

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/251

**Gothic House and Merton House, Church Street,
Clare, Suffolk**

Site code: CLA 060

HER Information

Planning Application No: SE/09/0539

Date of Fieldwork: 01 September 2009

Grid Reference: TL 7703 4551

Funding Body: Mr. Becher

Curatorial Officer: Keith Wade

Project Officer: Kieron Heard

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-63904

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

CLA 060, Gothic House and Merton House, Church Street, Clare: An archaeological monitoring was carried out in advance of the construction of a garden wall and a summerhouse. It revealed a vertical sequence of topsoil, made ground and turf. No archaeological deposits or features were found but six unstratified sherds of medieval greyware pottery (late 12–14th century) were recovered from the spoil heap.

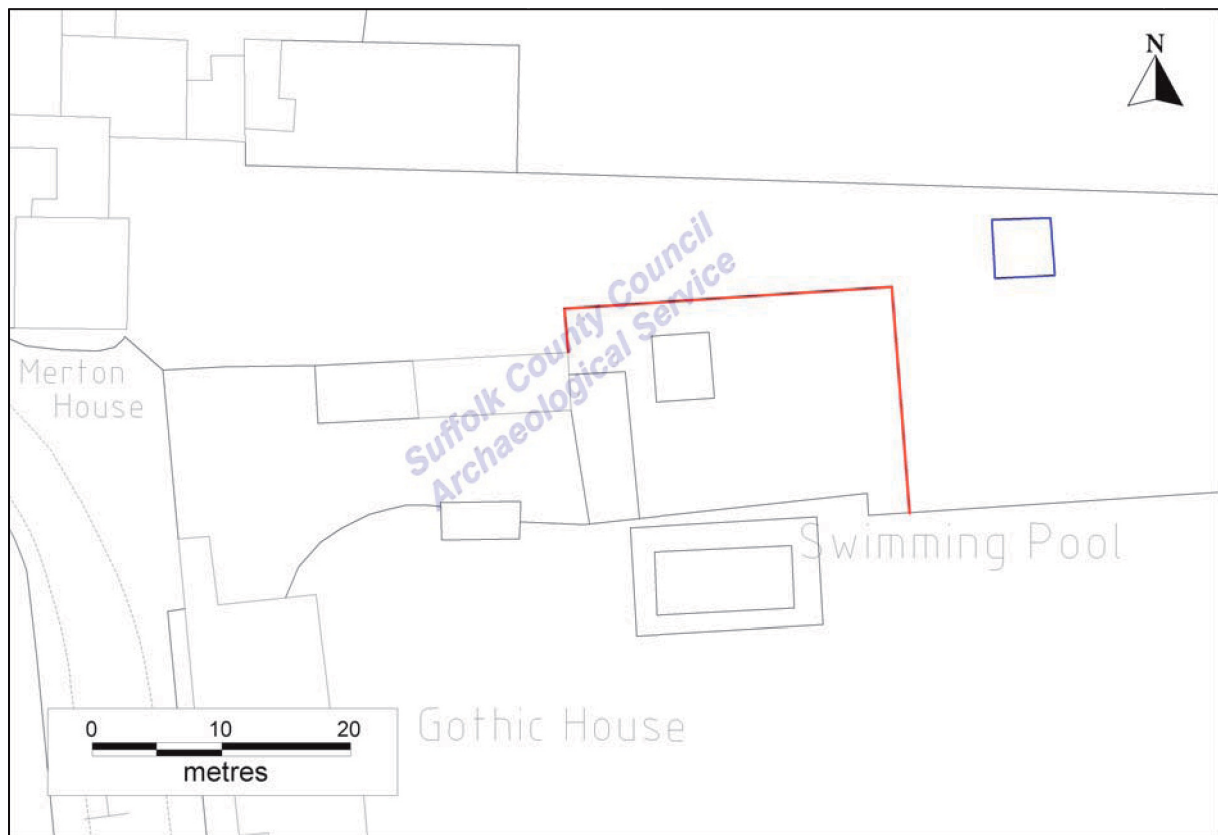
An archaeological monitoring was carried out at Gothic House and Merton House, Church Street, Clare (Fig. 1) in accordance with an archaeological condition relating to planning permission for the construction of a garden wall between the properties and a summerhouse in the grounds of Merton House (planning application number SE/09/0539). The monitoring was commissioned and funded by the owner, Mr Becher.



Figure 1. Location map showing the approximate site of the monitoring

The writer visited the site after the trench for the strip foundation of the proposed garden wall had been excavated and the area of the proposed summerhouse had been de-turfed. The foundation trench measured 46.4m long x 0.50m wide x 0.50m deep. The area de-turfed for the casting of a raft for the proposed summerhouse measured 4.50 x 4.50m (Fig. 2).

Written records were made in a field notebook and all salient details have been reproduced in this report. A digital photographic record was made and is included here. A metal detector was used to scan the excavated soil, with negative results.



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Figure 2. Plan showing the foundation trench for the proposed garden wall (red) and the area of the proposed summerhouse (blue)

2. Results

The monitoring of the foundation trench revealed a straightforward vertical sequence of compacted topsoil, made ground and turf, as summarised in the table below. No archaeological deposits or features were observed and geological strata were not

encountered. Six fragments of medieval pottery (total weight 53g) were recovered from the spoil heap, having probably been incorporated in the topsoil. They are all wheel-thrown greywares dating to the late 12th–14th centuries (Richenda Goffin, *pers comm*).

Deposit	Depth below G.L
Turf	0.00m
Made ground: A dumped layer of soil, crushed mortar and chalk containing moderate small to medium fragments of red brick and roof tile extended the length of the trench	0.10m
Topsoil: Firm, mid brownish grey clayey loam containing frequent chalk flecks, moderate pebbles, and occasional small fragments of coal, mortar, brick, tile, 19th-century pottery, clay tobacco pipe stem, bone and oyster shell	0.30m

Table 1. Deposit summary

In the area of the proposed summerhouse de-turfing had exposed the surface of the topsoil (as described in the table above), this being the formation level for the concrete raft.



Figure 3. General view of the monitored area, looking east



Figure 4. Typical section in the foundation trench, looking north

3. Conclusion

The archaeological monitoring has revealed 0.20m of post-medieval made ground over compacted topsoil. The made ground incorporates much building material and probably dates to the time of the construction of the adjacent barns and outbuildings. The topsoil is likely to be of medieval and later date.

The small and abraded fragments of medieval pottery that were recovered from the spoil heap are of little significance, given the location of the site within the Clare's medieval core.

In view of these limited results it is anticipated that no further fieldwork will be required on this site in relation to the current development. This document will be disseminated as a 'grey literature' report *via* the OASIS on-line archaeological database and a summary will appear in the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History.

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Appendix: Brief and Specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

GOTHIC HOUSE & MERTON HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, CLARE

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a garden wall between Gothic House and Merton House, and a summer house at Merton House, has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (SE/09/0539). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance defined for medieval Clare in the County Historic Environment Record, and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As strip foundations are proposed for the wall, and a raft for the summer house, there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.
- 1.4 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for the medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and timetable.

- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity should be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed should be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.
- 4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.
- 4.7 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P L and Wiltshire, P E J, 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 4.8 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

5. **Report Requirements**

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County HER if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the

archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Historic Environment Record sheets should be completed, as per the county manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 If archaeological features or finds are found an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 3 July 2009

Reference: Gothic House/Merton House, Church St

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.