

**Summary of works: Archaeological monitoring and
recording in East and South Range, Halswell House,
Goathurst, Somerset**



*on behalf of
the client*

Report No. 25-30

Project No. 1373

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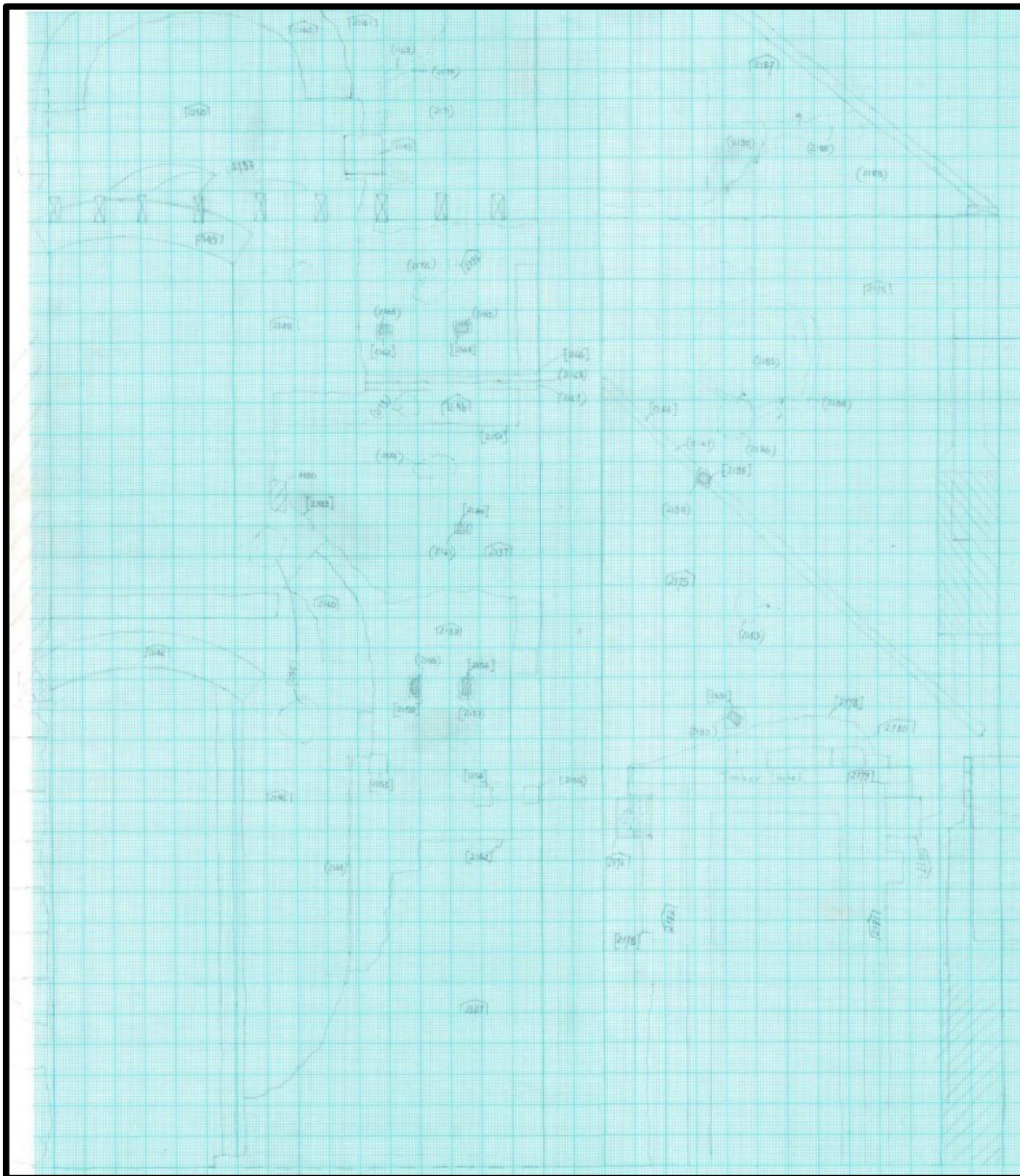
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Archaeological monitoring and recording in the East and South Range, Halswell House, Goathurst, Somerset.

Summary of works

Further to the recent work undertaken inside the East Range the following account is a brief summary of the archaeological recording. Prior to the latest phase of work only limited recording had been undertaken inside the east range. In the main this has consisted of a preliminary photographic survey of the range. Some building recording was undertaken in 2017 prior to the rendering of the east elevation of the east and south range. The work to date has suggested a more complex building development than is immediately apparent from the documentary history of the property. In addition to partial excavations in G18 and 19, as well as the courtyard, the latest work has also included the removal of internal finishes in G17, G18, G19, F24, and S20.



The works inside G18 and G19 exposed the fragmentary remains of a possible early Morte slate rubble foundation projecting beyond the line of the west wall of G19, with a small section surviving underneath the later timber partition separating G18 from G20 to the north. The scarring on the ground floor in the interior west wall of G18 suggests that this may originally have been a stone stair providing access from the courtyard to the upper floors of the newly extended south range. An area of scarring on the first floor level suggests that here too the original stair was removed and later infilled.



General view of the west elevation of the east range showing the projecting partial foundation of a possible earlier stair structure, the position of two earlier window openings, the position of the two later windows, and the late 18th century staircase arrangement. Looking east.

The original stair arrangement was subsequently rebuilt on a much grander scale. A context for this is likely to be the construction of G5/F3/S6 to the east, filling in the gap between the long south range and the separate kitchen block to the north. The west elevation of G18 and F24 contained evidence for two long rectangular window openings on the ground- and first floor, mirroring the scale and arrangements of the internal timber-framed lightwell with its three

internal openings. The remains of a single timber lintel above the lower-level opening and associated with this phase was exposed in the internal elevation. Access from the ground-floor was likely to have been through the original doorway opening in the north elevation, with the deep treads and risers extending to the level of the original lower height of the south range, while the decorative turned balusters within the lightwell openings added both interest and additional light.



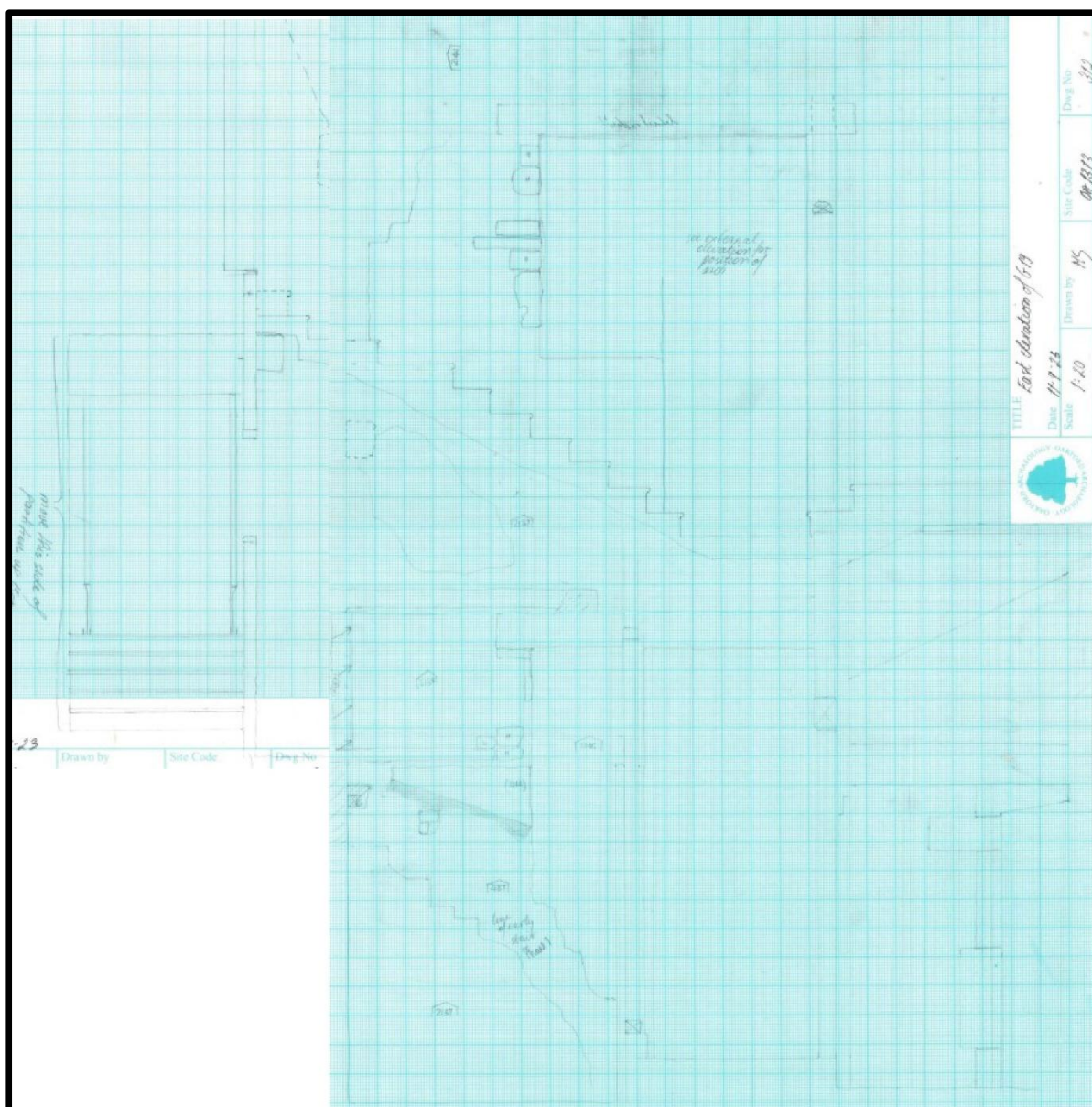
General view of the north elevation showing the position of two earlier windows, the remains of a possible pentice, the position of an earlier ground-floor window and later inserted doorway. Looking south.

In addition, previous historic building inside G12/13 and F16 has identified the remains of two similar long rectangular window openings. These pre-date the heightening of the south range, part of the major works undertaken in c.1590 by Sir Nicholas Halswell, suggesting that these windows, both within the south range and the staircase, are of a possible mid-late 16th century date.



General view of the north elevation of the south range showing the partial position of the earlier window on the ground floor. 2m scale. Looking south.

At some point, perhaps as part of the extensive works undertaken in the early 17th century by Sir Nicholas Halswell, a new unified façade was built in line with the west wall of the staircase. The staircase was extended to match the new height of the south range, while the earlier window openings were infilled and two large new windows with relieving arches above built, matching the window arrangement in the west elevation of G22/F29. It is possible that as part of the works new windows were also inserted into the north elevation of the south range, including at ground-floor level immediately to the west of the staircase. The remains of a hood mould were exposed above a later doorway by the removal of the internal finishes, the window providing light to the large, former kitchen within the south range. It is likely that the original north wall of the staircase was removed at this date and the current timber partition inserted between the stair and the new west doorway. The remains of an infilled roof scar extended across the blocked window openings, post-dating their infill, and as far as the base of the new window openings. Beyond any evidence has been removed by later 18th century alterations and it is only possible to speculate that following the construction of the new façade a lean-to roof, perhaps part of a timber pentice, was built above the level of the window in the north elevation of the south range and extending across the lower level of the newly built windows in the west elevation of the former staircase, providing perhaps a covered walkway for the servants between the south range and the main kitchen in the east range. It is possible that the window in the north elevation of the south range was converted into a doorway at this period, providing additional access to the range from the courtyard.



West internal elevation of the staircase showing earlier window openings, position of early stair, and successive later window and doorway insertions.

Sometime in the late 18th century a new external staircase was built within the courtyard providing access between the ground-, first-, and second floor of the east and south ranges. The later windows were removed and the former openings altered into two new doorways, while internally the level of the landings altered, and the earlier stair, with its deep treads and risers, replaced with a new stair with shallower and smaller treads and risers. It is likely that the ground floor stair within G19 was removed at this date, with the new arrangement negating the need for a stair in this position. Lastly, additional lighting was provided by two large windows in the west elevation of the new staircase.

A new stair was inserted inside the later stair turret at some point in the early 20th century, perhaps at the same time as a new single storey building was built against the west elevation of the stair turret. These works are likely associated with the extensive works undertaken by Charles T. H. Kemeys-Tynte following the fire of 1923. Finally, a boiler was installed within

part of the former staircase in G19 by a previous owner some time in the late 20th or early 21st century.

The records, including context sheets, drawings and digital photographs will be digitised and added to the existing physical and digital archive in line with ADS guidelines, and the results of the work will, in due course, be published.

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