

Proposed Exchange Project (The Mix),
127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket
SKT 061

Archaeological Evaluation Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/138

Client: Suffolk County Council Corporate Property

Author: Jezz Meredith

August 2011

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HER Information

Report Number: 2011/138

Site Name: Proposed Exchange Project (The Mix),
127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket

Planning Application No: MS/10/1241

Date of Fieldwork: 11th July 2011

Grid Reference: TM 0518 5836

Client/Funding Body: Suffolk County Council Corporate Property

Client Reference: n/a

Curatorial Officer: Keith Wade

Project Officer: Jezz Meredith

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-108308

Site Code: SKT 061

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.

Prepared By: Jezz Meredith

Date: 26.08.2011

Approved By: Stuart Boulter

Position: Senior Project Officer

Date: 26.08.2011

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Summary

Two trial trenches placed to the east and centre of the site found no evidence for features or finds of archaeological significance. The central trench encountered extensive modern pitting of 20th Century date. The eastern trench appears to be within a sunken area according to the Ordnance Survey map of 1882, possibly associated with an ornamental garden suggested by the tithe map of 1839. Extensive truncation is likely in this area.

The site is close to the medieval core of Stowmarket and its raised gravel terrace location might have made it attractive to prehistoric or later activity. No evidence however for pre-19th Century use was identified.

Trenching of the site was highly restricted by standing structures and underground services, so that only 2.4% of the site could be examined.

1. Introduction

A trial trench evaluation was carried out on land to the rear and to the side of 127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket (TM 0518 5836). This work was in accordance with an archaeological condition relating to planning permission granted by Mid Suffolk District Council (Planning Application number: MS/10/1241) for a proposed youth centre (The Mix). A Brief and Specification issued by Keith Wade (Appendix 1) specified the manner of the fieldwork and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Rhodri Gardner and Stuart Boulter (April 2011). The trial trenching was conducted by the Field Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS), on Monday 11th July 2011.

2. Geology and topography

The site is located on a fairly steep sloping east-facing valley side, with the majority of the site situated above the 35m contour and with the street frontage to the west at an approximate height of 38m above sea-level. Ipswich Street represents the break of slope of the valley edge and is fairly flat westwards. Eastwards the valley side falls to the River Gipping, approximately 250m away.

A ground investigation report (RSA Geotechnics 2011) identified major deposits of clay (Lowestoft Till) at depths of between 2.3m and 5.4m. Above this were sand and sandy gravel deposits.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The site is on the southern boundary of the medieval core of Stowmarket according to the Suffolk Historic Environment Record. The site is 400m south-east of the medieval church of St Peter and St Mary. The site position on an east-facing elevated gravel terrace is likely to be a good location for prehistoric and later occupation.

The adjacent site of SKT 058 at Sheringham Court, Milton Road (Sommers 2011) revealed a scatter of medieval and post-medieval features and finds. This suggested dumping of material during the medieval period (e.g. outside the medieval core of the town) followed by the development of formal gardens, probably dating from the 18th century or later. A background prehistoric presence was also noted with a scatter of flintwork across the site belonging to this period.

A documentary report was produced for the neighbouring site of SKT 058 (Breen 2010). This research confirms that this general area is outside the main core of the medieval town. An examination of the tithe map of 1839 indicated that the present site under consideration (the western end of the plot numbered 346a) was described as 'pasture and ornamental [garden?]'. Plot 346 to the north was an orchard, plot 344 to the east was a 'hop ground' and plots 342 and 343 to the south and south-east was a malthouse.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map (1882) shows that the large building fronting Ipswich Street was in place by this time and appeared almost unchanged in the 1904 and 1927 editions of the map. The range of buildings now occupying the back of the plot appear to be of post-war style.

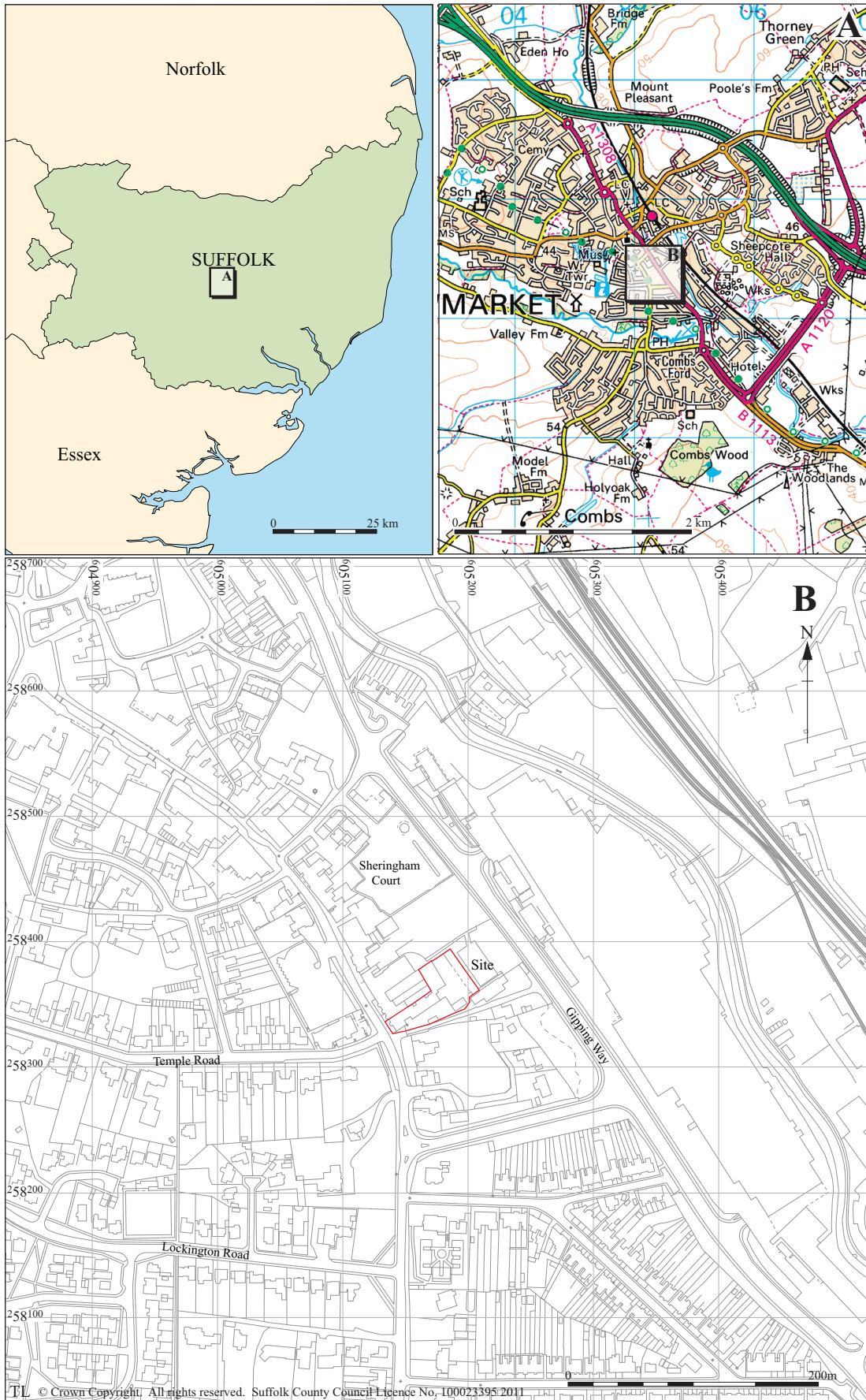


Figure 1. Location of site



Figure 2. Trench plan

4. Methodology

Trial trenching of the site was highly restricted by standing buildings and known underground services (Gardner and Boulter 2011). An electricity sub-station was positioned along the southern boundary of the site so that this area had to be avoided due to underground cables. The client also requested that drain runs should not be disturbed. On arrival on site the location of services had been marked on the tarmac surfaces.

The Brief and Specification issued by Keith Wade (Appendix 1) asked for a 5% sample of the site but less was achieved. Two trenches were dug, Trench 1 was positioned at the lower eastern end of the site, while Trench 2 was positioned along the south-eastern edge of the post-war range of buildings (Fig. 2). In total 52.5m² was dug, representing 2.4% of the site.

Trenching was conducted using a five tonne 360° mechanical digger equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. All machining was observed by an archaeologist. Tarmac surfaces were cut using a pecker with underlying surfaces and other overburden removed by bucket to reveal undisturbed natural deposits or potential archaeological deposits. The upcast soil was examined visually for any archaeological finds. The bases of trenches were checked using a metal detector. Records were made of the position and length of trenches and the depths of deposit encountered.

Trenches were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:50 and specimen sections along each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:20 on A3 sheets of gridded drawing film. A digital photographic record was made, consisting of high-resolution .jpg images.

The site has been given the Historic Environment Record (HER) code SKT 061. All elements of the site archive are identified with this code. An OASIS record has been initiated and the reference code suffolkc1-108308 has been used for this project.

5. Results

Trench 1

This trench was located towards the eastern end of the site, ran north-west to south-east and was positioned between known services at each end of the trench. This trench was 15m in length with a depth of 0.95m at the north-west end and 1.2m depth at the other end. Modern services near the south-eastern end obscured areas at this end of the trench.

The following thicknesses of deposits were encountered:

0.35m – 0.55m, tarmac, sand, gravel and hardcore surface; *over*

0.3m – 0.45m, mid to dark brown silty sand (topsoil?); *over*

0.25m – 0.3m, mid brown silty sand with very occasional oyster shell (subsoil); *over*

Natural pale brown yellow sand encountered at a level of 32.84m OD at the north-western end and at 32.2m OD at the other end.

No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Trench 2

This trench was positioned along the south-eastern edge of the rear building, north-east to south-west running. This trench was restricted by the building on one side and marked services on the other three sides. This trench was 13m long and was 0.68m deep at the north-eastern end and 1.26m deep at the other end.

The following thicknesses of deposits were encountered (north-east end only):

0.25m, tarmac, sand, gravel and hardcore surface; *over*

0.1m, mid to dark brown silty sand (topsoil?); *over*

0.18m, mid brown silty sand (subsoil); *over*

Natural pale brown yellow brown sand encountered at a level of 34.0m OD at the north-eastern end. This deposit was only encountered for the first 4m before being replaced by mixed modern backfill (containing a car tyre). This was machine excavated to the depth of c.1.2m depth to the end of the trench.

Other than the modern deposits, no archaeological features or finds were observed.

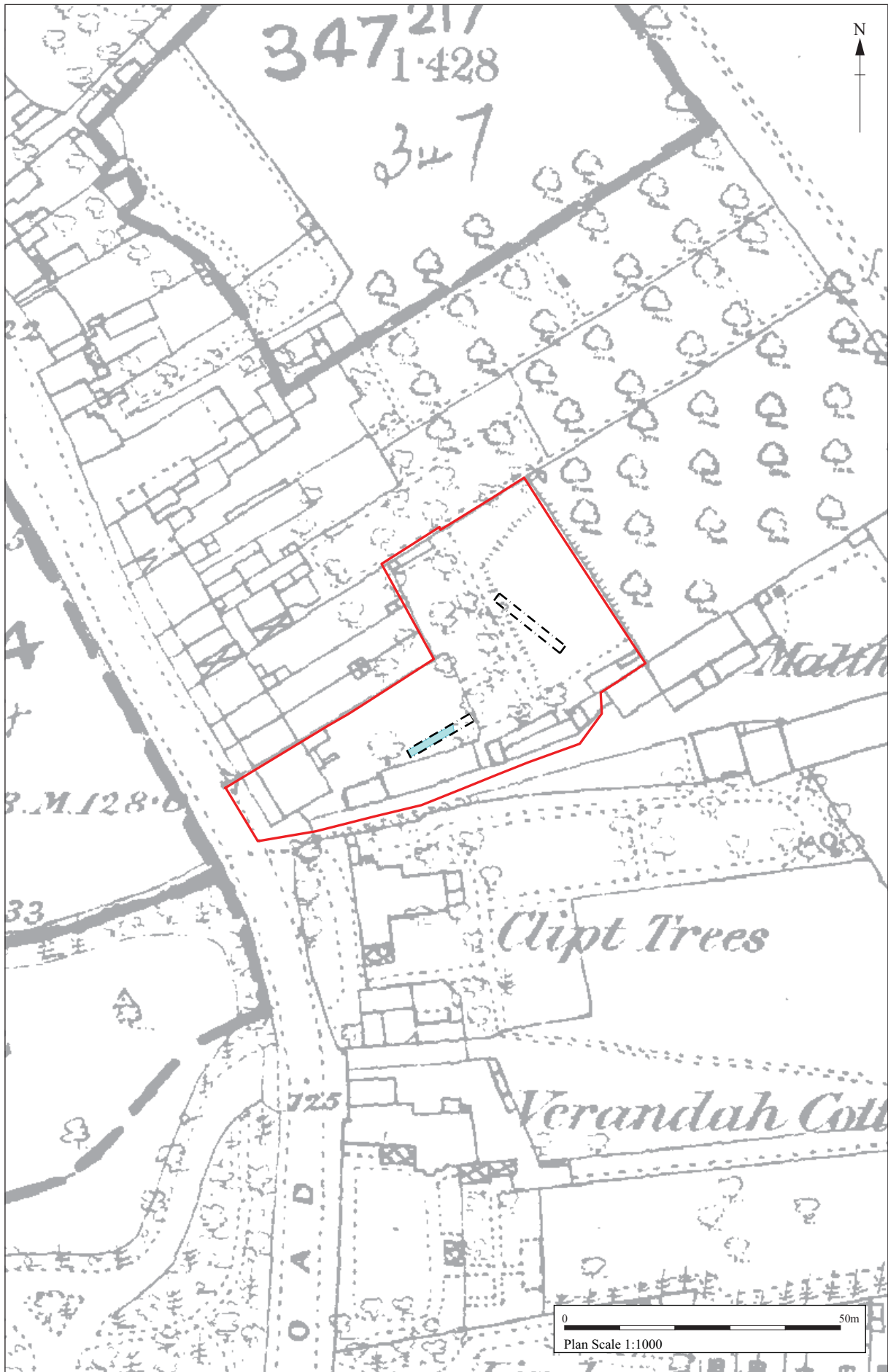


Figure 3. Trench plan superimposed over 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (c.1882)

6. Discussion

Despite the trial trenching only sampling 2.4% of the site, some observations can be made. No evidence for past activity could be detected in the vicinity of Trench 1. An examination of the 1882 edition of the Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) shows that the trench is within a possible sunken area. This could be part of the 'ornamental garden' noted on the tithe map (Breen 2010).

Trench 2 encountered extensive modern pitting of 20th century date. These deposits were only investigated to a depth of 1.2m but records from the nearby borehole (BH2, RSA Geotechnics 2011) suggest that 'made ground' was encountered to a depth of 3.7m. Deep modern intrusions could be a characteristic of this part of the centre of the site.

7. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

No archaeological evidence for ancient use of the site has been recorded, although only a small sample of the site has been trial trenched. The site is generally highly disturbed with a large range of buildings, many underground services, a possible 18th or 19th century sunken garden to the east and deep modern pitting through the centre of the site.

With no archaeological features or finds recovered there is little justification for any further trenching to examine the site. Only a small sample area has been examined however, so that monitoring of footing trenches might be advisable for any future building on the site.

8. Archive deposition

The archive is lodged with the SCCAS at its Ipswich office under the HER reference SKT 061. A summary of this project has also been entered onto OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the reference suffolkc1-108308. Digital photographs have been given the codes HLE 37-41

Digital archive: R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Current Recording Projects\Stowmarket\SKT 061 127 Ipswich St Evaluation

9. Acknowledgements

Keith Wade produced the Brief and Specification and the project was managed by Stuart Boulter. The fieldwork was carried out by Simon Picard and Jezz Meredith. Chris Taylor offered advice and organised access. Holmes Plant provided the digger and driver.

10. Bibliography

Breen, A., 2010, 'The Documentary Report' in M. Sommers (2011), *Archaeological Evaluation & Excavation Report: Sheringham Court, Milton Road, Stowmarket SKT 058*, SCCAS Report No. 2010/205. Ipswich, Suffolk

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RSA Geotechnics Ltd, 2011, *Proposed Exchange Project at 127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket, Suffolk for Barnes Construction: Interpretative Report*. Ground Investigation Report Number 12772GI, Needham Market, Suffolk

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Appendix 1. Brief and specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation

127 IPSWICH STREET, STOWMARKET (MS/10/1241)

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety and other responsibilities, see paragraphs 1.7 & 1.8.

This is the brief for the first part of a programme of archaeological work. There is likely to be a requirement for additional work, this will be the subject of another brief.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning consent has been granted for *the XChange Project* at 127 Ipswich street, Stowmarket (MS/10/1241).
- 1.2 The planning consent contains a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work before development begins (Planning Policy Guidance 16, paragraph 30 condition). In order to establish the full archaeological implications of the proposed development, an archaeological evaluation is required of the site. **The evaluation is the first part of the programme of archaeological work and decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of additional briefs.**
- 1.3 The development area lies immediately adjacent to the area defined for medieval Stowmarket in the County Historic Environment Record on the gravel terrace of the River Gipping with a high potential for prehistoric remains. There is, therefore, a high probability that the development will damage or destroy archaeological deposits.
- 1.4 All arrangements for the field evaluation 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 with the commissioning body.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.5 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.

- 1.6 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 Mid Suffolk District Council that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged (assuming planning permission is forthcoming).
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 The responsibility for identifying any restraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c.) rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such restraints or imply that the target area is freely available.

2. **Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation**

- 2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ* [at the discretion of the developer].
- 2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- 2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses and natural soil processes. Define the potential for existing damage to archaeological deposits. Define the potential for colluvial/alluvial deposits, their impact and potential to mask any archaeological deposit. Define the potential for artificial soil deposits and their impact on any archaeological deposit.
- 2.4 Establish the potential for waterlogged organic deposits in the proposal area. Define the location and level of such deposits and their vulnerability to damage by development where this is defined.
- 2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 2.6 Evaluation is to proceed sequentially: the desk-based evaluation will normally precede the field evaluation unless agreed otherwise. The results of the desk-based work is to be used to inform the trenching design. This sequence will only be varied if benefit to the evaluation can be demonstrated.
- 2.7 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential, analysis and final

report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design, this document covers only the evaluation stage.

- 2.8 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (address as above) 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.
- 2.9 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.
- 2.10 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

3. **Specification A: Desk-Based Assessment**

- 3.1 Consult the County Historic Environment Record (HER), both the computerised record and any backup files.
- 3.2 Examine all the readily available cartographic sources (e.g. those available in the County Record Office). Record any evidence for historic or archaeological sites (e.g. buildings, settlements, field names) and history of previous land uses. Where permitted by the Record Office make either digital photographs, photocopies or traced copies of the document for inclusion in the report.
- 3.3 Assess the potential for documentary research that would contribute to the archaeological investigation of the site.

4 **Specification B: Field Evaluation**

- 4.1 Trial trenches are to be excavated to cover a minimum 5% by area of the development area and shall be positioned to sample all parts of the site. A single linear trench down the middle of the site is thought to be the most appropriate sampling method. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.8m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated. If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' must be used. The trench design must be approved by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service before field work begins.
- 4.2 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine fitted with toothless bucket and other equipment. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.
- 4.3 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 4.4 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation. Significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled.

- 4.5 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.
- 4.6 The contractor shall provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from the English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy and Wiltshire 1994) is available.
- 4.7 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.
- 4.8 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 4.9 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service during the course of the evaluation).
- 4.10.1 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.

“Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England” English Heritage and the Church of England 2005 provides advice and defines a level of practice which should be followed whatever the likely belief of the buried individuals.

- 4.11 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, 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. Any variations from this must be agreed with the Conservation Team.
- 4.12 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome and colour photographs.
- 4.13 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.

5. **General Management**

- 5.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service.
- 5.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed (this is to include any subcontractors).

- 5.3 A general Health and Safety Policy must be provided, with detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.
- 5.4 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 5.5 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* and for *Field Evaluations* should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

6. Report Requirements

- 6.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).
- 6.2 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.
- 6.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 6.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 6.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 6.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 6.7 The results of the surveys should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 6.8 A copy of the Specification should be included as an appendix to the report.
- 6.9 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) to obtain a HER 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.
- 6.10 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.
- 6.11 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the full site archive, and transfer of title, with the intended archive depository before the fieldwork commences. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, scientific analysis) as appropriate.

- 6.12 If the County Store is not the intended depository, the project manager should ensure that a duplicate copy of the written archive is deposited with the County HER.
- 6.13 The project manager should consult the intended archive depository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation, and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition. The intended depository should be stated in the WSI, for approval. The intended depository must be prepared to accept the entire archive resulting from the project (both finds and written archive) in order to create a complete record of the project.
- 6.14 If the County Store is the intended location of the archive, the project manager should consult the SCCAS Archive Guidelines 2010 and also the County Historic Environment Record Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive. A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.
- 6.15 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 the proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>) with ADS or another appropriate archive depository.
- 6.16 The site archive is to be deposited with the County HER within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 6.17 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to the Conservation Team, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 6.18 An unbound hardcopy of the evaluation report, clearly marked DRAFT, must be presented to SCCAS/CT for approval within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 6.19 Following acceptance, two hard copies of the report should be submitted to SCCAS/CT together with a digital .pdf version.
- 6.20 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 HER. 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.
- 6.21 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.
- 6.22 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Tel: 01284 352440

Date: 3rd March 2011

Reference: /127 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket

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.

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