

**Land to the North of Home Farm, Main Street,
Woolverstone, Suffolk**

Planning application: B/10/00219

HER Ref: WLV 050

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Site details for HER

Name: Land to the north of Home Farm, Woolverstone, IP9 1AJ

Client: A W Mayhew (Farms) Ltd

Local planning authority: Babergh DC

Planning application ref: B/10/00219

Development: Erection of building for storage of potatoes & associated pad

Date of fieldwork: 24 May 2010

HER Ref: WLV 050

OASIS ref: johnnewm1_78097

Grid ref: TM 1790 3886

Contents

Summary

1. Introduction & background
2. Evaluation methodology
3. Results
4. Conclusion

Fig. 1a Site location

Fig. 1b Trench location

Fig. 2 Recorded archaeology

List of appendices

Appendix I- Selected images

Summary: Woolverstone, land to the north of Home Farm (WLV 050, TM 1790 3886) evaluation trenching for a proposed potato store and associated concrete pad revealed one ditch which could not be dated, but appeared 'ancient' in character, close to an area containing aerial photographic evidence for past land boundaries. A cast iron, 19th century, water pipe that formerly served a water tower in the nearby farm complex was also revealed (John Newman Archaeological Services for A W Mayhew (Farms) Ltd).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 A W Mayhew (Farms) Ltd commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological evaluation works on the area that is to be developed as required under condition 4 for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application B/10/00219. The evaluation requirements were set by Ms S Poppy of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service to satisfy this condition. This development concerns the erection of a building for the storage of potatoes and construction of an associated concrete pad on land immediately to the north of Home Farm.

1.2 Woolverstone parish is on the Shotley peninsula and to the south east of Ipswich and on the southern side of the Orwell Estuary. The local drift geology is made up largely of well drained sands and gravels with a distinctive upper deposit of a very fine loess type giving rise to what in prehistoric and historic times has been an area extensively farmed for its arable potential in particular. Topographically the proposed development area (PDA, see Fig. 1a) lies in a largely flat area at 34m OD, 750m south of the nearby estuary, close to the parish boundary with Freston and 1150m west of the parish church. The site is on the northern edge of Home Farm which is an extensive 19th century complex and one of the major developments of that period of the Berners family who in total amassed an estate of some 6,000 acres on the Shotley peninsula from the second half of the 18th century through to its final sale in 1937. In terms of wealth and desire to build and improve their estate, the Berners family are extremely important to the Shotley peninsula and Woolverstone parish in particular. Through extensive development they remodelled much of the architecture and landscape of the area and their influence must be considered and has been thoroughly summarised by Laverton (1995). At the time of the evaluation the PDA was soft ground on the edge of an arable field and had been in use for the storage of farm equipment and materials.

1.3 The PDA is in an area recorded on the Suffolk County Historic Environment Record (HER) as it lies within an area containing extensive evidence of past activity recorded on aerial photographs. These aerial photographs show field boundaries and enclosures of unknown date some 250m to the north of the PDA and a probable ring ditch (likely to be a Bronze Age burial mound site) c450m to the north east. In addition archaeological excavation work on a farm reservoir site 300m south of the site revealed evidence of later prehistoric settlement activity in addition to field boundaries of prehistoric and later/early Post medieval date. Therefore the development area has the potential to contain evidence of prehistoric activity in particular as the peninsula was extensively settled from the Neolithic period exploiting its light, well drained soils.

1.4 In this case it is particularly useful to have Laverton's place name study of the parish (*ibid.*). Clearly the Berner family instigated extensive changes in the landscape with what was the 'Common Way' between Freston and Woolverstone churches (pp52-53) which is some 150m north of Home Farm becoming a simple footpath and the present Main Road becoming the primary route avoiding the park created round Wolverstone Hall. While Laverton does not show any settlement in the area of Home Farm in her summary of the evidence for the Manor of Wolverston Hall 1350-1600, Home Farm is established by the time of the tithe map of 1840 (pp8-9). By this time the proposed development area is called 'Stackyard.'

2. Evaluation methodology

2.1 The proposed development area at the Home Farm site was trenched to a previously agreed plan with two trenches sampling all parts of the proposed structure (see Fig. 1b). In all 30m of trench at a width of 1.8m were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision using a wide, toothless, ditching bucket giving a sample of 54m², or some 5.6%, of the combined store and pad footprint. The exposed loess type surface was closely examined for archaeological features and any indistinct areas were hand cleaned. As the loess type deposits of the Shotley Peninsula often mask archaeological features the upper 100mm of this natural deposit, where present, was then mechanically removed as a safeguard. The up cast spoil from the trench was examined visually and by an experienced metal detector user for any finds. Site visibility for features and finds is considered to have been good throughout the evaluation once the upper part of the loess deposit had been removed. The trench was recorded in relation to existing mapped details. A full photographic record in digital format was taken of the trenching works (see Appendix I).

3. Results

3.1 By trench (see Fig. 2):

Trench 1: this 12m long east-west trench sampled the northern part of the proposed store footprint. Within the trench a 300mm thick dark brown sandy topsoil lay over a uniform depth of 250mm of pale/mid brown sandy subsoil. In general at a total depth of 550mm this trench revealed natural sand and gravel deposits with few traces of any loess type material. While no archaeological features were identified in Trench 1, a cast iron pipe on a north-west/south-east alignment was revealed at a depth of 350mm towards the western end of the trench. This pipe, which had an internal bore of 75mm (3 inches), was clearly not in use and it was also located in Trench 2 to the south. Information from the land owner confirmed that the pipe related to the 19th century development of the adjacent Home Farm complex and had been used to transfer water from an area of natural springs in Toweralder Carr to the north-west to a water tower in the farm yard.

Trench 2: this 18m long north-south trench sampled the central and southern parts of the proposed store footprint and the northern part of the associated pad. As in Trench 1 the topsoil was a uniform 300mm while the subsoil increased from 250mm at the northern end of the trench to 400mm at the southern end. As Trench 2 revealed a loess type layer under the subsoil this was also removed and during this process an east-west aligned ditch (0002 on Fig. 2) was identified. This ditch could later be identified in the trench section (see Fig. 2) as having been cut through the loess layer and a 1m wide section confirmed a total depth of some 400mm with a fill (0003) of a pale brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks. The ditch (0002) had gently sloping sides going down to a rounded base and was 1100mm wide. No finds were recovered from the ditch.

3.2 The metal detector search of the up cast spoil did not recover any finds of archaeological interest with the few metal items all being of mid 19th century or later date and largely comprising debris from farm machinery, a dress buckle and a very

worn copper alloy button. The only finds recovered from a visual inspection of the spoil were small brick and tile fragments of indeterminate date.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The low density of archaeological features and lack of finds indicates that while the PDA lies within a general area of interest, with widespread evidence for past activity in the form of land boundaries in particular recorded on aerial photographs, this site is peripheral to any concentrated areas of past land use. The single recorded ditch (0002) is of interest as while not directly dateable as no relevant finds were recovered the fill (0003) did appear to be 'old' in character. That the recorded ditch (0002) lies on a similar alignment to an existing boundary immediately to the west of the PDA may be relevant but cannot be proven from the evaluation results as dating linear features from small samples is always difficult. Former boundaries recorded to the north on aerial photographs are also on broadly east-west alignments so it is also possible that such orientations have been influenced by topographic factors in the past. The location of the 19th century water pipe is of interest as it indicates the scale of works carried out by the Berners Estate through the later Post medieval period.

4.3 Based on the evaluation results it is recommended that no further archaeological investigations be carried out on the proposed development area.

Ref: Laverton, S 1995 Exploring the Past Through Place-Name: Woolverstone

Archive- to be deposited with the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service under the HER ref.WLV 050.

Disclaimer- any opinions regarding the need for further archaeological in relation to this proposed development are those of the author's alone. Formal comment regarding the need for further work must be sought from the official Archaeological Advisors to the relevant Planning Authority.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to Sarah Poppy of SCCAS for providing local HER information, Philip Mayhew for providing information relating to the site and plant plus operator for the evaluation and James Armes for the metal detector search).

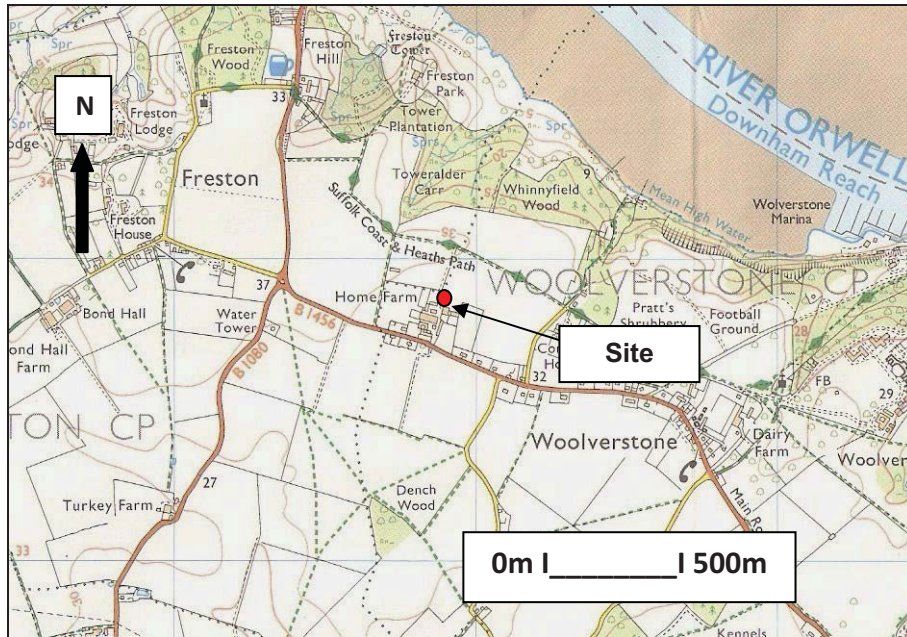


Fig. 1a: Site location- Home Farm, Woolverstone (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 1999. All rights reserved. Licence number WL1005096)

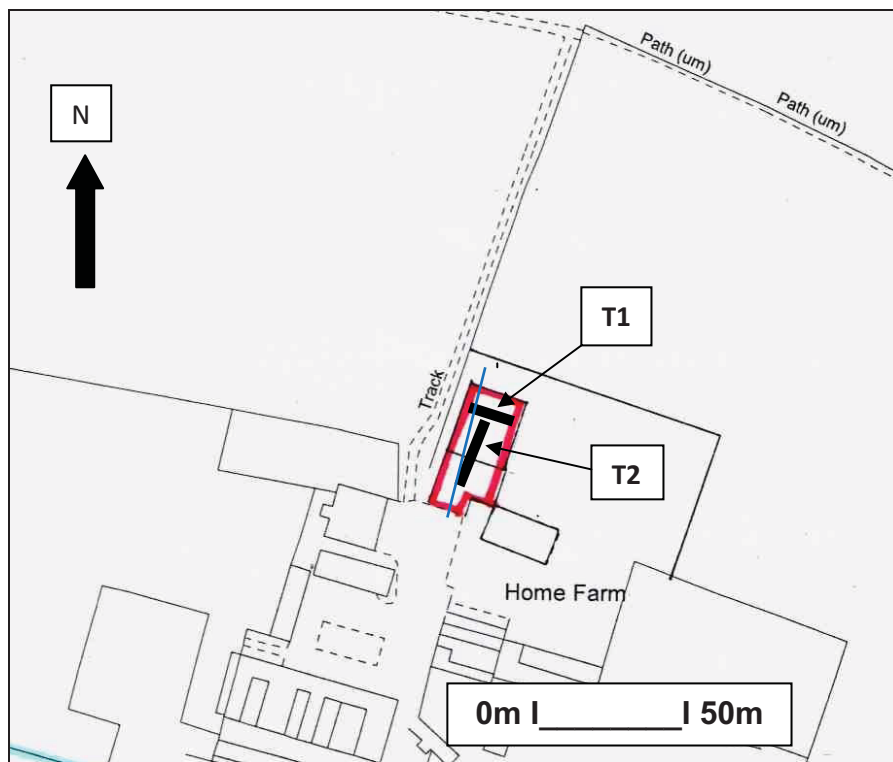


Fig. 1b: Trench location & water pipe- blue line (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008 All rights reserved. Licence number WL1005096)

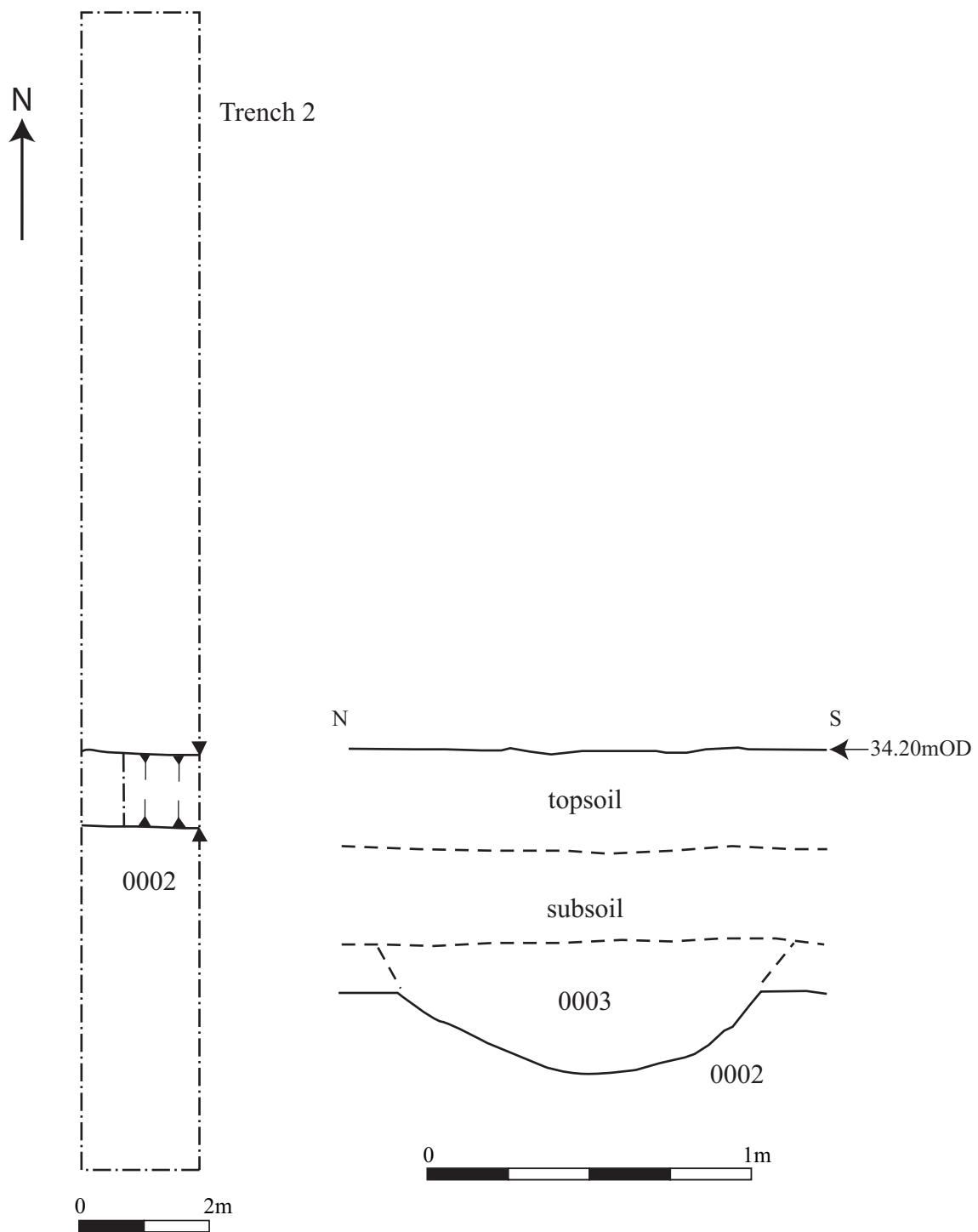


Fig 2 Home Farm, Woolverstone (WLV050) - recorded archaeology.

Appendix I



Trench 1 from east



Trench 2 from south



East section of Trench 2 showing east-west ditch 0002 & fill 0003 from west