

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

‘THE POPLARS’, ASHBOCKING (SMR ref. ABK 015)

A REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED
WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SMALL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
(Application Nos. 1060/04)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/158
(OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-10688)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a small residential development within the garden of ‘The Poplars’, Ashbocking (NGR; TM 1706 4462), was undertaken during June and July 2005. The site lies alongside the line of a Roman road and close to an area of medieval settlement but no archaeological deposits, features or artefacts of any period were identified. The natural subsoil comprised orange/yellow clay and lay under c.0.3m of garden soil. The surface of the natural subsoil did not appear to be truncated. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference ABK 015. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by Last and Tricker Partnership, on behalf of their clients, SEH French Construction Ltd.

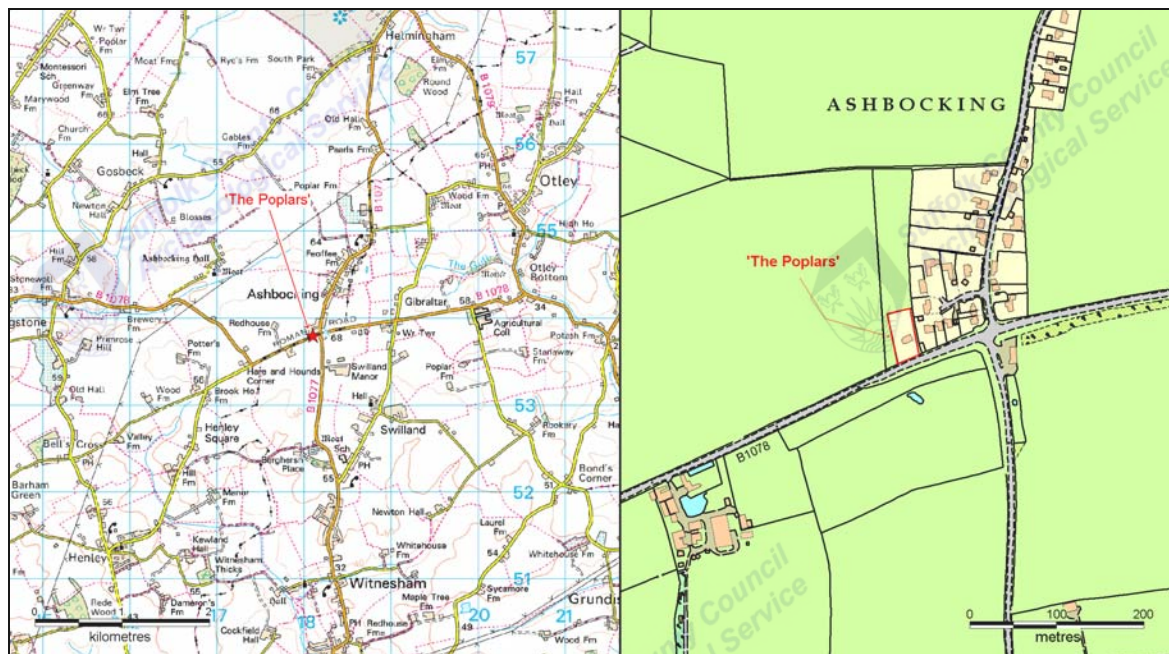


Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with construction of a small residential development within the garden of 'The Poplars', Ashbocking, was undertaken during June and July 2005. The development comprised three new houses and two separate garages with connecting roadways. The existing house, which is a former Police House (Plate II), was to be retained and refurbished as part of this development. Interest in the site is due to its location immediately adjacent to the B1078, which, in this area, runs along the line of a Roman road. The site is also in an area of medieval roadside occupation as indicated by finds of 13th/14th century coins and pottery in the vicinity.

Two of the new houses and the two garages were to be built on strip foundations whilst the third house was to be built on piles. The development would involve significant ground disturbance with the potential to destroy any archaeological deposits or features that may be present. Consequently an archaeological condition was placed upon the planning consent to allow for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks in order 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).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 1809 5381; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference ABK 015. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by Last and Tricker Partnership, on behalf of their clients, SEH French Construction Ltd.

Methodology

Site visits were made to inspect the various aspects of the development. The footings for each plot were visually examined for archaeological deposits or cut features after they had been mechanically excavated by the building contractors. The revealed soil profile was recorded, with the depths and thickness of any layers identified being noted, and a small number of digital photographs were taken. The surfaces of any spoil tips present on site during a monitoring visit were quickly examined for archaeological artefacts. The houses were identified as Plot 1, 2 and 3, the locations of which are illustrated in Figure 2.

Results

The site was visited on four occasions to inspect the groundworks then underway.

Visit 1 (17th June 2005): The roadways within the development had been stripped of topsoil and had partially revealed the underlying natural subsoil but no archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered from the spoil heaps present on site.

Visit 2 (22nd June 2005): The footings for Plot 2 were examined. They had been cut to a depth of c.1.5m. The top 0.3m was cut through the garden topsoil before encountering a natural subsoil comprising stiff orange/yellow clay. No interventions into the natural subsoil were seen and there was no indication the natural subsoil surface had been truncated. No finds were recovered from the spoil heaps.

Visit 3 (29th June 2005): The footings excavated for a garage south of Plot 2 were examined with negative results.

Visit 4 (6th July 2005): The footings for Plot 1 were examined (Plate I). These were also 1.5m deep although the southwest corner of the footings were excavated to a greater depth due to the presence of a small tree. The results were similar to those seen previously and again no deposits or cut features were identified and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil heaps.



Figure 2: Detailed Location Plan
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Plate I: Plot 1 footings (camera facing N)
(6th July 2005)

Plot 3 was to be constructed on piles due to a low-level contamination of the soil related to a former cess pit(?). This work was not monitored.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference ABK 015, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-10688.

Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits or features appear to have been destroyed by this development as no features or deposits were noted in any of the monitored excavations. The observed footings were cleanly cut and had any archaeological features or deposits been present it is highly likely they would have been identified. There was no evidence of the natural subsoil having been truncated and the complete absence of any finds from the site suggests that it is unlikely to have been the site of any earlier occupation.

The medieval settlement in the area is likely to be centred on the nearby road junction and presumably did not extend this far to the west on this side of the B1078 although there is evidence to suggest that settlement may have occurred on the opposite side of the road. The majority of finds recorded in the area have come from the south side of the B1078 and a linear field running parallel with the road may be related to an early roadside settlement.

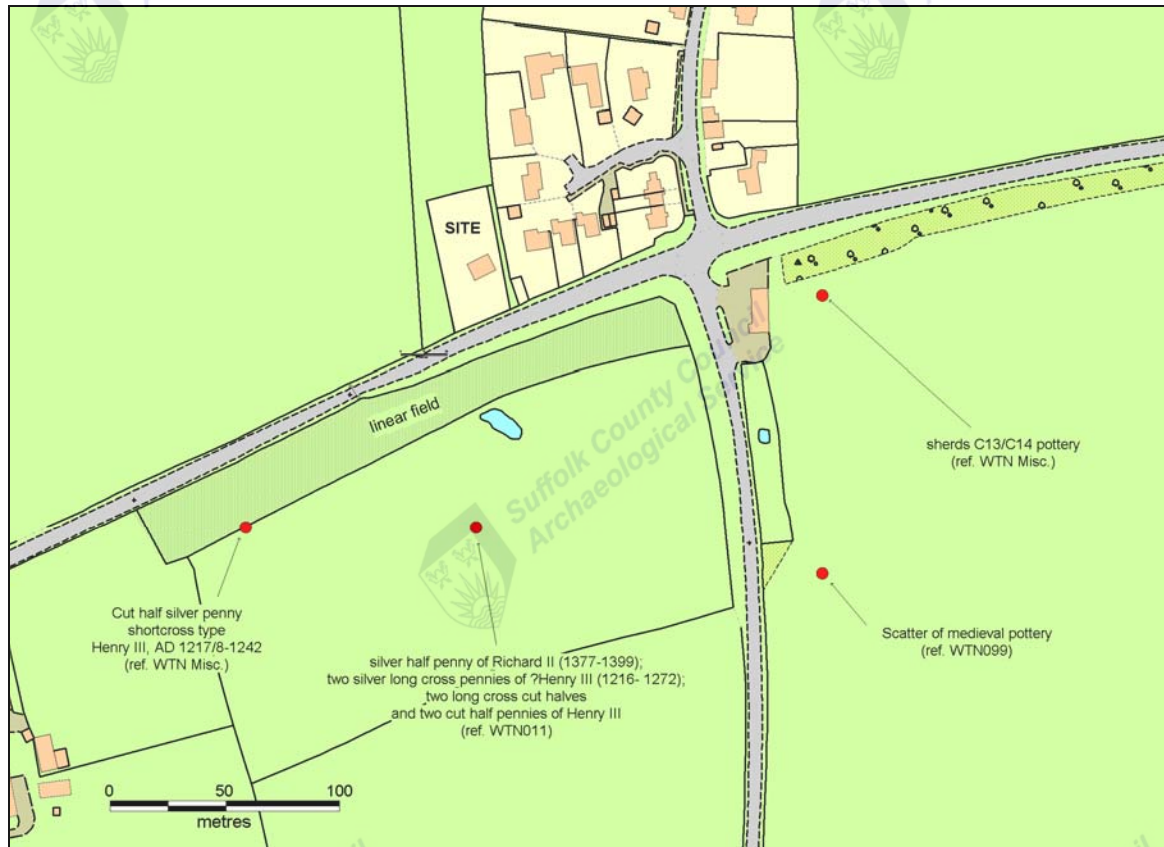


Figure 3: Location of Findspots Recorded on County Sites & Monuments Record

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Mark Sommers
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Field Projects Team

12th October 2005



Plate II: The Former Police House (23rd June 2005)

APPENDIX

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

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Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

THE POPLARS, ASHBOCKING

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. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.

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 (application 1060/04). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies beside an ancient roadway with Roman origins in an area where archaeological survey has shown clear evidence of medieval roadside occupation. There is high potential for medieval settlement evidence with occupation deposits in the backland areas. Service connections to the roadway have the potential to cut into early road deposits which could have Roman content.
- 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.
- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in "Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England" Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.
- 1.5 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

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 activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (e.g. the construction of access roads, hard standing construction, and landscaping) and the excavation of building footing or ground-beam trenches.

If site preparation works involve topsoil stripping the stripping process and the upcast soil are to be observed **whilst** they **are** excavated by the building contractor.

In the case of footing trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed **after** they **have been** excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the 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 topsoil stripping for site preparation, access roads, hard standings and landscaping unimpeded access to the stripped area at the rate of **two hours per 100 square metres** must be allowed for archaeological recording at the interface between topsoil and clean sub-soil surface before the area is further deepened, traversed by machinery or sub-base deposited.
- 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. The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.6 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.
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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: R D Carr

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

Date: 9 June 2005

Reference: /Ashbocking-ThePoplars06

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.