

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF OLIVER HOUSE THE STREET, ELMSWELL (SMR ref. EWL 021)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK
ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
(Application Nos. OL/44/00 & 1352/03)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/153
(OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-10546)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of a residential development on land to the south of Oliver House, The Street, Elmswell (NGR; TL 9885 6368), was undertaken during summer 2004. The stripping of topsoil for the new access road and footings for two of the fourteen houses were observed. A number of finds, including medieval buckles and pottery, were recovered from the spoil heaps but no significant archaeological deposits or features were identified. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference EWL 021. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the developer, Bennett Homes PLC.

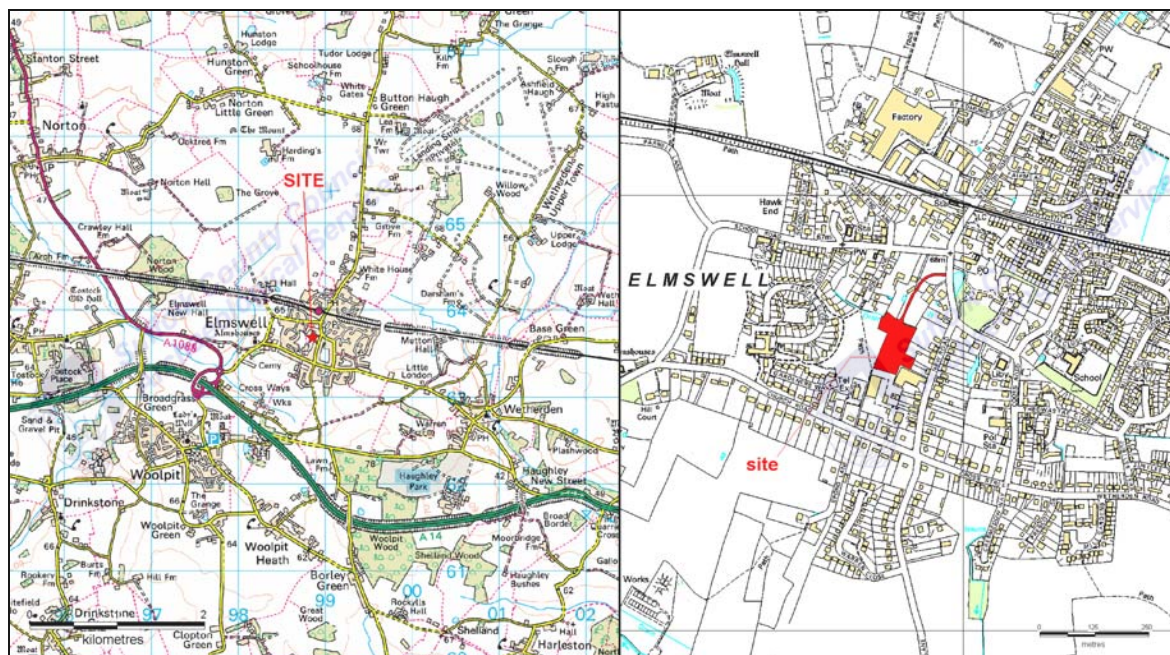


Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the erection of a residential development on land to the south of Oliver House, The Street, Elmswell, was undertaken during the summer of 2004 through to the summer of 2005. Interest in the site is due to the fact it lies close to known sites of Roman activity. Scattered evidence, which includes a

pottery kiln (SMR ref. EWL 003), has been recorded intermittently in the area to the south and recent work undertaken in association with the adjacent development situated to the southwest (SMR ref. EWL 013) revealed part of a ditched enclosure with a low level of finds dating from the Roman period with some activity continuing to the east. As only a low-level of archaeological activity was expected within the site an archaeological monitoring condition was considered adequate. The aim of monitoring was to provide a record of any archaeological features or deposits revealed by the groundworks associated with this development. To detail the archaeological work required a Brief and Specification was produced by the Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (see Appendix I).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TL 9885 6368; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference EWL 021. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the developer, Bennett Homes PLC.

Methodology

Site visits were made to inspect the road strip, as it was underway, and the footing trenches of the house plots after they had been excavated by the building contractor. Any spoil heaps present on site were also briefly examined in the hope of retrieving archaeological artefacts. Occasional digital photographs were taken of the site and the monitored footing trenches. Figure 2 illustrates the layout of the development and the areas monitored.

Results

The site was visited on the 18th June, 6th August and 16th August 2004 to inspect the stripping of topsoil from the route of the new access roadway. On the first visit stripping was underway but the resultant surface was not completely cleared of topsoil with only small occasional patches of the underlying natural subsoil being revealed. Consequently no archaeological features or deposits were identified. The surface of the spoil heaps present on site were quickly examined but no artefacts were recovered.

The site was visited on the 6th and the 16th August 2004 during which time the roadway was reduced to the formation level which was approximately 0.4m below the surface of the natural subsoil. Much of the roadway had been cleanly cut to this level but no archaeological

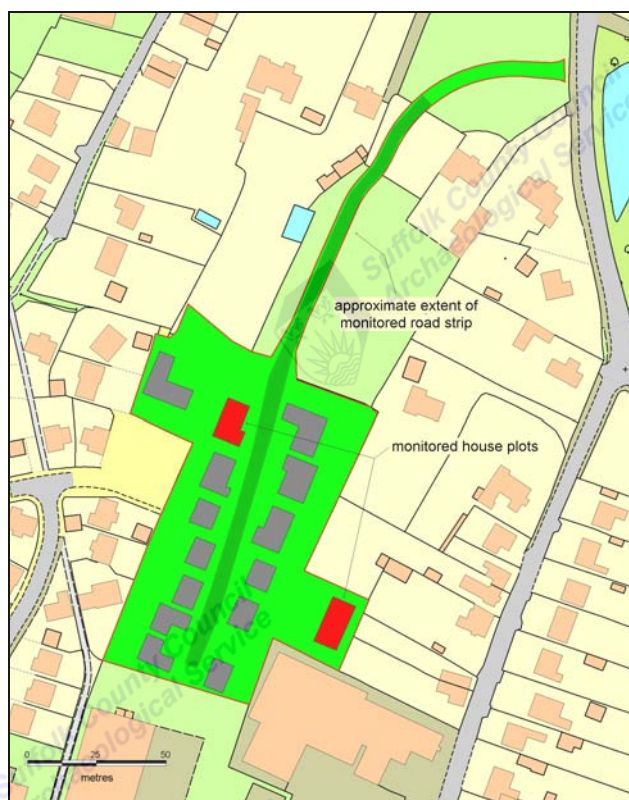


Figure 2: House Plot Locations and Areas Monitored
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features were recorded. The vertical sides of the reduced area were examined with the aim of identifying features in section but none were seen. The natural subsoil in this area comprised an orange silty clay with occasional patches of orange/yellow sand. The area of new roadway fronting onto 'The Street' had been reduced but unfortunately hardcore had been put down as this was one of the main entrances to the site and was being regularly used. The sites of the proposed house plots had been stripped of topsoil and these areas were also examined but with negative results. Again, the surfaces of any available spoil heaps were examined but no artefacts were recovered although a small number of items had been collected off the spoil heaps by the building contractors themselves (see 'The Finds' below).

A brief visit was made to the site on the 22nd December 2004 when it was found that footings for approximately half of the house plots had been completed. Spoil present on-site was examined but no artefacts were recovered.

The open footing trenches of only two of the house plots were examined (see figure 2). No archaeological features were identified within the cut footings and only the natural silty clay subsoil was seen. Monitoring of the excavated footings was undertaken over three visits, 29th March 2005, 20th June 2005 and 13th July 2005.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference EWL 021, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-10546.

The Finds

A.West / R. Goffin, October 2005.

Introduction

Two fragments of medieval pottery were recovered from spoil heaps associated with building development. In addition a number of small finds were metal detected from the spoil heaps. The pottery from the site is listed below:

Context	Pottery		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	
0001	2	31	L12th-14th C

Table 1: Quantification of pottery

Pottery

Two fragments of medieval pottery were collected, both abraded. A large sherd of the sagging base of a coarseware bowl or jar was identified. The fabric is uniformly grey in colour and is medium sandy with occasional flint inclusions up to 5mm in length. A second smaller body sherd is slightly coarser and has a reddish brown surface with a dark grey inner surface. Both fragments have been given the general description of medieval coarseware, dating to the Late 12th-14th century. The pottery has been listed in Appendix II.

Small finds

A total of four metal small finds were recovered from the spoil. These are catalogued separately in Appendix 2. Two copper alloy buckles of medieval date were identified, SF 0003 and SF 0004. A third buckle of post-medieval date with a rectangular frame was also recovered (SF 0002), together with a complete copper alloy bracelet with little decoration apart from a central groove (SF 0005).

References

Egan, P., and Pritchard, F., 1991, Dress Accessories c.1150-c.1450

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits or features were revealed during the monitoring visits to the site. Unfortunately the monitoring of the stripping for the roadway was problematic as the initial strip was too high and the second reduction truncated the surface of the natural subsoil by *c.*0.4m, which would have removed any early floor or yard surfaces and shallow features. Deeper features would have survived and the absence of these, combined with the small number of artefacts directly associated with occupation that were recovered, would indicate that it is unlikely any significant archaeological activity has occurred within the area. This is possibly corroborated by the complete lack of features and deposits noted in the observed footing trenches which were cleanly cut which would have made the identification of features reasonably simple. Despite the fact that only two of the house footings were monitored the footprints for the houses were seen after they had been stripped of topsoil with no finds or features being noted. Consequently it would appear that no significant archaeological deposits or features have been damaged or destroyed by the development of this site.

The finds recovered from the spoil tips indicate a low-level of medieval and later activity in this area but presumably only represent chance losses by individuals rather than anything specific. No activity dating from the Roman period was identified.

APPENDIX I

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

SOUTH OF OLIVER HOUSE, THE STREET, ELMSWELL

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, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (applications OL/44/00 and 1352/03). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposed development is at TL 988635 on high ground (60-70m OD) overlooking valleys to the south and west. Scattered evidence for Roman activity has been found intermittently from the church area westwards, including a pottery kiln (EWL 003). Recent work on a development immediately west of the present area (EWL 013) revealed part of a ditched enclosure and a fairly low density of ditches and finds although some activity did continue towards the east. The development area has been garden or orchard for the last 150 years, and so preservation of any archaeological deposits is likely to be good. The main potential is for Roman features, probably peripheral to the settlement area; the site is 80m off the medieval(?) road frontage but the proposed new access will impact on the frontage.
- 1.3 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 Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/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 (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 PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/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.

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 main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.

2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the stripping of topsoil for access and the excavation of building footing trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

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 the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.

3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS 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 paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.

3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS 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 both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

4.2 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and a half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.

4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.

4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.

4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments 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 Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR 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.
- 5.3 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. 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).
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

Specification by: Judith Plouviez

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 16th September 2003

Reference: Elmswell OliverHouse09.doc

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 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.

APPENDIX II

FINDS DATA

POTTERY

<u>Context</u>	<u>Fabric</u>	<u>Form</u>	<u>No of</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>	<u>Fabric date range</u>	<u>Comments</u>
0001	MCW	BODY	1	5	L12th-14th C	
0001	MCW	BODY	1	26	L12th-14th C	Sagging base

SMALL FINDS

<u>Small</u>	<u>Cont.</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Obj. Name</u>	<u>Finds Cat.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Dia.</u>	<u>Comments</u>
0002	0001	PMED	Copper	Buckle	DA	1	8	36	25	4		Cast rectangular, double loop frame buckle with central bar and pin
0003	0001	MED	Copper	Buckle	DA	1	9	34	24	7		Cast D-shaped buckle, 14 th C. Frame bar offset and narrowed. Cu sheet roller with groove for pin, decorative knobs on outside edge either side of sheet roller
0004	0001	MED	Copper	Buckle	DA	1	2	41	18	2		Cast buckle frame with integral plate. Sub round frame with straightbar on outer edge. Hole for pin. Frame moulded and decorated with vertical lines.
0005	0001	PMED	Copper	Bracelet	DA	1	12			5	65	Cast bracelet. D-shaped in profile. Impressed 'rope-twist' pattern around the centre of the outer surface.