

Report 2343



nau archaeology

**Archaeological Watching Brief at  
St Edmunds House, Lower Baxter Street,  
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk**

BSE360



**Prepared for**  
Highlight Consultancy  
Ioma House  
Hope Street  
Douglas  
Isle of Man  
IM1 1AP



Andrew Barnett

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[www.nps.co.uk](http://www.nps.co.uk)

<b>PROJECT CHECKLIST</b>		
Project Manager	Nigel Page	
Draft Completed	Andrew Barnett	10/02/2011
Graphics Completed	David Dobson	12/07/2011
Edit Completed	Jayne Bown	19/07/2011
Signed Off	Nigel Page	20/07/2011
<i>Issue 1</i>		

## **NAU Archaeology**

Scandic House  
85 Mountergate  
Norwich  
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150

F 01603 756190

E [jayne.bown@nps.co.uk](mailto:jayne.bown@nps.co.uk)

[www.nau.org.uk](http://www.nau.org.uk)

BAU2343

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Location:	St Edmunds House, Lower Baxter Street, Bury St Edmunds
District:	St Edmundsbury
Grid Ref.:	TL 8540 6430
HER No.:	BSE360
OASIS Ref.:	105480
Client:	Highlight Consultancy
Dates of Fieldwork:	10 November 2010

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted for Highlight Consultancy during Phase 1 of building refurbishment at St Edmunds House, Lower Baxter Street, Bury St Edmunds. The excavation of three trenches for a new drainage system was monitored.*

*The trenches were shallow and no archaeological features were observed and no finds were encountered during the works.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A watching brief was carried out on three service trenches which were excavated, during Phase 1 of the buildings refurbishment to facilitate the installation of new drainage. The site was situated in the car park to the rear of St Edmunds house on Lower Baxter Street, Bury St Edmunds (Fig. 1). The excavations were limited to approximately 9m either side of the rear entrance door to the building and 2.5m from the rear wall (Fig. 2).

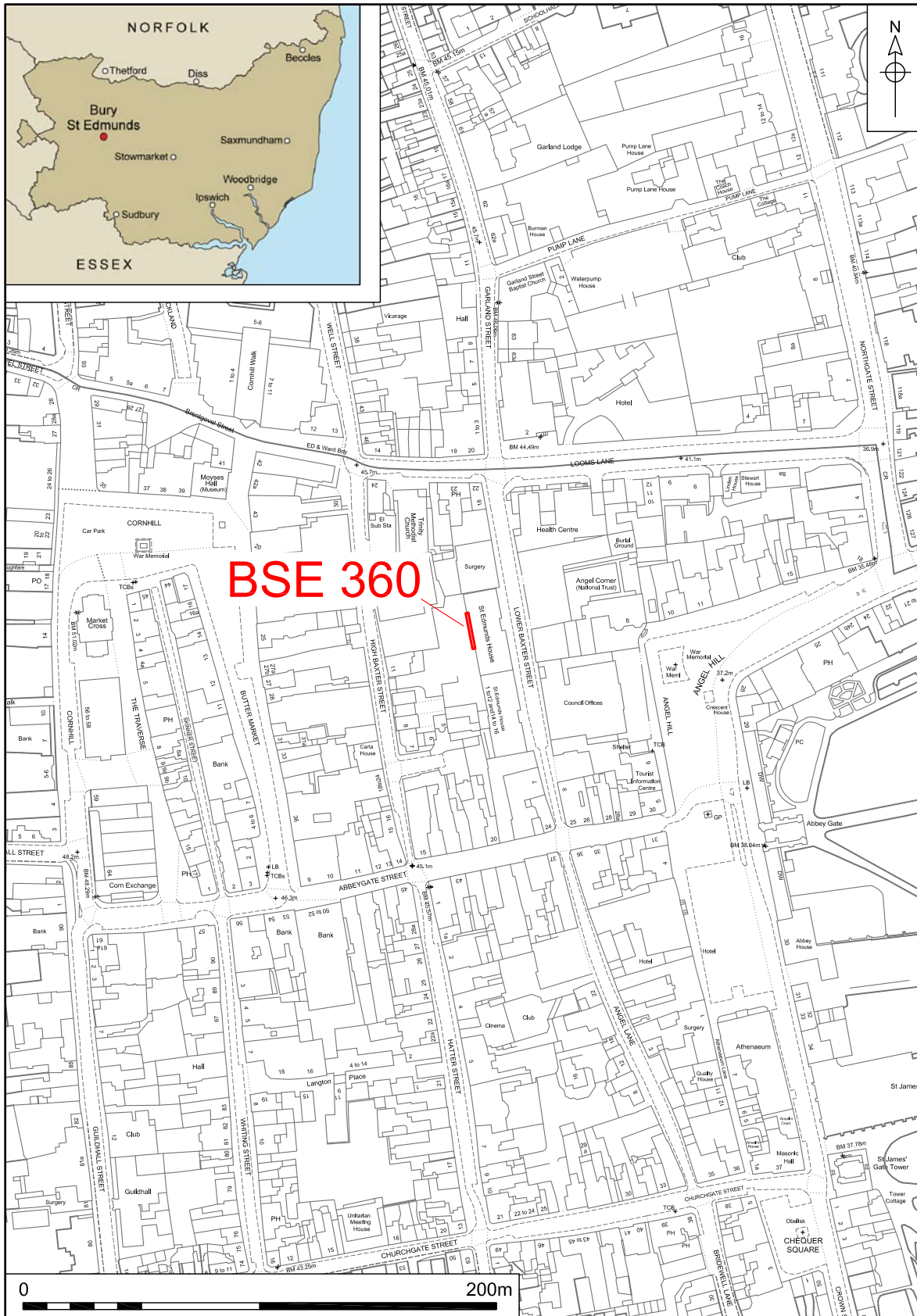
This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (Ref. SE/09/1375) and a Brief issued by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Ref.StEdmundsHouse-BSE2009). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2343/NP). This work was commissioned and funded by Highlight Consultancy.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010) The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

## **2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

Bury St Edmunds lies on Glacial Sands and Gravels overlying Upper Chalk (BGS 1991 and 1985). The site lies on a well drained slope falling to the east within the historic core of Bury St Edmunds.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500



Plate 1. Development site, looking north-east



Plate 2. Development site, looking west

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

St Edmunds House is a mid 20th-century brick-faced office building (Plate 1). It is situated centrally on Lower Baxter Street within the medieval core of Bury St Edmunds and approximately 200m east of the north-east corner of the Cathedral precinct. The site, in the car park to the rear of the building, is at the base of a slope rising to the west towards High Baxter Street (Plate 2).

A search of the Historic Environment Record for the area shows that four sites of medieval and post-medieval date are located within 50–100m to the east and north-east of the development site. BSE085 and BSE202 show evidence of significant medieval occupation. BSE183 records the presence of a skeleton of 7th-century date and BSE145 marks the location of a probable clay pipe factory. Both latter sites (BSE183 and BSE145) straddle the entrance to the car park at the rear of St Edmunds House.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

The Brief required that all groundworks associated with the excavation of the drainage runs to the rear of the building be monitored by an experienced archaeologist in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008) and the guidelines set out in the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

Excavation was carried out by hand with an electrically powered breaker and shovels which were operated under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were to be scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

No environmental samples were taken.

All archaeological features and deposits were to be recorded using NAU Archaeology *pro forma*. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

No temporary benchmark was used during the course of this work

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine, cold weather.

## **5.0 RESULTS**

The excavation of three pipe trenches was monitored during the watching brief attendance (Fig. 2).

### **Trench 1**

Trench 1 ran along the northern face of the building for approx 5.5m and was dug to a depth of approximately 300-450mm gaining in depth as the trench fell away to the south (Fig. 2. Section 1, Plate 3).

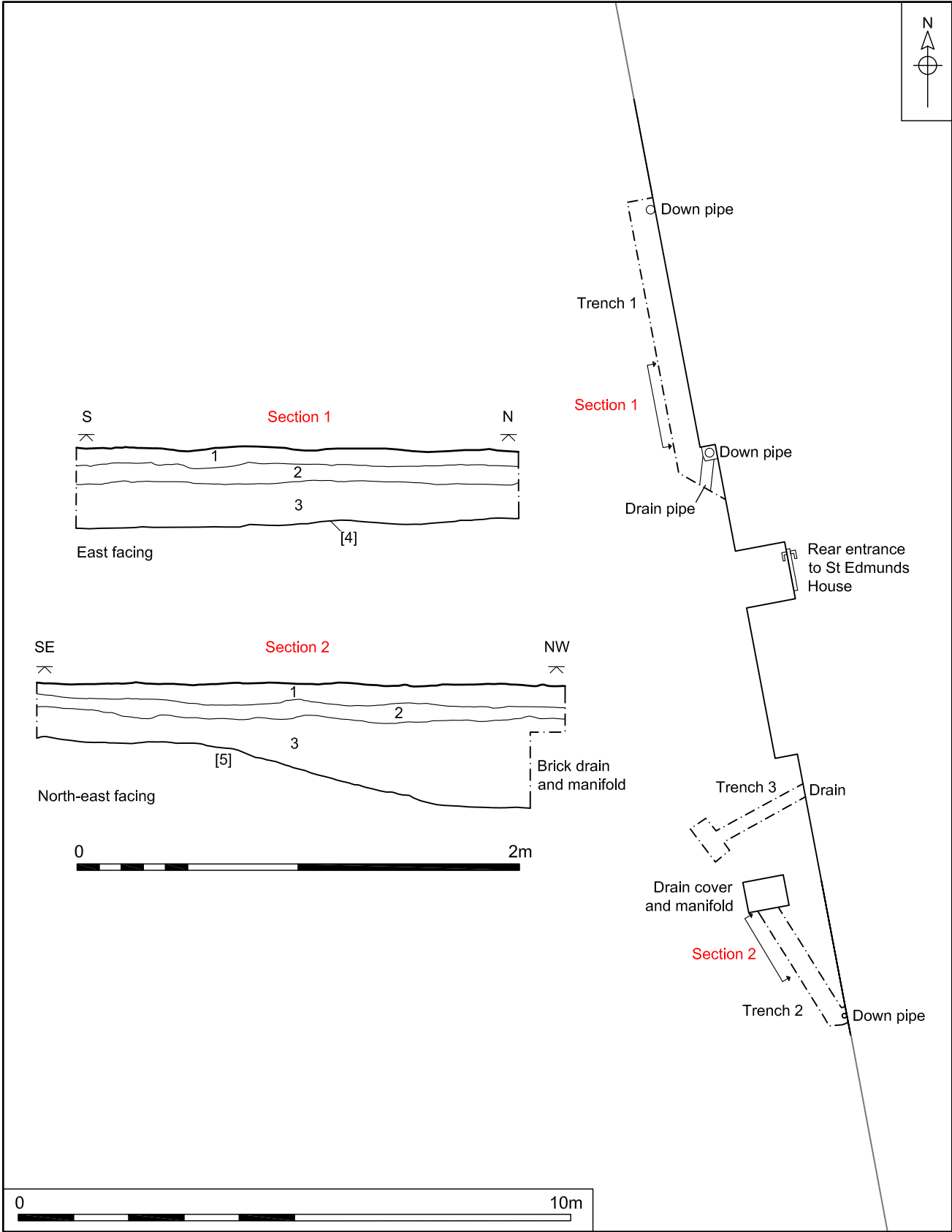
### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 was aligned roughly north-west to south-east from the southern end of the rear wall for approximately 2.5m and was dug to a depth of 200mm which increased to 550mm at the drain manifold (Fig. 2. Section 2, Plate 4).

### **Trench 3**

Trench 3 was aligned south-west to north east and was approximately 2.25m long. It was dug to a general depth of 450mm, becoming shallower (approximately 200mm) at the wall itself (Plate 5).





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Figure 2. Trenches location and sections. Scale 1:100 and 1:25

All three trenches were excavated through tarmac and base layer of the car park into a make-up layer of dry, lean mix cement and gravel. The lower boundary of the make-up layer was not reached and so no archaeological features, deposits or finds were visible or collected.

Trenches 1 and 2 were planned and photographed and a sample section of each was drawn. Trench 3 was monitored and photographed, however no section was drawn as it became apparent that the trench was as shallow as Trenches 1 and 2 and contained the same deposits.



Plate 3. Trench 1



Plate 4. Trench 2



Plate 5. Trench 3

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The depth to which the service trenches were excavated was relatively shallow and the bases of all three trenches remained within modern construction layers for the car park.

No archaeological features were observed and no finds were encountered during this watching brief.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The author would like to thank the contractors on site who allowed ready access to the trenches.

David Dobson produced the figures and the report which was edited by Jayne Bown

## ***Bibliography***

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| BGS (British Geological Survey)                 | 1985 | <i>East Anglia</i> , Sheet 52N 00 Solid Geology, 1:250,000 series                        |
| BGS (British Geological Survey)                 | 1991 | <i>East Anglia</i> , Sheet 52N 00 Quaternary, 1:250,000 series                           |
| Department for Communities and Local Government | 2010 | <i>Planning policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment</i> , TSO, Norwich |

### Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period
1	Deposit		4,5 & 6	Tarmac	Modern
2	Deposit		4,5 & 6	Base Layer under Tarmac	Modern
3	Deposit		4,5 & 6	Foundation Layer	Modern
4	Cut	Pipe Trench		Pipe Trench	Modern
5	Cut	Pipe Trench		Pipe Trench	Modern
6	Cut	Pipe Trench		Pipe Trench	Modern

### Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Feature Type	Quantity
Modern	Service trench	3

**Appendix 2: Archaeological Specification**

Environment and Transport Service Delivery  
9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 2AR

## **Brief and Specification for Continuous Archaeological Recording**

### **ST EDMUNDS HOUSE NORTH, LOWER BAXTER STREET, BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK (SE/09/1375)**

***Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications***

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission for the construction of a rear extension at St Edmunds House, Lower Baxter Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1NX (TL 854 643), has been granted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (SE/09/1375).
- 1.2 Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by continuous archaeological recording during all groundworks (**Please contact the developer for an accurate plan of the development**).
- 1.3 This application is within an area of high archaeological importance, defined in the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016 (Appendix B) and recorded in the County Historic Environment Record (HER no. BSE 241). There is high potential for medieval occupation deposits to be disturbed by this development. Aspects of the proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.4 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field 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 establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.5 Following approval of the WSI, our office will advise the Local Planning Authority that an acceptable scheme of work is in place, and therefore we (will) have no objection to the work commencing. 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 St Edmundsbury Borough Council that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.

- 1.6 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.
- 1.7 All arrangements for the excavation 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 by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

## **2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the ground works associated with the new extension. Any ground works, and also the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after stripping by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.

## **3. Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by SCCAS/CT.
- 3.2 The developer or his contracted archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT 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. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.
- 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 this Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.



- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered SCCAS/CT must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

#### **4. Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological monitoring of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development, 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.
- 4.4 A photographic record of the work is to be made of any archaeological features, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies/high resolution digital images.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeo-environmental 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 Rachel Ballantyne, 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.
- 4.7 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the monitoring).
- 4.8 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.

#### **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 three months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 The project manager must consult the County Historic Environment Record Officer to obtain an event 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.
- 5.3 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 5.4 The project manager should consult the SCC Archive Guidelines 2008 and also the County HER Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive

(conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.

- 5.5 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 proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).
- 5.6 The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record 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.
- 5.7 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, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. 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).
- 5.8 An unbound copy of the assessment report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to both SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 5.9 Following acceptance, two copies of the assessment report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT. A single hard copy should be presented to the County Historic Environment Record as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 5.10 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*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.11 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 Historic Environment Record. 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to County Historic Environment Record. 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

Suffolk County Council  
Archaeological Service Conservation Team  
Environment and Transport Service Delivery  
9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP33 2AR  
Tel. : 01284 352197  
E-mail: jess.tipper@suffolk.gov.uk

Date: 23 December 2009

Reference: /StEdmundsHouse-BSE2009

**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.**