

Kermont, The Street, Walberswick, Suffolk

Planning application: C/10/1190

HER Ref: WLB 074

Archaeological Monitoring Report

(© John Newman BA MIFA, 2 Pearsons Place, Henley, Ipswich, IP6 0RA)

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Site details for HER

Name: Kermont, The Street, Walberswick, Suffolk, IP18 6UH

Client: Mr N Walpole

Local planning authority: Suffolk Coastal DC

Planning application ref: C/10/1190

Development: Erection of garage

Date of fieldwork: 4 & 7 October, 2010

HER Ref: WLB 074

Grid ref: TM 4928 7465

OASIS Ref: johnnewm1-88203

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Summary: Walberswick, Kermont, The Street (WLB 074, TM 4928 7465) monitoring of ground works for a proposed garage did not reveal any archaeological features but 8 sherds of medieval coarseware and 5 sherds of late medieval transitional ware plus a fragment of lava quern stone were recovered from the subsoil. These finds strongly suggest some form of intense medieval activity on or close to the site as only 13m of 400mm wide footing trench were opened. In this case recovery of the finds was helped by the hand excavation of the trenches (John Newman Archaeological Services for Mr N Walpole).

1. Introduction & background

1.1 Eastaugh Builders on behalf of Mr N Walpole commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of ground works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application C/10/1190. The monitoring requirements were set out in a Brief and Specification set by Mr K Wade of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service to satisfy this condition (Appendix II). This development concerns the erection of a garage on the western side of Kermont, The Street, Walberswick (see Fig. 1).

1.2 Walberswick is a large coastal village located on a promontory of higher ground between the River Blyth and its mouth to the north and the Dunwich River and related marshes to the south. The village has seen extensive later recent development as it has grown as a favoured coastal retreat while historically the settlement has focused on the parish church, with a common to the north, at the western end and a small green at the eastern end of the main street. In the later medieval period Walberswick benefitted from its coastal location as a small port and fishing centre as the River Blyth became inaccessible to larger vessels seeking to reach Blythburgh upstream; the Saxon and earlier medieval centre for the area. Walberswick therefore grew and prospered in the later medieval period as evidenced by the formerly larger parish church which itself is a relocation from an earlier, lower lying, site nearer the coast. The settlement therefore developed various urban characteristics in terms of its local economic and related social roles and size which declined back to those of a more typical coastal rural village in more recent centuries. However the extent of the historic core is uncertain as opportunities to investigate below ground deposits has been limited though Walberswick's revival in recent years has seen various small scale developments (monitoring of small scale ground works nearby at 2 Manor Close, WLB 068, & The Stables, WLB 069, produced largely negative results).

1.3 Kermont is a modern house located on the southern side of The Street some 260m east of the parish church (see Fig. 1) and, as noted above, the main street through the village links the church towards its western edge with a small green 750m to the east indicating a dispersed medieval settlement pattern. That the medieval settlement across the area now covered by Walberswick may well have been dispersed is also suggested by the various previous site monitorings that have produced negative results though it is notable that one of the few listed historic buildings in the village is located just to the north of Kermont (see Fig. 2). This building is Thorpe View (LBS 285570) described as having a late 16th century core later re-faced in red brick. The site for the proposed garage lies on the eastern side of Kermont and 15m south of the frontage onto The Street.

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 Two visits were made to inspect the foundation trenches and upcast spoil with all of the ground works being undertaken by hand which greatly facilitated the examination of the spoil for archaeological finds. The trenches were 400mm wide and 13m long in total along the northern, western and southern sides of the footprint (see Fig. 2). As the planned structure abuts the edge of the existing house to which it will be linked there was no need for foundations along this side. On the first site visit

little of the subsoil below some 400mm of the dark brown sandy topsoil had been disturbed so the opportunity was taken to take a trial area to a greater depth and examine the upcast spoil. This shovel testing within the foundation trench indicated the depth of the subsoil and also recovered a few pottery sherds. Therefore close liaison was established with the contractor on site to help schedule a second visit and the contractor also agreed very readily to put any further finds to one side as they were revealed. On the second visit the sides and base of the foundation trenches were hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and the upcast spoil was again examined for finds; finally a number of digital images were taken to record the monitoring (see Appendix I).

3. Results

3.1 The 13m of trenched foundation revealed a uniform depth of 400mm of dark brown sandy subsoil across the building footprint. Below this was a 500mm deep layer of a mid brown sandy subsoil (0002) which contained a moderate number of medieval pottery sherds as described in section 4 below in addition to occasional brick or tile fragments and a few oyster shells. The subsoil lay over the naturally occurring drift geological deposit in the area which is a light grey to brown soft sand. The footing trenches were taken to this maximum depth of 900mm combined top and subsoil for the garage foundations. The hand cleaning of the trench sides and base did not reveal any features or discernible layers of archaeological interest as the subsoil was of a uniform mid brown sandy composition. As noted above the hand excavation of the footing trenches facilitated the collection of finds as did the interest shown by the contractor on site. These finds are described in section 4 below.

4 The Finds

4.1 Introduction

All finds were recovered from subsoil, context 0002. They comprised thirteen sherds of pottery (298g), four pieces of ceramic building material (733g) and a fragment of a lava quernstone (194g). A full list is included in Appendix III.

4.2 Pottery

Seven sherds of medieval coarseware were present, including three undecorated body sherds, a base fragment, a body sherd with an applied strip, and two rims. All were in fine sandy grey fabrics with occasional mica. One rim was a slightly thickened everted form from a cooking pot and was sooted. The other was in a Hollesley-type fabric and was part of a jug with a plain upright rim and wide strap handle. A medieval green-glazed body sherd, probably Hollesley glazed ware, was also found.

Five sherds of late medieval and transitional ware (LMT) were collected. Two pieces were base sherds, both sooted but one burnt with very thick sooting externally. Two fragments were body sherds, one with spots of green glaze externally. A jug rim fragment, from a small vessel, had a spot of glaze on the slightly thickened upright rim.

4.3 Ceramic building material

Two fragments of plain roof tile in oxidised, fine sandy, slightly micaceous fabrics were collected, both probably post-medieval. An abraded fragment in an estuarine

fabric was probably an 'early' brick of 13th–15th-century date.

A corner fragment of handmade brick, in a dark red medium sandy fabric with occasional flint, measured 50mm thick. The top (struck) surface was intact and the base also appeared to be. The stretcher face had a shallow groove running horizontally to the corner, and there was a similar but deeper groove with a U-shaped section in the base. Both appeared to have been made before firing, but their purpose is uncertain. The size of the brick suggests a late medieval ('Tudor') date.

4.4 Miscellaneous

A fragment of lava quern stone was found. It measured 55mm thick and both surfaces appeared to show signs of wear. Querns of this type were used in the Roman, Saxon and medieval periods and were sourced from the Niedermendig area of the Rhineland.

4.5 Discussion

The earliest pottery recovered was of 13th/14th-century in date, and the latest 15th/16th-century. The pottery fabrics are comparable with material from recent excavations in north-east Suffolk, and could be products of the Waveney Valley kilns or perhaps made more locally. At least two sherds of a type similar to pottery made at the known manufacturing site at Hollesley were present, and it is likely that the medieval wares were sourced from a variety of producers within about 20 miles of the site. The LMT was again probably produced in the Waveney Valley. No imported wares were found, despite the coastal location of the parish. The brick and tile group was generally unremarkable, although both bricks were relatively early types. The lava quern fragment has to be dated by association so is also likely to be of medieval origin.

5. Conclusion

5.1 While no archaeological features were revealed by the foundation trenches the moderately large medieval and late medieval transitional pottery group plus the lava quern fragment that were recovered point to probable settlement activity of this date on or very close to Kermont. That the site is immediately south of Thorpe View which is described as having a late 16th century origin maybe relevant in this context. Perhaps the apparently dispersed settlement pattern at Walberswick in the medieval period had a small focus in this area approximately midway between the church and the green.

5.2 In conclusion it is clear that the ground works for the proposed garage have given a valuable opportunity to gain historical information relating to the development of Walberswick and no archaeological deposits of importance have been affected by the admittedly limited ground works. Finally that the recovery of finds was enhanced by the hand excavation of the foundation trenches is worthy of note.

(Acknowledgements: JNAS is grateful to Chris Eastaugh for his close cooperation and on site to Dougie Wright in particular for his interest and great help in collecting finds and Sue Anderson for her specialist finds work).

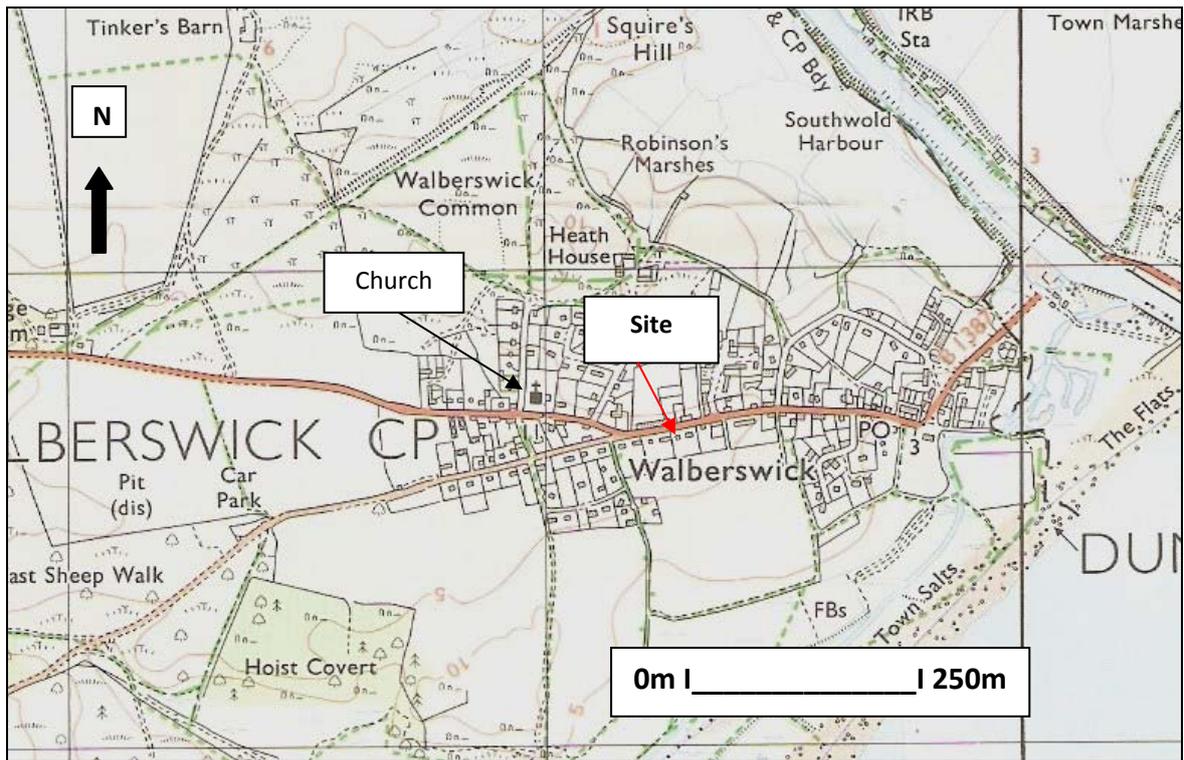


Fig.1: Site location within Walberswick(Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2006 All rights reserved Licence No 100049722)

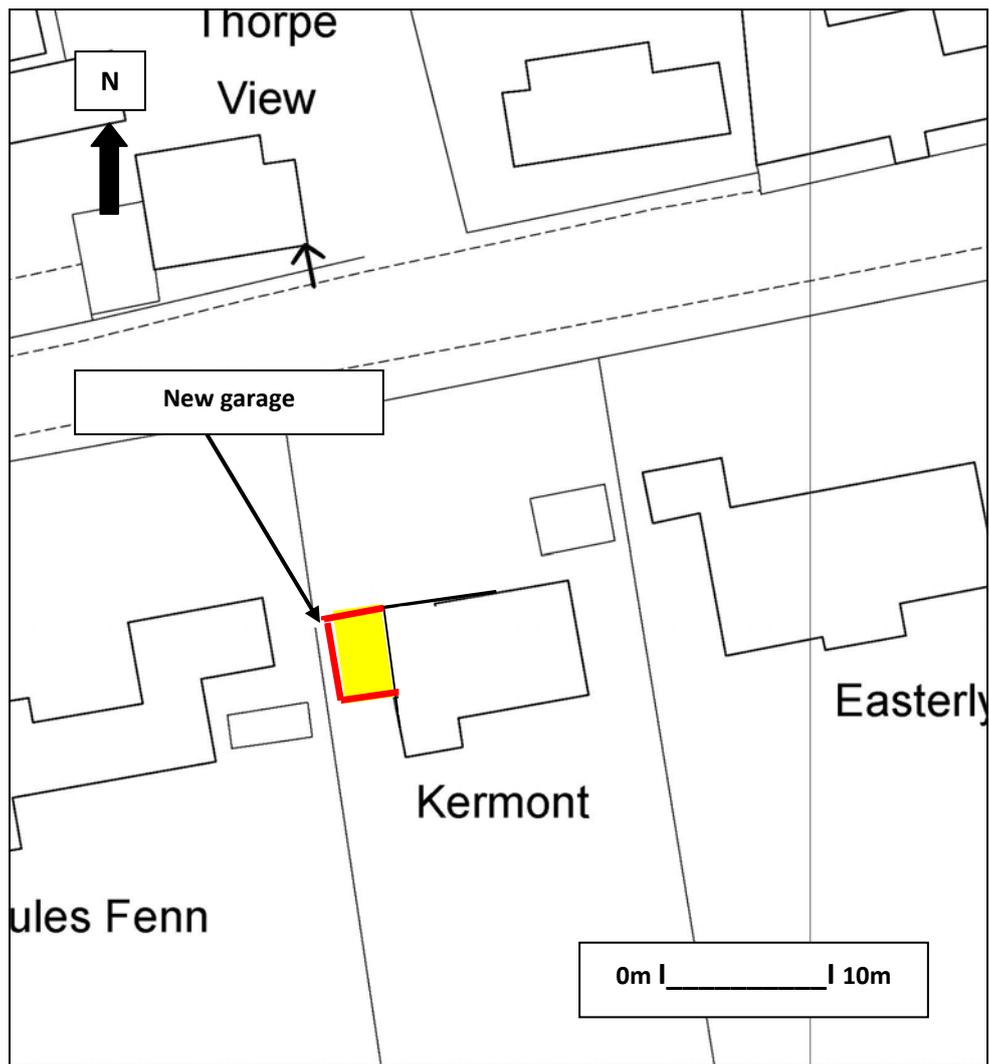


Fig.2: Monitored garage footings shown in red (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2010 All rights reserved Licence No 100049722)

Appendix I- Images



Western foundation trench from north, fully excavated



Southern foundation trench from west, fully excavated with existing house foundation in distance

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

Kermont, The Street, Walberswick

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a garage at Kermont, The Street, Walberswick has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (DC/10/1190). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the area of archaeological interest defined for Walberswick in the County Historic Environment Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As strip foundations are proposed there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.
- 1.4 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for the medieval/early post medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches. These, and the up-cast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and timetable.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

4. Specification

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity should be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed should be fully excavated and planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.

- 4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.
- 4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.
- 4.7 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from the English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P L and Wiltshire, P E J, 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 4.8 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County HER if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their

significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Historic Environment Record sheets should be completed, as per the county manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 If archaeological features or finds are found an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 9th July 2010

Reference: Kermont

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.

Appendix III- Finds catalogue

Context	Find type	No	Wt (g)	Notes	Spotdate
0002	Pottery	3	60	MCW body	12-14
		1	15	MCW base	12-14
		1	8	MCW body, applied strip	12-14
		1	9	MCW jar rim, thickened everted, sooted, 240mm diam, 4%	13-14
		1	65	MCW/HOLL jug rim, upright plain, with stub of wide strap handle, 120mm diam, 11%	13-14
		1	9	HOLG green glazed body	13-14
		2	104	LMT bases, one burnt & heavily encrusted in soot with internal glaze, one with spots of glaze and sooting externally	15-16
		2	21	LMT body sherds, one with spots green glaze externally	15-16
		1	7	LMT jug rim, small, upright thickened, spot clear glaze on rim, 70mm diam, 15%	
	<i>Total</i>	13	298		
	CBM	2	145	roof tile, fsm	pmed
		1	57	early brick, est	13-15
		1	531	late brick, msf, 50mm thick, grooves on stretcher and base	15-16?
	<i>Total</i>	4	733		
	Lava	1	194	quernstone fragment, 55mm thick	Rom/Sax?