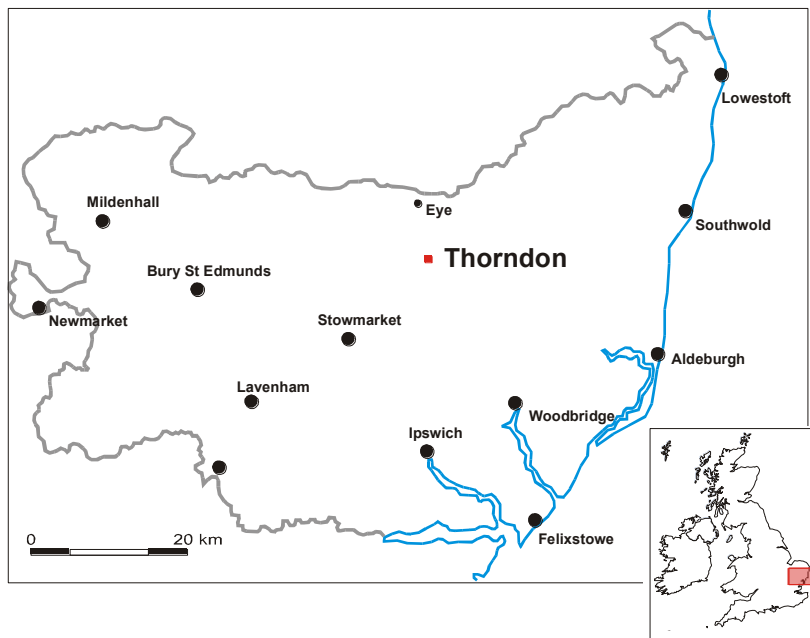


Church Farm Barn, The Street

Thorndon, Suffolk

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Planning Application No: 2043/06



Grid Reference TM 1418 6970

HE R No: THD 027

OASIS No. 58597 (2)

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Commissioned by Craig Beech and Ruth Paternoster

Contents

Church Farm Barn, The Street,	1
Thorndon, Suffolk.....	1
Summary	1
Site Location and Description.....	1
Figure 1 Site in yellow located on the modern Ordnance Survey.	1
Planning background	2
Historical Background	2
Archaeological Background.....	2
Map information	3
Figure 2 Hodskinsons map Thorndon of 1783	3
Figure 3 The Tithe map of Thorndon, dated 1845	3
Figure 4: The 1880's Ordnance Survey,	4
Methodology	4
Figure 5 Block-plan showing location of footings	5
Results.....	5
Figure 6 Plan of sections.....	6
Trench 1	6
Figure 7 Section 2, Trench 1.....	7
Trench 2	8
Trench 3	8
Figure 8 Section 1, Trench 1	8
Trench 4	8
Figure 9 Section 3, Trench 4.....	9
Context Description	9
Discussion	10
Conclusions.....	11
Acknowledgements.....	11
Bibliography	11
Sources:.....	11
Photographs.....	12

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of the excavation of foundations was undertaken between August 2008, and June 2009 on land at Church Farm, Thorndon, Suffolk. A layer of organic material and a course of stones were recorded. No finds or dating evidence was found within the features.

Site Location and Description



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Figure 1 Site in yellow located on the modern Ordnance Survey.

Thorndon is located 6 km south of Eye and 14 km north-east of Stowmarket in Suffolk. The site is located on a north-facing, gentle slope on the eastern edge of Thorndon (fig. 1), on soils developed from a chalky, pebbly, sandy clay over a formation of fine-to coarse grained sands and silts (BGS: Eye, sheet 190). A spot height for the site has a value of 50.10m OD. The site runs down a small river valley, which is a tributary of the River Dove, and is immediately to the north of the medieval church of All Saints. Before development the site was a disused barn orientated north-south and connected to an east-west orientated range of outbuildings on the barns north side forming a T shaped plan. These building were located in disused yard and garden of Church Farm House (fig 4).

Planning background

Planning permission, application number 2043/06, has been granted with conditions to convert an existing barn and its connecting range of outbuildings on land at Church Farm, Thorndon, Suffolk, grid reference (TM 1418 6970). To allow proper investigation and recording of the site which is potentially of archaeological and historic significance condition 5 stated that “ *No development shall take place within any part of the application site until the applicant or developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.*”

An archaeological monitoring brief was produced by Dr Jess Tipper of the SCCAS Conservation Team highlighting the archaeological potential of the site within the curtilage of a Grade II Listed Building of special architectural and historic interest, with dates from the early seventeenth century with possible medieval origins (Listed Building 281379). Subsequently a written programme of archaeological work was agreed with him.

Historical Background

Thorndon All Saints is a parish within the hundred of Hartismere, Suffolk.

Thorndon is mentioned in the *Domesday Book, 1086*, and is referred to as *Tornedun* translated as '*Thorn hill*' from the old English for *thorn* and *dun* for hill (Ekwall 1960). A church and a mill are referenced (Rumble 1986).

By 1844, The village of Thorndon is mentioned in a local directory as: ‘A large, scattered village with many neat houses.... has in its parish 732 souls and 2680A, 33p.of land, 51A, 3R, 36p (acres, rods and poles of land), of common land, etc’. The directory goes on to say: ‘ Thorndon is in four manors: Little Thorndon, of which N.C. Barnardiston, Esq., is lord; and a small manor belonging to the rectory. The other principal landowners are Richard Dalton, Esq., H.D. Hemsworth, Esq., Rev. J. Betts, Rev. B. Chapman, and Messers. J. Hammond, Thomas Woodward, and J. Simpson. In the reign of Edward III, *Thorndene* was held by Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk, (who built the church in 1358) and afterwards by the De la Poles. (History, Gazeteer and Directory of Suffolk, 1844). Church Farm Barn appears to be part of Church Farm, a farmhouse dating to the sixteenth century with possible medieval origins and the house is grade II listed (Images of England; IoE Number 281379). In spite of the possible early origins of Church Farm house the barn appears to be much later, having been recorded under a separate building survey by DPAS.

Archaeological Background

There has been one archaeological intervention, approximately 30 metres to the south-west of the development site, in the form of archaeological monitoring (SCCAS; HER No. THD 022). A large ditch of unknown date was discovered.

The H.E.R., records eleven entries of archaeological interest within the parish of Thorndon. A full list of these is given in appendix I

Map information



Figure 2 Hodskinsons map Thorndon of 1783
(approximately one inch to the mile)



Figure 3 The Tithe map of Thorndon, dated 1845
(site highlighted in red, scale 1 inch to the mile)

The Tithe map of Thorndon showing the barn in its extended form shows two, possibly three, moated enclosures. One of these contains the rectory and could indicate that other principal buildings such as a manor house or hall may have also

moved away from the church in the post-medieval period or even at an earlier date, thus providing a potential site for earlier buildings at Church Farm.



Figure 4: The 1880's Ordnance Survey,
(site marked in red; scale 1:63360)

Methodology

The excavation of the footings was monitored on the 28th August 2008, 6th November 2008, 10th November 2008, 17th-19th November 2008, 22nd January 2009, and 10th-11th June 2009. Four separate areas were excavated and assigned trench numbers (fig 4). The trenches were inspected by the observing archaeologist Dennis Payne.

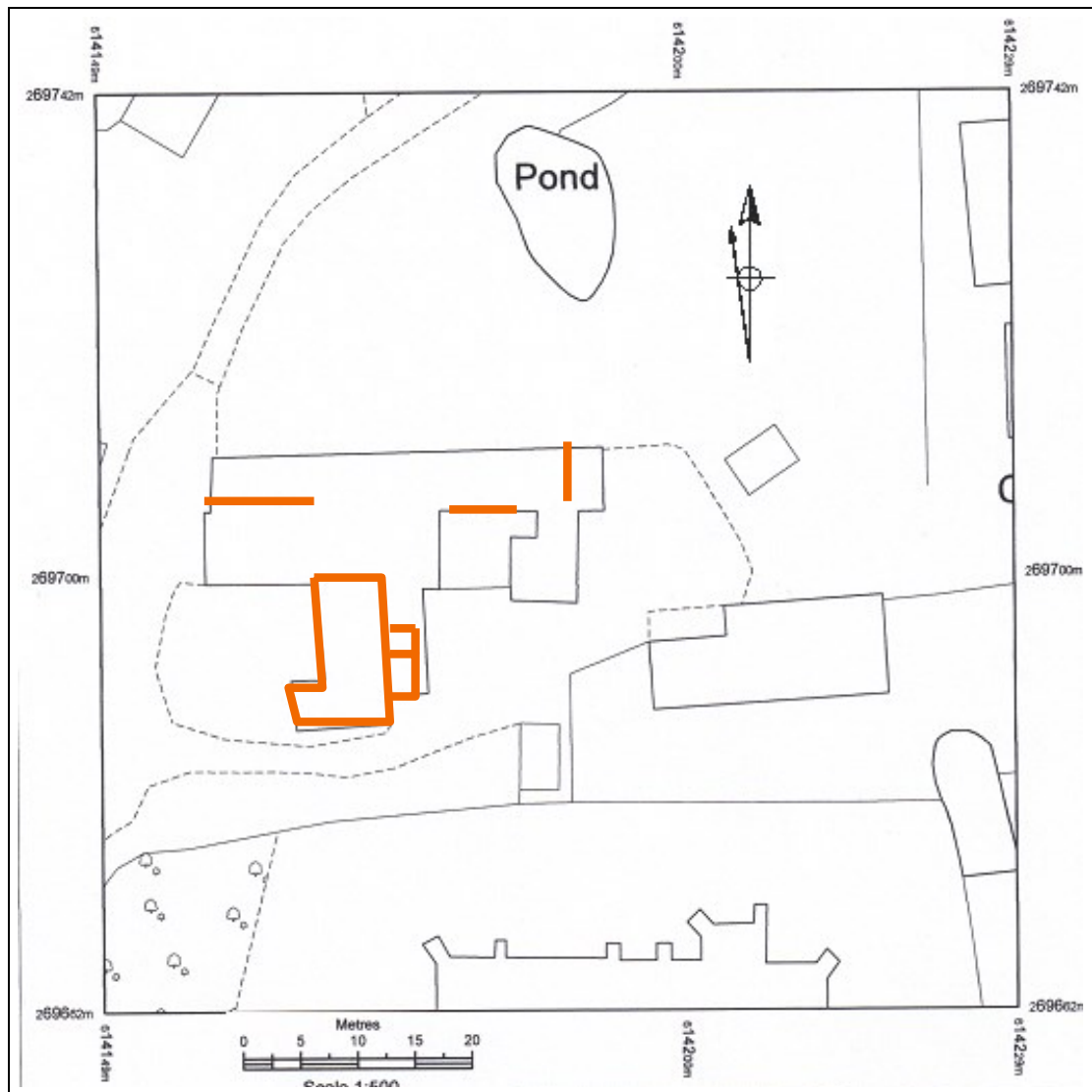


Figure 5 Block-plan showing location of footings

The site was recorded using a sketch plan and a scale plan at a scale of 1:50. The sections were hand-cleaned and recorded at 1:20. A photographic record was compiled in digital, black and white and colour transparencies.

The trenches were approximately 0.5 wide under the location of the prior timber frame wall which mainly had had a brick plinth. This plinth had been removed before the trench was excavated. The trenches were excavated to provide underpinning for the building.

Results

The area around the development and within the barn had been cleared and a hogging placed within the barn before the first visit to monitor the trench excavations. The four trenches were excavated to a depth between 0.80-1.20m below floor level.

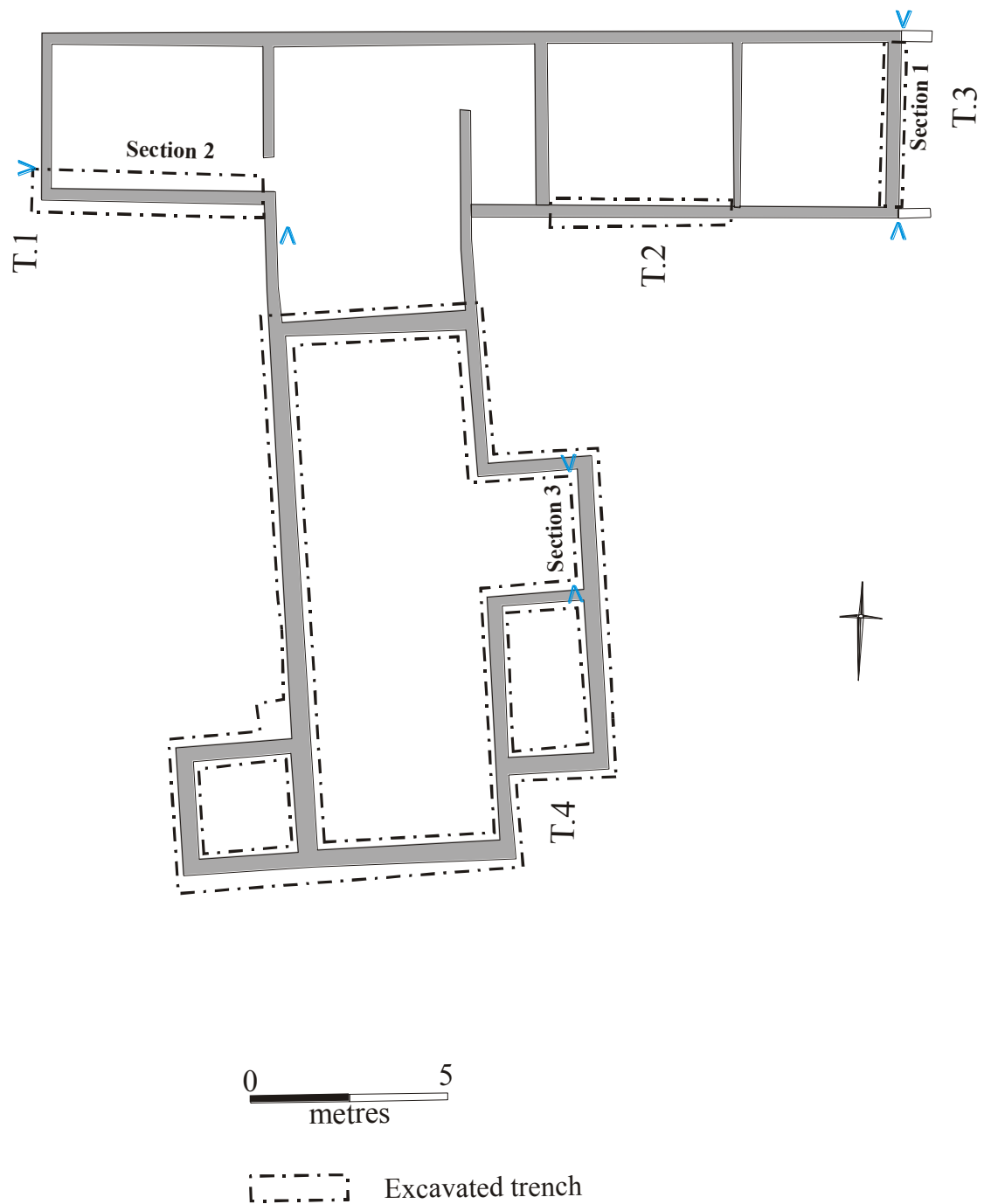


Figure 6 Plan of sections

Trench 1

Trench 1 (fig 6) was located in the western end of the east-west range of outbuildings, immediately to the north of the barn, and measured 6.80m in length by 0.50m in width and 0.80m in depth. There were no finds.

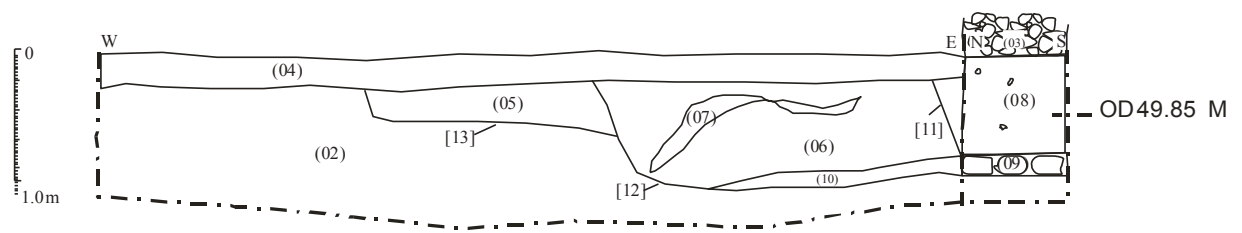


Figure 7 Section 2, Trench 1.

Possible cess deposits and stone layer for a probable foundation wall.

Context	description	dimensions	Interpretation
(03)	Flint and lime mortar		Outbuilding wall
context 04	crushed building material		Modern material make-up laid to facilitate the buildings access.
context 05	a silty greyish-green clay with interspersed lenses of blackish grey organic (cess) silt	dimensions: width, 1.68m, depth, 0.30 m	Mixed back-fill with lenses of organic (cess) material and clay
context 06	yellowish-grey clay with interspersed lenses of blackish organic silt	dimensions: width 2.40m, depth, 0.58m	Mixed back-fill of organic (cess) material and clay
Context 07	yellowish grey silty clay lens	width 1.40m, depth 0.08m	Back-fill
context 08	fill of wall cut [11] – brown and beige sticky clay with common small stones	width 0.58m, depth 0.54m	Probable back fill? This deposit may have been concealing the extension of the flint wall (03)
context 09	layer of stones/bricks	width 0.55m, depth 0.12m	Possibly a foundation layer for a wall of an earlier structure
context 10	black, sticky, silty clay – cess material?	width 2.40m, depth 0.12m	Waste material
context 11	cut of wall trench	profile: u-shaped, vertical cut; width 0.58m, depth 0.54m	Cut for wall
context 12	re-cut of pit or pond	profile: u-shaped, gradual sides and gradual break of slope; dimensions: 2.40m width, depth 0.58m	
context 13	cut of pit or pond	profile: u-shaped with angular sides and sharp break of slope	

Trench 1 showed evidence of two possible pits containing cess like material which were cut by a possible footing. This footing was inline with the wall footings of the out buildings but contained clay. There were no finds.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located in the eastern end of the connecting east-west range of out-buildings, immediately to the north of the barn, and measured 4.50m in length by 0.50m in width and 0.80m in depth, was on an east-west alignment.

No archaeology was located within this trench, consisting purely of natural yellowish-grey clay (02) which was considered equivalent across the site.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the eastern end of the connecting east-west range of out-buildings, immediately to the north of the barn, and measured 5.0 metres in length by 0.50m wide and 0.80metres deep. There were no finds.

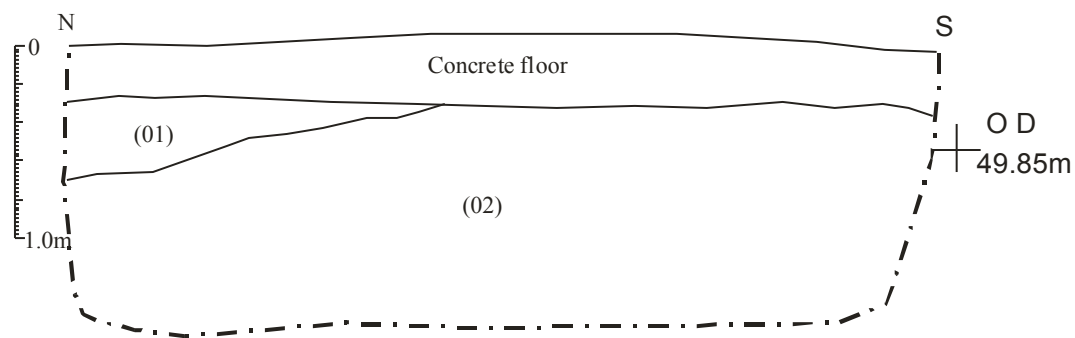


Figure 8 Section 1, Trench 1

Context	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
Context 01	Orange brown clayey silt.		No finds Possible sub-soil
Context 02	yellowish-grey clay with rounded chalk and common angular flint		natural clay

Trench 4

Trench 4 was a continuous trench, excavated for the footings for a new brick plinth to underpin the main barn structure, including the eastern facing porch and two connecting lean-to structures. A total of 65.50m were excavated to a depth varying from 0.80m-1.20m by 0.50m wide.

Archaeology of a similar nature to that found in trench 1 was located in the north-south trench for the porch, located facing east on the main barn structure. The section

revealed a layer of organic material identical to that seen in trench 1. There were no finds.

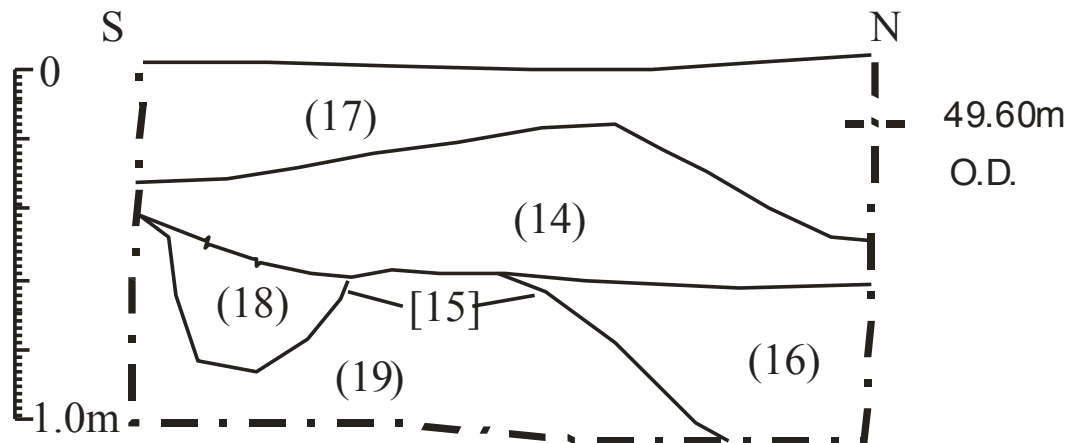


Figure 9 Section 3, Trench 4
(series of slurry or cess pits?)

Context Description

Context	description	dimensions	Interpretation
context 14	black silty organic (cess) deposit – similar to (10)	width 2.08m, depth 0.35m	Similar (16) and (18)
context 15	cut of pit	profile: u-shaped and irregular; width 2.10m, depth 0.33m	This cut was not seen in the facing wall and extended 1 metre to the west of the section
context 16	black silty deposit (cess), similar to (14)	width 0.97, depth 0.32m	Similar (14)
context 17	mixed back-fill of clay and crushed building material	width 2.08, depth 0.22m	
context 18	blackish grey silty clay	width 0.52m depth 0.30m	Similar (14)
context 19	mainly yellowish grey clay equivalent to (02)	width 1.70m, depth 0.38m	This deposit in this area was often contaminated with crushed building material most probably introduced by the excavation of the trench.

Discussion

The footing trench dimensions were generally consistent, measuring around 0.50 metres wide by between 0.80-1.30 metres deep. The site, upon the initial inspection, had been disturbed by vehicular movement and some crushed building material had been laid to ease access due to flooding on the site. Apart from the stone course (09) and clay back fill (03) in trench 1 and the organic deposits seen in trenches 1 and 4, no other archaeology was observed.

Given the location of the site, being close to the church, it is surprising that no archaeology, except for the features mentioned, were found. The site does lie however on the eastern most extent of the present village, but this may have once been the nucleus of the settlement in medieval times. On the other hand, the site may not have seen much activity at any time, and may have been given over to farming purposes during the medieval period or even earlier.

The presence of the church though, being close to the present settlement does indicate that the site was within the historic core of the village and that the green, most certainly (referred to as Standwell or Thorndon Green on early maps) extended westwards from the church and is probably a later development. Thorndon is a good candidate for major buildings having moved away from the church as the rectory is now located to the south of the church, away from the village core along with three possible medieval enclosures. (one of these enclosures is recorded in the HER - THD 005).

A Historic building survey carried out on the barn showed that the building was later than the farmhouse (dated to between the late 17th c. – early 18th c.) and most probably replaced an earlier barn-type structure belonging to Church Farmhouse, which dates back to the sixteenth century. The deposits found could possibly - along with the stone course recorded - be the evidence for an earlier barn on the site.

It is not known if the site was part of the church holdings.

The site for the barn may have been selected because it was on firm ground that had little disturbance.

It is possible from the cess like deposits that the site, before the barn was erected, was part of a farm yard for many centuries. The cess deposits were seen below the out buildings and the porch to the barn, which might have been a latter addition, so some of these deposits may have been contemporary with the original barn, which is probably late 17th or early 18th century.

Archaeological monitoring has shown that no significant archaeology, except for the features mentioned, was compromised by the development within the footings that were excavated by the mechanical digger.

Conclusions

A stone course layer seen under the connecting range may indicate that an earlier building had stood on the site of the barn. Limited observation in a small section did not allow for a fuller interpretation. The organic material noted in some sections was of a cess-like material with no finds and was not datable, but could be earlier than the barn given their location beneath the present barn footings. It is likely that this material belonged to earlier farming activity, but could not be conclusively proven to be the case.

Acknowledgements

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This report for archaeological monitoring was written by Dennis Payne, who also managed the project and carried out the field-work.

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Sources:

The Suffolk County Council Historic Environment Records office, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk

The Thornham village web-site: <http://thorndon.com>

Photographs



Plate 1 Church Farm Barn. looking west, showing porch



Plate 2 Section 2, Trench 1 Section 2 showing flint wall.



Plate 3 Section 3, Trench 4



Plate 4 Section 1, Trench 3.