

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 1 of 7

February 28, 1995

Interim Report of Findings, Archaeological Sensitivity Survey, Captain Oliver Filley House, Bloomfield, Connecticut.

Archaeological field investigations at the Capt. Oliver Filley House were initiated by Archaeological Research Specialists and the Wintonbury Historical Society in late November of 1994. Due to the onset of inclement weather prior to completion of the agreed upon scope-of-work (as outlined below), completion of these investigations and preparation of a final report had to be postponed until late spring of 1995. However, sufficient evidence has been generated by ARS's partially complete survey to generate the following tentative interpretations and recommendations. A final report of this survey's findings, complete with artifact inventories, analyses, black and white photographs, maps and illustrations, will be submitted to the Wintonbury Historical Society and the Connecticut Historical Commission during May of 1995.

V.d.1. INTRODUCTION

In response to a request made by the Wintonbury Historical Society of Bloomfield, Connecticut on October 30, 1994, Archaeological Research Specialists of Meriden, Connecticut initiated an archaeological sensitivity survey of the Filley House grounds. The project had originally been outlined in the Request For Proposal (RFP) as follows:

A. Provide a perimeter exterior soil survey around the house a minimum of 5 feet - 0 feet from the exterior wall.

Information Priority was as follows:

1. Locate original exterior grade at perimeter of building.
2. Look for signs of use near the existing Minor Wing arched portico.
3. Determine the location of the Major Wing's 1885 porch and determine when the porch may have been built.
4. Look for artifacts around exterior doors and kitchen windows.
5. Determine the location and age of the structure evident in the rear of the Minor Wing.
6. Review with the Historic Architect digging around the lower wall lintels of the house.

B. Provide a report summarizing Field findings.

V.d.2. PROPOSED SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Subsurface Testing

ARS strongly recommends that a thorough walkover inspection of the adjoining grounds be conducted by Wintonbury Historical Society members at the earliest opportunity for the purposes of documenting the fragile,

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 2 of 7

February 28, 1995

above-ground features which are contemporaneous with the Filley House (i.e., creamery, animal pens, silo, barns, etc.) Further, once located, Historical Society members are encouraged to conduct an intensive documentary search in order to determine the date of construction, function and duration of use of each feature/outbuilding. The results of these investigations will serve to verify and enhance whatever archaeological investigations may be conducted on the property and any future Historical Society interpretive programs. In regards to the above-mentioned components of the Capt. Oliver Filley House archaeological project area, ARS submits the following revisions for your consideration.

1. Locate original exterior grade at perimeter of building.

ARS concurs that subsurface investigation could yield valuable information regarding whatever major landfilling/landscaping activities have occurred in the vicinity of the Filley House. Therefore, ARS intends to provide Historical Society volunteers with the necessary training and supervision which a systematic shovel testing survey will require.

2. Look for signs of use near the existing Minor Wing arched portico.

ARS does not believe that archaeological testing would be the most productive avenue of research in regards to this

issue. This assessment was confirmed upon visual inspection of the structure.

3. Determine the location of the Major Wing's 1885 porch and determine when the porch may have been built.

ARS does not believe that archaeological testing would be the most productive avenue of research in regards to this issue. However, ARS intends to provide Historical Society volunteers with the necessary training and supervision that this phase of testing will require.

4. Look for artifacts around exterior doors and kitchen windows.

ARS recommends that the rear of the house be the focus of such research as it appears to have the greatest archaeological potential. Specifically, investigations should concentrate around and underneath the extant, wooden addition located adjacent to the original kitchen. Said addition would have sealed whatever domestic/trash deposits or cultural features (such as a well or cistern) may have been placed in close proximity to the kitchen. Upon removal of the wooden floor within this addition, ARS proposes to shovelshave 100% of the surface area in 2 to 4 inch levels to the junction between topsoil and subsoil levels. Minimal testing will be conducted below this interface (i.e., at least two levels of sterile subsoil will be excavated within 50 cm² STPs placed at 6 to 15 foot

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 3 of 7

February 28, 1995

intervals).

5. Determine the location and age of the structure evident in the rear of the Minor Wing.

ARS does not believe that archaeological testing would be the most productive avenue of research in regards to this issue. This assessment was confirmed upon visual inspection of the structure.

6. Review with the Historic Architect digging around the lower wall lintels of the house.

ARS believes that subsurface archaeological investigation is not required to address this concern. Rather, careful investigation (cleaning, drawing, etc.) of the lintel structure from inside the basement should enable researchers to determine the nature and function of these architectural features without the aid of archaeological survey along the foundation's exterior. ARS will provide whatever assistance Historical Society volunteers require in this regard.

7. Investigation of the remains of an addition which existed at the rear of the Filley House's Major Wing.

ARS recommends that the remains of a brick and stone foundation adjacent to the rear of the Major Wing be completely exposed, mapped and archaeologically tested in

order to gain information regarding the nature and function of this addition. ARS proposes to shovel shave 100% of the surface area within the foundation wall in 2 to 4 inch levels to the junction between topsoil and subsoil levels. Minimal testing will be conducted below this interface both within said walls and immediately adjacent to them on the exterior (i.e., at least two levels of sterile subsoil will be excavated within 50 cm² STPs placed at 6 to 15 foot intervals).

V.d.3. PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The preliminary interpretation of ARS's archaeological investigations and on-site surficial observations can be used to substantiate many of the assessments made by John O. Curtis in his architectural report dated September 1994. However, many questions are also raised which may aid in the refinement of his interpretations and may serve to refute a number of them as well.

1. Locate original exterior grade at perimeter of building, and 3. Determine the location of the Major Wing's 1885 porch and determine when the porch may have been built

The Capt. Oliver Filley House built in 1834 reveals many interesting features which have been extensively altered during subsequent occupations. Confirmation of the existence and location of a front porch is possible by means

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 4 of 7

February 28, 1995

of visual inspection of the major wing's east facade where the porch's roofline is still visible. Archaeological testing in this area has uncovered a faint, linear stain which runs parallel to the facade along the eastern porch wall. This could well be remnant of a builders' trench or simply the cast left by decaying timbers or a foundation sill. This porch addition clearly did not have a very substantial permanent foundation (i.e., no footings per se; likely, it was a dry-laid, above-ground structure). Interestingly, archaeological testing in this area also located a much deeper foundation of unknown function, below the 1880's porch. A linear arrangement of stones and brick seem to confine an aggregate living floor and possible domestic debris. The depth at which this feature was uncovered and lack of continuity with above strata, tend to substantiate hypotheses concerning a major filling episode(s) and/or change in grade within the southeastern portion of the Filley House area (see discussion of the minor wing's arched entry for further information in this regard).

To date, four 50 cm² shovel test pits have been partially excavated at this locale.

2. Look for signs of use near the existing Minor Wing arched portico.

We pose the possibility that the arched entryway in this ell may have been a carriage barn or cold storage area. The

Filley House's minor wing is obviously utilitarian in nature, and the rooms on the second floor were probably home to the hired help. The cellar under the eastern end of this wing is merely a crawl space. Surficial observations indicate that a large sandstone slab remains in place immediately south of the easternmost bay in this carriage shed. We suggest that slab may have been the original carriage ramp leading into said bay, and hypothesize that the incline of this slab may support our tentative conclusions regarding a major filling episode and/or grade change in this portion of the yard of the Filley house.

4. Look for artifacts around exterior doors and kitchen windows.

ARS recommended that the rear of the house be the focus of such research since it appeared to have the greatest archaeological potential. Specifically, investigations had been designed to concentrate around and underneath the extant, wooden addition located adjacent to the original kitchen. We hypothesized that said addition would have sealed whatever domestic/trash deposits or cultural features (such as a well or cistern) may have been placed in close proximity to the kitchen. We had proposed to remove the wooden floor within this addition so that archaeological excavation could then be initiated. Unfortunately, however, this addition has a poured concrete floor (with possibly a wooden floor below) and excavation could not be conducted

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 5 of 7

February 28, 1995

at this time.

5. *Determine the location and age of the structure evident in the rear of the Minor Wing.*

ARS did not believe that archaeological testing would be the most productive avenue of research in regards to this issue. A newspaper article dated 9/3/93 appeared in *The Bloomfield Journal* in which Marguerite Pinney, the wife of a former Filley House resident, was quoted as saying:

" It has great, huge kitchen. Attached, out the back of the house, was an addition where the housekeeper or cook or hired man lived. It's since torn down, that wing, but the door on the second floor went to it."

6. *Review with the Historic Architect digging around the lower wall lintels of the house.*

If there was a major change in grade around the Filley House, this could explain why the lower level windows were bricked up after the cellar stairway was constructed.

ARS researchers have consistently noted that the lower level windows along the south wall of the minor wing appear larger and "more functional" in appearance than those around the remainder of the house. We propose that the former were originally used for coal and wood delivery to the cellar

(prior to a major grade change), and the latter were less utilitarian and perhaps simply use for light, ventilation and/or ornamentation.

7. *Investigation of the remains of an addition which existed at the rear of the Filley House's Major Wing.*

ARS recommended that the remains of the brick and stone foundation adjacent to the rear of the Major Wing be completely exposed, mapped and archaeologically tested in order to gain information regarding the nature and function of this addition. Eight 1 m² excavation units have been partially excavated so that the entire foundation and floor of this addition are currently exposed. Mapping and photography are on-going.

V.d.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Completion of this archaeological investigation will, hopefully, yield diagnostic information which will enable analysts to correlate major episodes of alteration of the Filley House. For example, at what time was the cellar stairway added, lower level windows filled in, and southeastern yard filled in? Why was the addition built at the northwest corner of the house and when was it destroyed? Might said addition have sealed any domestic/trash deposits or cultural features (such as a well or cistern) which may have been placed in

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 6 of 7

February 28, 1995

close proximity to the kitchen? Upon removal of the aggregate floor within this addition, ARS proposes to shovelshave 100% of the surface area in 2 to 4 inch levels to the junction between topsoil and subsoil levels. Minimal testing will be conducted below this interface (i.e., at least two levels of sterile subsoil will be excavated within 50 cm² STPs placed at 6 to 15 foot intervals).

ARS strongly recommends that a thorough walkover inspection of the adjoining grounds be conducted by Wintonbury Historical Society members at the earliest opportunity for the purposes of documenting the fragile, above-ground features which are contemporaneous with the Filley House (i.e., creamery, animal pens, silo, barns, etc.) Further, once located, Historical Society members are encouraged to conduct an intensive documentary search in order to determine the date of construction, function and duration of use of each feature/outbuilding. The results of these investigations will serve to verify and enhance whatever archaeological investigations may be conducted on the property and any future Historical Society interpretive programs.

We further recommend that the Wintonbury Historical Society make every effort to either confirm or deny Marguerite Pinney's recollection concerning the addition located immediately north of the Filley House's minor wing as it appeared in the September 3, 1993 edition of the

Bloomfield Record.

Finally, ARS encourages the Wintonbury Historical Society to consider implementing an archaeological monitoring and salvage program through which they can participate in the evaluation and preservation of significant archaeological and/or historic resources during the course of the Capt. Oliver Filley House restoration attempt.

V.d.5. FURTHER HYPOTHESES

As is the nature of archaeological investigation, once work begins and our original hypotheses and research design begin to be addressed, new questions and hypotheses are raised.

1. Why and when was the chimney removed?
2. Are the 12/4 windows on the second floor of the ell possibly earlier than the 6/6 windows in the rest of the house?
3. Why was the stairway in the main house altered? Could it have been because the chimney for the south parlor and second floor fireplaces was larger and therefore took up more space in the center hall? Or was it just an open floor plan with the back windows

The Captain Oliver Filley House

V. d. Archaeology Archaeological Research Specialists

Page 7 of 7

February 28, 1995

(now bricked-up) illuminating the entryway? When was the stairway altered?

4. Where was the original cellar stairway? Could it have been located in the center entrance prior to that stairway's reconstruction?