

# **Land Adjacent to Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road, Suffolk**

**Planning application: 2757/10**

**HER Ref: FSF 064**

## **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

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

(December 2010)

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## **Site details for HER**

Name: Land adjacent to Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield, IP21 5PU

Client: Encompass Project Management Ltd

Local planning authority: Mid Suffolk DC

Planning application ref: 2757/10

Development: Residential dwelling

Date of fieldwork: 17 December 2010

HER Ref: FSF 064

OASIS ref: johnnewm1\_90051

Grid ref: TM 2612 7736

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*Summary: Fressingfield, land adjacent to Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road (FSF 064, TM 2612 7736) evaluation trenching did not reveal any features or significant finds on a single house plot site formerly within the curtilage of a cottage of earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century date and towards the southern edge of the historic village area. (John Newman Archaeological Services for Encompass Project Management Ltd).*

## 1. Introduction & background

1.1 Encompass Project Management Ltd commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological evaluation works on that part of the garden on the eastern side of Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield (see Fig. 1) that is to be developed as required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works of the planning decision notice for application 2757/10. The evaluation requirements were set out in a Brief and Specification (see Appendix II) set by Dr J Tipper of the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service to satisfy this condition. This development concerns the erection of a single residential dwelling on the area of garden between Orchard Cottage and Elm Cottage which is to be detached as a new house plot.

1.2 Fressingfield parish is located in north central Suffolk in an area where, historically, village has clustered partly round the church but also with a more scattered pattern dispersed round various green edges and along the numerous roads and lanes. With a productive, though heavy, soils based on the deep clays of the till plateau of central Suffolk over the underlying chalky till of the Hanslope series, population densities were high through the medieval period in a prosperous region as evidenced by the substantial parish church located just over 100m north of the proposed development area (PDA). The PDA lies within an existing residential curtilage just below the 45m OD contour and set well back from the Laxfield Road which may suggest some form of earlier common ground to the south (see Fig. 2). It is also worthy of note that two listed buildings are located nearby, some 50m to the north west 'Hemm Dinn' described as having a 14<sup>th</sup> century core with 16<sup>th</sup> century additions (LBS 279974) and c30m to the east 'Oldcott' described as being of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century date (LBS 279977). Orchard Cottage itself is currently undergoing extensive restoration and updating and appears to be of earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century date with some timber framing and otherwise brick built. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century it is known that this property and attached land plot formed a small holding on the southern edge of the historic village.

1.3 To quote from the relevant specification- 'This application lies in an area of archaeological importance, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, in a historic settlement core and to the south of the medieval church and churchyard (HER no. FSF 023). There is high potential for encountering medieval occupation deposits at this location, even taking into account the existing buildings. The proposed works would cause ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.'

## 2. Evaluation methodology

2.1 The proposed house plot area to the east of Orchard Cottage was trenched to a previously agreed plan with a single north-south aligned trench giving an extensive sample of the proposed footprint area (see Fig. 2). In all 12m of trench at a width of 1.8m were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision to the top of the underlying naturally occurring sandy clay with flints Till deposit using a wide, toothless, ditching bucket giving a sample of 21.6m<sup>2</sup>, or some 20%, of the footprint.

The exposed sandy clay surface was closely examined for archaeological features and any indistinct areas were hand cleaned. The upcast spoil from the trench was examined visually and by an experienced detector user though the upper 60mm of topsoil was frozen ground restricting some of the finds search. Site visibility for features and finds is considered to have been good throughout the evaluation on a very cold but clear day. 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 The 12m of trench revealed a depth of between 300mm and 350mm of dark brown clayey topsoil across the site. Below the topsoil the naturally occurring Till surface that was exposed was a mix of an orange brown sandy clay interspersed with bands of grey clay with flints (see Appendix I for images of the trenches). No archaeological features were visible in the trench bottom or sides though numerous small tree roots were evident in parts of the trench reflecting recent use of the site as an orchard and the trench was mechanically excavated through the upper 200/300mm of this undisturbed deposit to ensure that no archaeological features were being obscured. Close examination of the upcast spoil did not reveal any finds save a few small 19<sup>th</sup> century and later brick and tile fragments and the metal detector search did not recover any finds apart from iron nails and fragments of recent or indeterminate date.

### 4. Conclusion

4.1 The lack of any archaeological features or significant finds from what represents a substantial sample of the proposed development area indicates that this site, though close to the historic core of the village, does not directly impinge on deposits of archaeological importance. While there are listed structures nearby predating Orchard Cottage it appears likely that they were separated by areas which saw little activity other than general agricultural use until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

4.3 Based on the evaluation results it is recommended that no further archaeological investigations be carried out on the proposed site to the east of Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield.

***Archive- to be deposited with the Suffolk CC Archaeological Service under the HER ref. FSF 064.***

***Disclaimer- any opinions regarding the need for further archaeological work 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 the staff and contractors of Encompass Project Management Ltd for their close cooperation).***

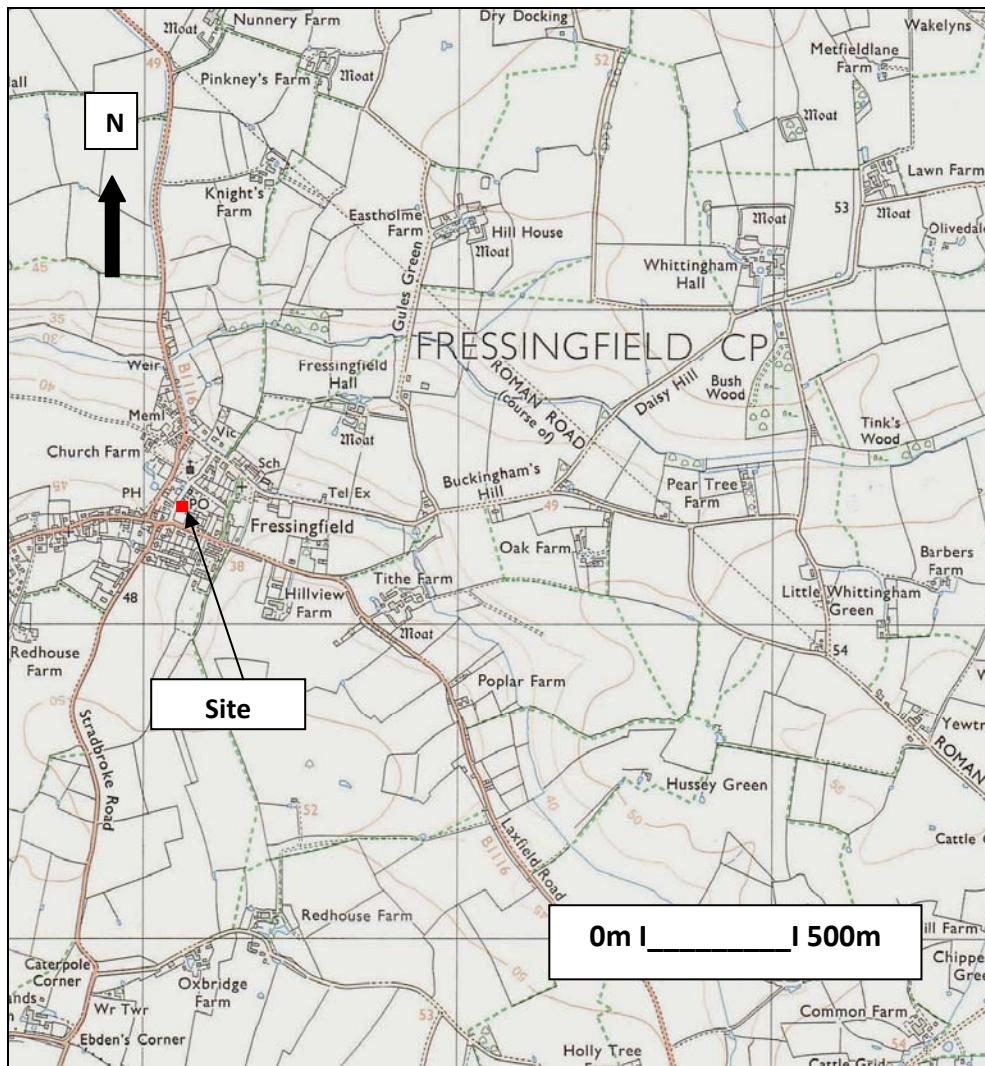


Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2008  
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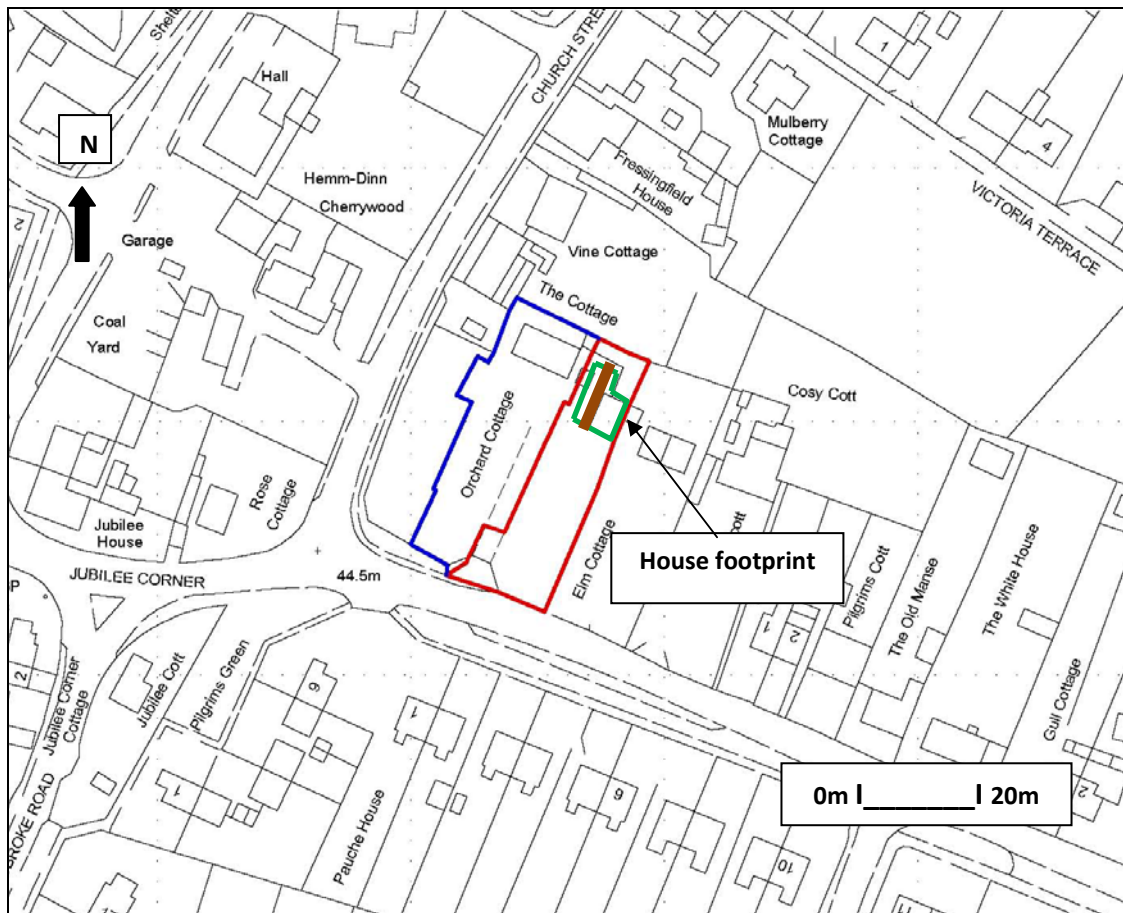


Fig. 2: Proposed house footprint with location of trial trench (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2010 All rights reserved licence no: 100049722)



## Appendix I- Images



Orchard Cottage from south



Trench from north



Trench from south



9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 2AR

## **Brief and Specification for Archaeological Evaluation**

### **ORCHARD COTTAGE, LAXFIELD ROAD, FRESSINGFIELD, SUFFOLK (2757/10)**

***The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities.***

#### **1. The nature of the development and archaeological requirements**

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Mid Suffolk District Council (2757/10) for the erection of a new dwelling and access (following demolition of existing buildings adjacent to Orchard Cottage, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield (TM 261 733). **Please contact the applicant for an accurate plan of the site.**
- 1.2 The Planning Authority has been advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins in accordance with PPS 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment* (Policy HE 12.3) to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.
- 1.3 The site is located on the north side of Laxfield Road at c.40-45.00m OD. The soil is deep clay derived from the underlying chalky till of the Hanslope Series.
- 1.4 This application lies in an area of archaeological importance, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, in a historic settlement core and to the south of the medieval church and churchyard (HER no. FSF 023). There is high potential for encountering medieval occupation deposits at this location, even taking into account the existing buildings. The proposed works would cause ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.5 In order to inform the archaeological mitigation strategy, the following work will be required:
  - A linear trenched evaluation is required of the development area prior to the removal of the below-ground foundations of the existing buildings.
- 1.6 The results of this evaluation will enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified. Decisions on the need for and scope of any mitigation measures, should there be any archaeological finds of significance, will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of an additional specification.
- 1.7 All arrangements for the field evaluation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.
- 1.8 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.
- 1.9 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute for Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline

specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory. The WSI will provide the basis for measurable standards and will be used to satisfy the requirements of the planning condition.

- 1.10 Neither this specification nor the WSI, however, is a sufficient basis for the discharge of the planning condition relating to archaeological investigation. Only the full implementation of the scheme, both completion of fieldwork and reporting based on the approved WSI, will enable SCCAS/CT to advise Mid Suffolk District Council that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.
- 1.11 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 the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of SCC (SCCAS/CT) before execution.
- 1.12 The responsibility for identifying any constraints on field-work, e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c., ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such constraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 1.13 Any changes to the specifications that the project archaeologist may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated directly to SCCAS/CT and the client for approval.

## **2. Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation**

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ*.
- 2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- 2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential, analysis and final report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design; this document covers only the evaluation stage.

- 2.7 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT (address as above) five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored.
- 2.8 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.
- 2.9 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

### **3. Specification: Trenched Evaluation**

- 3.1 A single trial trench 10.00m long x 1.80m wide is to be excavated to cover the area of the new development.
- 3.2 If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' 1.50m wide must be used. A scale plan showing the proposed locations of the trial trenches should be included in the WSI and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before field work begins.
- 3.3 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a back-acting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket, down to the interface layer between topsoil and subsoil or other visible archaeological surface. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 3.4 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.5 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled. For guidance:  
  
For linear features, 1.00m wide slots (min.) should be excavated across their width;  
  
For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills should be sampled (in some instances 100% may be requested).
- 3.6 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 3.7 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. The contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from Helen Chappell, 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.

- 3.8 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 3.9 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.10 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).
- 3.11 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.
- 3.12 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.
- 3.13 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies and/or high resolution digital images.
- 3.14 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 3.15 Trenches should not be backfilled without the approval of SCCAS/CT. Suitable arrangements should be made with the client to ensure trenches are appropriately backfilled, compacted and consolidated in order to prevent subsequent subsidence.

#### **4. General Management**

- 4.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by SCCAS/CT. The archaeological contractor will give not less than five days written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.
- 4.2 The composition of the archaeology contractor staff must be detailed and agreed by this office, including any subcontractors/specialists. For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this evaluation there must also be a statement of their responsibilities or a CV for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites and publication record. Ceramic specialists, in particular, must have relevant experience from this region, including knowledge of local ceramic sequences.
- 4.3 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfill the Brief.
- 4.4 A detailed risk assessment must be provided for this particular site.
- 4.5 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 4.6 The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.



## 5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).
- 5.2 The report should reflect the aims of the WSI.
- 5.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 5.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 5.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 5.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including an assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.7 The results of the surveys should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 5.8 A copy of the Specification should be included as an appendix to the report.
- 5.9 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) to obtain a HER number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.
- 5.10 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 5.11 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the full site archive, and transfer of title, with the intended archive depository before the fieldwork commences. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.12 If the County Store is not the intended depository, the project manager should ensure that a duplicate copy of the written archive is deposited with the County HER.
- 5.13 The project manager should consult the intended archive depository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition. The intended depository should be stated in the WSI, for approval. The intended depository must be prepared to accept the entire archive resulting from the project (both finds and written archive) in order to create a complete record of the project.
- 5.14 If the County Store is the intended location of the archive, the project manager should consult the SCCAS Archive Guidelines 2010 and also the County Historic Environment Record Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive. A clear

statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.

- 5.15 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure the proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>) with ADS or another appropriate archive depository.
- 5.16 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to SCCAS/CT, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 5.17 An unbound hardcopy of the evaluation report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.  
  
Following acceptance, two hard copies of the report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT together with a digital .pdf version.
- 5.18 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County HER. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.
- 5.19 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.20 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the County HER, and a copy should be included with the draft report for approval. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Dr Jess Tipper

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Archaeological Service Conservation Team  
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Suffolk IP33 2AR  
Tel: 01284 352197  
Email: jess.tipper@suffolk.gov.uk

Date: 8 December 2010

Reference: /OrchardCottage\_Fressingfield2010

**This brief and specification remains valid for six 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.**