

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF AT  
FOREMARKE HALL,  
MILTON, DERBYSHIRE, 2011**



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*by M. Hurford*

OS Grid Ref SK 33313 26541  
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## SUMMARY

- **Background:** An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) on behalf of Repton Preparatory School between 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011 at Foremarke Hall, Milton, Derbyshire. A new temporary school block was to be built and TPA was commissioned to monitor the digging by contractors of 20 pits for foundation pads. The original holes were excavated and filled in without being monitored. Following a visit by the Derbyshire County Archaeologist a replicating pattern of holes were then excavated alongside the original ones and these were recorded. The project was managed by R. Sheppard and the fieldwork undertaken by M. Hurford.
- **Location and description:** The area covered by the archaeological watching brief is located to the north-east of Foremarke Hall (SK 33313 26541) and immediately north of stone ancillary buildings connected to the Hall. To the south and east lie two twentieth century temporary French building blocks. The site lies on a flat grassed area.
- **Archaeological context:** The present Foremarke Hall dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, replacing an earlier building on the same approximate site. Documentary evidence for the general site extends back into the medieval period and there is the potential for buried archaeological remains remaining from that period.
- **Results:** Beneath the topsoil only there were modern layers and potential demolition deposits used to level the Hall grounds; these were found to extend to a depth exceeding 0.5m within the footprint of the new temporary building.

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## **1. Project background and site description**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) between 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011, in the grounds of Foremarke Hall, Milton, Derbyshire, centred at SK 33313 26541 (Figure 1). The site in question was a grassed area located north-east of the Hall and immediately north of stone ancillary buildings connected to the Hall. To the south and east lie two temporary French building blocks (Figure 2 and Plate 1). TPA was commissioned to watch the excavation of 20 test pits in the 12.8m x 9.8m footprint of a new temporary classroom building. This followed on from the already completed excavation and concreting of 20 foundation pillars, measuring 600mm x 600mm in plan and 400mm in depth (Plate 2). The archaeological work was undertaken for Repton Preparatory School, as part of Planning Application 9/2011/0255/NO to South Derbyshire District Council. The project was managed by R. Sheppard and the fieldwork undertaken by M. Hurford.

Foremarke Hall is a Grade II\* listed building built in the Palladian style between 1759-61; it is now used as a school. It replaced a supposedly 'large and convenient' former house that in 1662 had 24 hearths. The Hall also had gardens to north and south and a surrounding estate nearly 6000 acres in size. Documentary evidence indicates that the estate dates back to the medieval period and that it is likely to have included a manor house, possibly replaced in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. Manor houses and halls often had outbuildings and garden features, evidence for which may survive as archaeological features or finds.

The site lies on Sandstone and Conglomerate of the Triassic Period (Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 141) at an elevation of around 55m OD.

## **2. Methodology**

Twenty test-pits roughly 0.4m x 0.4m in dimension and ranging in depth from 0.22m to 0.50m were hand excavated by building contractors (Figure 3). The test pits were examined by a professional archaeologist once they had been dug. One section and the base of each test pit were cleaned by the archaeologist and photographed using digital and black and white film media. The sections and bases of each test pit were drawn at a scale of 1:20, with each layer and deposit being ascribed a four digit context number.

### **3. Results** *(See Figures 4-9 and Plates 3-4 for a selection of the test-pits and deposits)*

A 0.1m thick turf layer (0001) comprising very dark grey soft silt loam extends across much of the site, only being absent in Test Pits 12 and 13, where the ground had been disturbed by the insertion of a concrete plinth, and in Test Pit 07 where the uppermost layer was a buried topsoil layer (0002) found only in the north-west corner of the site. It too was 0.1m thick and was a dark brown soft silt loam layer containing rounded stones. Beneath 0002 there was a 0.2m thick deposit of brown soft silt loam containing small amounts of charcoal and mortar flecks (0004), indicating that it was re-deposited material, probably used for the levelling of the gardens in recent times. It too is confined to the north-west of the site.

Extending across the remainder of the site beneath 0001 (excluding Test Pits 12 and 13) there was another deposit up to 0.26m thick (0005). It was a very dark brown soft silt loam containing inclusions of mortar, brick and tile, indicating that it was formed of demolition material that has been used to level the Hall's grounds. Beneath 0005 there were further demolition deposits, layers 0006 and 0007. Confined to Test Pits 12 and 13 there was a very dark grey silt loam deposit containing modern material (0008), which was found overlaying 0007. The finds from the test pitting were exclusively modern and included willow-pattern pottery, glass, and metal.

### **4. Conclusions**

The watching brief demonstrated that modern layers and potential demolition deposits extended to a depth exceeding 0.5m in the footprint of the new temporary building.

### **5. Acknowledgement**

Thanks are due to the project manager Steve Delorean and his team for their assistance on site.

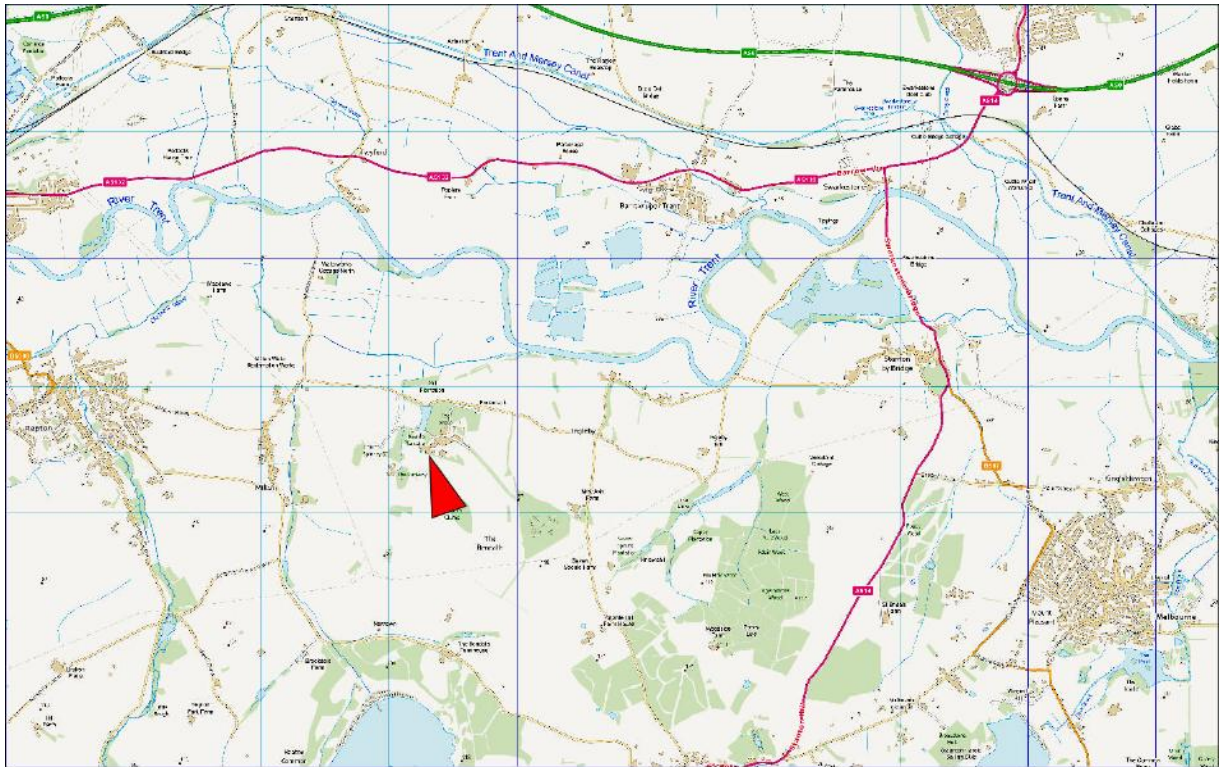
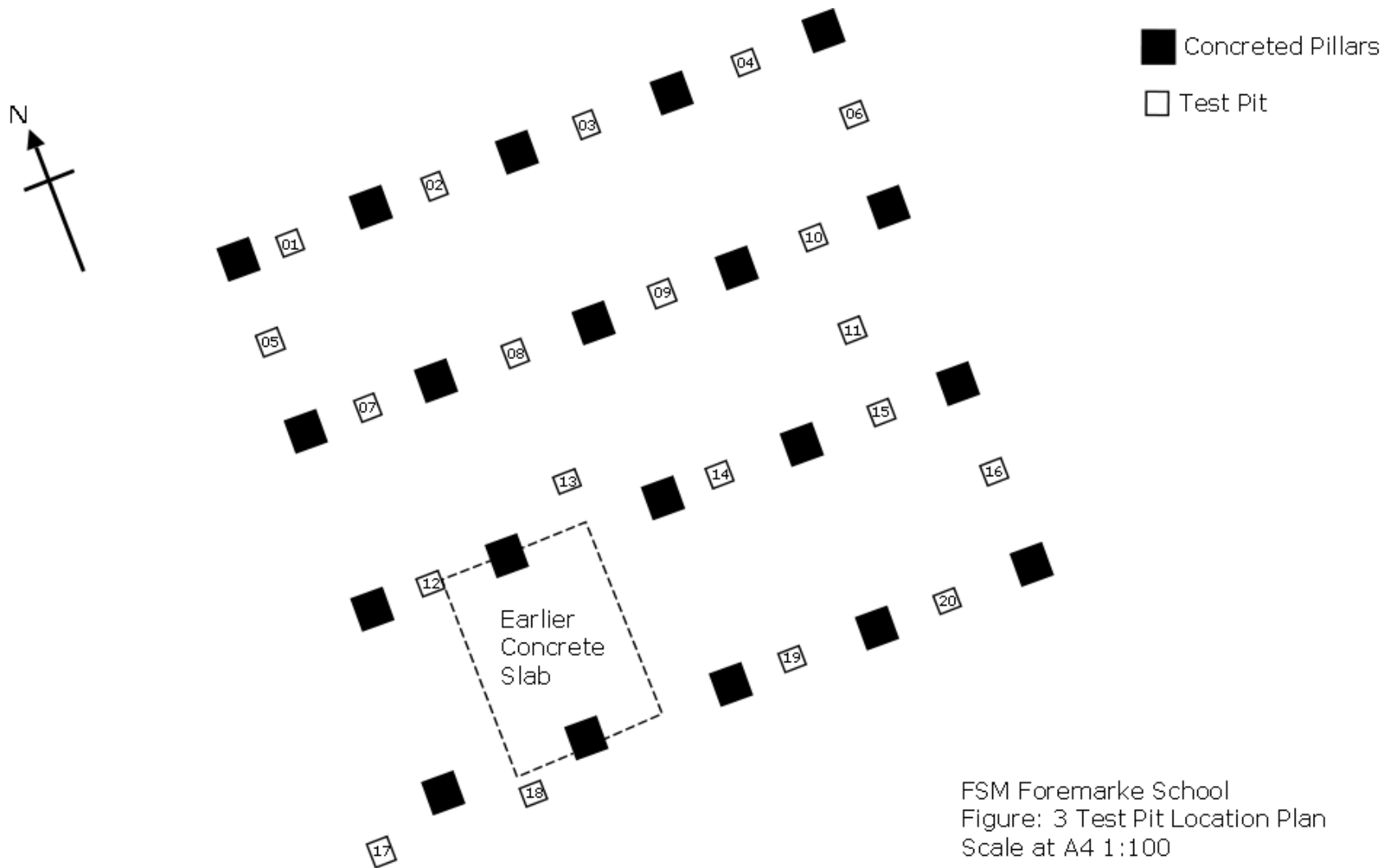


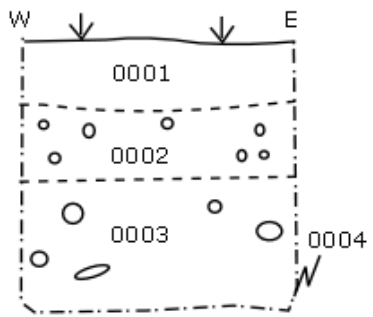
Figure 1: Location of Foremarke Hall in relation to Repton, Melbourne, the A50 and the River Trent. Scale approx. 1:57,000. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2011.



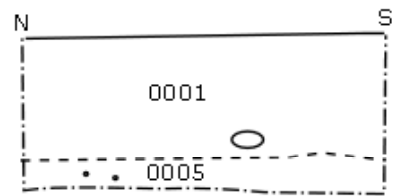
Figure 2: Location of the site in relation to Foremarke Hall. Plan provided by Matthew Montague Architects.



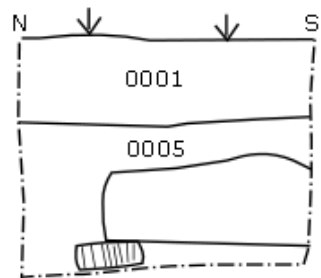




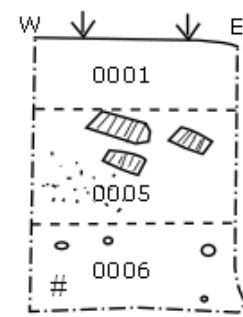
FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 04 Test pit 01,  
South facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10



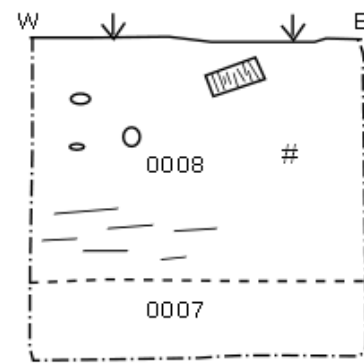
FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 06 Test pit 08,  
West facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10



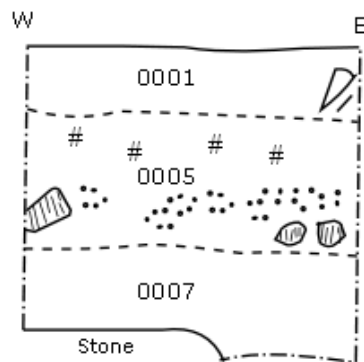
FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 08 Test pit 14,  
West facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10



FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 05 Test pit 02,  
South facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10



FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 07 Test pit 13,  
South facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10



FSM Foremarke School  
Figure: 09 Test pit 20,  
South facing section  
Scale at A3 1:10

### Contexts

- 0001 7.5 YR 3/1 very dark grey weak silt loam, <1% rounded pebbles up to 20mm in size
- 0002 7.5 YR 3/2 dark brown weak silt loam, 10% rounded stones, whole up to 30mm in size
- 0003 7.5 YR 4/2 dark brown weak silt loam, 5% rounded whole pebbles up to 40mm in size, 1% charcoal and mortar flecks. Boundary with (0004) clear
- 0004 7.5 YR 4/2 dark brown weak silt loam, (dries to 7.5 YR 5/2 brown and is distinctive to the layers above) <5% rounded whole pebbles up to 20mm in size, 1% charcoal flecks <1% Brick fragments and mortar flecks.
- 0005 7.5 YR 3/1 very dark brown weak silt loam, up to 15% white mortar flecks, 1% charcoal flecks 10% brick fragments, <5% tile fragments. 2% rounded whole pebbles up to 30mm in size. Boundary 0006 merging, 0007 clear.
- 0006 10 YR 4/2 dark greyish brown weak silt loam, 5% charcoal flecks. 5% rounded whole pebbles up to 20mm in size
- 0007 10 YR 3/2 very dark greyish brown weak silt loam (dries to 10YR 4/3 brown), 10% rounded whole pebbles up to 100mm in size, <5% brick and tile fragments, 2% mortar flecks, 1% charcoal flecks.
- 0008 7.5 YR 3/1 very dark grey weak silt loam, 2% brick fragments, 10% slate fragments, 5% mortar flecks, 2% rounded pebbles up to 20mm in size, 1% charcoal flecks.

### Key



-  Brick
-  Charcoal flecks
-  Mortar Flecks
-  Rounded Pebbles



Plate 1: Location of the site in relation to Foremarke Hall, viewed looking south-east



Plate 2: General site view looking south-east





Plate 3: Test Pit 06, west facing section



Plate 4: Test Pit 17, east facing section