

**SPYE PARK HOUSE
SPYE PARK
CHITTOE
WILTSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

For

LPC (TRULL) LTD

CA REPORT: 07028

OCTOBER 2007

**COTSWOLD
ARCHAEOLOGY**



SPYE PARK HOUSE
SPYE PARK
CHITTOE
WILTSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CA PROJECT: 2201
CA REPORT: 07028

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Spye Park House
Location: Spye Park, Chittoe, Wiltshire
NGR: ST 9500 6735
Type: Watching brief
Date: 14-15 February, 12 March-5 April, 11-12 July
and 26 September 2007
Planning Reference: K/42421
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes
Site Code: SPC 07

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new country house on land at the former Spye Park House, Spye Park, Chittoe, Wiltshire.

Seven red brick walls and a red brick arch were identified, which are the remains of cellars and foundations of the former Spye Park House, constructed in the mid 19th century. These walls had been heavily truncated and the cellars backfilled with material during the demolition of the house in the late 20th century.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between February and September 2007 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for LPC (Trull) Ltd on land at the former Spye Park House, Spye Park, Chittoe, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: ST 9500 6735; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent for the construction of a new country house (Planning ref: K/42421). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.3 The archaeological fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a request for archaeological recording issued by Mr Roy Canham, the then County Archaeologist at Wiltshire County Council (WCC) and archaeological advisor to Kennet District Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and with a subsequent Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2006) and approved by Mr Canham. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001) and the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation* (WCC Archaeology Service 1995).

The site

- 1.4 The site is located on a gentle south-facing slope on the crest of Bowden Hill overlooking Melksham to the south-west. It comprises the location of a former large 19th-century country house situated within an historic landscape park (Fig. 1). The house was demolished in 1985 following a fire and only the entrance portico remains intact. At the time of the watching brief, the site comprised the footings and gardens of the former house. The house platform lies at approximately 140m AOD.
- 1.5 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Jurassic Coral Ragstone (Geological Survey 1974). Oolitic limestone overlain by clay was identified during the works.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 The archaeological potential of the site has been fully described in a desk-based assessment of Spye Park (CA 2001) and it is not necessary to fully reprise that information here. The findings of that report are summarised below.
- 1.7 The earliest recorded archaeological finds within Spye Park are two Mesolithic flint tools found 300m to the east of the former house. The line of the former Roman road between *Cunetio* (Mildenhall) and *Aquae Sulis* (Bath) runs east-west through Spye Park 80m to the north of the former house.
- 1.8 Chittoe is recorded as Crown property in the Domesday Book but was donated to Battle Abbey in 1087 with whom it remained until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. At this time the lands that became Spye Park passed to the Baynton family who constructed a house there following the loss of their exiting hall at Bromham in 1645. This new house, located c. 200m to the south of the current site, was demolished in the mid 19th century on behalf of the then owner, Mr Spicer. Mr Spicer was responsible for the construction of the large red brick house which stood on the current site. The latest Spicer house was largely destroyed by fire in 1974 and was finally demolished in 1985.

Methodology

- 1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2006). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks. The first phase of work comprised the excavation by machine of ten geotechnical trenches measuring between 1.5m and 3.5m in length and between 0.6m and 1.5m in width (Fig. 2). The trenches reached depths of between 1.6m and 4m below present ground level (BPGL). The second phase of work comprised work associated with the insertion of concrete foundations, this comprised the excavation of an area to the south east of the upstanding portico measuring approximately 28m by 33m to a depth of around 4.2m, followed by the excavation of the foundation trenches.
- 1.10 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).

- 1.11 The site archive is currently held at CA's offices in Kemble and will be deposited with the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes.

2. RESULTS

Geotechnical Trenches (Fig. 2, T1-10)

- 2.1 Natural clay was exposed in every trench except Trenches 1 and 2 at between 0.25m and 1.6m BPGL. In trenches 6, 7 and 8 the natural clay was overlain by a substantial thickness of demolition rubble which included red bricks, some of which were burnt. This was also exposed at the bases of Trenches 1 and 2. In Trench 2 this demolition material butted a red brick wall, 202. This wall was not fully exposed within the trench but was aligned north-east/south-west. The deposits in every trench were sealed by topsoil and subsoil layers.

Foundations

- 2.2 The excavation of the area for the insertion of the new foundations showed that the area had been excavated before. Seven heavily truncated red brick walls, some retaining their lime plaster (Walls 3 and 4; Fig. 5) and Wall 1 its concrete foundations, were encountered. Wall 5 was abutted by the remnants of brick arch 18 to the north-east (Fig. 4), the function of which was unclear. Stone slab flooring was also observed adjacent to Wall 1 at approximately 3.7m BPGL (Fig. 3). The previously excavated area had been backfilled with brick rubble, burnt timber, and fragments of decorated stonework including a section of cornice showing egg and dart moulding with traces of gold leaf. This piece was retained by the landowner.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The series of truncated walls identified during construction conform to the alignment of the latest Spicer house built in the mid 19th century and represent the remains of the foundations and cellars associated with the house, all of which were demolished in the late 20th century. Walls 1 and 4 may represent the location of a central load bearing wall, being much thicker than the walls 2, 5, 6 and 7, and the curved wall 3. It was not possible to accurately ascertain the layout of the remaining structural elements represented by the other walls with the little brickwork that remained.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

4.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Derek Evans and Kelly Saunders. This report was written by Jonathan Hart and Kelly Saunders with illustrations prepared by Jemma Elliot. The archive has been compiled by Jonathan Hart and Kelly Saunders and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2001 *Spye Park, Chittoe, Wiltshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Typescript report no. **01077**.

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2006 *Land at the Former Spye Park House, Spye Park, Chittoe, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**Trench 1**

101	Topsoil, 0m-0.25m BPGL
102	Demolition material: red brick (some burnt) and timber within orange-brown silty clay matrix, 0.25m+ BPGL, excavated to 3m BPGL without base of deposit being encountered

Trench 2

201	Topsoil, 0m-0.25m BPGL
202	Wall: red brick, very limited exposure within side of trench, top at 0.25m BPGL
203	Same as 102, 0.25m+ BPGL, excavated to 3m BPGL without base of deposit being encountered

Trench 3

300	Topsoil, 0m-0.25m BPGL
301	Possible natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 0.25m-1.5m BPGL
302	Natural substrate: dark blue-grey clay, 1.5m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 4

400	Topsoil, 0m-0.25m BPGL
401	Subsoil, 0.25m-0.4m BPGL
402	As 301, 0.4m-1.5m BPGL
403	As 302, 1.5m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 5

500	Topsoil, 0m-0.3m BPGL
501	Natural substrate?: brown-orange silty clay, 0.3m-0.5m BPGL
502	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 0.5m-2.7m BPGL
503	Natural substrate: oolitic limestone, 2.7m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 6

600	Topsoil, 0m-0.2m BPGL
601	Subsoil, 0.2m-0.4m BPGL
602	Demolition material: red brick (some burnt) and timber within orange-brown silty clay matrix, 0.4m-1.5m BPGL
603	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 1.5m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 7

700	Topsoil, 0m-0.2m BPGL
701	Demolition material: red brick (some burnt) and timber within orange-brown silty clay matrix, 0.2m-0.4m BPGL
702	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 0.4m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 8

800	Topsoil, 0m-0.25m BPGL
801	Demolition material: red brick (some burnt) and timber within orange-brown silty clay matrix, 0.25m-1.6m BPGL
802	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 1.6m-2.1m BPGL
803	Natural substrate: oolitic limestone, 2.1m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 9

900	Topsoil, 0m-0.3m BPGL
901	Natural substrate?: brown-orange silty clay, 0.3m-0.7m BPGL
902	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 0.7m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Trench 10

1001	Topsoil, 0m-0.3m BPGL
1002	Natural substrate: blue-grey clay, 0.3m+ BPGL, base not encountered

Watching Brief

1	Red brick wall. 5m and 8m, with a right angled return between, running SE-NW
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2	Red brick wall. 1.4 by 0.5m running NE-SW, heavily truncated
3	Red brick wall. Slightly curved in plan, running N-S, 2m by 1.5m, heavily truncated
4	Red brick wall. 1.5m by 1.5m, running SE-NW, heavily truncated
5	Red brick wall. 1.2m by 0.5m, running SE-NW, heavily truncated
6	Red brick wall. 2m by 0.5m, running NE-SW, heavily truncated
7	Red brick wall. 0.8m by 0.5m, running NE-SW, heavily truncated
8	Rubble Fill of demolished building
9	Stone flagged floor. 3.7m BPGL
10	Natural substrate. Blue-grey clay
11	Cut for wall 1. 5m by 8m. Not excavated
12	Cut for wall 2. 1.4m long. Not excavated
13	Cut for wall 3. 2m long. Not excavated
14	Cut for wall 4. 1.5m long. Not excavated
15	Cut for wall 5. 1.2m long. Not excavated
16	Cut for wall 6. 2m long. Not excavated
17	Cut for wall 7. 0.8m long. Not excavated
18	Red brick arch, abutts wall 5. 0.75m wide, wall 0.22m thick
19	Cut for arch 18. Not excavated

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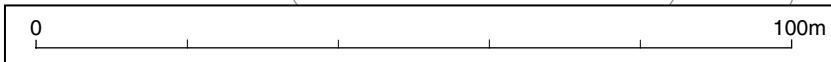
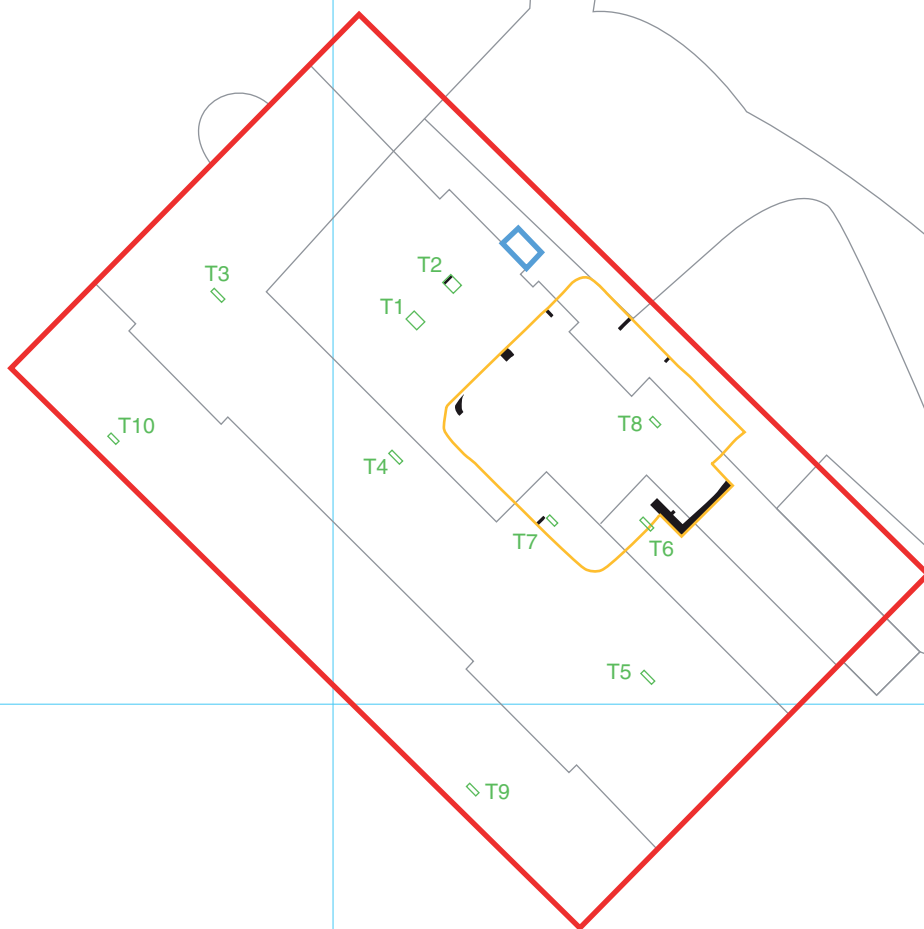


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PROJECT TITLE
**Spye Park House, Spye Park
 Chittoe, Wiltshire**

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
JE	1:25,000@A4	2201	1



- site
- area of observed groundworks
- ◇ test pits
- brick wall
- ◇ existing portico



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PROJECT TITLE

Spye Park House, Spye Park
Chittoe, Wiltshire

FIGURE TITLE

**The site, showing location
of groundworks**

DRAWN BY

JE

SCALE

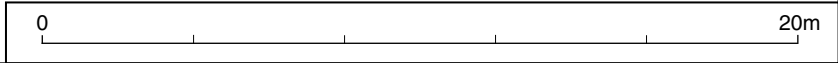
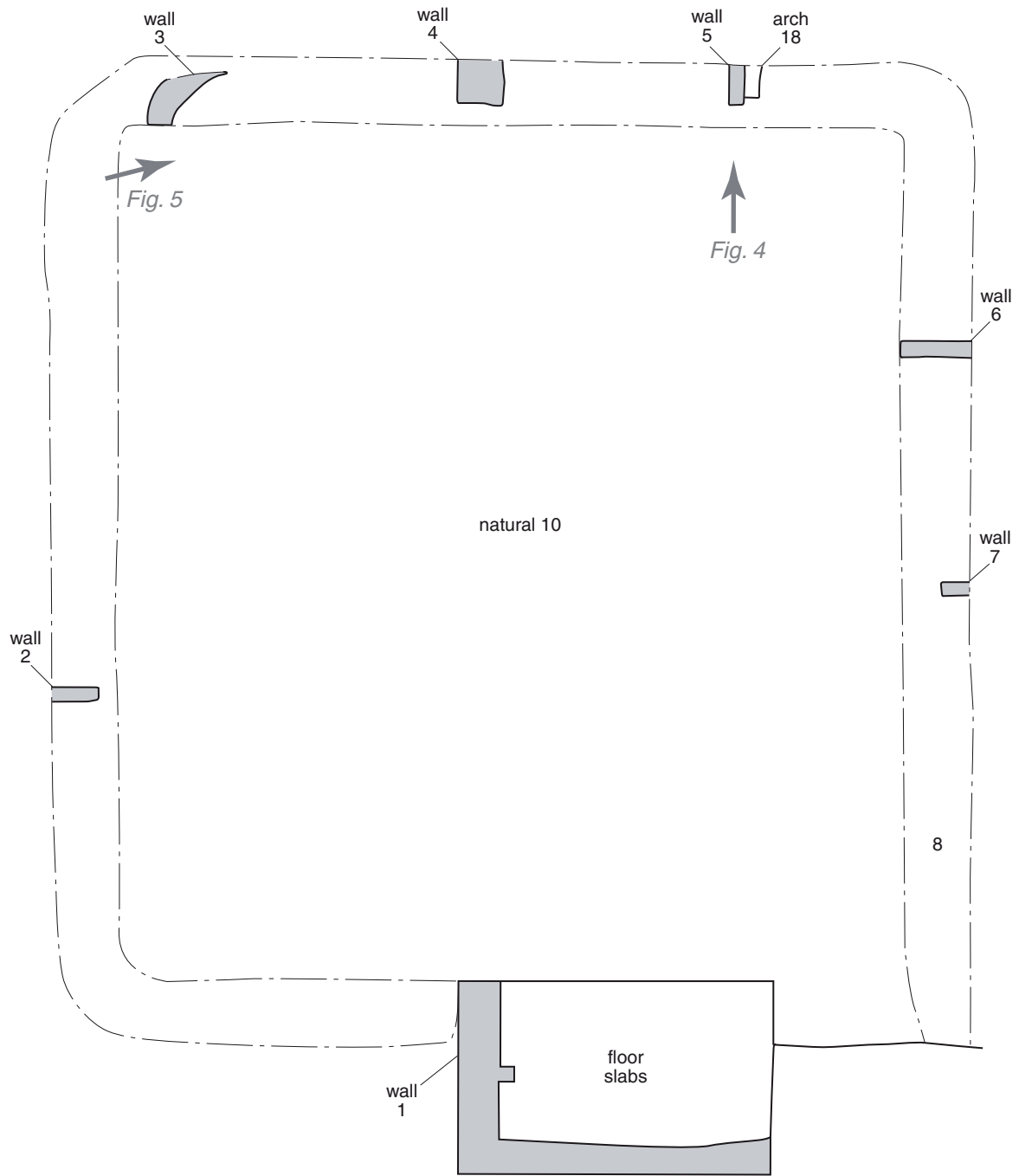
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PROJECT NO.

2201

FIGURE NO.

2




 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
PROJECT TITLE Spye Park House, Spye Park Chittoe, Wiltshire			
FIGURE TITLE Observed groundworks			
DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
JE	1:200@A4	2201	3



4



5

<p>4 Remnants of arch 18 and wall 5.</p> <p>5 View of south-west corner of area of groundworks</p>	 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
	<small>PROJECT TITLE</small> Spye Park House, Spye Park Chittoe, Wiltshire			
	<small>FIGURE TITLE</small> Photographs			
	<small>DRAWN BY</small> JE	<small>SCALE</small> n/a	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> 2201	<small>FIGURE NO.</small> 4 & 5