ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/148

Rotunda Basement, Ickworth House, Ickworth
IKW 017

R. Brooks
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HER Information

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Project Officer: Rob Brooks
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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out in the basement of the Rotunda at Ickworth House, Ickworth, Suffolk. This revealed a brick culvert that had been filled with English bond brickwork and foundations relating to the existing walls.
1. Introduction

An archaeological recording was carried out in the basement of the Rotunda at Ickworth House, Ickworth, Suffolk, in part of Room 19 (Figs. 1 and 2). This was in conjunction with works to extend the existing lift shaft to basement level. The work was carried out on 16th and 21st July 2009 and was commissioned and funded by The National Trust.

Figure 1. Site location

2. Archaeological and historical background

The history of Room 19 is somewhat uncertain, although on the 1803 plan of the house it is listed as a ‘Cellar or Room for the Cook’ and a plan from the middle of the 19th century shows that it had a stove and recess (Unknown author, 2008). At some point it may have functioned as a bedroom. Its use in the recent past up until the current works has been as a Male WC.
Figure 2. Basement plan from *Rotunda Basement, Ickworth House Conservation Plan* (Unknown author, 2008)
3. Methodology

A visit was made to the site during the removal of the modern floor levels and sub-base material by the building contractors. At this point several digital photographs at a resolution of 300 x 300 dpi were taken and preliminary measurements were made of the layout of the room. A second visit was made when removal of the rubble and concrete levels was complete. Further photographs were taken and a full layout plan was made. Sections were also drawn of the culvert and house footings at a scale of 1:10.

4. Results

The removal of the overlying material in Room 19 revealed two architectural features of the house (Fig. 2 and Appendix 1). The first of these was culvert 0001; a brick and mortar domed structure with a relatively flat base (Fig. 3). This ran through the room on a NNE-SSW alignment from the NW-SE wall, before curving NW-SE and heading underneath the remaining modern footings. At some point a small stretch of the top of the culvert had been removed at the NW-SE wall and it had been bricked-up to be flush with the wall. It measured c.0.52m across externally. From the internal base to the top of where the bricks had been removed during the blocking of the culvert it measured c.0.26m. The base of the culvert was relatively smooth. It had been bricked up with a mixture of red and pale yellow bricks 0002, which had been laid in an English bond pattern. The NW-SE alignment of the culvert lined up directly with a now disused down pipe that had carried excess water from the roof. As such it seems likely that the culvert drained the water from this pipe.

The other prominent feature of the room was the brickwork relating to the foundations of the house (Fig. 3). These ran along the NW-SE wall between the culvert and the modern door and along the N-S wall from the modern concrete approximately 0.9m north. In the northern corner of the room it looked as though the brickwork had been removed. The bricks in the top course were relatively uniform in size at c.0.27-0.3m long x c.0.1m wide and c.0.7m tall. The two courses below this were less uniform, and below these were some very roughly laid stone blocks that were set into disturbed grey clay. Along the N-S wall the second and third courses of brickwork stepped out from the top course. Overlying all of these contexts was a rubble infill of fragmentary bricks, mortar and other rubble that was thought to have been placed there in the 1960s.
Figure 3. Plan of Room 19

Figure 4. Sections
Plate 1. Room 19, facing north-east
Plate 2. Culvert 0001

Plate 3. Foundation brickwork 0003
5. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds T:\Arc\Archive field proj\ickworth\IKW 017 Ickworth House recording

6. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The monitoring was carried out and directed by Rob Brooks from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team, and managed by Andrew Tester.

Production of site plans and sections was carried out by Crane Begg and Rob Brooks. The report was checked by Richenda Goffin.

7. Bibliography


Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.
## Appendix 1 - Context list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Under</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0001</td>
<td>0001</td>
<td>Culvert</td>
<td>Culvert that runs N-S from the NW-SE wall, before curving to run NW-SE and running into the area of unremoved footing. Constructed from bricks and mortar. At some point the culvert was bricked up. In cross-section the culvert was domed at the top, and appeared to have a relatively flat base, although this was worn, presumably by water movement. The external width was c.0.52m. The internal height was c.0.26m. Near the north wall, the top of the culvert had been damaged/removed.</td>
<td>0002</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0002</td>
<td>0001</td>
<td>Culvert fill</td>
<td>Bricks that filled up the culvert. Some of this appeared to be clumps of rubble and mortar and may represent loose material that fell in when the culvert was bricked up. Where it had been bricked up, a mix of pale yellow and red bricks had been used which measured c.0.22m x c.0.115m x c.0.06m tall.</td>
<td>0001</td>
<td>0004</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0003</td>
<td>0003</td>
<td>Foundation brickwork</td>
<td>Brickwork presumably relating to the foundations of the house. This ran along the NW-SE wall from the modern door to the culvert. Another stretch was recorded along the N-S wall from the modern footing, north for c.0.9m and had then been removed at some point. A section of the footing was drawn near the modern door and reveals three courses of bricks above some roughly laid stone blocks. The bricks were c.0.27-0.3m long x c.0.1m wide and c.0.7m tall. The bricks below this course were more irregular and not clear for measuring.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0004</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rubble</td>
<td>Material thought to have been infilled in the 1960s that is located around the foundation brickwork and culvert, etc. Consisted of fragmentary bricks and mortar.</td>
<td>0002</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>