

Archaeological Test Trench Report

Apartment 39, Hampton Court Palace.



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Site Code: HCP 142

1	The Location and Scope of Work.....	2
2	Historical Background.....	2
3	Description of trial trenching.....	2
4	<i>Archive, Artefacts and Ecofacts</i>	3
5	Recommendations	3
6	Illustrations	4
7	Appendix I	7
8	Appendix II.....	8
9	Bibliography	9

1 The Location and Scope of Work

- 1.1 A small test trench was excavated in the Apartment 39 garden at Hampton Court Palace adjacent to the south-facing elevation of room number GF025. The excavation was undertaken at the beginning of February and recorded on the 10th February 2016. The purpose of this trial trench was to determine the extent of the foundation and the type of bedding material upon which the wall of this building lies. The works were centred on National Grid Reference TQ 15615 68422.
- 1.2 The site code assigned to this project was HCP 142.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1 Hampton Court Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Surrey No. 83). The palace, gardens and grounds form an archaeological and historical site of national importance. The historical background to Hampton Court is well documented and will not be repeated here.

2.2 *Brief historical background of the southern wing of the West Front*

The construction of base Court in 1522, west of Daubeney's building, created the grand gatehouse as we know it today, minus the top two storeys that were demolished in the 18th century. The southern and northern wings, however, were added later in the 16th century. The northern wing of the palace was constructed by Henry VIII between 1529–1530. This new range contained kitchens and offices lying immediately to the north of Base Court and extending 24 m beyond the west front. This would have produced a lopsided appearance to a previously symmetrical palace, as it was not until Anne Boleyn's era that the Southern Wing was built. Given the six-year gap between the construction of the two wings, it would seem that a balanced appearance was not of paramount concern, although this may seem strange by modern-day standards.

The Southern Wing was thus built between 1535-1536, and was used to contain a number of new lodgings as well as the palace's public latrine, which later in Elizabethan times became known as the '*great house of easement*'. The left hand block of the south facing elevation situated in the South West Gardens, was also built in the 16th century and served as out buildings, whilst the central linking wall contains fragments of a possible 16th century boundary wall. The structure against which the test trench was excavated is a 17th century addition.

3 Description of trial trenching

- 3.1 The trial trench was positioned directly adjacent to the south-facing elevation of room GF025, 2.2m east of the western corner of the far eastern block. This small sondage measured 0.9 m x 0.6 m and had a maximum depth of 0.6 m. Nine separate contexts were observed within the trench.

Context (1) was the main construction of the brick wall. No foundation was identified beneath and the current ground level obscures a mere two courses of bricks (Fig. 1). As the focus of the report is the below ground archaeology the main structure of the wall has not been split into separate contexts. For a fuller analysis of the wall see appendix II.

- 3.2 At ground level there was a crude 0.24 m thick 'flashing' like element **Context (6)** (Fig. 2) composed of rough-looking header bricks and thick mortar. This feature curiously did not extend across the whole length of the wall but ran over a length of 1.35 m. The

mortar is composed of coarse gravelly concrete, indicating that this particular feature of the wall may be a later addition, repair or an attempt at redirecting rainwater away from the building? It had been thought that it may have been related to a culvert structure, but viewed from this small trench it is difficult to tell though seems unlikely. Below this level are two courses of brick at the bottom of which is a thin layer of sandy gravelly concrete mortar measuring between 0.02 m and 0.06 m **Context (7)**

- 3.3 **Context (2)** was a soft beige sandy deposit with frequent fragments of CBM and signs of bioturbation directly below the third course of this elevation on the western side of the trench. The first two courses of brick seem to have broken away or have been deliberately removed. Interpretation of this feature is difficult, it may relate to the placement of a small drainage structure or simply damage caused to the building by unknown previous activity.
- 3.4 **Context (3)** was a substantial layer of compact, silty sandy coarse gravels containing small angular stones and occasional fragments of CBM. It seems to lie within a foundation cut (5) and may represent the founding level upon which the wall was built. The compact gravels make a fairly solid base for the structure, but are not necessarily stable. The lack of a foundation is nonetheless curious and is likely a contributing factor to the current poor level of stability in the wall structure.
- 3.5 **Context (5)** was the theoretical cut in which lie the gravels (3). It was not possible to identify any specifics about the nature of this cut and further excavation is needed to confirm its existence.
- 3.6 **Context (4)** is cut by (5) and represents a layer of friable dark grey loam containing frequent small stones and a high level of bioturbation though no signs of any anthropic material.
- 3.7 Lastly, **Context (8)** is the installation cut for the modern pipe running through the trench (**Context 9**), which has a width of 0.03 m.

4 *Archive, Artefacts and Ecofacts*

- 4.1 No finds were uncovered in this trench. No environmental samples were taken.

The paper archive comprises of the context register, context records, photographic register, 1:20 plan and section.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 In order to have a better understanding of the construction history and foundation of the wall it would be helpful to widen the current trench along the length of the elevation. This should help determine what function the “flashing” is serving and will clarify whether the lack of foundation courses is a consistent feature along the whole length of this elevation.

Illustrations

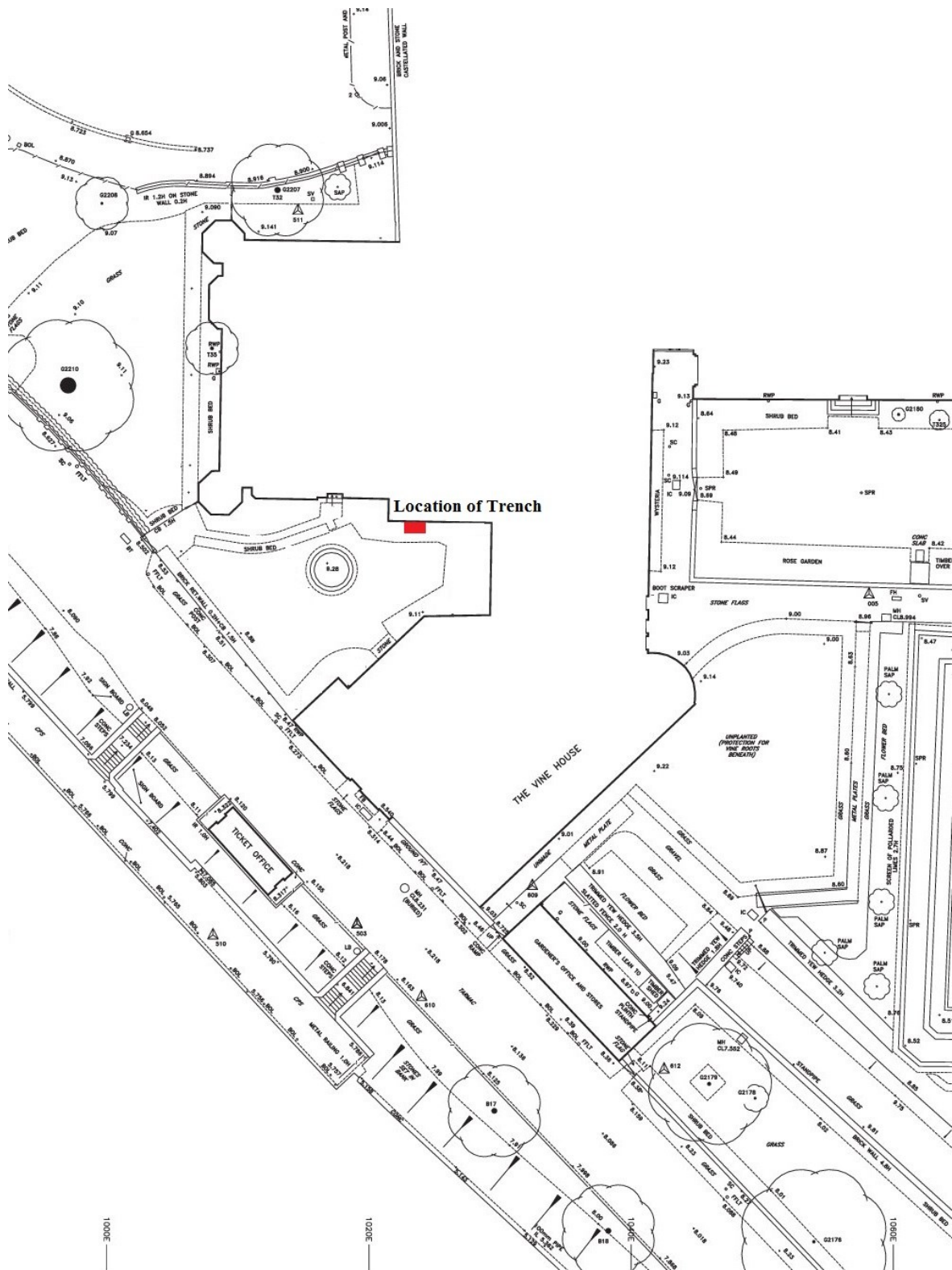


Figure 1: Location of trench 1



Figure 2: South-facing section showing the wall construction



Figure 3: Location of Trench 1



Figure 2: View of the concrete flashing (6) observed along the bottom of part of the south-facing elevation (1).

7 Appendix I

Context Register

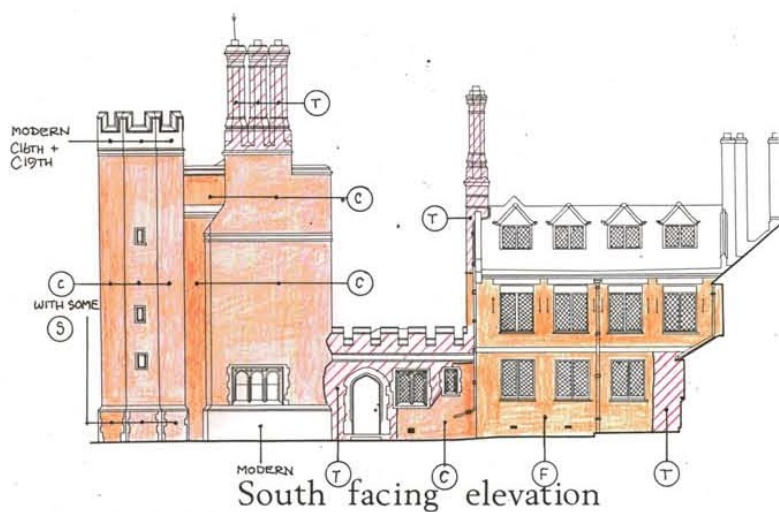
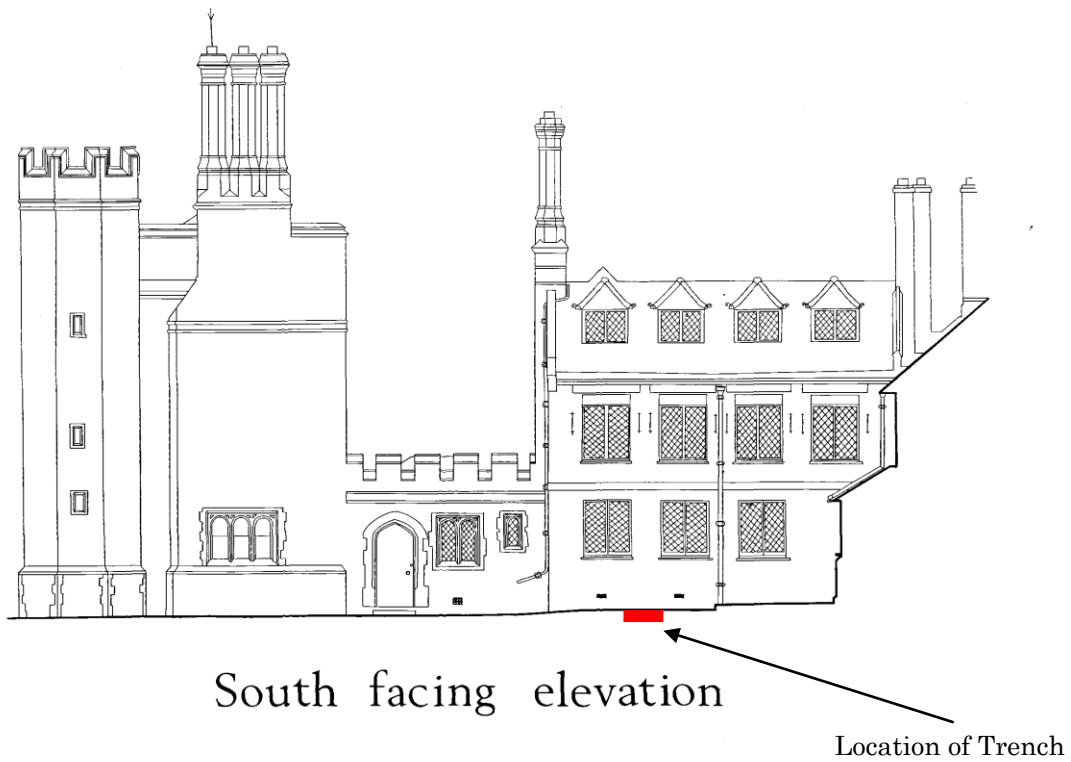
Context	Type	Description	Levels
1	Masonry	Brick elevation south facing	At base: 8.87 m
2	Deposit	Sandy layer	Top: 9 m Bottom: 8.84 m
3	Fill	Gravelly foundation bedding	Top: 8.82 m
4	Layer	Friable loamy deposit	Top: 8.44 m
5	Cut	Cut for foundation level of (1)	Top: 8.82 m

Photographic Register:

Shot Number	Description	View	Scale
001	South-facing elevation of the West Front/South Wing	N	0.4 m
002	Detail of contexts (1), (2), (3)	N	0.4 m
003	Detail of concrete/brick skirting	NW	N/A
004	Detail of concrete/brick skirting	NW	N/A
005	General View of the south-facing elevation	N	N/A
006	General View of the south-facing elevation	NE	N/A
007	General view of the west-facing elevation	E	N/A
008	Trench 1	N	0.3 m
009	Trench 1	N	0.3 m
010	Trench 1	N	0.3 m
011	Detail of trench 1	N	0.3 m
012	Detail of trench 1	N	0.5 m
013	South-facing elevation	N	0.5 m

8 Appendix II

Daphne Ford's south facing elevation of the West Front South Wing.



THE BLOCK AT LEFT IS C16TH HENRICIAN.
THE CENTRE LINKING WALL CONTAINS FRAGMENTS OF A POSSIBLE C16TH BOUNDARY WALL.
THE BLOCK AT RIGHT PRE-DATES KNYFFS 1708 VIEW AND IS A C17TH ADDITION.

9 Bibliography

Worsley, L and Souden, D. Hampton Court Palace The Official Illustrated History, Merrell, London.

Thurley, S, 2003 Hampton Court Palace, A Social and Architectural History, London.