

Land west of Red House, Hall Road, Long  
Melford  
LMD 191

**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

SCCAS Report No. 2011/157

**Client: Alston Cabinets (Long Melford) Ltd**

Author: J.A. Craven

September 2011



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Report Date: September 2011

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## HER Information

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**Report Number:** 2011/157

**Site Name:** Land west of Hall Road, Long Melford

**Planning Application No:** B/10/01078

**Date of Fieldwork:** 6th September 2011

**Grid Reference:** TL 863 458

**Client/Funding Body:** Alston Cabinets (Long Melford) Ltd

**Curatorial Officer:** Dr Abby Antrobus

**Project Officer:** John Craven

**Oasis Reference:** Suffolkc1-106070

**Site Code:** LMD 191

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:  
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

### **Disclaimer**

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.



# Contents

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Summary

Drawing Conventions

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Geology and topography</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Archaeology and historical background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Methodology</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Results</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 Introduction	5
5.2 Trench 01	5
5.3 Trench 02	6
<b>6. Discussion</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Conclusions and recommendations for further work</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Archive deposition</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>9. Acknowledgements</b>	<b>9</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Location plan	3
Figure 2. Trench location plan, trench plans and sections	7

## List of Plates

Plate 1. Trench 01 looking north-east	6
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



## **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation carried out on land west of Red House, Long Melford, identified two undated features amidst areas of substantial post-medieval/modern disturbance. No datable evidence of any activity relating to the nearby Roman settlement or medieval occupation of the town was identified.

# Drawing Conventions

## Plans

- Limit of Excavation 
- Features 
- Break of Slope 
- Features - Conjectured 
- Natural Features 
- Sondages/Machine Strip 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Illustrated Section  S.14
- Cut Number 
- Archaeological Features Observed In Section 

## Sections

- Limit of Excavation 
- Cut 
- Modern Cut 
- Cut - Conjectured 
- Deposit Horizon 
- Deposit Horizon - Conjectured 
- Intrusion/Truncation 
- Top of Natural 
- Top Surface 
- Break in Section 
- Cut Number 
- Deposit Number 0007
- Ordnance Datum  $\overline{18.45\text{m OD}}$

## **1. Introduction**

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An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land west of Red House, Long Melford, Suffolk (Fig. 1) to assess the potential of the site for archaeological deposits. The work was required by a condition on the approved planning application B/10/01078. The aim of the evaluation was to establish the implications of development upon archaeological deposits so that an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy could be decided.

The evaluation to assess the site's potential was carried out to meet a Brief and Specification issued by the Archaeological Advisor to the planning authority, Dr Abby Antrobus (SCC Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The work was funded by Ralph Carpenter of Modece Architects on behalf of the developer, Alston Cabinets (Long Melford) Ltd.

## **2. Geology and topography**

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The site, an area of c.820sqm, lies at TL 863 458 on an area of level ground, at a height of c.34 AOD, overlooking the Chad Brook which lies c. 50m to the west.

The site geology consists of deep loam/sandy soils with flint gravel overlying glaciofluvial drift (Ordnance Survey 1983).

### **3. Archaeology and historical background**

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The site was of interest due to its location within the historic medieval core of Long Melford (LMD 187) and its position to the north-east of an area of known Roman settlement (LMD 172).

700m to the south-west are the remains of a substantial Roman building, possibly a bathhouse (LMD 017, Scheduled Ancient Monument SF90) and Roman occupation and funerary deposits have been frequently observed extending northwards (e.g. LMD 137 and LMD 157) to within 150m of the site, the closest being LMD 027, 028, 029 and 047.

The site lies to the rear of a range of listed post-medieval properties which front onto Hall Road, close to a crossing of the Chad Brook. One of these buildings, Red House, has a core dating to the 16th century. 400m to the north-east lies the medieval Melford Green and the post-medieval Melford Hall and Park (LMD 058).

During the late 19th/early 20th century the northern part of the site is shown on the 1st – 3rd Editions Ordnance Survey as being occupied by a ‘mat’ factory. The Design and Access statement by Modece Architects submitted in support of the planning application states that the factory is believed to have burned down during the late 1940s, since when the site has been derelict.

At the time of evaluation, the site had been cleared to ground level. This had required felling of trees and the removal of large quantities of demolition rubble deriving from the former factory. The northern half of the site was still covered by the factories concrete floor surface, while the southern half consisted of a garden topsoil.

The development of the site therefore was thought to have high potential to affect archaeological deposits of Roman or medieval date, despite the sites recent history, and so a programme of archaeological evaluation was required to assess the site.

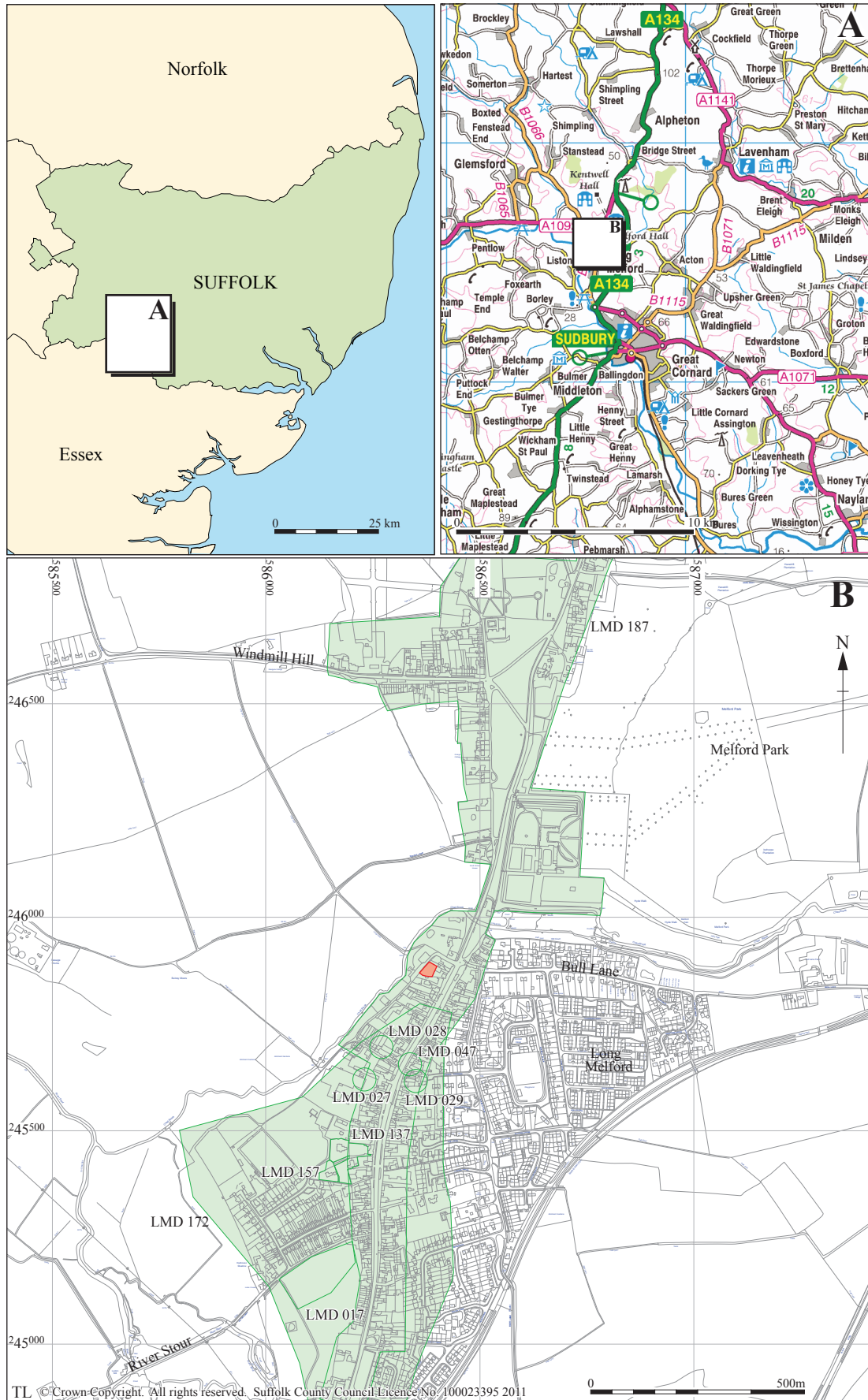


Figure 1. Location plan, showing development area (red) and HER sites mentioned in the text (green)

## 4. Methodology

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Two trenches, measuring 10.5m in total length, were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist, to the top of the undisturbed natural subsoil or archaeological levels (Fig. 2). The trenches were marked out by hand, as close as possible to the layout suggested in the WSI.

Archaeological features were normally clearly visible following cleaning by hand. All features that were not post-medieval/modern disturbance were investigated by hand.

The site was recorded using a single context continuous numbering system, contexts 0001-0006. Trench positions were recorded by hand in relation to boundaries shown on the Ordnance Survey. Trench plans were recorded at a scale of 1:50 and feature/trench sections at a scale of 1:20 onto A3 gridded permatrace sheets. Digital colour and black and white print photographs were taken of all stages of the fieldwork, and are included in the digital and physical archives.

An OASIS form has been initiated for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-106070) and a digital copy of the report has been submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>).

The site archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under Suffolk HER No. LMD 191.

## 5. Results

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### 5.1 Introduction

As stated above the site had been cleared to groundlevel, except at the southern end where trees were still to be cleared meaning Trench 02 was moved slightly northwards from its planned position. Of particular note was a soil profile along the northern site edge, showing 0.2m of topsoil over c.0.3m of mid brown subsoil, which demonstrated that the factory floor surface was set at least 0.5m below the original ground level at this point. To the south-west natural ground levels appeared to have dropped so that the southern edge of the concrete was level with the ground surface to the south, and west outside the site.

### 5.2 Trench 01

Trench 01, which measured 1.8m wide and 5.5m long, was excavated through the former factory floor in the northern part of the site to a depth of 1.2m. The trench profile showed that c.0.3m-0.4m of concrete and hardcore rubble deposits overlaid a c.0.5m thick layer of buried post-medieval/modern soils. The surface of the natural geology, a mix of mid orange/yellow sand and gravels, was identified at a depth of 0.8m, but only narrow ridges survived as it was cut by a series of substantial pits, all infilled with 18th/19th century soils containing scattered building debris.

At a depth of 1.2m machining was halted as two possible features were now visible amidst the later disturbance. A small sondage excavated by hand in one of the post-medieval/modern pits showed the base of the feature at a depth of c.1.5m.

0001 was a pit or ditch terminus, aligned north-west to south-east, lying between two large later pits. Overmachined by c.0.15m the trench profile showed these later pits to be cutting across the upper part of 0001. Measuring 0.55m wide and a further 0.2m deep it had steep sides, a concave base and a fill, 0002, of clean dark orange/brown mixed sands and fine gravels.

0003 was a probable pit, partially under the trench edge, and again partly overmachined by c.0.2m. Measuring 1.2m wide and a further 0.2m deep it had moderate sloping sides

and a flat base. Its fill, 0004, was also a clean, dark orange/brown, mix of sands and fine gravels.



Plate 1. Trench 01 looking north-east

### 5.3 Trench 02

Trench 02, which measured 1.8m wide and 5m long, was excavated through an area of garden topsoil in the southern part of the site to a depth of 0.9m. The trench profile showed that c.0.4m of modern disturbed soils overlaid a 0.3m thick former topsoil. The surface of the natural geology, a mix of mid orange/yellow sand and gravels, was identified at a depth of c.0.7m, but again only in small areas as it was also cut by four large features, all infilled with the same 18th/19th century soils containing scattered building debris.

A fifth feature, pit 0005, was initially thought to be interest as it had a noticeably different fill. Partial excavation and cleaning however showed it to partially cut the adjacent post-medieval/modern pit and fragments of modern brick were seen in its fill, 0006, of dark grey/brown silt/sand and gravels. The feature was not recorded.



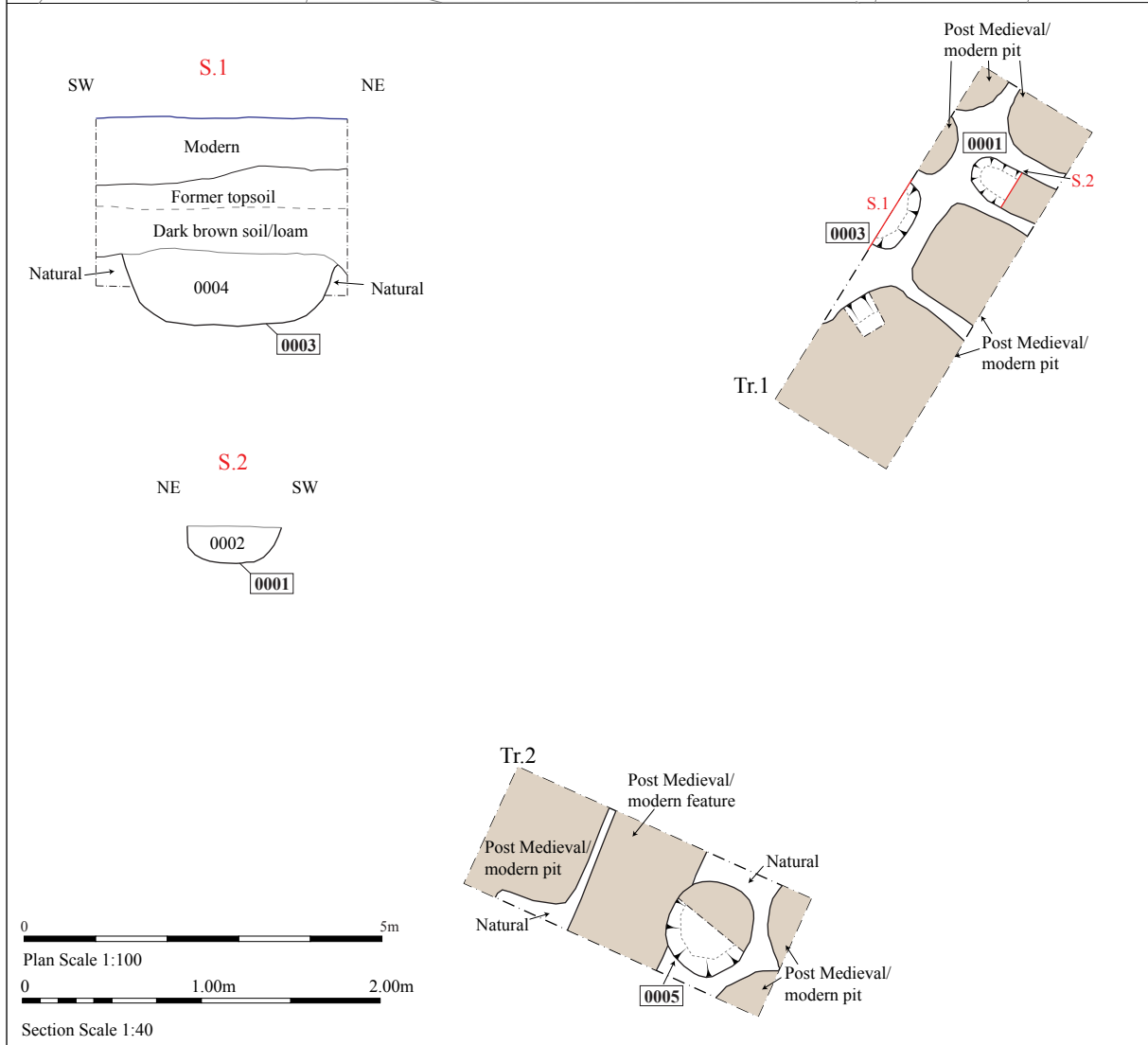
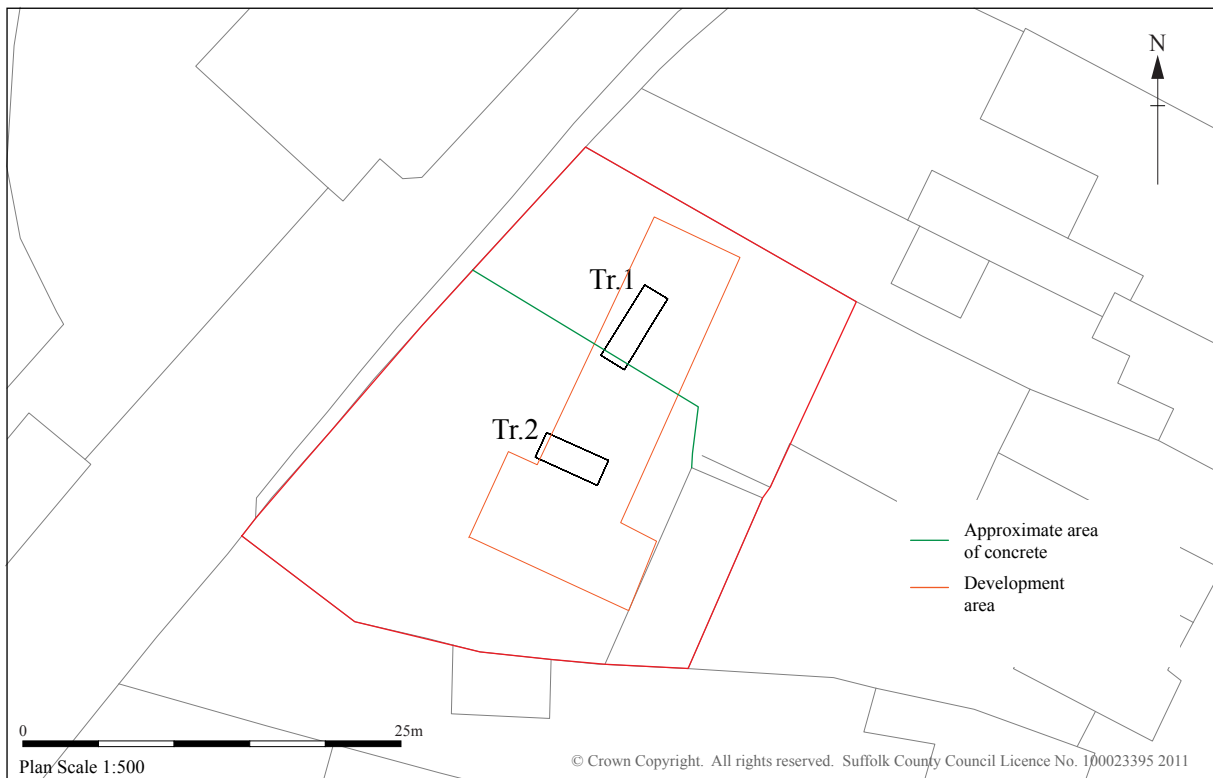


Figure 2. Trench location plan, trench plans and sections

## **6. Discussion**

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The archaeological evaluation has shown that the site is covered by deep post-medieval/modern deposits, the natural subsoil surface lying at a depth of c.0.8m. These deposits consist of thick garden topsoils and, in the northern half of the site, have been partially removed by the foundations and floor of the 19th century factory.

Lying below these topsoil layers is a series of large pits, infilled with the same topsoil material, which are cut into the natural subsoil by c.0.5m+. While pre-dating the final factory floor surface, these features are of 19th century or later date and have caused massive truncation to any potential archaeological deposits from earlier periods. Despite this truncation two possible features of earlier date were identified but both are undated.

No datable evidence of any activity relating to the Roman or medieval period was identified. Despite the truncation this suggests that the site lies outside of the Roman settlement as not even any disturbed or redeposited material was seen. The two undated features are unlikely to be of Roman date as, in the sites to the south-west, any Roman features typically contain sizeable finds assemblages.

## **7. Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

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The disturbance caused by the extensive post-medieval/modern activity on the site, combined with the absence of any datable deposits of an earlier period, suggest that the site is of limited archaeological potential despite the sites position in the medieval town and proximity to the Roman settlement. The development is therefore unlikely to have any significant impact upon archaeological deposits, particularly as any unidentified intact archaeological features are likely to be at a depth of at least 1m, and so no further archaeological work is thought necessary to mitigate the impact of development.

## **8. Archive deposition**

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Archive store, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

Digital archive: SCCAS archive.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

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Evaluation fieldwork and production of the report was carried out by John Craven.

Graphics for the report were produced by Ellie Hillen.





# Archaeological services Field Projects Team

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