

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Myddylton House, Myddylton Place, Saffron Walden, Essex**

NGR: TL 53557 38580

Prepared for Donald Purkiss Associates



**ASE Project No: 8309
ASE Report No: 2015246
Site Code: SW65**

July 2015

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Donald Purkiss Associates to conduct an archaeological watching brief at the rear of Myddylton House, Saffron Walden during extension works.

The house is a Grade II Listed Building dating from the mid-16th century, with additions of the early 18th century and re-fronted in the early/mid-19th century.

The watching brief on construction groundworks recorded several features representing at least three phases of occupation of the site, from the 12th century to the 18th century, including pits, levelling layers, a brick-built oven, a flint and mortar wall and a brick-lined well.

Two, possibly three, medieval pits were identified, perhaps associated with rubbish and cess disposal to the rear of a precursor of the present house. A fragment of undated flint and mortar wall foundation found close to its southwest corner may in fact be part of such a building.

A brick-built oven, partially exposed within a soakaway pit further to the west of the house was 15th-17th century in date and therefore likely to be contemporary with its early use.

A 17th-18th century brick-lined well was found just west of the current kitchen and was presumably the principal water source for the later occupation of the house.

Relatively late and substantial layers of yellowish silty clay and chalk alongside the rear of the house constitute levelling and landscaping of the sloping garden.

Modern spreads of demolition rubble and some limited disturbance by services were also encountered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Donald Purkiss Associates to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for extensions to Myddylton House, Myddylton Place, Saffron Walden, CB10 1BB – a Listed Building (Figure 1, NGR TL 53557 38580).

1.1.2 The property lies within the historic core of Saffron Walden town and is accessed from Myddylton Place (Figure 1). The extensions will occupy what is currently the rear garden to the property.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology is Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) formed in the Cretaceous Period. No superficial deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/>).

1.2.2 The site lies at approximately 50m AOD, on the south-western slope of a chalk spur, the top of which is Bury Hill. The garden occupies a slight west-facing slope (Figure 3).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was sought in 2014 for a single storey extension to the rear of the property to create a garden room and new kitchen (Planning Ref: UTT/14/2937/HHF). A new soakaway and drains were also required (Figure 2).

1.3.2 Consent was granted with an archaeological condition attached due to the site's location within a highly sensitive area highlighted by the Historic Environment Record (HER). A brief was issued by ECC Place Services – the Historic Environment Advisors to Uttlesford District Council - for a watching brief including the analysis, publication and dissemination of the results (Havis 2014). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the local planning authority (ASE 2015).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aims of the watching brief were:

- To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site.
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site area and to preserve by record any such remains
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains

- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits
- To make public the results of the work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions

1.4.2 Specific aims of the project were:

- To uncover earlier phases of the present building
- To gain information relating to the development of the town

1.4.3 In the case of significant archaeological remains being encountered, the report was to place the archaeological remains found in the context of any appropriate research objectives, with particular reference to those identified in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Observation of sewer trenches in 1911-1913 located three apparently parallel adjacent ditches under the south arm of Myddylton Place at TL 536385 (EHER 513). Some of these, and another three ditches some 55m to the south (HER 0514), may be associated with prehistoric, possibly Iron Age, occupation of the Bury Hill promontory (where the castle is now located). They may be related somehow to Ring Hill Camp which is located to the west, in Littlebury parish, at TL 515382 (Bassett 1982, 5, 109).
- 2.2 There is evidence for Roman occupation in Saffron Walden and the closest find of this date is a coin of Constantinian which was found in the garden of Walden Place, to the south of the site (EHER 470).
- 2.3 The site lies within the medieval core of Saffron Walden (EHER 408), within the area that was enclosed by defences at the time of the construction of the castle in the mid-12th century. Myddylton House lies within the area that was built up by the 12th or early 13th century, being just inside the presumed line of the ditch to the outer bailey of the castle. The northern, southern and eastern courses of the castle's outer bailey ditch have been recorded at the rear of 63A Castle Street (Ennis 2011, 98-106), at Market Place and Barnards Yard (Bassett 1982, 19 and 64-66) and at Castle Hill House (Bassett 1982, 6203) respectively. The western limits of the castle's outer bailey ditch have not been fixed but have been deduced from the street pattern in that area; i.e. the curved lines of Freshwell Street and Myddylton Place mirror the ditch, indicating that that it probably lies somewhere between the two (Medlycott 1998, 13; Bassett 1982, 19).
- 2.4 Excavations in the enclosed medieval town have established the presence of below-ground features and deposits dating to this period, including structures, pits and property boundaries (Medlycott 1998, 38), and it is suspected that such remains may survive at this site. So far, however, only one below-ground archaeological investigation has taken place in the near vicinity. This was a watching brief undertaken on the construction of a single house to the rear of Myddleton House (EHER 13945). The foundation trenches cut the natural subsoil, the topsoil being approximately 0.25m in depth. All trenches were examined but only one feature, a single pit with dark grey fill containing occasional fragments of post-medieval pottery, was visible (Havis 1993).
- 2.5 Several late medieval and post-medieval buildings survive along Myddylton Place. Myddylton House itself is a Grade II Listed Building (EHER 27157; English Heritage Building ID 370699). The listing description describes it as a large three storey house of mid-16th century date, with additions of the early 18th century and re-fronted in the early/mid-19th century. It is timber framed with gault brick slate and peg tile roofs and of rectangular plan with five bays. The interior has a large fireplace bearing an inscription, possibly 1534, and there is also 16th, 17th and 18th-century panelling as recorded by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/>-consulted 21/4/15).
- 2.6 The garages to Myddylton House (EHER 27158) are also Grade II listed, being 17th/18th century timber framed outbuildings.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Stripping of topsoil and modern overburden to the desired construction level was carried out by a mini-digger with a toothless bucket. Strip foundations were dug using a toothed bucket. The foundation trenches were dug to 0.6m width and minimum 1.1m depth. The base and sides of all trenches were inspected for the presence of archaeological remains. Where features were observed in section they were cleaned by hand.
- 3.1.2 Archaeological features and deposits were drawn, photographed and recorded on pro-forma context record sheets to accepted professional standards.
- 3.1.3 Finds were retrieved and bagged on-site according to context and retained for processing and study.
- 3.1.4 Work was carried out in accordance with the ClfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) Code of Conduct, by-laws and guidelines (ClfA 2014a, b and c) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 At the commencement of the fieldwork the site code (SW65) was obtained from ECC Place Services. This code will be used as the unique site identifier for all records. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited in Saffron Walden Museum in due course. The contents of the archive for the watching brief are tabulated below (Table 1).

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Number of Contexts | 28 |
| No. of files/paper record | One small file |
| Plan and sections sheets | 5 |
| Bulk Samples | n/a |
| Photographs | 33 |
| Bulk finds | 1 box |
| Registered finds | 1 |
| Environmental flots/residue | n/a |

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Garden Room extension

- 4.1.1 Preliminary groundworks involved the stripping of topsoil and modern overburden at the rear of the house, prior to excavating foundation trenches for the new garden room. An area 6m x 5m was stripped of up to 350mm thickness of material, using a toothless bucket. This material consisted of topsoil [001] sealing and the top of a deposit of modern brick, mortar rubble and roof slate [002] – presumably make-up or demolition material. The rubble possibly indicates there may have been a previous structure in this location, perhaps simply a patio?
- 4.1.2 Foundation trenches were subsequently dug for the garden room, mainly using a toothed bucket. The foundations were 0.6m wide and 1m deep from the reduced ground level. A 300mm thick layer of rubble-rich deposit [002] sealed a layer of mixed chalky silt [003] containing peg tiles, and glass dated 1650-1850. This chalky layer was observed in the northern and western foundation trenches and was between 0.1m and 0.25m thick. In the southern trench it was absent, perhaps as a result of modern truncation. It is interpreted as a post-medieval levelling layer deposited on the slope to create a level platform at the rear of house (Figure 2 and Figure 3, section 1). This layer sealed chalk natural [004] and an infilled pit [006] (see below).
- 4.1.3 Within the garden room foundation trenches three pits were recorded – [006], [009] and [013]. Pit [006] was observed within the western foundation trench where it was established to be more than 2.6m wide and 0.5m deep (Figure 3: Section 1). It continued into the southern trench but was disturbed in that location by modern service pipes, making its extent here unclear. Peg tile in the lower fill was the only artefactual material present. The pit was sealed by post-medieval levelling layer [003]. Its function is unclear; it does not appear to be a rubbish pit and its shallow sloping sides would be unconventional for a chalk extraction pit.
- 4.1.4 Pits [009] and [013] were adjacent to each other in the southern foundation trench (Figure 3: Section 2). 0.75m-diameter pit [009] contained much animal bone, peg tile, a quantity of 12th-mid 13th century pottery and a fragment of rotary grindstone. The feature's straight sides and the green hue to its single fill indicate a pit dug for the disposal of cess and rubbish. Pit [013] was much smaller and contained fewer finds in its fill – two sherds of late medieval or early post-medieval ware, plus a piece of tile medieval and a fragment of post-medieval pantile. Both pits were sealed by modern building rubble.
- 4.1.5 Additionally, in the southern foundation trench to the garden room, but on the opposite side of the trench to pits [009] and [013], a brick-lined domed well [011] was partially exposed. The brick from this structure has been identified as 17th-18th century in date, making the well contemporary with the later phase of the present Myddylton House.
- 4.1.6 The area for the new garden room was crossed by two ceramic pipes – a water pipe and a foul drain.

| Context | Type | Description | Max. Length | Max. Width | Depth/ Thickness |
|---------|-----------|--|-------------|------------|------------------|
| 001 | Layer | Topsoil- modern | 6m+ | 5m+ | 0.3 - 0.35m |
| 002 | Layer | Rubble. Light brown sandy silt with brick rubble, slate and mortar. Modern | 6m+ | 5m+ | 0.30m |
| 003 | Layer | Yellow silty clay and chalk (re-deposited boulder clay?) mixed with loose brown sandy silt. Peg tile and post-medieval glass. Levelling layer | 6m+ | 5m+ | 0.1 - 0.25m |
| 004 | Layer | Natural deposit. Soft crumbly chalk and flint nodules. All features were cut into the chalk | 6m+ | 5m+ | 0.55m+ |
| 005 | Layer | Same as [003] | | | |
| 006 | Cut | Pit. Medieval or post-medieval | 2.6m+ | 0.6m+ | 0.6m+ |
| 007 | Fill | Lower fill of [006]. Light yellow silty clay with frequent chalk flecks and lumps. Inc.an organic lens. Contains peg tile | 1.4m+ | 0.6m+ | 0.2m+ |
| 008 | Fill | Upper fill of [006]. Similar to [007] but chalkier and without any peg tile | 2.6m+ | 0.6m+ | 0.5m |
| 009 | Cut | Straight-sided pit Sealed by modern rubble. Medieval | 0.75m | 0.75m | 0.6m |
| 010 | Fill | Single fill of [009]. Grey silty clay, chalk frags, flecks of green (cess?) and charcoal. Contains peg tile, animal bone, medieval pottery and a rotary grindstone frag. | 0.75m | 0.75m | 0.6m |
| 011 | Structure | Brick-lined domed well. Unknown depth. 17th-18th century bricks | 1.25m | 1.25m | unknown |
| 012 | Cut | Cut for well structure [011] | 1.25m | 1.25m | unknown |
| 013 | Cut | Cut of small pit next to [009]. Post-medieval | 0.45m | 0.45m | 0.4m |
| 014 | Fill | Single fill of [013]. Grey silty clay. Less chalky than [010]. Contains post-medieval material | 0.45m | 0.45m | 0.4m |

Table 2: List of recorded contexts from the area of the new garden room

4.2 Foundation trenches for new kitchen

4.2.1 The extension for the new kitchen is located in the angle of the garage and the existing kitchen and adjoins the extension for the new garden room. The ground level here is higher than the area of the garden room extension, partly due to the natural gradient and partly to the presence of nearly 0.4m

of modern demolition rubble. The foundation trenches were approximately 1.5m deep and were 0.6m wide. Topsoil was not present and neither was the chalky levelling layer [003] that was observed in the garden room foundation trenches.

- 4.2.2 In the western foundation trench for the new kitchen, a pit [015] was exposed which had a very similar cassy fill to pit [009] and also contained 12th-13th century pottery and some animal bone. Unfortunately there was no time to record this feature in detail prior to concreting.
- 4.2.3 In the southern foundation trench, where it met the garage, flint wall foundation [026], with a loose bonding of mortar, was exposed. The top of the wall was approximately 1m below reduced ground level and 1.6m below the floor level of the garage. It was 0.5m wide and 0.2m thick and followed a north-west to south-east alignment. Its continuation was not seen in the garden room trenches, nor was a return in evidence elsewhere.
- 4.2.4 The wall appeared to have been cut by a pit, [027], with a chalky fill (Figure 2). Oyster shell and medieval pottery was found by the groundworks contractor in the vicinity of this pit but, as these finds could not be definitely assigned to a context, they were not kept. The pit's eastern edges were clear. However, its western extent had been destroyed by modern disturbance. The top of the pit was cut by a modern ceramic drain and under the drain was much animal bone, peg tile and glass. This material appeared to be part of the fill of the drain cut rather than the pit and was therefore not kept.
- 4.2.5 No features or archaeological deposits were recorded within the remainder of the southern foundation trench; modern disturbance being in evidence down to the level of the natural chalk.

| Context | Type | Description | Max. Length | Max. Width | Depth/ Thickness |
|---------|---------|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 004 | Layer | Natural deposit. Soft crumbly chalk with flint nodules. All features were cut into this | Site extent | Site extent | Variable |
| 015 | Cut | Straight-sided pit. Medieval | 0.75m | 0.75m | 1.0m? |
| 016 | Fill | Fill of [015]. Greyish greenish. Animal bone and medieval pottery | 0.75m | 0.75m | 1.0m? |
| 025 | Cut | Cut for wall [026] | 1.25m+ | 0.5m | 0.2m |
| 026 | Masonry | Flint and mortar wall, undated | 1.25m+ | 0.5m | 0.2m |
| 027 | Cut | Pit, possibly cutting wall [026]. Undated, possibly medieval? | unknown | unknown | 0.9m |
| 028 | Fill | Chalky fill of [027] | unknown | unknown | 0.9m |

Table 3: List of recorded contexts from the foundations for the new kitchen

4.3 Soakaway trench

- 4.3.1 A 2.7m-long soakaway, between 1.2m-1.3m wide and 1.1m deep, was excavated in the lawn, downslope of the new garden room and approximately 15m west of the house. Turf and 0.27m of topsoil [001] sealed a 0.35m-thick layer of chalky subsoil [024] containing a few fragments of ceramic building material (Figure 2 and Figure 3: Section 3). Subsoil [024] sealed natural chalk [004] over the majority of the trench. However, at the eastern end, at 0.97m below ground level, a brick-built oven [017] was encountered.
- 4.3.2 Only part of oven [017] was exposed within the trench, but from what was visible it was at least 1.44m long, with the flue end being to the north and an oval cooking chamber to the south – presumably once domed. The southern end was excavated sufficiently within the confines of the groundworks to demonstrate that the wall of the structure was five brick courses high and that the uppermost course formed a flat platform covered with a thin layer of ash and charcoal [023] (Figures 2 and 3). The inside of the bricks forming the ‘wall’ of the cooking chamber were very blackened from heat and soot. The base of the oven was formed of the natural chalk and the void between the base and the platform was filled with chalky material [018]. It was not possible to see what the platform was supported by. The oven was constructed within a larger cut [021] filled with sand.
- 4.3.3 The superstructure of the oven had been destroyed by a large pit [019], the chalky silty clay fill of which contained much brick deriving from the oven (Figures 2 and 3).

| Context | Type | Description | Max. Length | Max. Width | Depth/ Thickness |
|---------|-----------|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 001 | Layer | Topsoil | 2.7m+ | 1.3m+ | 0.27m |
| 004 | Layer | Natural deposit. Soft crumbly chalk with flint nodules. | Site extent | Site extent | 0.5m+ |
| 017 | Structure | Oven remains constructed of Tudor bricks. | 1.44m+ | 0.5m+ | 0.33m |
| 018 | Fill | Fill of oven [017], under brick platform | unknown | unknown | 0.25m |
| 019 | Cut | Pit truncating oven [017] | 1.3m+ | 0.35m+ | 0.5m |
| 020 | Fill | Single fill of [019]. Very chalky light yellowish brown silty clay, inc. bricks from oven [017] | 1.3m+ | 0.35m+ | 0.5m |
| 021 | Cut | Cut for oven [017] | 1.44m+ | 0.5m+ | 0.1m+ |
| 022 | Fill | Fill of [021]. Orange sand | 1.44m+ | 0.5m+ | 0.1m+ |
| 023 | Fill | Thin layer of charcoal and ash on top of brick platform of oven [017] | 1.44m+ | 0.5m+ | 0.01m |
| 024 | Layer | Chalky subsoil sealing [020]. Under topsoil [001]. Occasional CBM | 2.7m | 1.3m | 0.35m |

Table 4: List of recorded contexts from soakaway trench

- 4.3.4 The oven bricks are dated as probably late 15th to 17th century, which is contemporary with the extant 16th century Myddylton House. The oven is located 15m from the back wall of the current kitchen and was presumably deliberately distanced from the contemporary house. Whether it was originally contained within a detached kitchen or outbuilding, or was associated with other structures, has not been possible to establish, given the small area of the soakaway trench.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief. Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context (Table 5). In addition, grindstone fragment from [10] weighing 406g was allocated a registered find number unique to the site (RF <1>). Finds were all packed and stored according to CIFA guidelines (2014b). None require further conservation.

| Context | Pottery | | CBM | | Bone | | Shell | | Fe | | Glass | | Stone | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt | Ct | Wt |
| u/s | 1 | 96 | | | | | 1 | 10 | | | | | | |
| 1 | 5 | 58 | | | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | | | 2 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | 84 | 5 | 770 | 5 | 24 | | | | | 3 | 102 | | |
| 7 | | | 1 | 48 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 9 | 210 | 4 | 452 | 21 | 1654 | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | 1 | 1380 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 164 | 1 | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 8 | 90 | | | 13 | 132 | 1 | 4 | | | | | 1 | 6 |
| 17 | | | 2 | 1802 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | 1 | 4 | | | 3 | 32 | | | | |
| Total | 26 | 540 | 16 | 4616 | 42 | 1830 | 3 | 22 | 3 | 32 | 5 | 110 | 2 | 10 |

Table 5: Quantification of the bulk finds (weight in grammes)

5.2 Medieval and later Pottery by Helen Walker

5.2.1 A total of twenty-six sherds, weighing 573g, was excavated from six contexts and has been catalogued according to Cunningham's typology of post-Roman pottery in Essex (Cunningham 1985, 1-16).

5.2.2 Medieval pottery was excavated from pits [009] (fill 010) and [015] (fill 016). That from pit [009] comprises joining sherds from the neck of a large early medieval ware jug showing a thickened everted rim and the beginnings of a strap handle attaching at the rim, dating from the 12th to early 13th centuries. Also present is a sherd from the base of a vessel in medieval coarseware; although an undiagnostic piece, it is clearly hand-built rather than wheel-thrown indicating a date of later 12th to mid-13th century.

5.2.3 Early medieval ware was also found in pit [015] comprising a sagging base and body sherds, two of the latter showing incised wavy-line decoration, providing a 12th to early 13th century date. Also from this pit is a sherd of the more unusual early medieval grog-tempered ware. A sherd of modern flowerpot from this pit can be dismissed as intrusive. Both pits therefore could be contemporary dating from the 12th to early 13th centuries.

5.2.4 Pit [013] produced a single sherd, a small body sherd with a fine buff-

coloured fabric and an internal ochre-coloured glaze. This is most likely to be an example of mis-fired early post-medieval red earthenware dating to around the 16th century, although a slightly earlier or later date cannot be precluded. Also of a late medieval/early post-medieval date is a sandy orange ware bung-hole from a cistern found unstratified. Cisterns were used for storing liquids and for the brewing of ale or beer and were common during the 15th and 16th centuries.

- 5.2.5 Layers [001] and [003] produced the latest pottery. Layer [003] produced a fragment of flowerpot and the base of a Westerwald stoneware vessel, most likely a chamber pot. Although imported from the mid-17th century, these vessels became more common in the 18th century. Layer [001] produced a fragment from a large post-medieval red earthenware flared bowl, and fineware sherds comprising a creamware plate with a moulded edge and an unusual squared-sided vessel in pearlware, perhaps a tea canister, showing Chinese-style blue-painted decoration. Together these vessels date to the late 18th century.
- 5.2.6 This assemblage provides evidence of activity in the early medieval period, the late medieval period and the 18th century.

5.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Trista Clifford

- 5.3.1 A total of fourteen fragments weighing 4190g were recovered from six separate contexts. The earliest material, recovered from pit fill [014] is a small fragment from a medieval flanged roof tile in a calcareous fabric. The same context produced pantile of late 16th to 18th century date and a fragment of ?floor tile or brick. Flat roof tile and peg tile of late medieval to early post medieval date was recovered from layer [003] and pit fills [007] and [010]. One fragment from pit fill [010] shows evidence of possible fire damage in the form of self-glaze and sooting. The context also produced pantile. A single fragment of peg tile with a circular peg hole of 14mm diameter was recovered from pit fill [007].
- 5.3.2 Brick samples were recovered from oven [017] and well [011]. Both are unfrogged and fairly crudely made. The brick from [017] is of probable late 15th to 17th century date and exhibits sooting and heat cracking consistent with its context. The brick from well [011] has a slightly later date range of c17th -18th century.

5.4 Geological Material by Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 The archaeological monitoring recovered just three pieces of stone from the site. Topsoil [001] and pit fill [016] produced fresh fragments of coal (weighing 3g and 4g respectively).
- 5.4.2 Fill [010], of pit [009], contained a disc fragment in a blue-grey fine calcareous sandstone with some mica (RF1; 406g). The original diameter of the disc would have been c.260mm and it measures 19-20mm thick. The edge profile is squared, with notable wear/polish on the exterior thin edge of the stone, strongly suggesting the piece to be from a rotary grindstone,

albeit a thin one. The larger faces also show some signs of wear polish in patches suggesting the fragment may have been used as a hand sharpening stone after breakage.

5.5 Metallurgical Remains by Trista Clifford

- 5.5.1 Two general purpose headless iron nails weighing 144g were recovered from deposit [023] which directly lay on top of the brick platform of oven [017]. Both are square in section and hand made. They are not inherently dateable but are unlikely to be later than c.1800.

5.6 Glass by Elke Raemen

- 5.6.1 A small assemblage comprising five glass fragments weighing 111g was recovered from two different contexts. Topsoil [001] contained a small green glass wine bottle fragment dating to c.1650-1750, as well as a body fragment from a colourless, globular bottle or phial of similar date.
- 5.6.2 Levelling layer [003] contained three green glass wine bottle fragments, all too small to be closely dateable. The earliest two, including a kick fragment and part of a base, both date to c.1650-1800, whereas the body fragment dates between c.1700 and 1850.

5.7 Animal Bone by Gemma Ayton

- 5.7.1 A total of forty-two fragments of bone weighing 1830g was recovered from six contexts ([001], [003], [010], [014], [016], [023]). The assemblage is in a moderately-well preserved condition with little evidence of surface erosion, but no complete bones remaining.
- 5.7.2 The bulk of the assemblage derives from context [010], the fill of pit [009], and includes cattle, sheep/goat, horse and cat. Both meat-bearing and non-meat bearing bones are present and three of the specimens display evidence of canid gnawing. Butchery was noted on a medium-mammal sized thoracic vertebra which had been sliced laterally. The remaining contexts contained fragments of cattle, sheep/goat and pig, including a calcined pig phalanx from topsoil [001].

5.8 Marine Molluscs by Trista Clifford

- 5.8.1 Three *Ostrea edulis* (Edible oyster) valves were recovered. The valves are immature and show no evidence of parasitic activity. The assemblage is recommended for discard.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion

- 6.1.1 The watching brief recorded several features and deposits at the rear of the house, representing at least three phases of occupation of the site from the 12th/13th century to the 18th century. These include rubbish pits, an oven, a wall, a well and later levelling layers.
- 6.1.2 Features were found at between 0.4m and 1m below ground level and most were only partially exposed within the groundwork trenches.
- 6.1.3 The earliest phase of activity was represented by two medieval pits, [009] and [015], both of which contained animal bone and 12th-13th century pottery. A third pit [027] may possibly also be of 12th-13th century date as medieval pottery recovered from machine spoil in its vicinity may have derived from it. All three pits were observed in the sections of the foundation trenches for the extensions at the rear of the house and most are likely to have been used for rubbish and cess disposal to the rear of an earlier property.
- 6.1.4 The undated flint wall [026] fragment, in the kitchen extension foundation trench could conceivably have been a surviving part of an earlier, medieval building here.
- 6.1.5 Probable post-medieval pit [006], containing peg tile, and further pit [013], observed in the garden room foundation trenches attest to later activity – presumably contemporary with the early life of the extant house. The post-medieval layers [003] and [024] demonstrate that some modification or landscaping of its gardens was undertaken.
- 6.1.6 The 15th–17th century brick-built oven [017], located away from the main house, in the soakaway trench, is also presumably contemporary with the earlier functioning of the house. It was not possible to fully excavate the oven and, apart from the bricks forming its structure, there was no artefactual or ecofactual evidence associated with it from which to discern its function. Given its location to the rear of the house, it is perhaps likely to be a domestic bread oven. An alternative interpretation could be a malting oven associated with the brewing of beer. A fragment of bunghole from a late medieval/early post-medieval cistern found unstratified on the site might lend some weight to the latter interpretation (Section 5.2.4).
- 6.1.7 17th-18th century brick-lined well [011] was positioned close to the rear wall of the house and was presumably its primary water source at this time, perhaps located close to the contemporary kitchen or a scullery.

6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The watching brief has not conclusively provided evidence for one or more precursors of the extant Myddylton House. However, masonry wall [026] could be a fragment of an earlier structure, particularly as it lacks any brick in its construction. The medieval building foundation excavated at near-by

33-35 High Street was similarly constructed of flint rubble and crumbly mortar, with a wall width averaging 0.5m (Clarke 1997). However, if wall [026] does constitute a medieval building, it is on a significantly differing alignment to the current house.

- 6.2.2 The presence of medieval pits adds weight to the likelihood of wall [026] being of similarly early date, though whether it represents the remains of a dwelling or an outbuilding remains unknown. These pits may reasonably be construed to be located behind a medieval property fronting Myddylton Place and to represent fairly typical 'back yard' activity of rubbish and cess disposal.
- 6.2.3 In terms of the understanding of the development of the wider town, the medieval remains found here accord with the emerging view that that this part of it, at the western edge of the outer bailey of the castle, was built up by the 12th-13th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Donald Purkiss Associates for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Richard Havis the ECC Place Services Monitoring Archaeologist. The watching brief was carried out by Kate Clover. The author would like to thank Andrew Lewsey who produced the figures for this report; Andy Leonard who project managed the watching brief and Mark Atkinson who project managed the post-excavation process.

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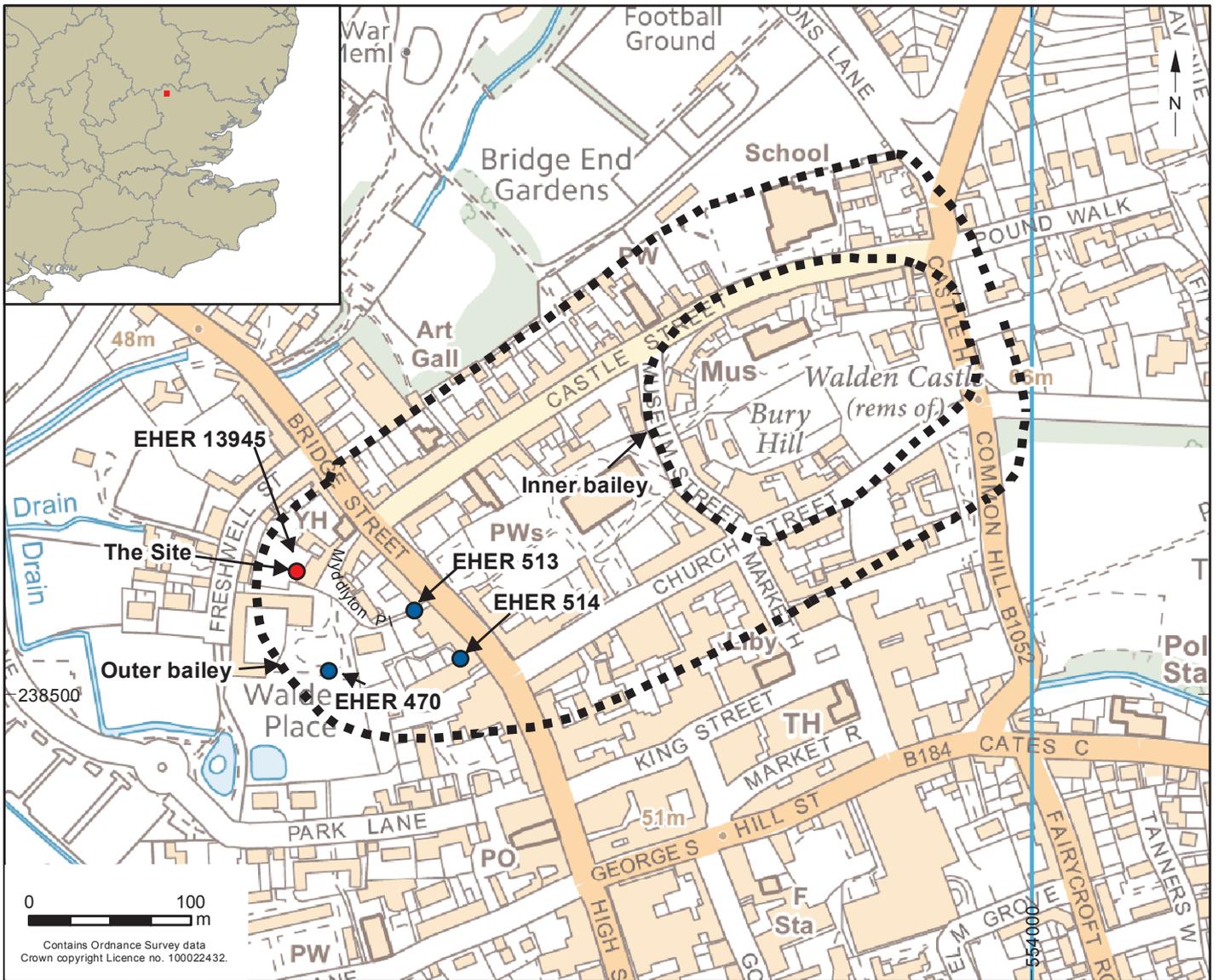
EHER Summary Form

| | |
|---|---|
| Site name/Address: Myddylton House, Myddylton Place, Saffron Walden, Essex | |
| Parish: Saffron Walden | District: Uttlesford |
| NGR: TL 53557 38580 | Site Code: SW65 |
| Type of Work: Archaeological Watching Brief | Site Director/Group: K. Clover, Archaeology South-East |
| Date of Work: 5th-15th May 2015 | Size of Area Investigated: c 65 sq metres |
| Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden Museum | Funding source: Client |
| Further Seasons Anticipated?: No | Related HER Nos: EHER 27157 |
| Final Report: ASE report no 2015246 and EAH roundup | OASIS No: 217954 |
| Periods Represented: Medieval, Post-Medieval, Modern | |
| SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: | |
| <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out at the rear of Myddylton House, Saffron Walden, during extension works to the dwelling. The house is a mid-16th century Grade II Listed Building, with early 18th century additions and re-fronted in the early/mid-19th century.</i></p> <p><i>The watching brief recorded several features representing at least three phases of occupation of the site, from the 12th century to the 18th century, including pits, levelling layers, a brick built oven, a brick-lined well and a flint and mortar wall.</i></p> <p><i>Two, possibly three, rubbish pits of 12th-mid 13th century date possibly represent backyard activity associated with a precursor medieval building fronting Myddylton Place. A fragment of undated masonry wall foundation could relate to such a building.</i></p> <p><i>The brick-built oven was 15th-17th century in date and therefore likely to be contemporary with the earlier use of the extant house. The brick-lined well was 17th-18th century and was presumably the principal water source during later occupation of the house.</i></p> <p><i>Relatively late levelling layers alongside the rear of the house constitute levelling and landscaping of the sloping garden.</i></p> | |
| Previous Summaries/Reports: | |
| Havis, R. 1993. Myddylton House, Myddylton Place, Saffron Walden. Watching Brief Report. ECC | |
| Author of Summary: K. Clover | Date of Summary: July 2015 |

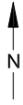
OASIS Form

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| OASIS ID: archaeol6-217954 | |
| Project details | |
| Project name | Watching Brief at Myddylton House, Myddylton Place, Saffron Walden, Essex |
| Short description of the project | An archaeological watching brief was carried out at the rear of Myddylton House, Saffron Walden during groundworks for extension construction. The house is a Grade II Listed Building of 16th to 18th century construction. Features representing at least three phases of occupation of the site, from the 12th century to the 18th century were recorded; including medieval pits, levelling layers, a brick-built oven, a brick-lined well and an undated flint and mortar wall. |
| Project dates | Start: 05-05-2015 End: 15-05-2015 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Assoc project reference codes | SW65 - Sitecode 8309 - Contracting Unit No. |
| Assoc project reference codes | UTT/14/2937/HHF - Planning Application No. 27157 - Related HER No. |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Site status | Listed Building |
| Current Land use | Other 5 - Garden |
| Monument type | PITS Medieval PITS Post Medieval WALL Medieval OVEN Post Medieval WELL Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Medieval POTTERY Post Medieval ANIMAL BONE Uncertain GRINDING STONE Uncertain CBM Post Medieval GLASS Post Medieval |
| Investigation type | "Watching Brief" |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Project location | |
| Country | England |
| Site location | ESSEX UTTLESFORD SAFFRON WALDEN Myddylton House, Myddylton Place |
| Postcode | CB10 1BB |
| Study area | 65.00 Square metres |

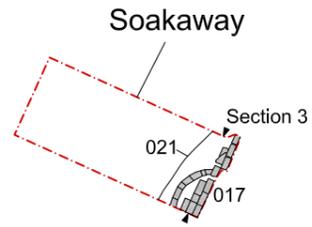
| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Site coordinates | TL 5355 3858 52.0239019235 0.238237506729 52 01 26 N 000 14 17 E Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 48.00m Max: 49.00m |
| Project creators | |
| Name of Organisation | Archaeology South-East |
| Project brief originator | Essex County Council Place Services |
| Project design originator | ASE |
| Project director/manager | Andy Leonard |
| Project supervisor | Kate Clover |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | on behalf of householder |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Architects |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | Donald Purkiss Associates |
| Project archives | |
| Physical Archive recipient | Saffron Walden Museum |
| Physical Archive ID | SW65 |
| Physical Contents | "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Worked stone/lithics" |
| Digital Archive recipient | Saffron Walden Museum |
| Digital Archive ID | SW65 |
| Digital Contents | "other" |
| Digital Media available | "Images vector","Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Saffron Walden Museum |
| Paper Archive ID | SW65 |
| Paper Contents | "other" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet","Correspondence","Diary","Map","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section" |
| Entered by | Kate Clover (k.clover@ucl.ac.uk) |
| Entered on | 16 July 2015 |



| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Myddylton House, Saffron Walden | Fig. 1 |
| Project Ref: 8309 | July 2015 | Site location | |
| Report No: 2015246 | Drawn by: APL | | |



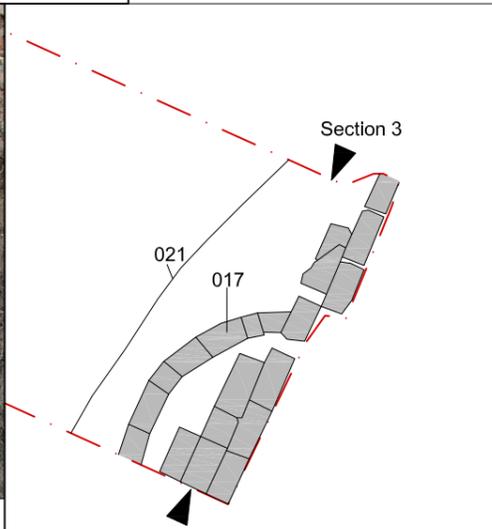
Foundation trenches to the new garden room, view south-east



+ 553540, 238585



Pit 027 and flint wall 026, view south-east



Detail of brick oven 17 (1:25)



Brick oven 017, view south

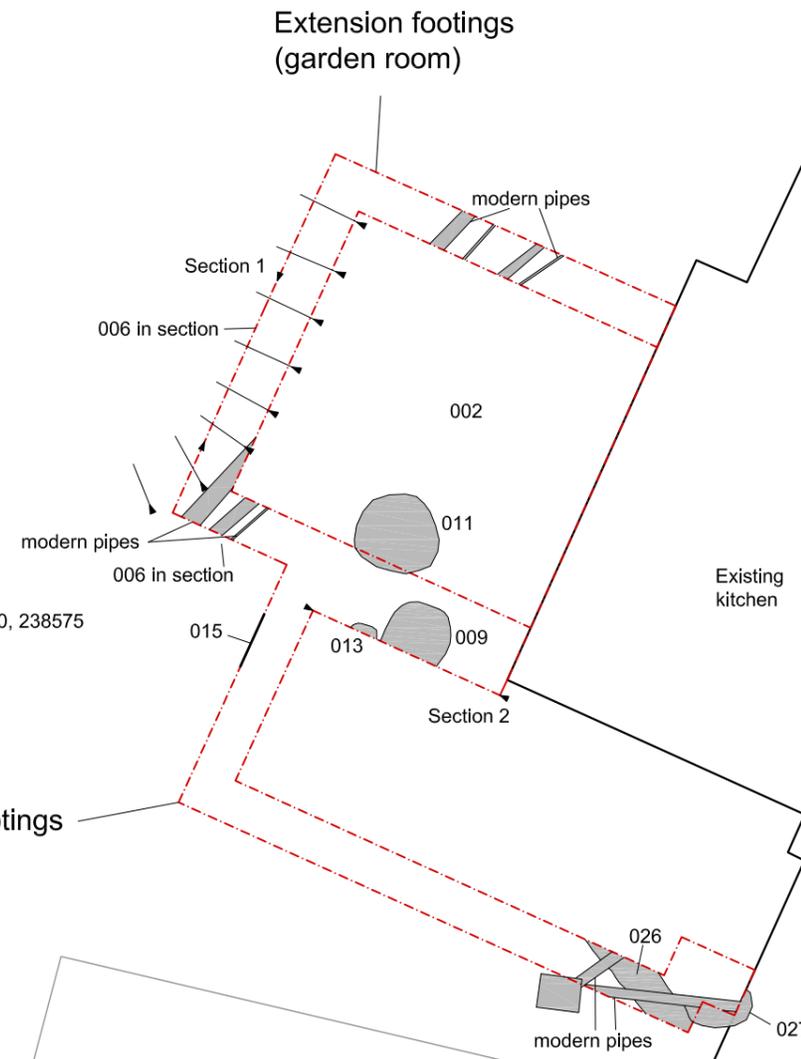


Brick oven 017 and pit 019, view east

Extension footings (garden room)

+ 553540, 238575

Extension footings (new kitchen)



Myddylton House

Existing kitchen

Garage

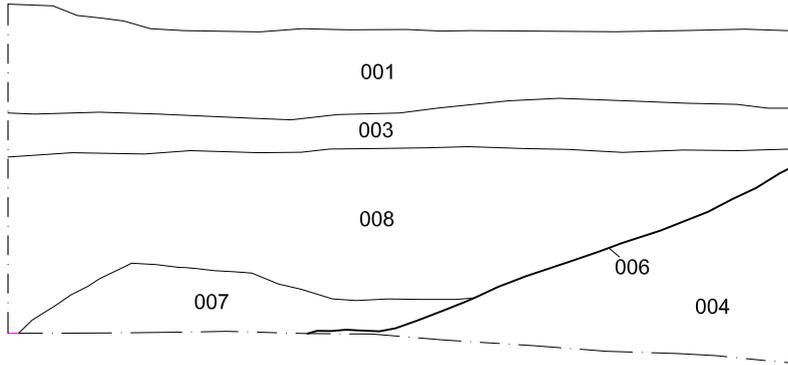


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| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|--|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Myddylton House, Saffron Waldon | | Fig. 2 |
| Project Ref: 8309 | July 2015 | Location of archaeological monitoring and features | | |
| Report Ref: 2015246 | Drawn by: APL | | | |

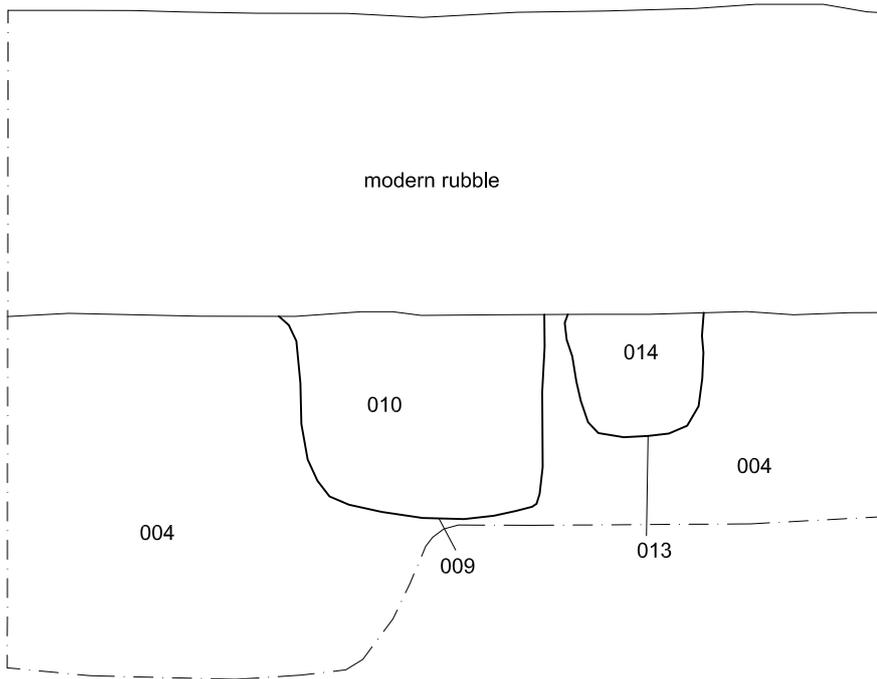
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SW

NE



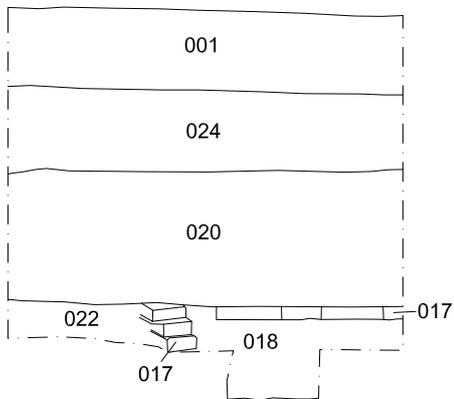
Section 2
SE

NW



Section 3
NE

SW



Oven 017 looking south-east, 0.5m scale

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