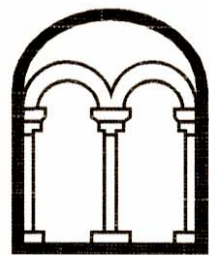


MERTON HALL
NORTHAMPTON STREET
CAMBRIDGE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, INVESTIGATION
AND RECORDING

Albion
archaeology





**MERTON HALL
NORTHAMPTON STREET
CAMBRIDGE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING,
INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING**

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| Compiled by | Approved by |
| Christiane Meckseper Robert Wardill Adam Lodoen | Drew Shotliff |

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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*Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 0300 300 8141
Fax: 0300 300 8209
e-mail: office@albion-arch.com
Website: www.albion-arch.com*

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Key Terms

Throughout this report, the following terms or abbreviations are used:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>CAPCA</i> | Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice office |
| <i>CHER</i> | Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record |
| <i>IfA</i> | Institute for Archaeologists |
| <i>MNI</i> | Minimum number of individuals |
| <i>SUERC</i> | Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre |



Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission was granted for the refurbishment and repair of Merton Hall North Wing, Northampton Street, Cambridge. Because of the archaeological importance of the site, a condition was attached to the permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by St John's College to carry out the archaeological works which comprised the monitoring of construction groundworks and the investigation and recording of revealed archaeological remains.

The archaeological works took place during the summer of 2008 and identified Roman archaeological remains and some of the development history of the building. Findings included the remains of walls indicating the addition of the bay windows and the removal of internal room and building divisions, and other remains indicative of old floor surfaces and supporting structures.

Human skeletal remains dating to the late Roman period were also found. These included a complete inhumation burial of a female and the disturbed remains of a juvenile burial with fragments of Nene Valley ware. The disarticulated remains of a minimum of 8 further individuals were recovered from make-up layers underneath Merton Hall. These findings, along with archaeological evidence of burials encountered during previous building work in the School of Pythagoras and the Cripps Building, confirm the presence of a Roman cemetery in the area.

Radiocarbon dates obtained from the human bones and ceramic evidence place the cemetery in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. The burial ground therefore complements the evidence from other late Roman cemeteries outside the Roman settlement of Cambridge, most notably in Jesus Lane and Park Lane on the eastern side of the river.

All artefacts and data gathered during the fieldwork will be consolidated into an archive and deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.

In addition to this report, it is anticipated that a summary article of the findings of the project will be submitted for publication in the Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted for the refurbishment and repair of Merton Hall (north wing), Northampton Street, Cambridge (ref. 07/0305/LBC). Because of the archaeological importance of the site, a condition was attached to the permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. In order to discharge the condition, Albion Archaeology was commissioned by R H Partnership Architects on behalf of St John's College, Cambridge, to undertake the archaeological work.

The local planning authority's archaeological adviser, Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice office (CAPCA), issued a brief (CAPCA 2008) detailing the requirements for this work which was to comprise archaeological monitoring of construction groundworks and the investigation and recording of any revealed remains.

1.2 Site Location and Description

Merton Hall lies to the north-west of Cambridge town centre and the River Cam, and is centred on grid reference TL44490 58940 (Figure 1). Both the Hall and adjoining School of Pythagoras building are part of St John's College.

The geology of the area comprises river sands and gravels over Gault Mudstone, with the land surface lying at a height of around 10m OD.

1.3 Description of Construction Groundworks

The refurbishment and repair works principally comprised underpinning the walls and replacement of the floor. This involved the reduction of the ground level within the building by around 0.45m and the excavation of trenches around all walls.

In addition, excavations for pads for temporary supports were carried out at various locations throughout the building and a duct trench was dug in the south-east room of the building. A modern extension on the north-east side of Merton Hall was also demolished as part of the refurbishment works.

1.4 Archaeological Background

Merton Hall lies within the historic core of Cambridge, c.250m south of the medieval castle (CHER 01778) and the Castle Hill area of the town which was the location of the Roman town of *Durolipons*. It consists of a SW-NE aligned 12th century stone hall, also called the School of Pythagoras, with a 16th/17th century northern timber-framed extension. The northern extension was subject to the current refurbishment works and archaeological investigations

Previous excavations within the School of Pythagoras building to the south uncovered an inhumation believed to be Romano-British in date (Graham-Campbell 1968). Four skeletons of uncertain date were also recovered in the mid 1960's during the construction of the Cripps Building which lies immediately to the south of Merton Hall (Boys-Smith 1964).



A number of archaeological investigations in the area, mainly to the north of Northampton Street, have uncovered remains from the Roman period onwards. At St Peter's Street, excavations at various sites during the early 1980s and 2001 found the Roman town wall, Roman and early medieval pits and ditches and a medieval road (CHER 08766 08769, MCB15796). Roman ramparts, industrial and other deposits were found along with medieval features at two sites off Pound Hill in 1982 and 1983 (CHER 08407, 08770).

Work at the Cambridge Folk Museum in 2002 located a Roman burial and structural remains dating to the Roman and Saxon periods (CHER CB15716). Roman or medieval remains have also been found at Kettle's Yard (CHER 11521) and Chesterton Lane (CHER CB154950) and a possible Saxon burial was found to the east of Northampton Street during the early 1900s.

Merton Hall itself (CHER 04930) is one of the very few domestic buildings of medieval date surviving in the country. It is a Grade I listed building¹ and consists of a two-storey, rectangular building of stone rubble and Barnack dressings. The hall was built as a manor house in the 13th century, probably as early as 1200AD. An ancient arm of the River Cam used to lie much closer to the building and could have served as a moat and water supply (Roach 1959). The NW stone-built solar wing of the hall is most likely part of the original design (RCHME 1988).

The original owners of the manor house sold their hall and property to Merton College of Oxford University in 1270-71, which is how the hall got its name. From the 13th to the beginning of the 19th century Merton Hall and its associated land was more or less continuously leased to tenant farmers and the hall used as a farm building.

The north wing of Merton Hall, which was subject to the investigations, is a two storey Grade II* listed building² of timber frame and brick construction. It is a long narrow building comprising an original 16th-century structure and a 17th-century extension (CHER 04930). It represents a northern addition to the main Merton Hall, and was built as the new manor or farm house when the original stone-built hall was turned into a granary.

Throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century until 1959 the north wing of Merton Hall was a private residence. There were two brief interludes when it housed a boys boarding school from 1807-1811 and the society which was the precursor to Newnham College from 1872-74. It is now part of St John's College, Cambridge, and used for graduate student accommodation.

¹ National Heritage list entry: 1126114

² National Heritage list entry: 1331893



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The programme of archaeological work was undertaken between 9th July and 30th September 2008. During this period a full-time site presence by an archaeologist was maintained during all groundworks that had the potential to impact deposits containing archaeological remains.

2.2 Fieldwork

The archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2008) approved by the CAPCA office. In summary, the required works comprised:

- All stripping of overburden and excavation of trenches to be monitored to identify *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- All disturbed soil to be scanned for artefacts.
- Any excavated features and deposits to be fully recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork*, (2nd edition, 2001).
- All archaeological observations to be recorded at a suitable scale on base plans that were tied in to the Ordnance Survey national grid.
- A photographic record to be kept of all significant features.

Throughout the project the standards and guidance in the following documents were also adhered to:

- *IfA Code of Conduct* (Revised edition 2002); the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (Revised edition 2001); the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (Revised edition 2001); and the *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2001)
- *English Heritage Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)
- *Deposition of Archaeological Archives in the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store*

2.3 Archive and Reporting

Following completion of fieldwork, all records were checked and cross-referenced to ensure they were internally consistent. Site drawings were digitised and geo-referenced. Recording, cleaning and conservation of finds followed *IfA Guidelines for Finds Work*.

All artefacts and data gathered during the fieldwork will be consolidated into an archive. Subject to agreement with the site owner, the archive will be deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store.

In addition to this archive report, it is anticipated that a summary article of the findings of the project will be submitted for publication in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*.



3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The observations and findings made during the archaeological works are described below by room and location and illustrated on Figures 2 and 3. Individual features and deposits are identified by context numbers and briefly described. Full context and finds details can be found in Appendix 3 and Section 4 respectively.

3.2 Room RG1

Following removal of existing floor and sleeper walls, a compact and very mixed sand, silt and clay layer (7) was uncovered (Figure 2). The layer was approximately 0.30m thick and contained a variety of finds including pottery of Roman, post-medieval and modern date along with roof tile, animal bone and disarticulated human bone. This layer probably represents a make-up and levelling layer deposited during the construction of the building.

A brick-built footing (5) was exposed during removal of layer (7) within the window bay.

Layer (7) overlay what appeared to be a mixed soil deposit (26) which was approximately 0.20m thick. No finds were recovered from this layer.

Geological deposits of orange/yellow sand and gravel were found beneath layer (26). A grave [35] containing a human burial (SK36) cut these deposits. The grave was aligned roughly E-W and contained the skeleton of an adult female (see Section 4.2.2). The skeleton was flexed and lying on its right side, with the head to the east. No remains of a coffin were detected and there were no accompanying grave goods.

3.3 Room RG4

A mixed make-up layer deposit (12) measuring *c.*0.40m thick and similar to (7) in room RG1 was uncovered in room RG4 (Figures 2 and 3). A variety of finds dating from Roman to post-medieval periods and disarticulated human bone were recovered from it.

Within this layer were a number fragmentary structural remains including walls (2), (9), (14), and (78) made of brick and/or limestone, and remnants of possible floors or supports for joists made of yellow brick (3), (4) and (6). Two further structures (21) and (23) made of limestone blocks were encountered adjacent to the western of the two fireplaces in RG4.

Layer (12) overlay natural geological deposits of yellow/white sand and gravel.

3.4 Room RG9

Approximately 0.20m of mixed make-up layer (39) was removed from room RG9 (Figure 3). A small quantity of locally manufactured clay smoking pipe fragments were recovered during the excavation of this layer adjacent to the eastern wall of the building, along with other artefacts dating to the Roman and later periods.



A red brick floor (49) was found overlying layer (39) within a small annex to the west of the room.

The remaining 0.20m of layer (39) was removed down to geological deposits of grey gravel during the excavation of underpinning and duct trenches. During the excavation of the latter, a large quantity of human skeletal remains from a single individual were recovered, possibly indicating the presence of disturbed grave.

A probable grave of a child [95]/(SK101) was also partially uncovered during underpinning excavations adjacent to the fireplace in RG9. The exposed section of the grave contained a fragmentary skull and vertebra, and fragments of a Nene Valley grey ware straight rimmed dish (commonly called “dog dish”), dating to the late Roman period.

3.5 Modern Extension and External works

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the demolition of the modern extension located on the north-eastern side of the building.

Deposits identified during external excavations associated with underpinning of the walls generally comprised a layer (47) of dark grey silt/sand up to 0.45m thick, overlying geological deposits of yellow/white sand, gravel and clay. This layer contained a large number of clay tobacco pipe fragments (Figures 8 – 11) of the same type and form than internal layer (39), suggesting that they are of the same origin.

A small section of wall constructed of red and yellow bricks (51) was found within the underpinning trench adjacent to the south-west wall of room RG1 (Figure 2).

No other features or artefacts were found during the external excavations.



4. FINDS DATA

4.1 Pottery

By Jackie Wells

The pottery assemblage comprises 70 sherds weighing 1.1kg. Forty-five Roman sherds (63%) are broadly datable to *c.* 2nd century +, and the remainder are of post-medieval and later origin. Pottery of all periods survives in good condition, although a low average sherd weight of 16g indicates its fragmentary nature. Occurrence by number and weight of sherds per feature is shown in **Table 1**. The bulk of the assemblage derives from make-up layers encountered during ground works within the Hall.

| Feature | Description | Roman | | Post-Roman | |
|---------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 7 | Make-up layer room RG1 | 2 | 51 | 13 | 295 |
| 12 | Make-up layer room RG4 | 2 | 35 | 2 | 59 |
| 39 | Make up layer room RG9 | 39 | 611 | 10 | 61 |
| 95 | Grave backfill (94) | 2 | 27 | | |
| | Total | 45 | 724g | 25 | 415g |

Table 1: Pottery quantification

4.1.1 Roman: (45 sherds: 724g)

The majority of the Roman assemblage comprises unsourced, locally produced, utilitarian coarse wares, with reduced sandy fabrics being the most commonly represented types (32 sherds). Fine grey wares (4) and shell-tempered coarse ware sherds (2) also occur. Wares imported from the domestic regional centres of the Nene Valley comprise grey wares (2) and colour coated wares (5), the latter including a beaker base. Diagnostic Nene Valley coarse ware vessels are wide flat-bottomed dishes with straight rims (resembling “dog dishes” and commonly named as such), flanged bowls, and jars with simple everted rims. One grey ware base sherd has been crudely re-shaped into a large counter or gaming piece, with a 50mm diameter.

| Fabric | Sherd No. | Context/Sherd No. | Comments |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Shelly coarse ware | 2 | (39):2 | Base sherd |
| Coarse grey ware | 24 | (7):1, (39):23 | Everted rim jar; flanged bowl; modified base sherd |
| Fine grey ware | 4 | (12):1, (39):2, (94):1 | Burnished jar; ‘dog dish’ |
| Black-slipped grey ware | 2 | (39):2 | Everted rim jar; plain rim bowl |
| Sandy black ware | 4 | (39):4 | Body sherds |
| Oxidised sandy coarse ware | 1 | (39):1 | Body sherd |
| Buff sandy ware | 1 | (39):1 | Jar base |
| Nene Valley grey ware | 2 | (39):1, (94):1 | Flanged bowl; ‘dog dish’ |
| Nene Valley Colour Coated ware | 5 | (7):1, (39):4 | Beaker base |

Table 2: Roman Pottery Type Series

4.1.2 Post-Roman: (25 sherds: 415g)

Two undiagnostic sherds of late medieval oxidised ware of uncertain source represent the earliest post-Roman material. The bulk of the assemblage comprises 16th-17th century glazed red earthenware (11 sherds) deriving mainly from one



bowl, retrieved from layer (7) in RG1. Single sherds of German stoneware (Frechen), Nottingham stoneware and a complete base from a tin-glazed albarello also occur. Pottery of 18th century and later date comprises salt-glazed stoneware (2 sherds), creamware (3), English porcelain (3) and brown stoneware (1), the latter deriving from an ink bottle. The latter were all found in layer (39) in RG9.

| Fabric | Sherd No. | Context/Sherd No. | Comments |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------|
| Medieval shelly ware | 1 | (12):1 | Body sherd |
| Late medieval sandy ware | 2 | (39):2 | Body sherds |
| Glazed red earthenware | 11 | (7):10, (12):1 | Shallow bowl |
| Frechen stoneware | 1 | (7):1 | Body sherd |
| Tin-glazed earthenware | 1 | (39):1 | Albarello |
| Nottingham stoneware | 1 | (39):1 | Body sherd |
| White salt-glazed stoneware | 2 | (7):1, (39):1 | Body sherds |
| Creamware | 3 | (39):3 | Body sherds |
| Stoneware | 1 | (39):1 | Ink bottle |
| Porcelain | 2 | (39):2 | Tea bowl |

Table 3: Post-Roman Pottery Type Series

4.2 Other Finds

A disparate artefact assemblage was recovered, deriving mainly from make-up layer deposits. A few objects are post-medieval, but the majority date to the 18th and 19th centuries, or are common forms, such as timber nails (four examples), which cannot be closely dated.

A collection of 157 clay tobacco pipe fragments was recovered, the majority deriving from layer (39) in the eastern part of room RG9. The assemblage comprises 40 bowl and 117 stem fragments (Figures 6-9). Twenty-two of the latter are stamped 'Pawson Camb' (Flood 1976, fig. 16d), indicating the manufacturer James Pawson and later, his widow Ann, who operated from premises at nearby 11 Sidney Street during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Flood 1976, 34). Five spurs are stamped with small stars, although it is uncertain whether these too represent Pawson products.

Vessel glass comprises eight translucent olive green wine bottle fragments, including shoulder and body sherds, and a single base. The latter derives from a mid 18th-19th century cylindrical bottle. The remainder are from vessels of indeterminate form, broadly datable to the mid 17th-19th centuries.

Six sand-tempered peg tile fragments (247g) of probable post-medieval date derived from make-up layers (7), (12) and (39).

4.3 Animal Bone

By Jackie Wells

Disarticulated faunal remains weighing 3.7kg (236 fragments) were recovered from post-medieval and modern make-up layers (7), (12), (39) and (47).

Preservation is generally good. Bones are, however, highly fragmented with a low average weight of only 15g, thereby reducing the potential for species identification.



Diagnostic elements comprise large mammal ribs, vertebrae, pelvis fragments, long bones (including a number of sheep metacarpals / metatarsals), horse and pig phalanges, sheep/goat and pig mandible and teeth fragments, and horn cores from young cattle and a goat.

Butchery / carcass processing is evidenced by cut marks on a number of long bone and rib fragments, and by sawing across the ends of two rib fragments from layers (12) and (47). A sawn, bone off-cut deriving from a flat bone (pelvis or scapula?) was recovered from make-up layer (7).

4.4 Human Remains

By Harriet Jacklin

4.4.1 Redeposited and disarticulated remains

In addition to the largely complete burial [35]/(SK36) found in room RG1 (see Section 4.2.2), redeposited, disarticulated human remains were recovered from make-up layers (7), (12), (39) and truncated grave [95]. Preservation is good to moderate, with some erosion and loss of surface detail. Most bones bear evidence of post-mortem fracturing. The assemblage is too fragmentary for estimations of age and/or sex to be clearly determined. Skeletal elements are summarised below.

Room RG1 (7)

Cranial elements deriving from the frontal and occipital regions; left mandibular fragment; left clavicle; left scapula; indeterminate long bone diaphyses and rib fragments. Adult and subadult remains, MNI: 3; total weight: 680g.

Room RG4 (12)

Long bone fragments, including diaphyses (femur; humerus; fibula); left tibia (distal end); right tibia (distal end); right femur (distal end); right femur (proximal end); right third metacarpal. Adult and subadult remains, MNI: 4; total weight 1,460g.

Room RG9 (39)

Cranial fragments deriving from the occipital region; left femur (distal and proximal ends); left tibia (distal end); right tibia; left ulna (proximal end); left humerus (distal end); left and right calcaneus; sternum (manubrium and body); left and right radius (head and neck); sacrum; vertebrae (cervical and thoracic); metacarpals (7); hand phalanx; indeterminate rib and pelvis fragments. Adult remains, MNI: 1; total weight 1,781g.

Room RG9 Grave [95]

The truncated grave contained a fragmentary skull SK101, which has been subject to severe post-mortem fracturing. Surviving cranial elements were identified as belonging to the frontal, parietal and temporal regions. Also present are fragments of mandible, right maxilla and vertebra (C1). Subadult remains, MNI: 1; total weight: 295g.



4.4.2 Skeleton SK36

The analysis of the inhumation included the analysis of the age and the sex of the skeleton. Post-cranial metrics, non-metric traits and stature were recorded and detailed pathological analysis was undertaken. Dentition and dental health were also recorded. The results were recorded using a standardised recording form created by Jacklin (2005), in line with Brickley and McKinley (2004). References used during skeletal analysis include Bass (1995), Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994), Brothwell (1981) and McKinley and Roberts (1993). All fusion data within this report are based on Scheuer and Black (2000).

SK36 (Figures 4 and 5) was found lying on its right side with its legs slightly flexed, orientated E-W (head to foot). The completeness of SK36 was categorised as '75-100%', after Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994) and the skeleton's preservation was categorised as 'Good' (bone surface in good condition, most osteological information recordable).

SK36 has been classed as a female aged between 36 and 50 years and measured 1.59 to 1.66m (based on measurements of the right femur and right tibia). The estimation of the sex of SK36 was based on the assessment of the pelvis (left and right sciatic notch), cranium (left and right supra-orbital ridge, left mastoid process, the supra-orbital margin, nuchal crest and the mental eminence) and measurements of the left and right femoral head.

The age estimation of SK36 has been based on dental eruption, dental attrition, epiphyseal fusion and age-related bone changes. The dentition was found to be in poor condition with a severe amount of dental attrition, perhaps reflecting a coarse diet. A number of teeth were lost *ante mortem* with the surrounding alveolar bone being reabsorbed. Two upper teeth (5 and 6) were affected by inter-proximal caries and the teeth were also affected by mild calculus.

Pathological analysis revealed that SK36 suffered from localised osteoarthritis affecting her left foot (the articular surfaces of the left talus and left calcaneus) and her left hand (the articular surfaces of metacarpal (1) proximal, medial phalanx (3) proximal and medial phalanx (4)). Her neck and upper spine were also affected (C1 to C7, superior and inferior surfaces and facets).

Although little remains of the thoracic vertebrae (mid-spine), it is likely that they were also affected given the presence of osteoarthritis located at a number of thoracic ends of the left and right ribs (where they attach to the thoracic costal foveae). The lower back was also severely affected (L5 inferior surface and S1 superior surface). No other pathological signs of ill-health are present on the surviving skeletal material; there was no evidence of trauma, metabolic or endocrine disorders and no congenital or developmental variants. See Appendix 1 for further details.

4.5 Radiocarbon Dating

Human bone samples from the complete burial (SK36) found in room RG1 and the large deposit of bone found in room RG9 (39) were radiocarbon dated at the



Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Facility. The results from both (Figures below) indicate a late Roman date for the remains.

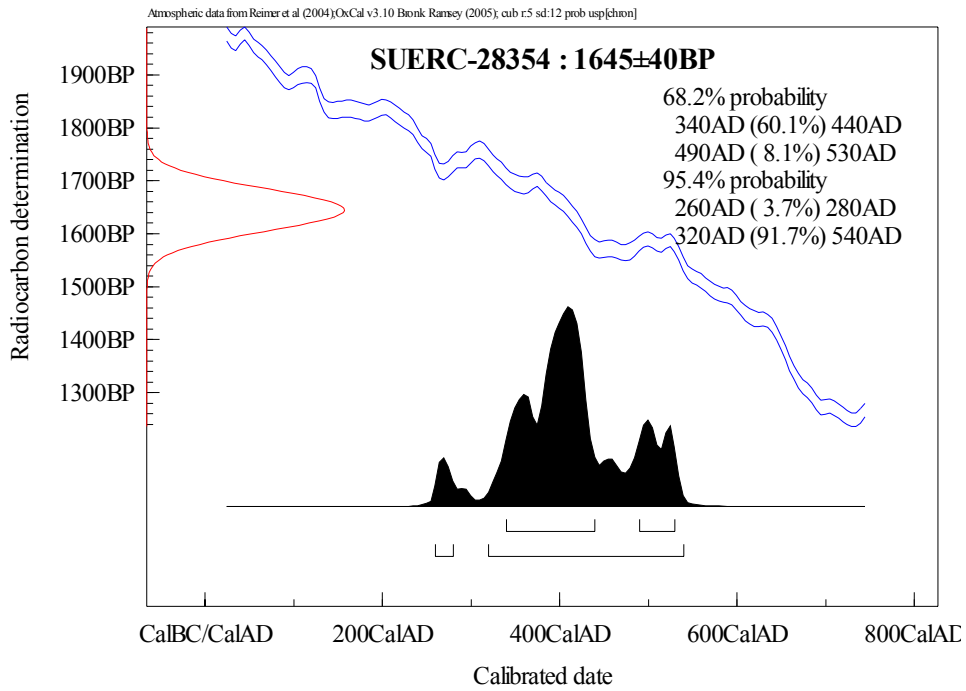


Figure 4.3.3.a: Calibration plot for sample (SK36)

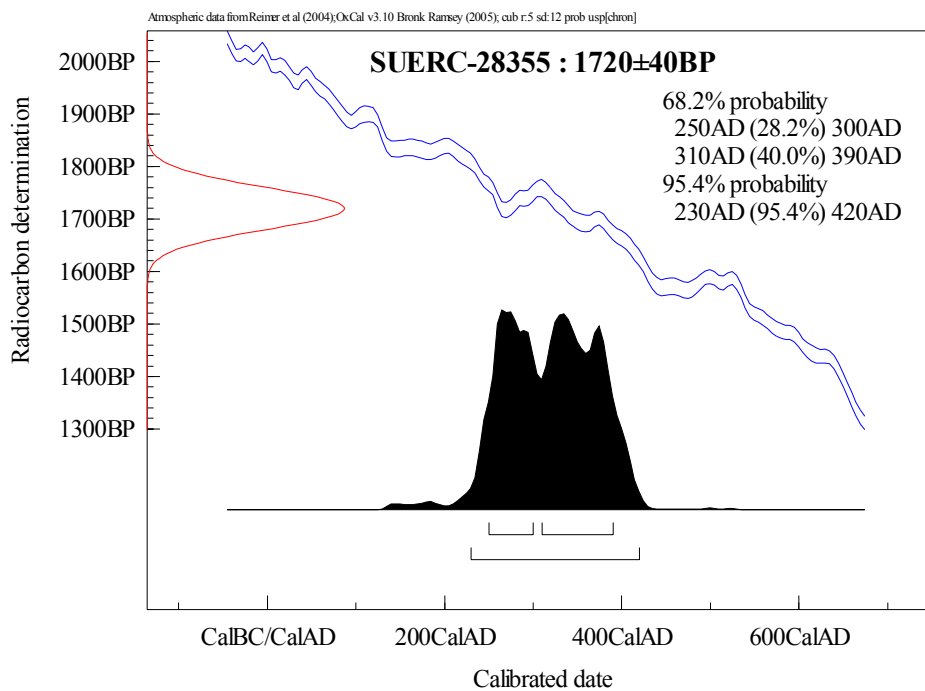


Figure 4.3.3.b: Calibration plot for sample (39)



5. DISCUSSION

The archaeological works carried out during the refurbishment of Merton Hall identified archaeological remains dating to the Roman period and revealed some of the development history of the north wing of Merton Hall.

5.1 Roman burials

The remains of 10 individuals were excavated during the groundworks at Merton Hall. These were evenly spread throughout the investigated area and included:

- the near complete, well-preserved burial (35) of a woman (SK36) plus the disarticulated remains of 3 further individuals in RG1;
- Disarticulated adult and subadult remains of 4 individuals in RG4;
- The truncated grave (95) of a subadult (SK101) plus the disarticulated remains of a further individual, most likely from disturbed grave, in RG9.

The surviving grave cut of burial (35/SK36) was very shallow and it is likely that neighbouring graves could have been disturbed during the construction of Merton Hall in the 16th century, leading to the incorporation of disarticulated human remains within the make-up layers for the building. The post-mortem fracturing but generally fairly good preservation of the bones indicate that they were disturbed post-deposition but probably did not move very far from their original burial location.

Radiocarbon dating of SK36 and the disarticulated individual in RG9 indicate a late Roman date for the remains. This underlines the 3rd-4th century date suggested by the fragments of Nene Valley Grey Ware (“dog dish”) within burial (95) in RG9.

Residual fragments of Roman pottery were found in the later make-up layers of Merton Hall, with by far the largest number recovered from layer (39) in RG9. It is possible that these originate from disturbed grave good vessels and one might speculate that the large assemblage in room RG9 originated from the same burial as the disarticulated remains of the single individual found in the same room. Alternatively the fragments could be part of a general background scatter of Roman refuse, particularly as they largely consists of locally produced utilitarian coarse wares.

“Dog dishes” are flat wide-bottomed dishes with a simple upturned rim which were part of the Nene Valley coarse ware pottery production and often occur in late Roman domestic assemblages. Nene Valley wares in general are commonly found on Roman sites in Cambridge (Hull and Pullinger in Taylor 1999) and the occurrence of the “dog dish” within burial (95) is therefore not surprising.

Other sites in Cambridgeshire where “dog dishes” were found are at Colne Fen, Earith (Regan *et al* 2004) and as residual sherds within Saxon and medieval features at Scotts Close, Hilton (Woolhouse 2006). As grave goods they have been recorded in small collections of funerary material from cemeteries at Milton and Faversham in Kent (Pollard 1988) and, closer to home, within burials excavated at the Roman cemetery in Sandy, Bedfordshire (BCAS 1995). A small Nene Valley



pot was also found with a juvenile during the excavations of the late Roman cemetery at Jesus Lane, c. 600m to the east of Merton Hall (Alexander *et al* 2004).

The recovery of at least 10 individuals from the excavations at Merton Hall which lie in close proximity to the burials and skeletons found within previous excavations at the neighbouring School of Pythagoras and the construction of the Cripps Building (Section 1.4) suggest that a cemetery also existed in this part of Cambridge in the late Roman period.

The cemetery is contemporary with the burial ground excavated at Jesus Lane, where investigations in the cellar of three terraced houses revealed a total of 32 inhumations, some with modest grave goods. The nature of the burials and the ceramic evidence suggested a date of the late 3rd to 4th century. It is possible that the cemetery may have extended to include the human remains found at Park Street, 230m to the north-west, where two adults and several neonates were excavated.

A further Roman cemetery containing 30 inhumations was found at Vicar's Farm 1.2km to the east of Merton Hall and c. 6 individuals were found during excavations at New Hall to the north-west of Cambridge.

The full extent of the cemetery at Merton Hall is unclear. Human skeletons were reported during earlier building work in the School of Pythagoras to the south and the Cripps Building to the west. No human remains were revealed during the current investigations in the modern extension to the east of the hall. However, a plan from the hall dating to c.1820 (Figure 10) shows that several extensions existed in this part of the hall in the 19th century. It is possible that the construction and demolition of these, and the subsequent construction of the modern extension, removed all traces of further human remains.

5.2 Merton Hall north wing

The groundworks also revealed several important clues as to the history and development of the north wing of Merton Hall. The north wing was built in the 16th century and extended northwards in the 17th. Externally, the closely spaced timber framing indicate the earlier part of the building, while the later part largely consists of a brick construction within a timber frame.

The internal party wall, separating the earlier from the later phase of the structure has been removed and room RG4 now spans the two phases of the building. It is possible that wall (14) could represent this party wall (Figures 2 and 3). Wall (78) also represents an earlier partition of the building while walls (2) and (5) confirm that the bay windows on the ground floor of the building are fairly modern additions.

The pottery assemblage within the rooms also tells of its history as a private residence. It is difficult to draw any conclusions as to the function of single rooms in the 16th and 17th centuries as not enough pottery was found. The sherds of a single red glazed earthenware, a more functional form of vessel, in RG1 may not be enough to assign it a function as a kitchen area.



However, most of the 18th century pottery consisted of finer tablewares denoting a middle to high status occupant and the sherds were largely concentrated in room RG9. On a much later plan (printed in RCHME 1988) this room is labelled as “Dining Room” and based on the ceramic evidence it is possible that it carried this function for a couple of centuries.

The large assemblage of clay tobacco pipes (Figures 6-9), largely associated with layers within room RG9 and dating to the early 18th century is also curious. The majority of pipes comes from a layer external to RG9 and recorded during the underpinning of its northern wall. Within room RG9 the pipe fragments were found associated with fragments of wine bottle glass.

It is possible that the clay pipes were a deliberate dump of disused pipes during earlier construction work. A plan of *c.* 1820 (Figure 10) shows the area to the outside of RG1 as a “Paved Yard” and the occupant of the southern part of Merton Hall as a “Mr. Eaden”. Without putting too much of the blame for tobacco and wine consumption on Mr. Eaden, the fragments of tableware, tobacco pipes and bottle glass still paint a vivid picture of the occupants of Merton Hall in the early 18th and early 19th century. They also give archaeological evidence for its use as a private residential building with occupants of moderate status and wealth.



6. CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

The archaeological works carried out during the refurbishment of Merton Hall identified significant archaeological remains dating to the Roman period and revealed some of the development history of this architecturally important building.

Evidence recovered during the archaeological works confirmed the presence of human burials in this part of the town. The burials of at least 10 individuals were identified and radiocarbon dating of the bone and pottery evidence indicate they are 3rd to 4th century in date. These findings, along with archaeological evidence from previous building work within the adjacent School of Pythagoras and nearby Cripps Building, confirm the presence of a Roman cemetery in the area.

It is difficult to draw any wider conclusions as to the nature, relation and demographic of the burial ground or indeed Roman Cambridge on the basis of a single burial. What is possible to conclude, however, is that the presence and location of this cemetery adds to the data available from other late Roman burial grounds outside the Roman settlement and may underline the suggestion that Cambridge remained a significant centre throughout the 4th century (Alexander *et al* 2004).

Merton Hall itself is a complex structure that has been subject to additions and modification since its construction in the 16th and 17th centuries. This complexity was visible during the archaeological monitoring in the disturbed nature of the ground surface within the building and remnant structural elements uncovered during ground reduction.

Some of these elements are evidence of changes to the building such as the remains of walls found in Rooms RG1 and RG4 indicating the addition of the bay windows and the removal of internal room and building divisions. Others are indicative of old floor surfaces and supporting structures.

Fine tableware dating to the 18th century and wine bottle glass and clay pipes dating to the 19th century were exclusively found within the southern room and suggest that this room had a long-term use for dining and entertaining and was inhabited by a family of moderate wealth. Post-medieval ceramic artefacts recovered from all floor layers within the building support historical evidence that Merton Hall was a private residence and manor house throughout most of its history.



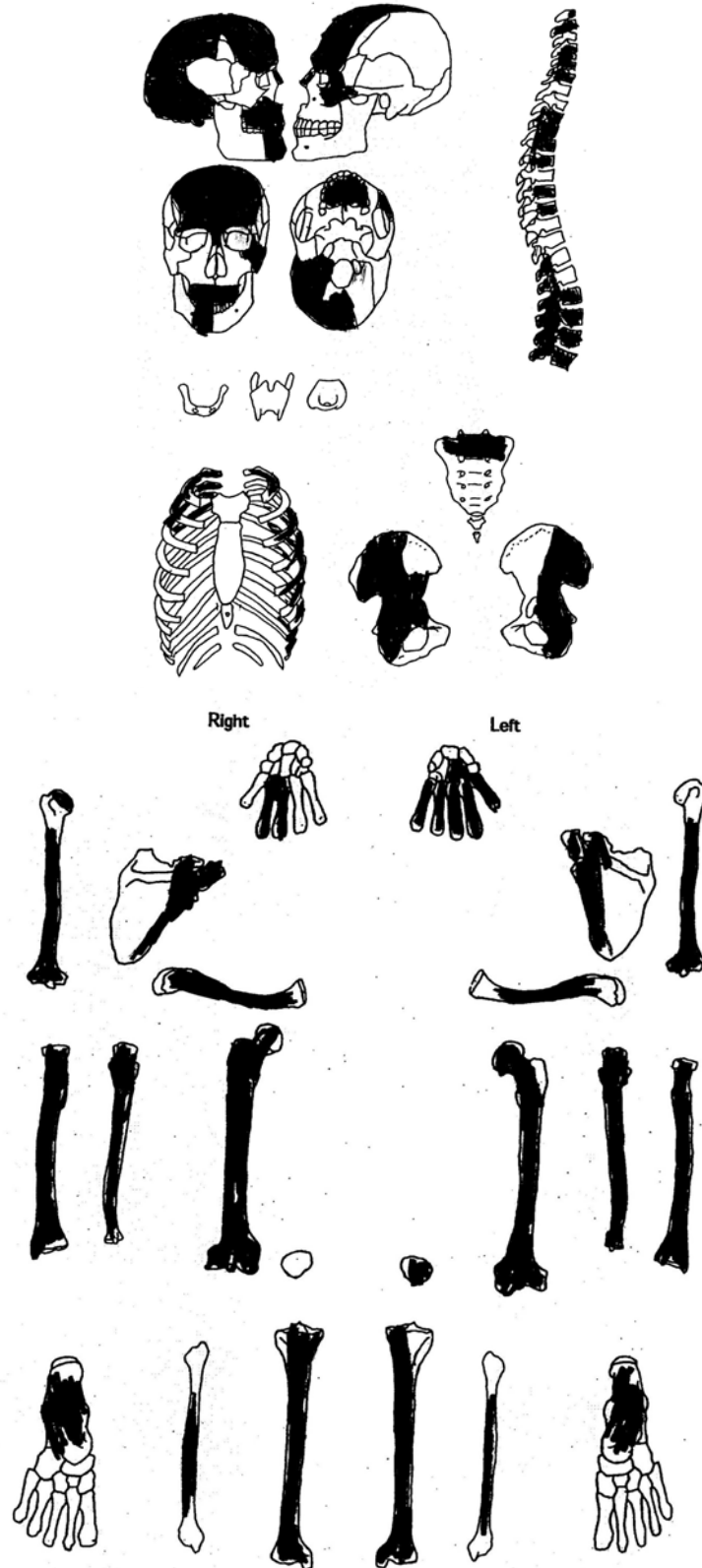
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

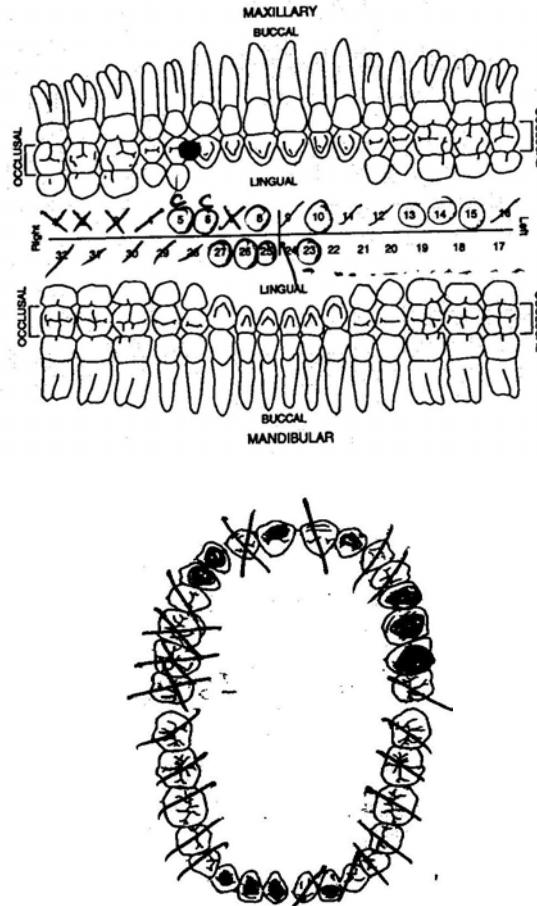
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Date accessed: 03 June 2011.



8. APPENDIX 1: SKELETON SK36 DATA

Pictorial Sheets





Skeletal Inventory

| Bone | Right | Left | Bone | |
|-----------|-------|------|-----------|---|
| Parietal | ✓ | ✓ | Frontal | ✓ |
| Temporal | ✓ | - | Occipital | ✓ |
| Maxilla | ✓ | ✓ | Sphenoid | - |
| Nasal | ✓ | ✓ | Vomer | - |
| Zygomatic | ✓ | - | Ethmoid | - |
| Lacrimal | - | - | Hyoid | - |
| Palatine | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Mandible | - | ✓ | | |
| Orbit | ✓ | ✓ | | |

| Ribs | Right | Left |
|------------|-------|------|
| Complete | - | - |
| Incomplete | 8 | 5 |

| Vertebrae | Centrum | Neural Arch | Vertebrae | Centrum | Neural Arch |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| C1 | - | ✓ | T6 | - | - |
| C2 | ✓ | ✓ | T7 | ✓ | - |
| C3 | - | - | T8 | ✓ | - |
| C4 | ✓ | ✓ | T9 | - | - |
| C5 | ✓ | ✓ | T10 | - | - |
| C6 | ✓ | ✓ | T11 | - | - |
| C7 | ✓ | ✓ | T12 | - | ✓ |
| T1 | - | - | L1 | - | ✓ |
| T2 | ✓ | ✓ | L2 | ✓ | ✓ |
| T3 | ✓ | ✓ | L3 | ✓ | ✓ |
| T4 | ✓ | ✓ | L4 | ✓ | ✓ |
| T5 | ✓ | ✓ | L5 | ✓ | ✓ |



| <i>Bone(Left)</i> | <i>Prox.J.S</i> | <i>P1/3</i> | <i>M1/3</i> | <i>D1/3</i> | <i>Dist.J.S</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Humerus | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Radius | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ulna | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Femur | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Tibia | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fibula | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| Clavicle | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| <i>Bone(Right)</i> | <i>Prox.J.S</i> | <i>P1/3</i> | <i>M1/3</i> | <i>D1/3</i> | <i>Dist.J.S</i> |
| Humerus | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Radius | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ulna | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| Femur | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Tibia | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fibula | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |
| Clavicle | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - |

| <i>Bone (Left)</i> | <i><25%</i> | <i>25-50%</i> | <i>50-75%</i> | <i>75-100%</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Ilium | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Ishium | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Pubis | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Scapula | - | ✓ | - | - |
| Patella | - | - | ✓ | - |
| <i>Bone (Right)</i> | <i><25%</i> | <i>25-50%</i> | <i>50-75%</i> | <i>75-100%</i> |
| Ilium | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Ishium | - | - | - | ✓ |
| Pubis | - | - | ✓ | - |
| Scapula | - | - | - | - |
| Patella | - | ✓ | - | - |
| <i>Bone</i> | <i><25%</i> | <i>25-50%</i> | <i>50-75%</i> | <i>75-100%</i> |
| Manubrium | - | - | - | - |
| Sternum | - | - | - | - |
| Ziphoid Process | - | - | - | - |
| Sacrum | ✓ | - | - | - |
| Coccyx | - | - | - | - |

| <i>Carpals</i> | <i>Left</i> | <i>Right</i> |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Scaphoid | - | - |
| Lunate | ✓ | - |
| Triquetral | - | - |
| Pisiform | - | - |
| Sesmoid | - | - |
| Trapezium | - | - |
| Trapezoid | - | - |
| Capitate | ✓ | - |
| Hamate | ✓ | - |
| <i>Metacarpals</i> | <i>Left</i> | <i>Right</i> |
| 1 | ✓ | - |
| 2 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | - |
| 5 | ✓ | - |

| <i>H.Phalanges (Left)</i> | <i>Complete</i> | <i>Incomplete</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Proximal | 3 | - |
| Medial | 3 | - |
| Distal | - | - |
| <i>H.Phalanges(Right)</i> | <i>Complete</i> | <i>Incomplete</i> |
| Proximal | 1 | - |
| Medial | - | - |
| Distal | - | - |



9. APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD SHEET

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

[Printable version](#)

OASIS ID: albionar1-45425

Project details

| | |
|--|---|
| Project name | Merton Hall, Northampton Street, Cambridge |
| Short description of the project | Planning permission was granted for the refurbishment and repair of Merton Hall, Northampton Street, Cambridge. Because of the archaeological importance of the site, a condition was attached to the permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. Albion Archaeology was commissioned by St John's College to carry out the archaeological works which comprised the monitoring of construction groundworks and the investigation and recording of revealed archaeological remains. The archaeological works took place during the summer of 2008 and identified Roman archaeological remains and some of the development history of the building. Findings included the remains of walls indicating the addition of the bay windows and the removal of internal room and building divisions, and other remains indicative of old floor surfaces and supporting structures. Human skeletal remains and a burial dating to the late Roman period were also found. These findings, along with archaeological evidence from previous building work in the vicinity, confirm the presence of a Roman cemetery in the area. C14 dating of the human skeletal material confirmed a date of the 3rd to 4th century AD. All artefacts and data gathered during the fieldwork will be consolidated into an archive and, subject to agreement with the site owner, deposited at Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Store. |
| Project dates | Start: 09-07-2008 End: 30-09-2008 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | MH1388 - Contracting Unit No. |
| Any associated project reference codes | ECB2980 - HER event no. |
| Type of project | Recording project |
| Monument type | INHUMATION Roman |
| Monument type | WALLS Post Medieval |
| Monument type | FIREPLACES Post Medieval |
| Monument type | FLOORS Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Roman |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | HUMAN BONE Roman |



| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Significant Finds | ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | ANIMAL BONE Modern |
| Significant Finds | CLAY PIPES Post Medieval |
| Investigation type | 'Recorded Observation' |
| Prompt | Planning condition |

Project location

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE Merton Hall, Northampton Street, Cambridge |
| Study area | 150.00 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 44490 58940 52.2092859222 0.114917245780 52 12 33 N 000 06 53 E Point |

Project creators

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation | Albion Archaeology |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | Albion Archaeology |
| Project director/manager | Robert Wardill |
| Project supervisor | Adam Lodoen |
| Project supervisor | Richard Gregson |

Project archives

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Physical Archive recipient | Cambs County Archaeological Stores |
| Physical Contents | 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal','Worked bone','other' |
| Digital Archive recipient | Cambs County Archaeological Stores |
| Digital Contents | 'Glass','Human Bones','Metal','Worked bone','other','Animal Bones','Ceramics' |
| Digital Media available | 'Database','GIS','Images raster / digital photography','Text' |
| Paper Archive recipient | Cambs County Archaeological Store |
| Paper Contents | 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Human Bones','Metal','Worked bone','other' |
| Paper Media available | 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Microfilm','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section' |

Project bibliography 1

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
|------------------|---|



| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Title | Merton Hall, Northampton Street, Cambridge: Archaeological Monitoring, Investigation and Recording |
| Author(s)/Editor (s) | 'Wardill, R' |
| Author(s)/Editor (s) | 'Lodoen, A' |
| Author(s)/Editor (s) | Meckseper, C |
| Other bibliographic details | 2010/106 |
| Date | 2011 |
| Issuer or publisher | Albion Archaeology |
| Place of issue or publication | Bedford |
| Description | Comb bound, client report, white cover |
| Entered by | Christiane Meckseper (cf.meckseper@gmail.com) |
| Entered on | 6 June 2011 |

OASIS:

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10. APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT DETAILS



Area: 1

Extent (ha):

OS Co-ordinates:

Description: Room RG1

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5 | Wall | Red bricks, dimensions 230 x 140mm. Wall base. Light brown yellow mortar. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Make up layer | Compact dark brown grey clay sand occasional small-medium ceramic building material, frequent small stones, occasional medium stones. Also contains frequent mortar fragments. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 26 | Subsoil | Compact mid brown grey clay sand frequent small stones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35 | Grave | Sub-rectangular ESE-WNW sides: irregular base: uneven dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.2m, max length 1.85m | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36 | Human skeleton | ESE-WNW direction of grave, head in SE, lying on right side, flexed position. Skeleton not in coffin. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 37 | Backfill | Firm mid grey clay silt occasional small chalk | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Area: 2

Extent (ha):

OS Co-ordinates:

Description: Room RG4

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 | Wall | Red bricks, dimensions 230 x 140mm. Wall base. Light brown yellow mortar. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Brickwork | Possible floor or support for joists. Yellow brick, dimensions 90 x 60 x 70 mm. random coursing, no bond. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Brickwork | Yellow bricks, dimensions 120 x 60 x 70mm to 230 x 120 x 70mm. Possible floor or support for joists. Random coursing, no bond. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Brickwork | Brick dimensions 120 x 60 x 70mm to 230 x 120 x 70mm. Possible floor or support for joists. Random coursing, no bond. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Wall | Wall footings. Limestone, ironstone and chalk. Roughly hewn stones, dimensions 30 x 20 x 10mm - 200 x 150 x 90mm. Random coursing. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Make up layer | Firm mid grey silty clay occasional small ceramic building material, moderate small stones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | Wall | Limestone wall. Light white yellow mortar. Dimesions of rough hewn stones 60 x 60 x 50mm to 106 x 80 x 70mm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 | Stone structure | Limestone . Possible padstone. Rougly hewn limestones, dimensions 110 x 130 x 100mm. Random coursing. Light white yellow silty mortar. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23 | Stone structure | Limestone . Possible padstone. Roughly squared limestones, dimensions 250 x 250mm to 420 x 400mm. Light white yellow silty mortar. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 78 | Wall | Wall completely covered in yellow lime mortar. Only top of wall revealed. Internal wall. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Area: 3

Extent (ha):

OS Co-ordinates:

Description: Room RG9

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|----------|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 39 | Make up layer | Firm dark grey clay silt occasional medium ceramic building material, occasional small stones. Occasional mortar fragments. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 49 | Floor | Red brick floor, dimensions of bricks 110 x 230mm wide, 30-60mm thick. Yellow mortar and concrete. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 95 | Grave | Sides: near vertical dimensions: min breadth 0.3m, min depth 0.35m, min length 0.25m. Grave cut, possibly N-S aligned. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 94 | Backfill | Dark grey silt occasional flecks chalk. Grave backfill. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 101 | Human skeleton | A human skull and vertebra. Grave cut extends outside of excavated area. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |



Area: 4

Extent (ha):

OS Co-ordinates:

Description: Modern extension and external areas

| Context: | Type: | Description: | Excavated: | Finds Present: |
|-----------------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 47 | Make up layer | Firm dark grey silty sand | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 51 | Wall | Single course of red and yellow bricks. 60 x 120 x 230mm. White mortar. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

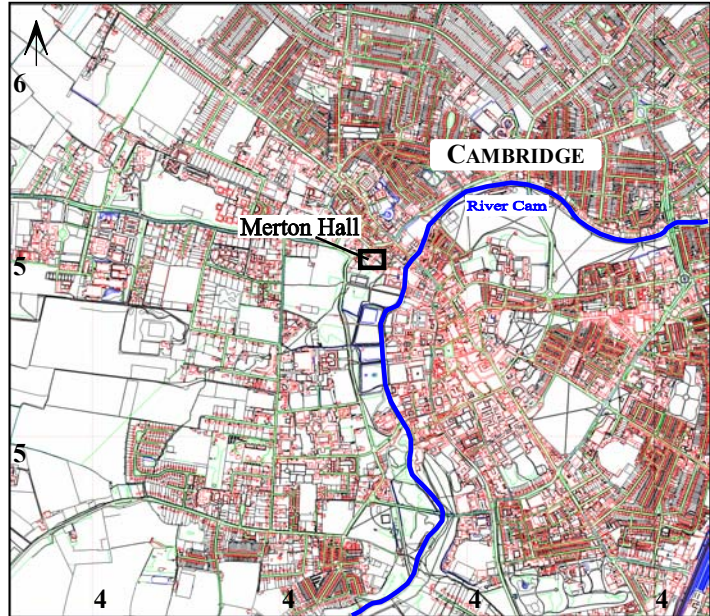
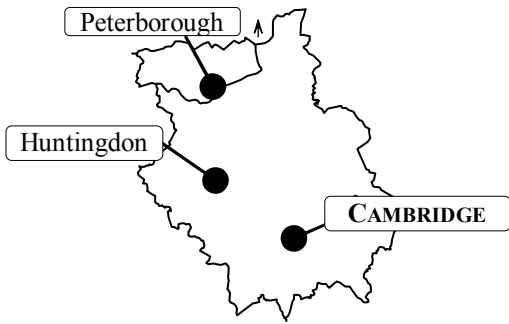
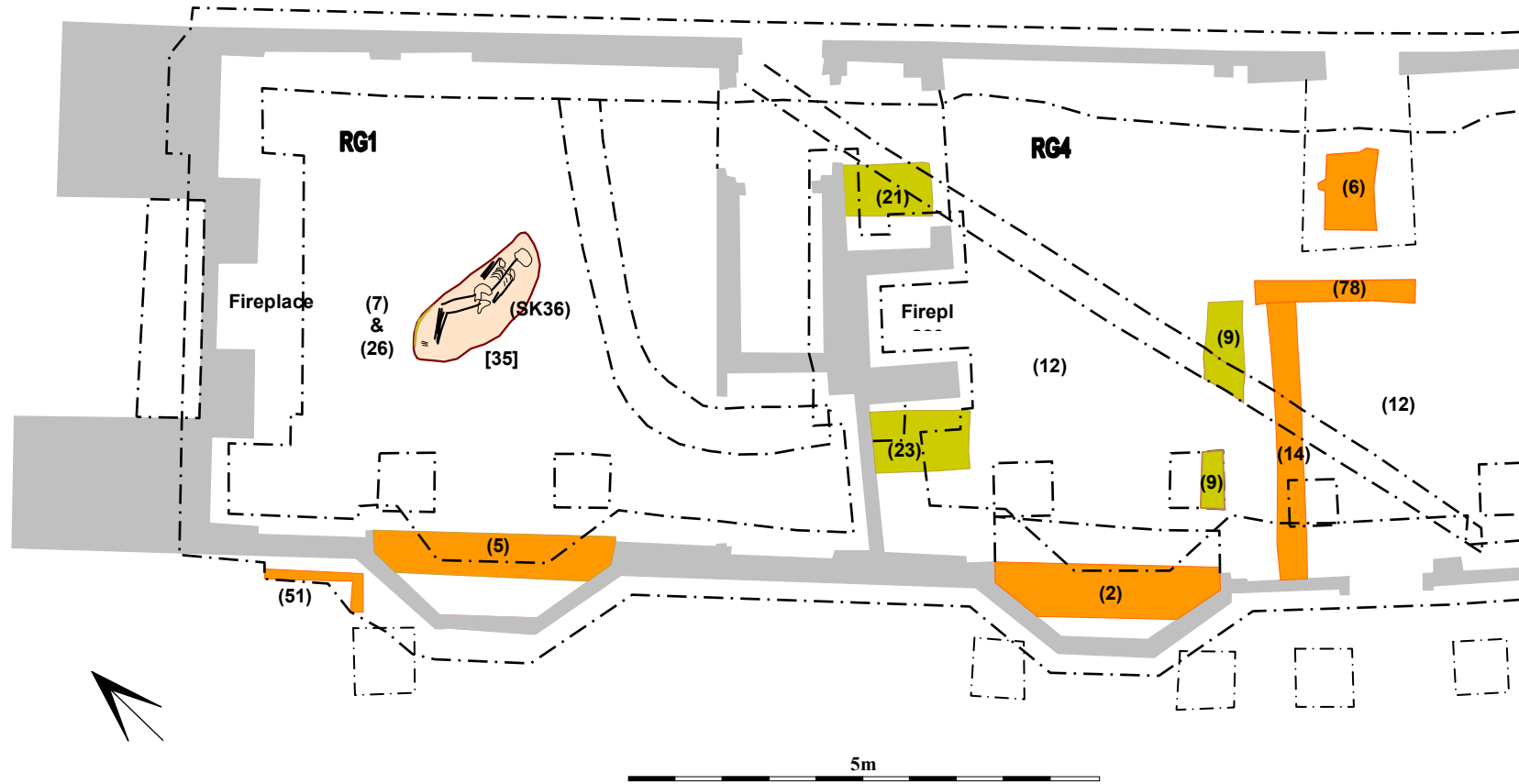


Figure 1: Site location plan

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



-  Groundwork excavations
-  Brick
-  Limestone
-  Grave

Figure 2: Merton Hall: North end of building

Merton Hall, Northampton Street, Cambridge.
Archaeological Monitoring, Investigation and Recording

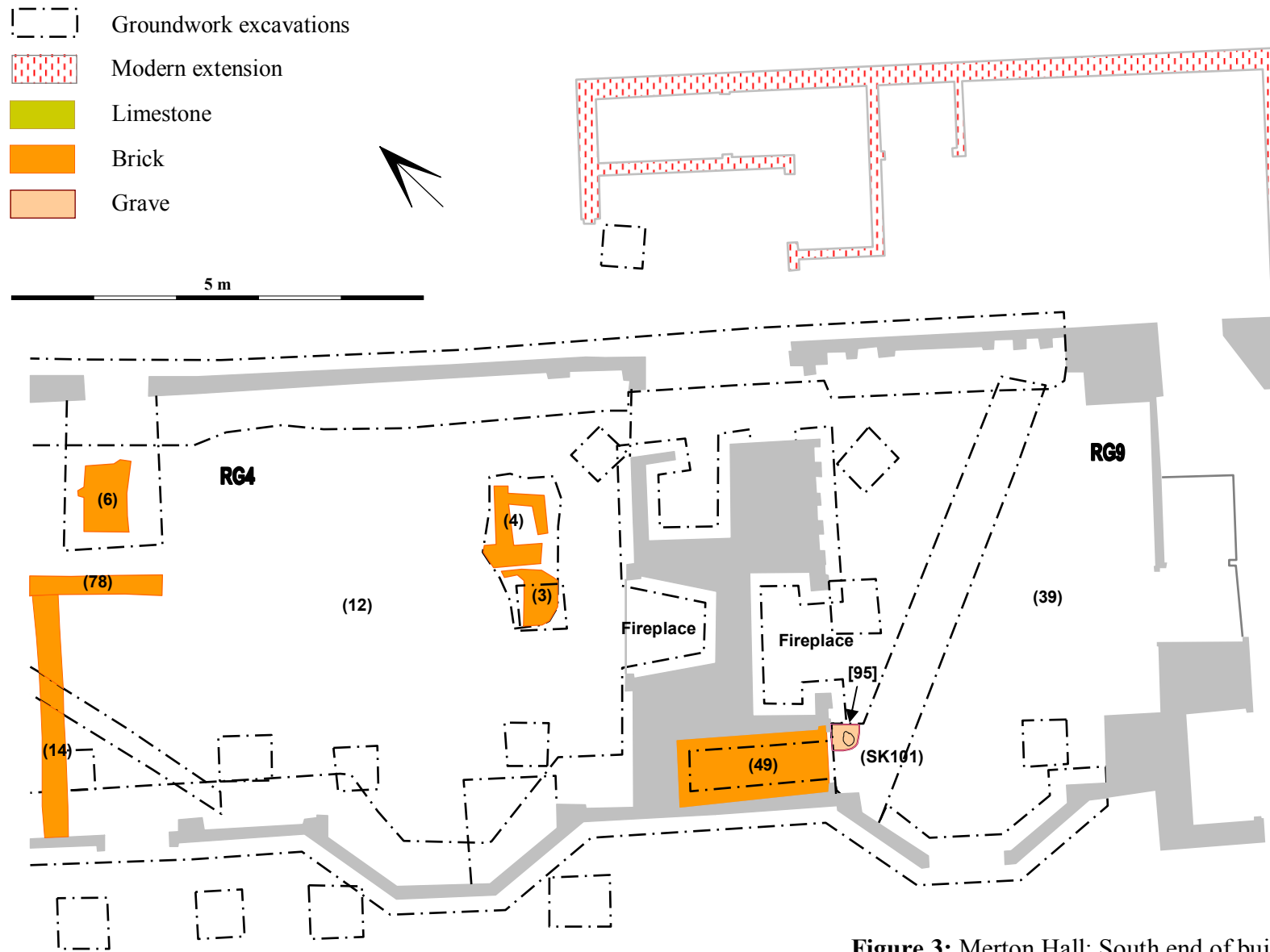


Figure 3: Merton Hall: South end of building



Figure 4: Grave [35] looking east. Scales 1m and 40cm



Figure 5: Skeleton SK36



Figure 6: Clay pipes from layer (47), undecorated bowls and stamped stems



Figure 7: Close-up of stamp on clay pipe stem: “Pawson Camb” (left) and print of stamp in white putty (right)



Figure 8: Pipe spurs decorated with small stars (on both sides)



Figure 9: Incised rim of one clay pipe bowl

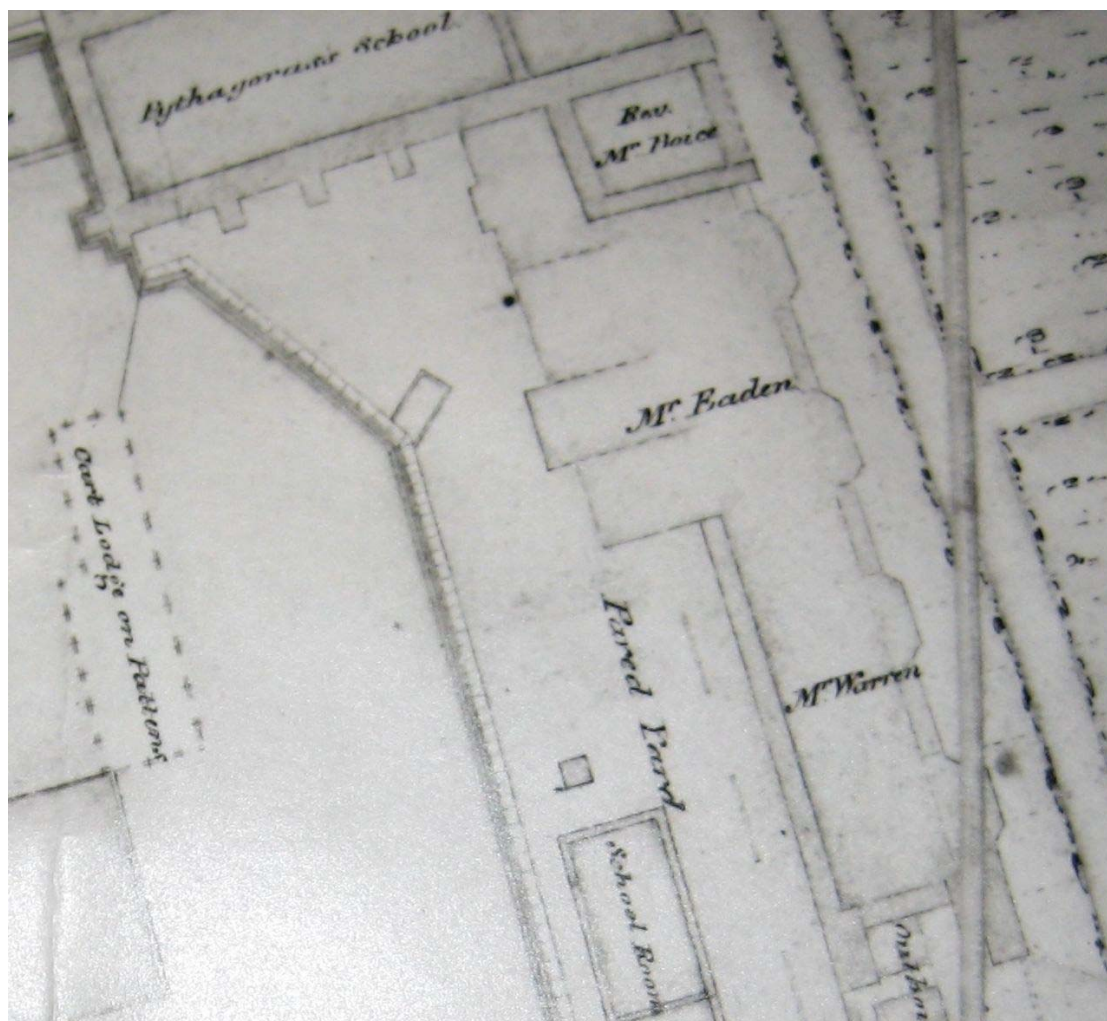
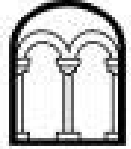


Figure 10: Detail of a c. 1820 plan of Merton Hall

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Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church,
St Mary's Street,
Bedford,
MK42 0AS

Telephone 0300 300 8141
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

