

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

WALLED GARDEN

CROFT CASTLE

N^R LEOMINSTER

HEREFORDSHIRE

NGR: SO 4486 6554
JOB NO: BA1312WGC



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Cover: View south across the Walled Garden to Croft Castle

Report specification

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1. Non Technical Summary

Border Archaeology was instructed by the National Trust to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (Watching Brief) with regard to preparatory ground-works for a new path extending internally around the perimeter of the Walled Garden at Croft Castle.

Observation of ground-works revealed a crude stone pathway extending around the west, east and northeast extent of the walled area. A different phase of path construction was revealed running east-west adjacent to the southern elevation. A modern cobbled surface was revealed in the southwest corner of the garden.

In the northern extent of the garden, a levelled area of re-deposited natural stone was revealed in the vicinity of the gardener's cottage. This had served as a platform for the two glasshouses in this location. No further evidence of glasshouse construction was revealed.



2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Janine Young Archaeology Consultant National Trust Attingham Park Shrewsbury SY4 4TP to undertake a programme of Archaeological Observation ('Watching Brief') regarding a section of preparatory ground-works for a new path extending internally around the perimeter of the Walled Garden at Croft Castle (NGR: SO4486 6554) (figs. 1 & 2).



*Fig. 1: Plan showing location of ground-works (marked in red)
(Based on plan supplied to Border Archaeology by the National Trust)*



Archaeological work carried out in 2011 (Williams 2011) revealed the main phases of the Walled Garden commencing with its creation c.1800-15 through to a latter phase of renovation under the direction of Diana Uhlmann, daughter of Sir Henry Page Croft. The results of these investigations have informed the layout of the new paths.

The focus of archaeological monitoring was the northern line of the path, in the vicinity of the gardener's cottage, where the ground-works appear to cut across the remains of the mid-19th century glasshouses, as suggested both by the historic map evidence and by the results of the recent investigations.

3. Soils & Geology

The area affected by the proposals may be characterised as comprising typical brown earths of the MUNSLOW series (541i) consisting of well-drained coarse silty soils over siltstone with occasional similar but fine silty and coarse loamy soils. The underlying solid geology is Silurian siltstone (SSEW, 1983).

4. Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

The ground-works extended around the perimeter of the 19th century Walled Garden (NGR: SO4486 6554), which lies N of the castle (HSM 76000) adjacent to the North Forecourt Garden of c.1960, which itself stands on the site of the N range, demolished in 1937. The site is shown on the Croft Parish Tithe Apportionment Map of 1839 and forms an integral component of the castle environs and wider landscape setting (HSM 2470).

The results of an archaeological evaluation carried out in 2011 (Williams 2011) have clarified the garden's development from its inception in the early 19th century through to the 1960s-70s when it underwent extensive restoration.

Four principal phases of activity were recognised, the earliest dated to c.1800-15. The second, 'glasshouse' phase encompassed the period 1839 to 1937 and is characterised by a series of works including construction of the gardener's cottage and glasshouses, and an additional N-S path and S door. The doorways to the stables were blocked and additional doorways inserted in the NW and SE corners with a double gate in the N wall. Existing paths were rebuilt and underpinned with a rubble sub-base beneath stone surfacing. The majority of this work had been completed by the 1880s.

The demolition of the glasshouses marks the termination of this phase. The date of this event is uncertain but it may have been as early as 1937, contemporary with the removal of the N range; however, these structures had clearly gone by 1950 when the garden was planted with vegetables. Something of a renaissance occurred over the course of subsequent decades under the direction of Diana Uhlmann, daughter of Sir Henry Page Croft, who created a rose garden and in 1979 established a vineyard.



5. Scheme of works

The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the *IfA Code of conduct (2012)*, *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology (2008)* and *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire (Issue 1)* (Herefordshire Council, 2004).

All intrusive ground works were carried out under archaeological supervision. Examination and cleaning of archaeological deposits was carried out using appropriate hand tools. All such deposits were examined and recorded.

5.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual* (2010). Records include:

- A *pro-forma* context record for each stratigraphic unit
- Plans of any area excavated showing: the extent of the area (tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on a 1:2500 plan), the extent of all stratigraphic units, and appropriate detail within stratigraphic units. Overall site plans were produced at a scale of 1:100.
- Numbered drawings, these being listed in a drawing register and cross-referenced to written site records.
- A photographic record of all stratigraphic units in addition to a representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work. The record was made using a high-resolution digital camera and comprised photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features and structures. All photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.
- A temporary benchmark (TBM) established within the garden with respect to a value (168.6754m AOD) located on the SE angle of the S face of St Michael's Church (SO 4499 6542).

5.2 Recovery of finds

All finds unearthed during the course of the ground-works were post-1850 in date and from poorly stratified deposits e.g. garden soil or imported soils. Finds were thus recorded but not retained.



6. Results

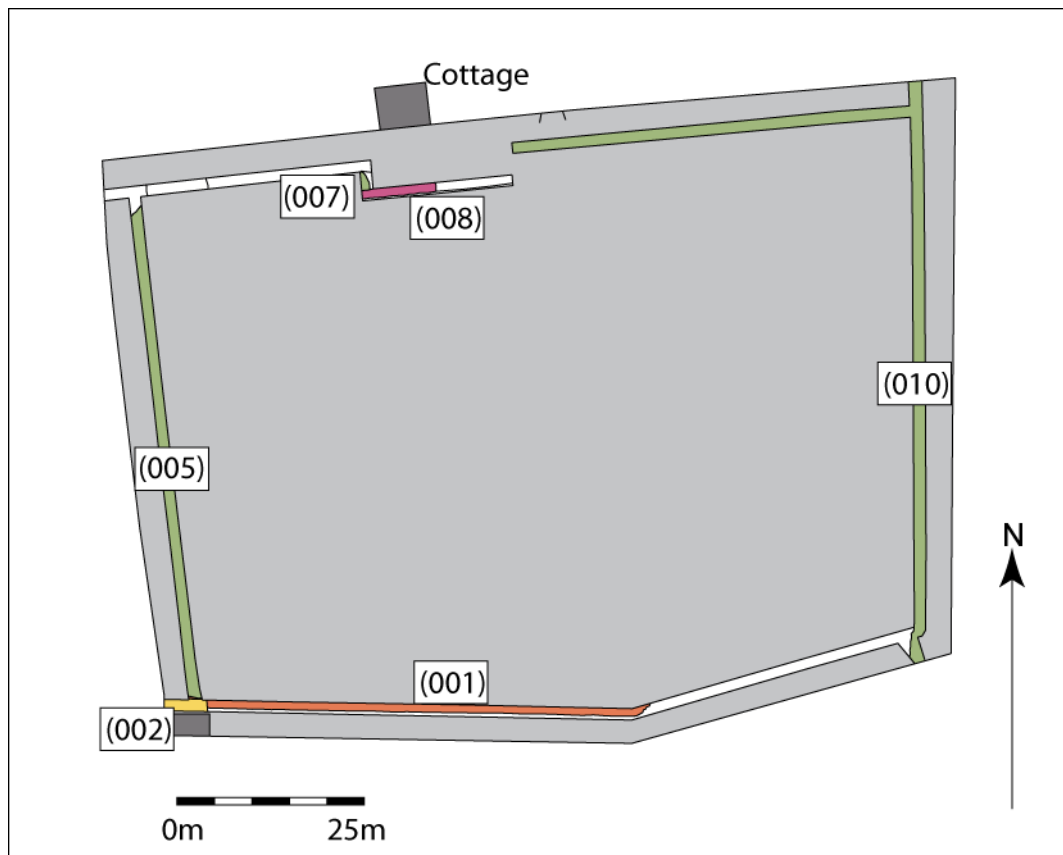


Fig. 2: Plan showing location of ground-works and features within the Walled Garden

The ground-works comprised a series of interlinked trenches, 1.2m to 1.5m wide and typically 0.1m to 0.2m deep, around the perimeter of the garden and offset approximately 3m from the wall. The trench doglegged out to 7m from the wall in the vicinity of the cottage on the N wall to allow for future reinstatement of the cottage garden. The route of the pathway adhered closely to the original line of the perimeter pathway as projected based on the evaluation results (Williams 2011). Ten contexts were revealed and recorded during the course of the observation.

Underlying a site-wide topsoil (003) and garden soil (004) were a series of path surfaces. Path surface (001) ran E-W adjacent to the S wall (*fig.2: indicated in orange*) (Plate 1) and was composed of reddish gravel with occasional larger stones extending 58m × >2m. The eastern extent of this surface appeared to have been truncated by a modern planting bed adjacent to the SE wall. The W extent was truncated by an extant cobbled surface (002) measuring 5.4m × 1.6m (*fig.2: indicated in yellow*) located close to the shed occupying the SW corner of the garden.



Plate 1: View E of E-W pathway (001) adjacent to S elevation of wall

Trenching immediately to the N of (003) revealed a crude path surface (005) (*fig.2: indicated in green*) (*Plate 2*) composed of small angular stone chippings. The path ran roughly N-S on a parallel alignment to the W wall and extended 65m x >1.5m.



Plate 2: View N of N-S pathway (005) adjacent to W elevation of wall

Trenching in the NW corner of the garden and adjacent to the N wall W of the cottage revealed no trace of a pathway. A remnant of pathway (007) (*fig. 2: indicated in green*) was revealed close to the cottage, this surface being similar in composition to (005) and (010).

Underlying (007) was a compacted light brown siltstone deposit (008) (*fig. 2: indicated in red*) (*Plate 3*) containing frequent CBM, mortar flecking, slate and imported stone, extending >9.7m in the area immediately to the S of the cottage.



Plate 3: View E of levelling (008) adjacent to N elevation of wall and gardener's cottage

Underlying (008) was (009) a compacted yellowish siltstone and CBM deposit extending >10.2m × >1.5m across the area immediately E of the cottage and W of the main entrance to the garden in the N wall.



Plate 4: View N of N-S pathway (010) adjacent to E elevation of wall



Ground-works adjacent to the N wall E of the main entrance and adjacent to the E wall revealed a wide ranging surface deposit (010) composed of angular stones of a similar composition to (005) and (007) (*fig. 2: indicated in green*) (*Plate 4*).

7. Conclusion

Archaeological observation of ground-works revealed evidence of the perimeter pathway (005) and (010) running adjacent to the garden wall on the E, W and part of the N internal elevations. A remnant of the pathway (007) was also revealed where the trenching passed to the W of the cottage. This pathway was constructed from angular stone chippings and was >1.5m wide. It may have served as a rough track-way providing access for cultivation equipment. An oblique aerial photograph from 1946 (Williams 2011) showed that the perimeter path was extant at least until this date and also that the garden had been used for larger-scale vegetable production consistent with its use as a market garden and orchard. The 1891 Ordnance Survey map appears to indicate planned avenues separated by open planting beds.

Trenching adjacent to the S elevation revealed an E-W reddish gravel pathway (001) dissimilar in terms of surfacing to that revealed elsewhere in the garden and probably representing a different phase of path construction. A cobbled surface (002) was revealed in the SW corner of the garden truncating (001) but no relationship to (005) was established.

Trenching in the NW corner of the site revealed no evidence of the perimeter circuit, although this may have been thinly laid over the natural degraded stone (006) which was very close to the surface in this part of the garden and may have served as a convenient sub-base.

The area E of this (to the S of the cottage) revealed re-deposited natural siltstone (008), (009). This had been dumped to form a level surface in the vicinity of the glasshouses located on the N wall either side of the cottage as shown on the OS 1st Edition 1:10,560 map of 1891. No further evidence of the glasshouses was revealed, these probably being located further N than the northernmost extent of the ground-works. No evidence for cuts containing buried external heating or water pipework was revealed in this area.

8. Copyright

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9. References

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9.2 Cartography

Croft Estate Demesne Map 1799

Map accompanying the Croft Highway Alteration Application 1825

Croft Parish Tithe Apportionment Map 1839

OS 1st Edition 1:10,560 map - 1891



10. Appendix 1

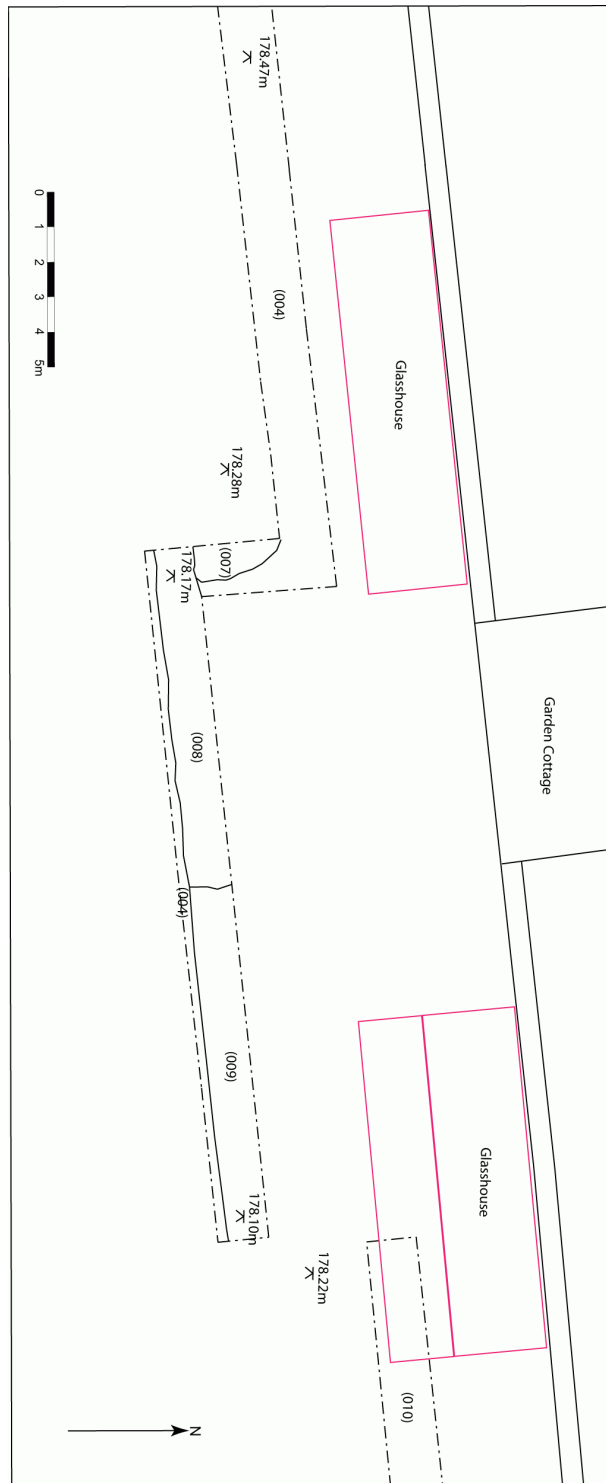


Fig. 3: Plan showing location of glasshouses (as shown on the 1st Edition 1891 OS) and 2013 trench locations (detail)



11. Appendix 2

Context	Description
(001)	Well-compacted reddish gravel, occasional larger stones, CBM, extends 58m × 2m × >0.02m. Underlies (002) and (004) Overlies (006)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Path adjacent to S wall elevation</i>
(002)	Well-compacted cobbles, brick edging, extends 5.4m × 1.6m. Overlies (007) (005) (001) and (010)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cobbled surface outside outbuilding in SW corner of garden</i>
(003)	Firm mid brown silt, CBM flecking extends site wide by 0.09m. Overlies (004)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Topsoil deposit across the entire area</i>
(004)	Firm mid brown clayey silt, frequent pebbles, extends site-wide. Underlies (003) Overlies (010) (007) (005) and (001)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Garden soil deposit across entire area</i>
(005)	Moderately compact angular stone, extends 65m × >1.5m. Underlies (002) and (004). Overlies (006) Same as (007) and (010)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Path adjacent to W wall</i>
(006)	Well-compacted light brown siltstone, extends >12.3m × >1.5m. Underlies (010) (009) (005) and (001)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Natural degraded stone outcropping</i>
(007)	Loose angular stone, pottery and CBM extends 2m × 1m by >0.08m. Underlies (002) and (004) Overlies (008) Same as (005) and (010)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Pathway remnant similar to (005) and (010)</i>
(008)	Well-compacted light brown siltstone, CBM, mortar flecking, slate and stone, extends >9.7m × >0.7m. Underlies (007) Overlies (009)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Levelling deposit adjacent to cottage</i>
(009)	Well-compacted mid brownish-yellow siltstone, CBM, extends >10.2m × >1.5m. Underlies (008) Overlies (006)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Made ground similar to (008)</i>
(010)	Moderately compact greyish angular stone, extends 68.7m × 44.8m. Underlies (002) and (004) Overlies (006) Same (005) and (007)
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Path adjacent to E wall elevation</i>