

Summary

- *An archaeological trenched field evaluation was undertaken on land at Levington Hall, Levington, Suffolk, IP10 0LH. This was conducted by Midland Archaeological Services prior to development of the site.*
- *Natural deposits were encountered, as well as three features of unknown date.*
- *The field evaluation concluded that archaeological remains were scarce, although when encountered lay at varying depths and were relatively well preserved.*
- *It also concluded that the possibility for finding more archaeological features and deposits throughout the immediate development areas is low.*

1.0 Introduction

Midland Archaeological Services was commissioned by The Landscape Partnership Ltd, on behalf of their client Mr A Scardino to undertake an archaeological trenched field evaluation prior to groundworks for the construction of a water garden and swimming pool at Levington Hall, Levington, Suffolk, IP10 0LH, henceforth called the site.

These works were undertaken at the request of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) to fulfil a condition attached to a planning permission. This approach is consistent with the *recommendations of Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IFA, 1994 as revised) and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14*, 2003.

2.0 Location and description

Levington is c. 11.1km south-south-east of Ipswich and c. 15.1km north-west of Felixstowe in the parish of Levington, centred on NGR TM 62390 23902. The development areas lie within the grounds of Levington Hall and are located on the south and south-west areas of the site (figs. 1 & 2, plates 1, 2 & 3).

The underlying geology of the immediate area comprises of glaciofluvial drift over Cretaceous sand or Crag (BGS, 2006).

3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission was granted by Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) for the construction of a water garden and swimming pool (fig. 2). The trenched field evaluation took place to ensure that any archaeological remains exposed as a result

of developing the two areas were recorded and because the site lay in an area of archaeological importance (planning ref: C/09/0494).

An archaeological written scheme of investigation detailing the methodology to be used was compiled by Midland Archaeological Services in response to a brief issued by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Appendix 3).

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The village of Levington is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and was known as *Leueutona*, meaning 'farmstead of a man called Lēofa' (Mills, A.D, 1993, Williams, A. and Martin, G. H, 1992).

The village has several fine buildings of medieval date, notably St Peter's Church which is 11th century in date with later additions and the Ship Inn, a rare example of a 14th century Aisled House (HER nos. 286180, 286181, fig. 3)

Archaeological remains of various periods have been recorded throughout the parish of Levington, both by excavation and by aerial reconnaissance.

Closer to the site, approximately 200m north-east aerial photography has shown a possible Neolithic mortuary enclosure or long barrow, while 250m-300m south a possible bronze age round barrow has also been plotted, along with various field boundaries and trackways of unknown dates. During the construction of a lay-by recently remains were found which were thought to be human and of some age (HER nos. LVT 014, LVT 046, LVT 047, SNH 08, fig. 3).

Levington Hall, along with its associated buildings and parkland were once part of a much larger estate, although not listed the hall dates from the mid 19th Century and was extensively re-modelled throughout the late 19th and early 20th Centuries (A. Scardino *pers com*).

5.0 Methodology

The methodology required that a total of 150m of trenching should be opened across the two site areas, this equated to three 43.33m trenches targeted throughout the water garden, (**Area 1**) and a single 20m trench located in the swimming pool (**Area 2**). The trenching throughout Area 1 was undertaken using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Due to access constraints the trench in Area 2 was machined with a 360° tracked 'mini digger' fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil removed from each trench was kept separate to aid sequential backfilling (fig. 2, plates 1 & 2).

Archaeological deposits/features identified were subjected to excavation, in order to assess their nature, dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions complemented by colour slide, monochrome photographs, digital images and scale drawings in both plan and section.

Spoil was visually scanned and metal detected for artefacts, features were also metal detected.

No environmental soil samples were taken during the trenched field evaluation, this was because no soils were exposed that merited soil sampling, a policy which was agreed during fieldwork with the advisor from the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT).

The work was undertaken by the author over a period of five days between 19th September and 23rd September 2009.

6.0 Results

Area 1

Trench 1

The earliest deposit encountered in this trench was (102), a natural clay 0.80m below the present ground surface, this was overlain by a silty clay (101), which in turn was covered by topsoil (100).

Truncating (102) towards the western limit of the trench was feature [104], a linear ditch running on a north-south orientation across the trench. It contained a solitary fill (103), but contained no dating evidence (fig. 4, plates 4, 8 & 12, Appendix 1).

Trench 2

The earliest deposit recorded within this trench was natural, coarse, silty sand (204), 0.64m below the present ground surface, this was sealed by (203), an almost similar deposit but which contained a small percentage of clay. Above this deposit was another almost identical layer of sand (202), this was dissimilar only in that it contained occasional poorly sorted rounded stones. A light brown/grey 4mm sticky colluvial layer sealed (202) and in turn was sealed by (200), a layer of topsoil (fig. 5, plates 5 & 9, Appendix 1).

Trench 3

Light grey/blue slightly silty clay (303) was encountered at 0.60m below the present ground surface, representing the earliest recorded deposit throughout this trench. It was sealed by a 0.30m layer of mid grey/blue silty clay (302). Sandy silt (301) sealed (302) and was sealed beneath topsoil (300), (fig. 6, plates 6 & 10, Appendix 1).

Trench 4

Mid brown 'dirty' sand (402) was recorded 0.50m below the present ground surface and represents the earliest deposit in this trench and was sealed by a 0.24m thick layer of subsoil (401), while above this was topsoil (400).

Two archaeological features were recorded towards the western limit of Trench 4, these were [406] and [404].

[406] represented a shallow linear ditch, this ran across the width of the trench on an oblique north-west/south-east orientation and truncated subsoil (401) and natural sand (402). It contained a single fill of mid orange clay (405), this appeared to represent a backfilling episode and which contained occasional flecks and fragments of coal but no dating evidence. This feature was truncated by [404] to the south-south-east.

The second feature [404] was linear in plan and extended into the southern baulk of the trench. It was 0.30m deep and had relatively steep sides and contained (403), mid brown sandy silt, which also contained coal flecks and fragments but no dating evidence (fig 7, plates 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15, Appendix 1).

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Contexts observed throughout the site consisted of natural deposits and three undated linear features.

Area 1

This area produced natural sand and clay deposits which were consistent with what is known of the underlying geology. It also produced a solitary linear ditch feature towards the south-west area of the area which may represent a field boundary ditch, although of unknown date.

Area 2

Area 2 also produced natural deposits consistent with geological mapping for the area, as well as two archaeological features. Due to a lack of artefactual evidence it has not been possible to date either feature. Although, the inclusion of coal throughout the fills of both features and their location within the garden area of the main house could suggest they are associated with past gardening activities of the 19th-20th centuries.

The scarcity of archaeological features throughout the two areas investigated was not anticipated, seeing as the site is in a favourable position for past settlement activities and within an area of much recorded archaeological activity. The reason for there being so few little archaeological remains present may simply be that the site was never infringed upon by past settlement activities, or that any archaeology present is beyond the confines of the two areas investigated.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology required the monitoring of four evaluation trial trenches within the development areas. This was undertaken using 360° tracked excavators fitted with toothless buckets, insuring a clean surface was achieved, this made identification of the underlying natural and archaeological deposits and features clearer. Sufficient

time was given by the developer to insure that archaeological deposits and features were recognised and recorded, thus enabling the site to be preserved by record.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Midland Archaeological Services would like to thank The Landscape Partnership Ltd and Mr A Scardino for this commission. Thanks also go to the Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service for providing information and advice concerning the site.

10.0 References

British Geological Survey, 2006. *Grantham: England and Wales Sheet 207, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits*. 1:50 000 Provisional Series. BGS, Keyworth.

Mills, A. D., 1993, *English Place-Names*. Oxford University Press.

Williams, A. and Martin, G. H. (eds.), 1992, *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*. Penguin Books, London.

11.0 Site archive

An archive of written, drawn and photographic elements is in preparation and will be deposited at The Suffolk County Historic Environment Record within three months of the completion of this report.