

**A watching brief at Swards End Farm,  
13 Redgates Lane, Swards End,  
Saffron Walden, Essex  
September-November 2007**

**report prepared by  
Howard Brooks and David Ross**

**on behalf of  
Alun Design Consultancy**

CAT project code: 07/9c  
Saffron Walden Museum accession code: SAFWM 2007.170  
NGR: TL 5710 3852



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**CAT Report 465**  
May 2008

# **A watching brief at Seward's End Farm, 13 Redgates Lane, Seward's End, Saffron Walden**

## **Summary**

*A watching brief on the underpinning of a 17th-century farmhouse associated with a potentially earlier moated enclosure failed to reveal evidence of any earlier activity.*

## **Introduction**

This is the report on an archaeological watching brief on the underpinning of the farmhouse at Swards End Farm, 13 Redgates Lane, Swards End, Saffron Walden, Essex. The work was commissioned by Tarry Moore of Alun Design Consultancy, and was carried out between September and November 2007 by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). The CAT project code is 08/1e and the NGR is TL 5710 3852.

This report is on work associated with the farmhouse alone. Should there be any development elsewhere on the site, for example on the barn or piggery, this will be the subject of a separate report.

## **Archaeological background**

Seward's End farmhouse is Grade II listed, and is Priority 1 on the buildings at risk register. It has a 17th-century and later timber frame (refaced in 1948), but there is the potential for it to be earlier in date (Essex Historic Environment Record or EHER no 27175). The early 20th-century brick farm buildings are of limited interest, but the 'cowshed' to the north-east of the farmhouse contained stalls and a copper. Also to the north-east of the farmhouse lies an incomplete moated enclosure of possible medieval date (EHER no 156).

## **Method and aim**

All work was carried out in accordance with a methodology agreed with the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (HEM) team. Sketch plans other than the one reproduced here are included in the site archive.

The aim was to record the nature, date, function and importance of any exposed archaeological remains, specifically anything pre-dating the 17th-century farmhouse or associated with the moat.

## **Report** (Figs 1-2)

### *10th September 2007* (Fig 1)

A 1m-long section of the north end of the west wall of the kitchen (the room in the north-west corner of the building) had been dug out for underpinning, to a depth of 1m below site ground-level. At the top of the exposed section, four courses of soft red bricks were exposed. These were the foundation plinth of the 17th-century timber wall. Below the bricks, the rest of the exposed section showed boulder clay. Looking into the east section of the trench (ie towards the interior), a 15cm depth of modern red ceramic tiles and their concrete base were exposed. These rested directly on boulder clay.

### *19th September 2007*

The trench for the north wall had been opened up. Nothing archaeological was visible. The excavation of the footings for the south wall of the utility room (ie the room in the north-east corner of the house) was monitored. Nothing archaeological was seen.

### *6th November 2007*

The footings trenches for the east and south walls of the drawing room (ie the room in the south-east corner of the house) had been dug out. Nothing archaeological was visible in them. The continuing excavation of the same wall trench to the west, around the south side of the sitting room (ie the room in the south-west corner of the house) revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

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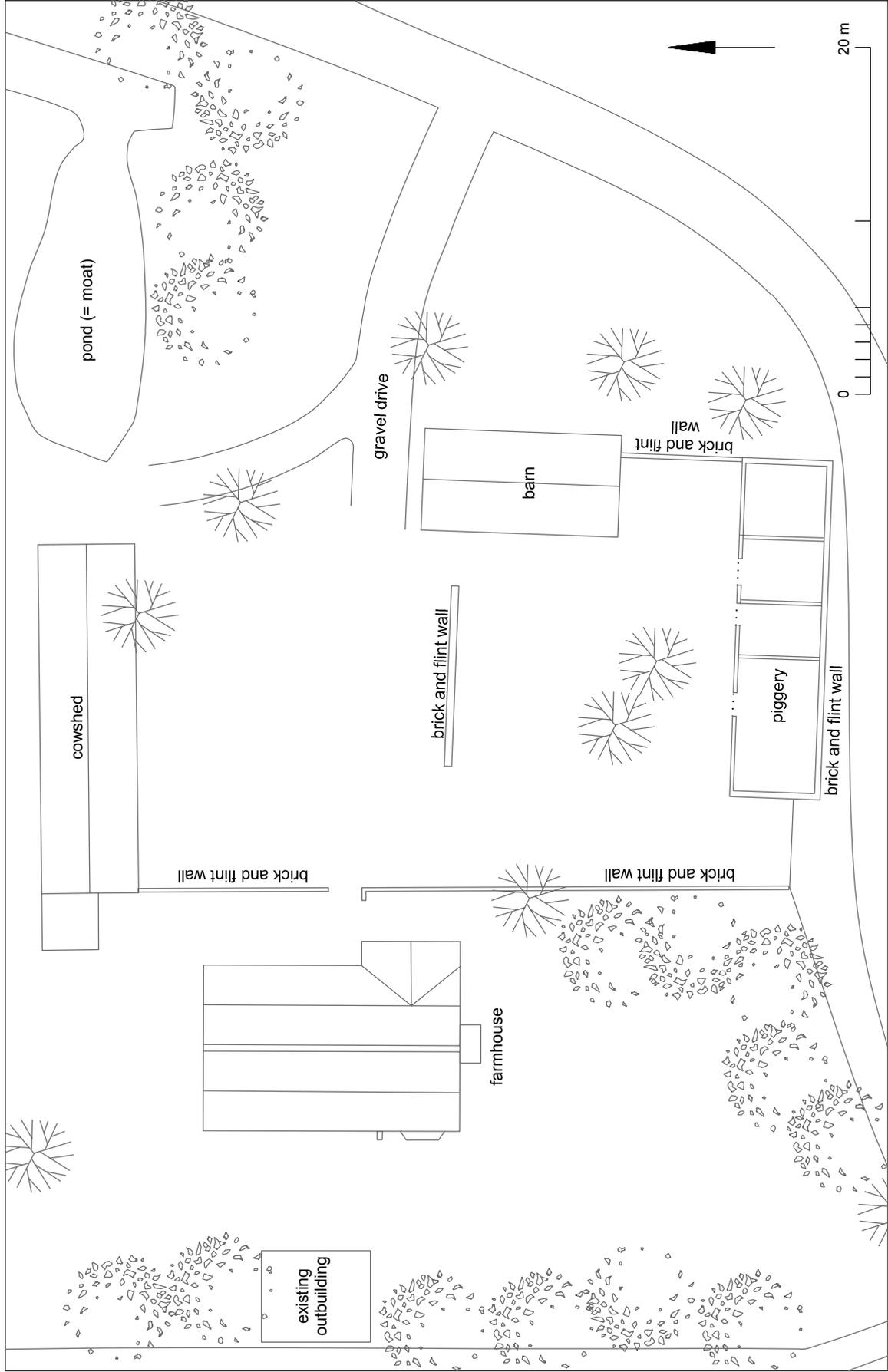
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Fig 1 Site plan.



Fig 2 Plan of farmhouse foundations, showing observed footings.

**Essex Historic Environment Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> Swards End Farm, 13 Redgates Lane, Swards End, Saffron Walden, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Saffron Walden	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5710 3852	<b>Site code:</b> CAT project code: 07/9c Museum accession code: SAFWM: 2007.170
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> September-November 2007	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> Farmhouse footprint is approximately 160m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further seasons anticipated?</b> Possibly (on other farm buildings at same site)	<b>Related EHER nos:</b> 156, 27175
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 465	
<b>Periods represented:</b> None	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> <i>A watching brief on the underpinning of a 17th-century farmhouse associated with a potentially earlier moated enclosure failed to reveal evidence of any earlier activity.</i>	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b> None	
<b>Keywords:</b> post-medieval, farmhouse, moat	<b>Significance:</b> neg
<b>Author of summary:</b> Howard Brooks	<b>Date of summary:</b> May 2008