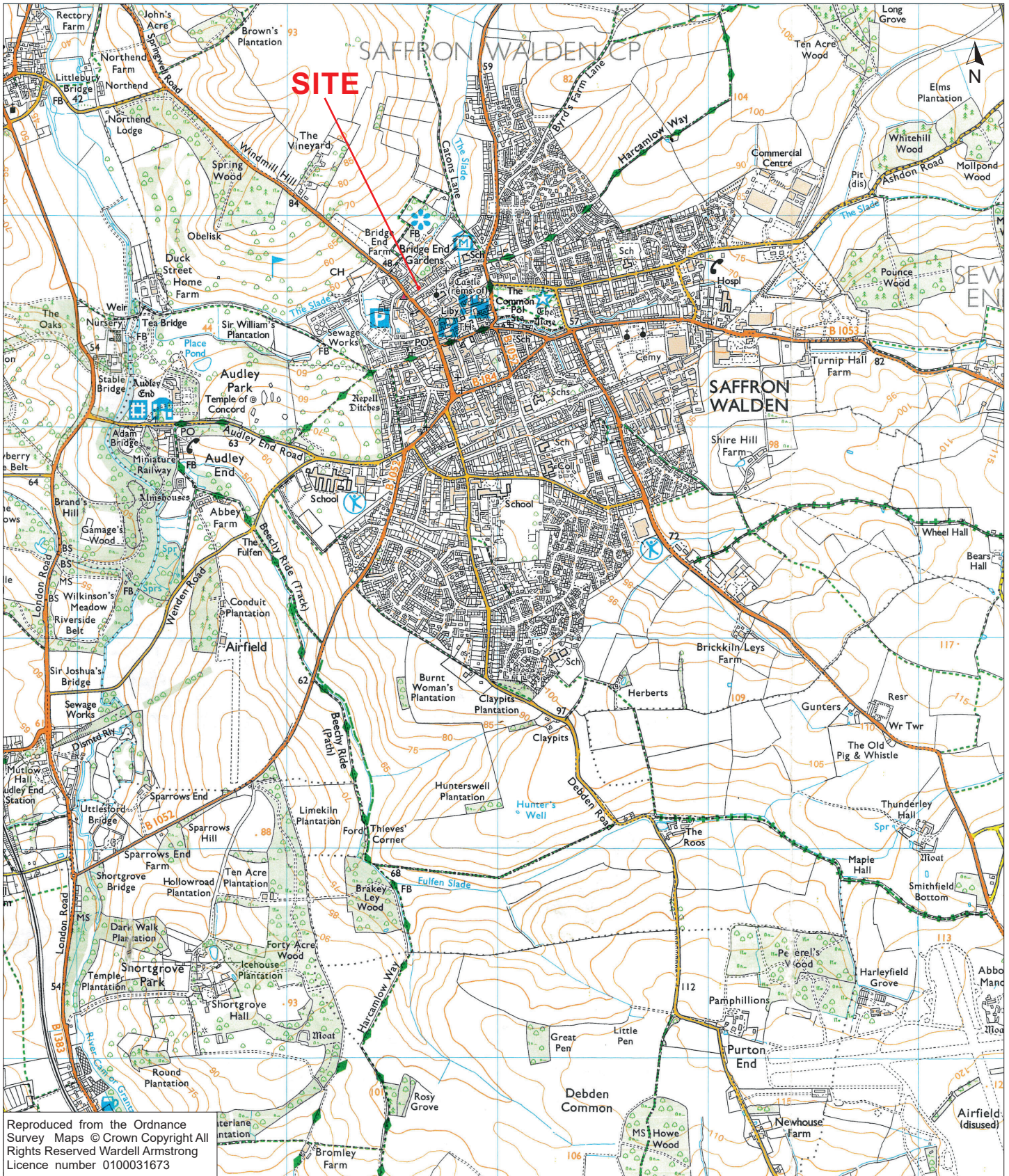
**Plate 8: Detail showing the well**



**Plate 9: Detail of the well**



## **APPENDIX 3: DRAWINGS**



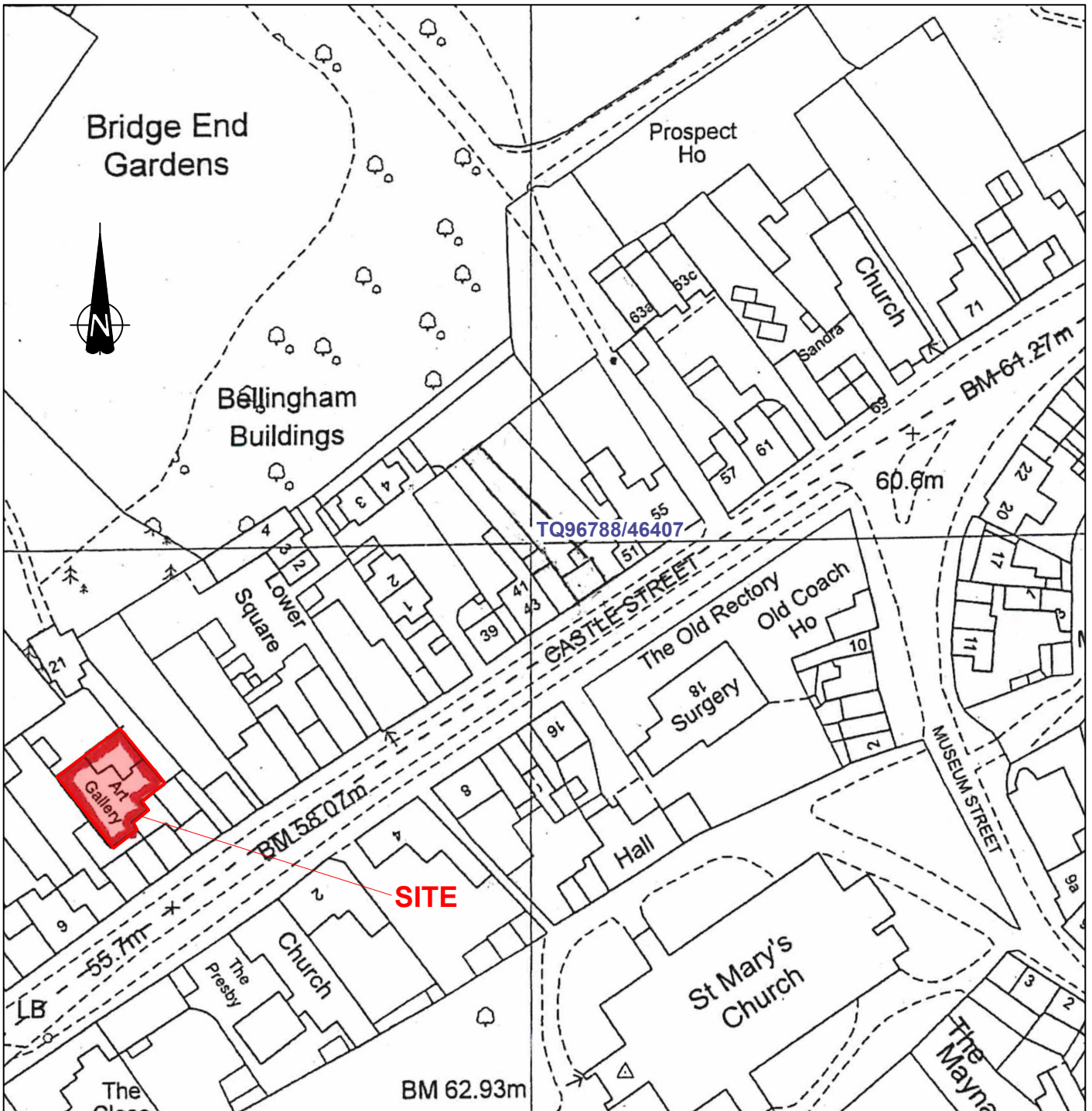
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CLIENT	IMS Building Solutions Ltd		
PROJECT	Extension to Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex		
DRAWING TITLE	Figure 1 Site location plan		


DRG No.	BE10027/001		REV	A	
SIZE	A4	SCALE	1:25,000	DATE	19.11.21
DRAWN BY	Kathren	CHECKED BY	PT	APPROVED BY	RG



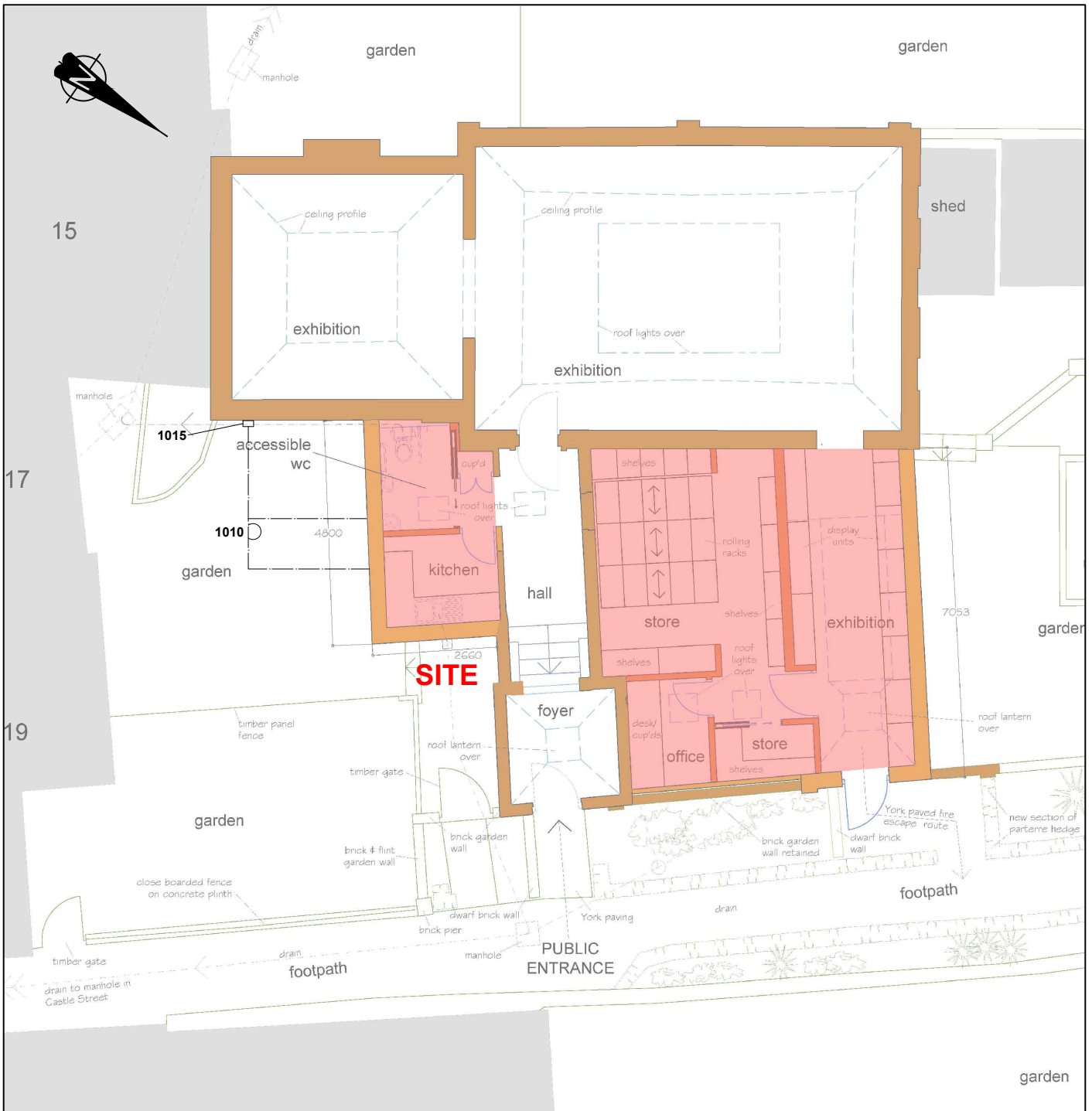
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	PROJECT <b>Extension to Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex</b>	SIZE <b>A4</b>	SCALE <b>1:1000</b>
DRAWING TITLE <b>Figure 2 Detailed site location plan</b>	DRAWN BY <b>Kathren</b>	CHECKED BY <b>PT</b>	DATE <b>19.11.21</b>
			APPROVED BY <b>RG</b>
<small> <input type="checkbox"/> BIRMINGHAM    <input type="checkbox"/> GLASGOW  <input type="checkbox"/> BOLTON    <input type="checkbox"/> LEEDS  <input type="checkbox"/> BRISTOL    <input type="checkbox"/> LONDON  <input type="checkbox"/> CARDIFF    <input type="checkbox"/> MANCHESTER  <input type="checkbox"/> CARLISLE    <input type="checkbox"/> STOKE ON TRENT  <input type="checkbox"/> EDINBURGH    <input type="checkbox"/> NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE         </small>		<small>           BURY ST EDMUNDS   TEL 01284 765210            WWW.WARDELL-ARMSTRONG.COM         </small>	





**NEW BUILD**

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<p>PROJECT <b>Extension to Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex</b></p>	<p>SIZE <b>A4</b></p>	<p>SCALE <b>1:125</b></p>
<p>DRAWING TITLE <b>Figure 3 Proposed development plan</b></p>	<p>DRAWN BY <b>Kathren</b></p>	<p>CHECKED BY <b>PT</b></p>
<p> <b>wardell armstrong</b></p>		<p>APPROVED BY <b>RG</b></p>

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## APPENDIX 4 ESSEX HER SUMMARY/OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>OASIS SUMMARY SHEET</b>			
Project name	the Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex Archaeological Monitoring		
The watching brief identified evidence of earlier buildings the most tangible evidence being a backfilled basement of probable post-medieval date which contained a brick well and an archway probably for a culvert. There were no archaeological finds.			
Project dates (fieldwork)	26 <sup>th</sup> August and 10 <sup>th</sup> September		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	TBC
P. number	BE10026	Site code	
Type of project	Archaeological Watching Brief		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Art Gallery		
Planned development	Erection of new single story extensions to the building following demolition of existing extensions		
Main features (+dates)	Basement and fragments of post-medieval walls, a brick archway and well in the basement		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	Essex	Uttlesford	St Mary's, Saffron Walden
HER for area	Essex HER		
Post code (if known)	CB10 1BD		
Area of site			
NGR	TL 53628 38662		
Height AOD (min/max)	c.53m aOD		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	Richard Havis		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Vinnie Monahan		
Funded by	Fry Art Gallery		
Full title	the Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden, Essex Archaeological Monitoring and Recording		
Authors	Peter Thompson		
Report no.	BE10027/0002		
Date (of report)	November 2021		

## Summary for wardella2-503277

OASIS ID (UID)	wardella2-503277
Project Name	Watching Brief at Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden CB10 1BD
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	BE10027
Planning Id	Uttlesford Planning Approval UTT/19/1995/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Wardell Armstrong Archaeology
Project Dates	26-Aug-2021 - 10-Sep-2021
Location	Fry Art Gallery, Castle Street, Saffron Walden CB10 1BD NGR : TL 53650 38660 LL : 52.0250795972146, 0.238058849387652 12 Fig : 553650,238660
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Essex District : Uttlesford Parish : Saffron Walden
Project Methodology	The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2020a), and in accordance with the WA excavation manual (2017). The watching brief was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2020a) and the Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2020b).
Project Results	The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on 26th August and 10th September 2021. The investigation revealed a back-filled post-medieval or Victorian basement containing a brick culvert and a brick well which was left in situ; no finds were recovered.
Keywords	Culvert - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Well - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Basement - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
HER	Essex HER - unRev - STANDARD
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Saffron Walden Museum

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