



NEW ELECTRICAL SUPPLY TO
CARRIAGE HOUSE.
REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING

SEATON DELAVAL HALL,
NORTHUMBERLAND

prepared for
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NORTHUMBERLAND:
REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

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Summary

Northern Archaeological Associates was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during the installation of a new electrical supply to the south of the Carriage House at Seaton Delaval Hall, Northumberland (NZ 32262 76593). This was completed in accordance with listed building consent 20/02609/LBC and represents a revision of the earlier electrical supply route approved under 17/04416/LBC (and corresponding permission ref 17/04415/FUL).

The Carriage House adjoins the north-east side of the East Wing of Seaton Delaval Hall and forms the north side of the associated stable yard. The building was constructed between 1816 and 1822 and is a Grade II listed building (NHLE: 1303613); it is listed separately from the Grade I 18th-century Hall, although clearly forms part of its setting.

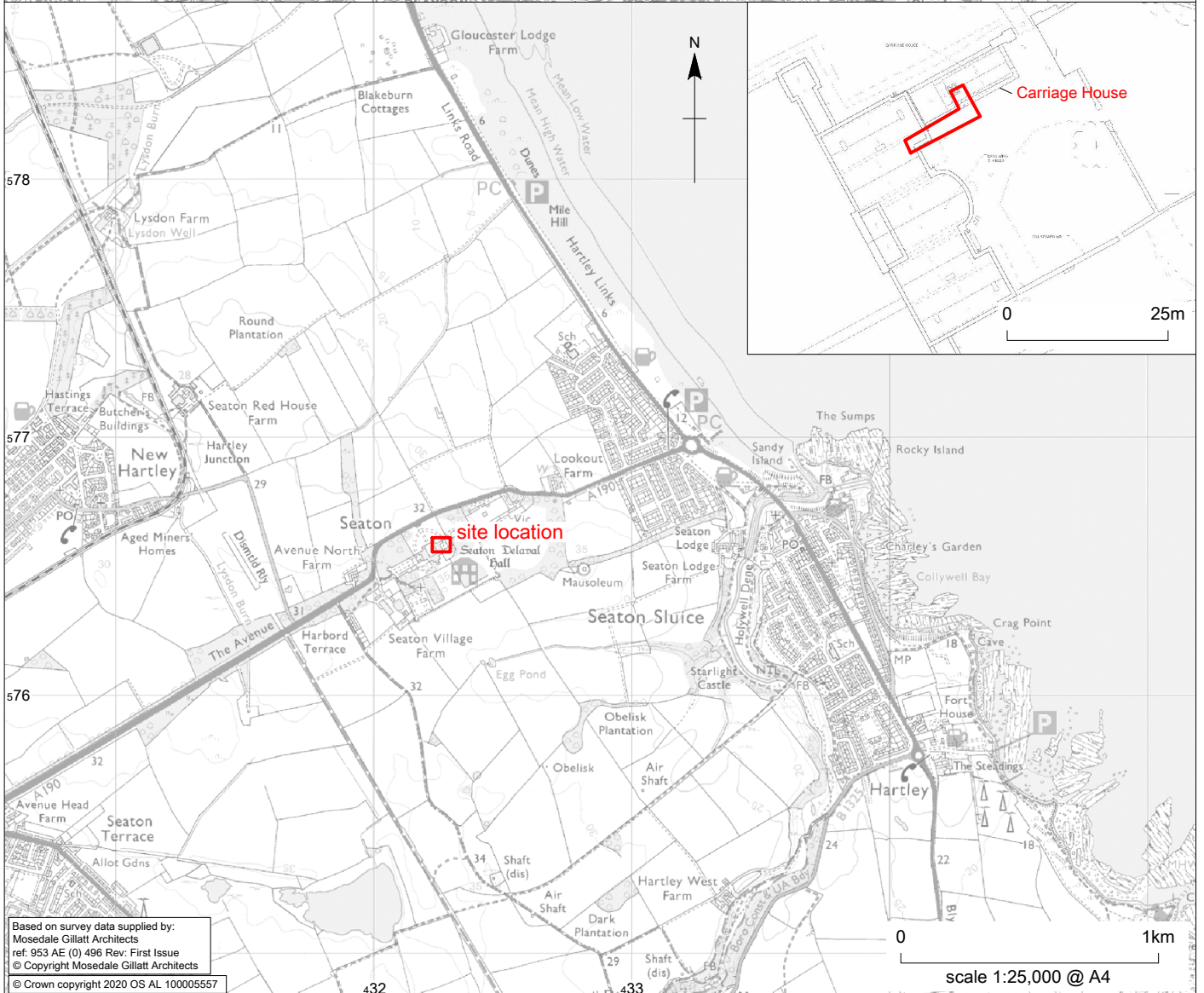
The installation of the new electrical cable necessitated the excavation of a c.0.30m-wide by 10m-long trench to a depth 0.45m. This extended from an existing electrical distribution board in the East Wing, along the passage between the central stables and north range, to connect with an existing drainage route entering the Carriage House. Given the high potential for the survival of post-medieval remains associated with the construction and use of the 18th-century Hall, the Northumberland County Council Assistant County Archaeologist requested a continuous archaeological watching brief be maintained during all groundworks. This was conducted in November 2020.

The evidence identified during the monitoring, in particular two foundation walls associated with the East Wing, provided a greater understanding of the construction of the building and later development of the Carriage House. It also provided context to the results of earlier work in the south passage of the wing conducted as part of The Curtain Rises project in May 2019.

Prior to the construction of the East Wing, topsoil appears to have been removed across the area, presumably to provide a sound surface. On which to build A degree of levelling was then conducted to accommodate the natural slope in the bedrock at the top of the rise. The foundations of the East Wing were then laid, comprising two low walls set 2m apart and each measuring c.1m wide and standing 0.25–30m high. These were constructed on top of a

compacted layer of crushed sandstone set above the natural sandstone bedrock. The distance between the two walls corresponded with the width of a north to south stair passage between the 18th-century East Wing and 19th-century Carriage House. The space in-between was filled with the same compact crushed sandstone deposit as found beneath the walls and formed a compact floor surface. All this indicates that the stair passage formed part of the original layout of the East Wing.

No trace of a flagged floor within the passage was found. This may have been removed prior to the laying of the modern concrete flooring, probably in the late 20th century. No artefacts (apart from modern material) were recovered during the watching brief to date any of the recorded features or deposits.



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Seaton Delaval Carriage House: Site location

Figure 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Northern Archaeological Associates was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during the installation of a new electrical supply to the south of the Carriage House at Seaton Delaval Hall, Northumberland (NZ 32262 76593; Fig. 1). This work was completed in accordance with listed building consent 20/02609/LBC and represents a revision of a previously planned electrical supply route approved under 17/04416/LBC (and corresponding permission ref 17/04415/FUL)
- 1.2 Archaeological monitoring was required during the excavation of a linear cable trench running east to west along the south side of the building, from the existing distribution board in the north passage of the East Wing to connect with the new visitor toilet facilities (WC pod) inside the Carriage House (Figs 2 and 3).
- 1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed and approved in advance by the Northumberland County Council Assistant County Archaeologist (NCCACA) (NAA 2020a).

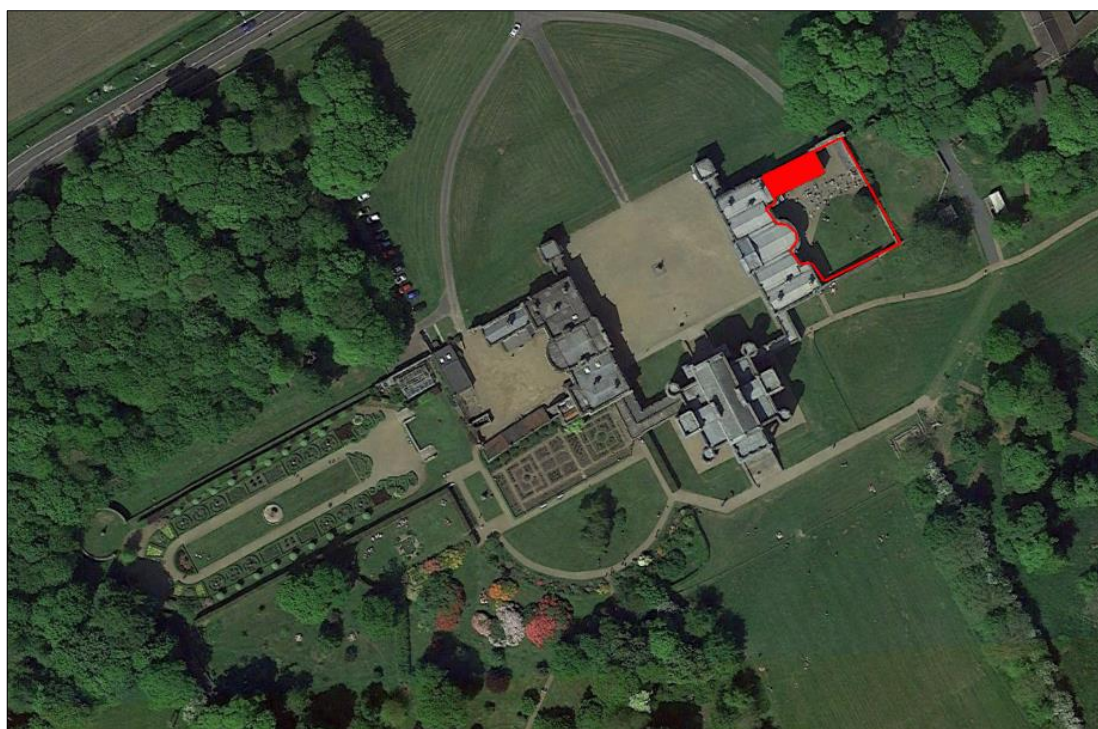
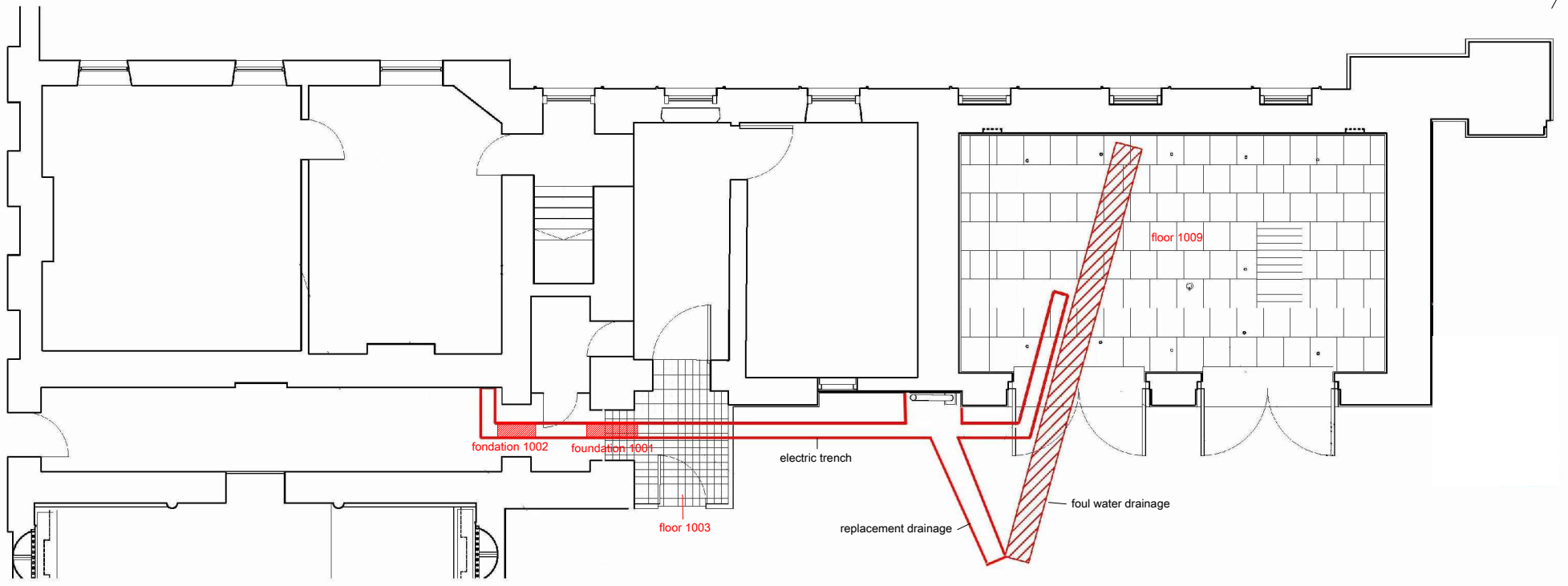


Figure 2: detailed site location showing the East Wing service court and Carriage House (in red). Image © Google Earth 05/27/2018.

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Seaton Delaval Carriage House: results of monitoring

Figure 3

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Location

- 2.1 Seaton Delaval Hall is located between Seaton Delaval and Seaton Sluice, c.5km south of the Port of Blyth (Fig. 1). The 19th-century Carriage House adjoins the north-east side of the East Wing, which is part of the 18th-century U-shaped Hall complex originally designed by Vanbrugh. The building forms the north side of the East Wing service court – also known as the Stable Yard (Fig. 2).

Geology and soils

- 2.2 Seaton Delaval Hall is located above Devensian Diamicton: poorly sorted glacial till deposited at the culmination of the last ice age. This layer lies above the Carboniferous Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation – a compilation of mudstones, siltstones and sandstones created in shallow seas (BGS 2021).

Topography and land use

- 2.3 The stable yard is a gravel courtyard, located to the rear (east) of the 18th-century East Wing, which formerly housed a riding house and stabling. The wing and associated service court were part of the 18th-century Hall layout, while the Carriage House is a later, e19th-century, addition (Simpson and Brown 2017). Evidence suggests this has always been a working yard, although the associated buildings are clearly less utilitarian than those relating to the West Wing service yard, suggesting the area was more regularly frequented by the Delavals and visitors to the Hall.
- 2.4 The yard is defined to the south by the remains of a building built in the 18th century as part of the East Wing, although demolished before 1781. The size and large number of blocked windows visible in the surviving elevation, together with documentary references, indicate this was probably a garden conservatory. A stone boundary wall extends to the east of this elevation and turns north to form the east wall of the yard. Until the early 19th century, this area was occupied by a linear stable block. The main entrance into the yard is via a large carriage-arch in the north-east corner of the yard, which adjoins the Carriage House to the west.

Previous archaeological works

- 2.5 Several previous episodes of archaeological monitoring were conducted by NAA in relation to the East Wing, Carriage House and stable yard as part of The Curtain Rises

project (NAA 2021). Of specific relevance to the current works was a watching brief in June 2020 during the installation of the WC pod inside the Carriage House. This was designed to sit above the existing Carriage House stone floor, resulting in minimum intrusion into the historic fabric of the building apart from installation of drainage. This involved the excavation of a 0.3m-wide by c.10m-long service trench through the Carriage House floor (Fig. 3). The removal of the flags along the length of the trench revealed a number of brick plinths – measuring 0.24m wide and 0.14m deep and set 0.32m apart – that supported the stone floor above. These were set on a deposit of compacted ash and black silty sand, typical of the made-ground observed across both the east and west service yards (NAA 2021, 120–1).

- 2.6 In addition, in May 2019, a c.0.3m-wide by c.7.5m-long trench for electrical ducting was excavated somewhat to the south of the Carriage House, through the south passage of the East Wing. This divides the central stable from the south part of the building and runs parallel to the north passage. The May 2019 works exposed the remains of wall footings associated with the construction of the East Wing. These were each c.1m wide and comprised two outer faces of dressed stone infilled with heavily compacted crushed sandstone (NAA 2021, 122–5).

Designations

- 2.7 The East Wing forms part of the Grade I Seaton Delaval Hall (NHLE: 1041321). The Carriage House is separately listed Grade II (NHLE: 1303613). The grounds of the estate are designated Grade II* on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England (NHLE: 1001052).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pre-medieval

- 3.1 There is currently little evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity on the Seaton Delaval Hall estate, although a fragment of Roman pottery was identified during recent excavations within the Pleasure Grounds (NAA 2020b).

Medieval

- 3.2 After the Norman Conquest, the area around Seaton Delaval was granted to the De Laval family. By the end of the 11th century, Guy de Laval is known to have constructed a private chapel at the site; this now forms part of the Church of Our Lady located to

- the south-west of the Hall. The chapel comprises the only extant remains associated with the medieval settlement (Simpson and Brown Architects 2017, 24).
- 3.3 A tower is known to have existed on the site by the early 15th century. This was expanded in the mid-16th century, and again in the early 17th century when Sir Ralph Delaval (1577–1628) built a large Jacobean hall around the core of the earlier Tudor mansion. The hall featured a forecourt and back-court – surrounded by three gardens – as well as a bakehouse, brewhouse, stables and dovecot. The old medieval tower was retained (Simpson and Brown Architects 2017, 25; Newman 2017, 5).
- 3.4 By 1660, Sir Ralph Delaval (1622–91) – the first baronet of Seaton – held the estate. His eldest son died without issue in 1696. There followed a period of legal wrangling, culminating in the estate passing to Sir John Delaval (1654–1729). He was bankrupted soon after by mounting legal fees and in 1717 obliged to sell the estate to his cousin, Admiral George Delaval (1668–1723). The Admiral commissioned the architect Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726) to design a new house, which was begun c.1719 (NHLE: 1001052). However, before completion of the building the Admiral died and the estate passed to his nephew, Captain Francis Blake Delaval (1692–1752). Work on the Central Hall was completed c.1724, with the two flanking service wings – the East Wing and West Wing – completed by 1740.
- 3.5 The 18th-century Hall and its service ranges were U-shaped in plan with an ornate Central Hall overlooking a large courtyard, flanked by the two service wings. The East Wing is believed to have been completed c.1730. It originally included a riding house, occupying the double-height large central room, with additional stabling on either side (Simpson and Brown 2017). The riding house was later converted to stables, probably in the late 1770s.
- 3.6 A major fire in 1822 gutted the Central Hall but left the East Wing largely unscathed. The Delaval family resided elsewhere after the fire, although the estate continued to be maintained by them. The two surviving wings were accommodated by their land agent, their immediate household, and members of the estate staff. During the First World War, the Hall was requisitioned by the military. Later, in the Second World War, it was first used as a British military prison and then a prisoner of war camp.

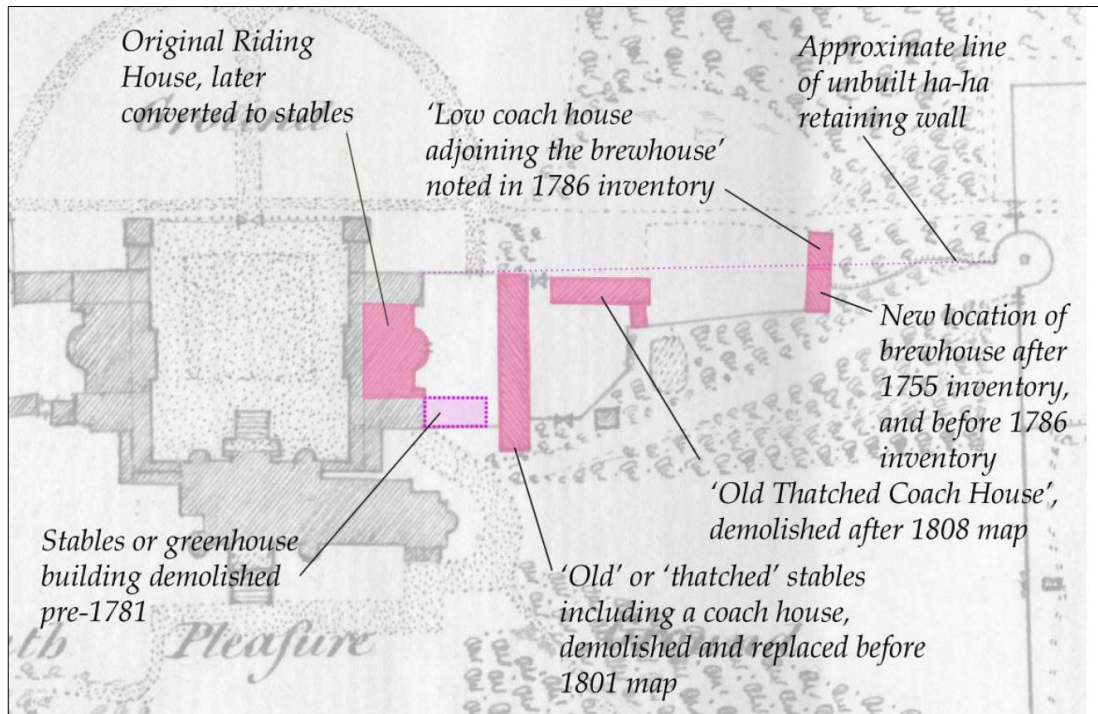


Figure 4: annotated extract from 1781 estate map showing the East Wing and associated buildings around the stable yard (from Simpson and Brown Architects 2017; Fig. 58).

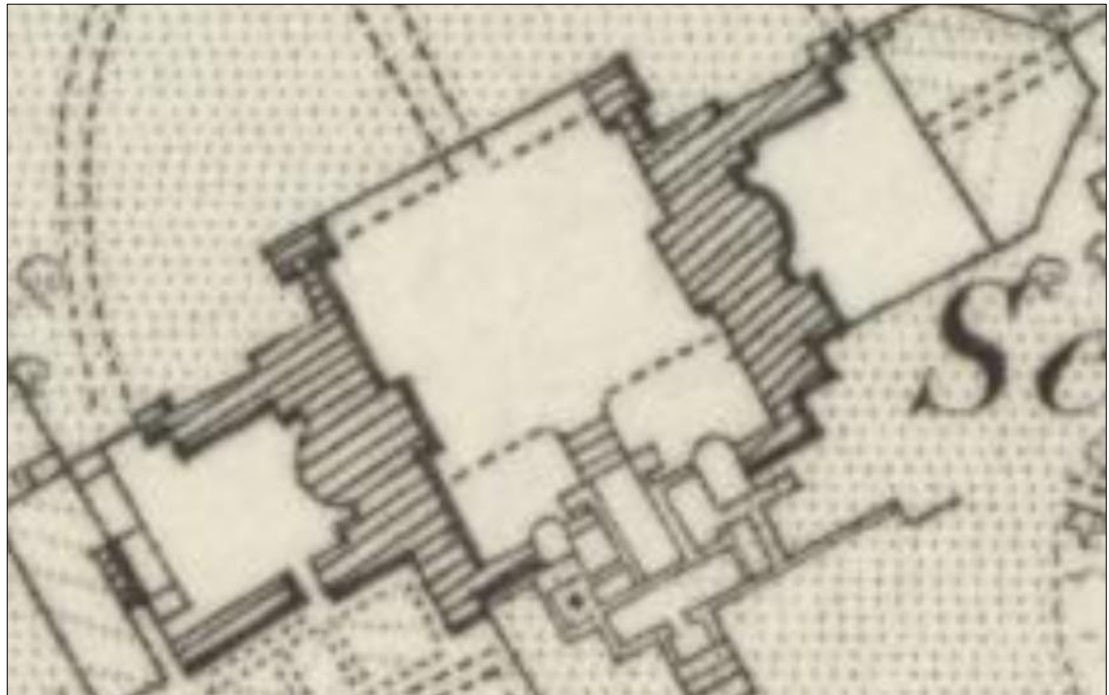


Figure 5: extract from 1860 six-inch First Edition map showing the East Wing and the Carriage House.

3.7 The Carriage House is not depicted on the earliest surviving plan of the estate, dated 1781 (Fig. 4). Neither is it shown on a later plan dated c.1816 (not reproduced). It first

appears on the six-inch First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1860 (surveyed 1858) (Fig. 5). Given the likely low level of investment in the estate following the 1822 fire, the Carriage House was probably constructed sometime between 1816 and 1822. The front (north) façade of the Carriage House was designed to match that of the north-west range of the West Wing, giving symmetry to the complex (Fig. 5). On the south side, a set of three carriage doors open into the enclosed stable yard.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORKS

4.1 Given the high potential for the survival of post-medieval remains associated with the construction and use of the 18th-century hall, the NCCACA requested archaeological monitoring during the installation of the electrical cable. This comprised a continuous watching brief during the excavation of a c.0.30m-wide and 0.45m-deep trench extending from an existing electrical distribution board in the East Wing, along the passage between the central stables and north range, to connect with an existing drainage route entering the Carriage House that ran parallel to a trench excavated and monitored as part of the earlier works (Fig. 3) (NAA 2021, 122–5).

5.0 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The aim of the monitoring was to ‘preserve by record’ any archaeological remains lost or damaged as a result of the groundworks.

5.2 The objectives were to:

- establish the presence, nature, extent, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains;
- provide a detailed record of any such archaeological remains;
- recover and assess any associated structural, artefactual and environmental evidence;
- undertake a programme of investigation that meets with national and regional standards (Historic England 2015a; ClfA 2014a–d); and
- prepare an illustrated report on the results of the archaeological monitoring to be deposited with the NCC Historic Environment Record (HER) and National Trust SMR.

Standards and guidelines

5.3 The work was undertaken with reference to the following published standards and guidelines of practice:

- *NPPF Planning Practice Framework* (MHCLG 2021);
- *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2020a)
- *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2020b);
- *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020c);
- *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2020d);
- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015);
- *A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds* (English Heritage 1995); and
- *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001).

6.0 METHODOLOGY

6.1 The watching brief was conducted in November 2020. All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI written and approved in advance by the NCCACA (NAA 2020a).

6.2 A 12m-long trench was hand excavated by the client's contractor, extending east from the electrical distribution board in the East Wing passage, through a lean-to lobby to connect with an existing drainage route before entering the Carriage House (Fig. 2; Plates 1 and 2). Prior to excavation, a strip of the modern, red-tiled, flooring within the lean-to lobby was carefully lifted and set aside for later reinstatement. A section was then cut through the underlying cast-concrete floor in the lobby and north passage to accommodate the 0.30m-wide cable trench.

6.3 At the east end of the Carriage House, a small trench was also excavated running diagonally from the south-east corner of the building to terminate in a new inspection chamber (Fig. 3).

6.4 A full record (written, graphic and photographic, as appropriate) was made of any archaeological features and deposits using NAA's pro forma record sheets. The location

of features, together with the edges of the excavated trench, were recorded in relation to the structural features on the ground.

- 6.5 A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the monitoring. This included images of each part of the excavated service trench and photographs of individual features and groups of features. All images included a suitable scale and a register of photographs taken is contained in the project archive.
- 6.6 All finds and pottery were initially retained for rapid assessment and proved to be demonstrably modern.
- 6.7 No environmental samples were taken, or thought necessary/viable.



Plate 1: electrical cable trench during excavation (and realignment of drainage in the stable yard), looking south-west. The lean-to structure is in the background.



Plate 2: ceramic tiling and concrete floor in the lean-to structure and passage with wall footing 1000 visible beneath.

7.0 RESULTS

- 7.1 Although constrained by the width of the trench, as well as earlier disturbance caused by modern services, the excavation provided further information regarding the construction of the East Wing and the nature of the deposits within the stable yard.
- 7.2 A ridge in the natural bedrock (**1000**) was present at the west end of the trench, within the East Wing passage. There was a break-of-slope below the lean-to structure, then the bedrock sloped east across the yard, below the depth of the excavation.
- 7.3 Two walls of heavily mortared sandstone masonry (**1001** and **1002**), measuring 1m wide and set c.2m apart, were identified forming a continuous foundation course running uninterrupted beneath the doors of the East Wing passage (Plate 3).
- 7.4 The wall footings were each two-courses high, standing to c.0.25m, and bedded on a heavily compacted layer of crushed sandstone mixed with small clay lenses (**1008**). This material also filled the gap between the two walls, where the deposit was up to 25cm thick. Equivalentents to both of these features were recorded in association with the south passage during the May 2019 excavations in the stable yard – wall footings **66** and levelling deposit **196** (NAA 2021, 122–5).



Plate 3: wall footings 1001 and 1002 in the East Wing north passage, with modern electrical cabling on the left of the photograph.

- 7.5 A self-levelling concrete deposit (1003), up to 0.12m deep, had been poured directly onto the exposed surface of 1008 and wall footings. The precise date of this intervention is unknown but it was clearly modern. No trace of a stone flagged floor within the passage survived.
- 7.6 To the east of the lean-to structure, the trench continued for 6m across the stable yard, where a marked difference in the nature and depth of the deposits was observed. At the west end of this section, the natural sandstone was visible at a depth of almost 0.50m below the present yard surface and overlain by a light grey coarse gravelly deposit, with bands of ash and lenses of dark cream sandy clay (1007). This could constitute an episode of ground levelling and consolidation outside the East Wing pre-dating the formalisation of the stable yard.
- 7.7 In the areas of the trench that lay outside the intrusion of modern services, a thick interleaving deposit of coarse purple ash (1006) had accumulated to a depth of c.0.30m

(Plate 5). Visible striations within this deposit suggest a continuous process of ash dumping and levelling within the yard. Both deposits **1006** and **1007** included no datable finds, perhaps suggesting deliberate dumping of a suitable material rather than domestic refuse.

7.8 No clearly defined horizon existed between deposit **1006** and the garden topsoil (**1005**), possibly indicating the continuation of the ash dumping during the formation of topsoil across the yard.

7.9 In the east half of the trench, modern services (**1004**) had truncated all stratigraphic deposits to a significant depth over a large area of the stable yard. The complexity of this caused major problems to the contractor during the excavation of the trench: in order to achieve the required depth for the electrical ducting, a broken foul-water drain had to be realigned and replaced.



*Plate 4: ash deposit **1006** with crushed sandstone gravel **1007** visible in the base of trench.*



Plate 5: deposits in the stable yard after removal of disturbed modern deposits, with natural sandstone visible beneath the lean-to wall, looking west.

8.0 THE FINDS

8.1 No significant finds pre-dating the modern era were recovered from the stratified deposits during excavation.

9.0 DISCUSSION

9.1 Excavation of the trench within the East Wing north passage and lean-to replicated the findings in the south passage during previous works conducted as part of The Curtain Rises project (NAA 2021).

9.2 Prior to the construction of the East Wing, topsoil appears to have been removed across the area, presumably to provide a sound surface from which to build. A degree of levelling was then conducted in some areas to accommodate the natural slope in the bedrock at the top of the rise. The foundations of the building were then laid as a continuous feature, spanning across the passage openings. The foundation walls were c.1m wide and 0.25–30m high, constructed on top of a compacted layer of crushed sandstone set above the natural sandstone bedrock.

- 9.3 The two foundation walls (**1002** and **1004**) were set c.2m apart, corresponding with the width of the north to south stair passage between the East Wing and Carriage House. The area between the two walls was infilled with the same crushed sandstone to form a compact surface, indicating the stair passage most likely formed part of the original layout of the wing.
- 9.4 No trace of a flagged floor within the passage was found. This may have been removed prior to the laying of the modern concrete flooring, probably in the later 20th century. Alternatively, given the area led into the former riding house, the compact surface may have been overlaid with sand to protect the unshod hoofs of the Haute école horses.
- 9.5 Within the area of the stable yard, the trench provided information regarding the topology of the underlying geology and, although the western end of the trench had been severely disturbed by modern truncation, indicated the likely depth of stratigraphic deposits within the courtyard. In this area, the natural bedrock was directly overlaid by a deposit of crushed sandstone, clay and gravel that had been deposited to form a hard surface. It is uncertain whether this deposit pre-dated the construction of the stable yard, although the similarity with the foundation deposits found across the Hall complex suggest landscaping at the time of the East Wing' construction (NAA 2021).
- 9.6 Ash and fire waste had been tipped into the interior of the yard over an extended period, evidenced by the striations and the indistinct boundary between this deposit and the overlying topsoil. Within the extents of the cable trench, this deposit was over 0.35m deep.

10.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 10.1 The full archive from the archaeological investigations, including paperwork, drawings, photographs, and digital data, will be deposited with the National Trust as part of The Curtain Rises archive. Copies of the digital data will also be archived with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and the report uploaded onto OASIS.

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APPENDIX A

CONTEXT CATALOGUE

Context	Interpretative description	Type	Area
1000	natural bedrock	geological	service trench
1001	foundation wall	structure	service trench
1002	foundation wall	structure	service trench
1003	modern concrete	surface	service trench
1004	modern services	structure	service trench
1005	garden topsoil	deposit	service trench
1006	interleaved coarse purple ash	deposit	service trench
1007	light grey coarse gravel with bands of ash and lenses of dark creamy clay	deposit	service trench
1008	compact crushed sands, mixed with clay lenses	fill/surface	service trench