

## **Aviary Wall Monitoring, Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds BSE 334**

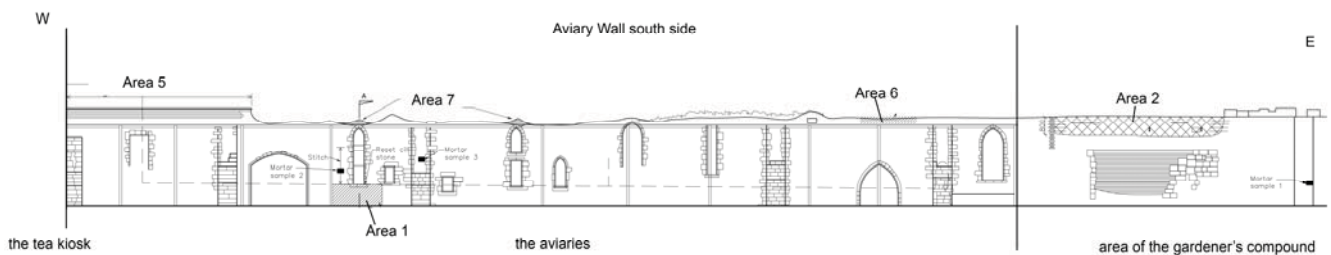
**SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/158**

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### **Introduction**

Repair works to the fabric of the Aviary wall, part of a service range within the precinct of the medieval Abbey of St Edmund were necessitated by localised failures of the wall surface. The wall is part of the designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (Suffolk Monument 2) and the repairs were monitored as part of a programme of archaeological work that was a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent. A description and analysis of the wall is included in the survey report (SCCAS Report no 2009/237) produced prior to the commencement of the repair phase and this document is an addendum to that original work.

The repair schedule was divided into seven numbered phases by the architects The Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP and this numbering system has been used in the report. The building contractors were F.A. Valiants & Son Ltd. whose staff were co-operative and gave notice of the work schedule diligently. The monitoring was undertaken between February and April 2010.



Location of repair site drawing and photograph supplied by Whitworth co-partnership

## Summary of results

### Area 1 Base of the aviary wall north and south faces.

The repairs to the base of the aviary wall involved the underpinning of the east side of the window reveal on the north elevation and the replacement of the lower wall face on the opposing south elevation. The underpinning on the north side consisted of casting a limecrete block beneath the overhang of masonry the whole of operation was completed within the depth of post medieval soil build up as identified during the test pit excavations and yielded no additional archaeological information.

At the base of the south elevation a row of paving slabs were set into the ground 150mm below the existing ground surface. The slabs were laid, in advance of the south wall face repairs, to provide a stable base off which the new work could be built. At this depth the slabs were laid still with the build up of post-medieval soil which has occurred in front of the aviary wall and above the level of the medieval ground surface.



Area 1 Paving slabs at the base of the south side of the wall prior to the breaking out of the face and underpinning of the north face reveal

The bulging flint face at the base of the wall was removed directly below the lancet, the stone sills of window had become mis-aligned as a result of the wall failure but these were left in place. The south face of the wall at this point along the wall opposes a deep, full length, reveal on the north side and the wall is only the depth of the stone sill thick. The removal of the face and the resulted in the wall being breached completely exposing the banked soil behind it. This soil was part re-excavated to allow the wall to be reconstructed/underpinned, this was completed in effect in reverse working from the north face back to the south.

To the west of the lancet the exposed core material was bonded with a modern, very hard concrete-based mortar, the mortar was a close colour match with the medieval material and was difficult to distinguish visually from the original. This is the reverse of the reconstructed west reveal on the north side; the overhanging piece of masonry that was underpinned during the first stage of work, and confirms that the bottom of the window reveal on the north side is a post medieval rebuild. Eroded medieval core was observed behind the face at the very base of the excavation.



Lime mortar - medieval fabric



Modern repair, core of the north side reveal



Area 1 south face repair below the lancet window

### Area 2 Gardener's compound

*Remove existing flint fabric at the top of the wall and rebuild*

The area of repair at the head of the wall within the gardener's compound was entirely within an area of post medieval infill built during the late 18th or early 19th century when the wall was heightened. The wall was reduced by approximately 800mm removing the existing loose and leaning flintwork before being replaced like for like; no original fabric was impacted upon.



Area 2 Gardener's compound, wall head repaired.

### **Area 3 and 4**

#### *Patching of the wall face west of the tea rooms*

Two areas of localised failure of south wall face were patched to the west of the tea rooms. Here the wall is constructed in two distinct phases the lower half of the wall built in re-used limestone block and soft red brick the upper in flint and brick. The division between the two coincides with the top of the short buttresses which support this section of wall. The bricks, in size and character, are common to both upper and lower parts of the wall, these date to the late 18th/ early 19th century and suggest that the two halves are broadly contemporaneous and a post-medieval reconstruction. The two holes in the wall face were observed prior to repair, the brick header extended into the core and the core mortar indistinguishable from the face work and demonstrate that the wall top, at least, is not based on a medieval core.



Post medieval wall core area 4, area 3 after repair

### **Area 5**

#### *Replace brick capping top of the wall east of tea rooms*

This involved the like for like replacement of the 20th century brick work at the head the aviary wall adjacent to and east of the tea rooms.

### **Area 6**

#### *Consolidation of the wall top*

The wall head in area 6 was consolidated and the wall head given a rounded profile to shed the weather. Blocks of masonry which were set in the top of the wall, in the style of battlements, during the previous repair campaign were maintained. The monitoring archaeologist was unable to visit the site during the work and it was only recorded after the work was completed.



Wall head repairs area 6

**Area 7***Re-capping with flint over the head of lancet window*

A cap of bonded flint racking was constructed over the top of the lancet windows, prior to this work the prior to the work the stone window head projected above the general top of the wall.

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