

Hill Top Farm, Stowmarket SKT 057

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2011/162

Client: Mr and Mrs P. Abbott

Author: Rob Brooks

September/2011

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HER Information

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Client Reference: N/A
Curatorial Officer: Judith Plouviez
Project Officer: Rob Brooks
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Site Code: SKT 057

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: Rob Brooks

Date:

Approved By: Judith Plouviez

Position: Conservation Officer

Date:

Signed:

Contents

Summary

Drawing Conventions

1. Introduction	1
2. Geology and topography	1
3. Archaeology and historical background	1
4. Methodology	4
5. Results	5
5.1 Introduction	5
5.2 Trench results	5
6. Discussion	8
7. Conclusions	8
8. Archive deposition	9
9. Acknowledgements	9
10. Bibliography	9

List of Figures

Figure 1. Location plan, showing development area (red) and HER sites mentioned in the text (green)	2
Figure 2. Trench plan	3
Figure 3. Plans of trenches and section	7

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Brief and specification	
Appendix 2. Context list	











Summary

Monitoring of footing trenches for a house and garage at Hill Top Farm, Stowmarket, in Suffolk, revealed two ditches which were parallel to the nearby road and two pits. These were all probably post-medieval, although the ditches may have originally been medieval re-cut long-standing boundaries. No finds were recovered, although post-medieval brick fragments, china sherds and bottle glass were recorded in the pits and ditches.












There were varying levels of disturbance in both the house and garage plots, which may account for the lack of any earlier archaeological deposits.

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 

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 $\frac{18.45\text{m OD}}{\times}$

1. Introduction

An archaeological monitoring was carried out during the machine excavation of trenches for a house, garage and a gas service pipe, on land at Hill Top Farm, Stowupland Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk (Fig. 1). The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team – Appendix 1), to fulfil planning conditions on application Mid Suffolk 0698/10 and was funded by Mr and Mrs P. Abbott.

2. Geology and topography

The site is located at grid reference TM 0566 5919 (Fig. 1). The bedrock is made up of Crag Group sand made up of estuarine sands, gravels, silts and clays, with superficial deposits of Lowestoft Formation of chalky till, which also contains outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays (BGS, 2011). On the site, this presented itself as pale orangish-grey chalky-clay underlying topsoil.

The site is located on the south-west facing slope of the hill that overlooks the River Gipping coming down from the village of Stowupland. The site lies in between the 50m and 55m contours, whilst the base of the hill is at 30m above the Ordnance Datum near the town centre of Stowmarket.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The development area lies adjacent to two sites of Iron Age occupation listed in the county Historic Environment Record (HER) as SKT 037, with further Iron Age features to the east (SKT 036, Fig. 1). To the south-west of the site a Roman pottery kiln has also been found (SKT 008), whilst the medieval site of Thorney Hall and the medieval town centre are found further to the south-west (SKT 012 and 022, respectively). To the east of the site a medieval pottery scatter has been recorded (SKT 029), with a medieval harness mount and purse bar being found to the north-west (SKT Misc).

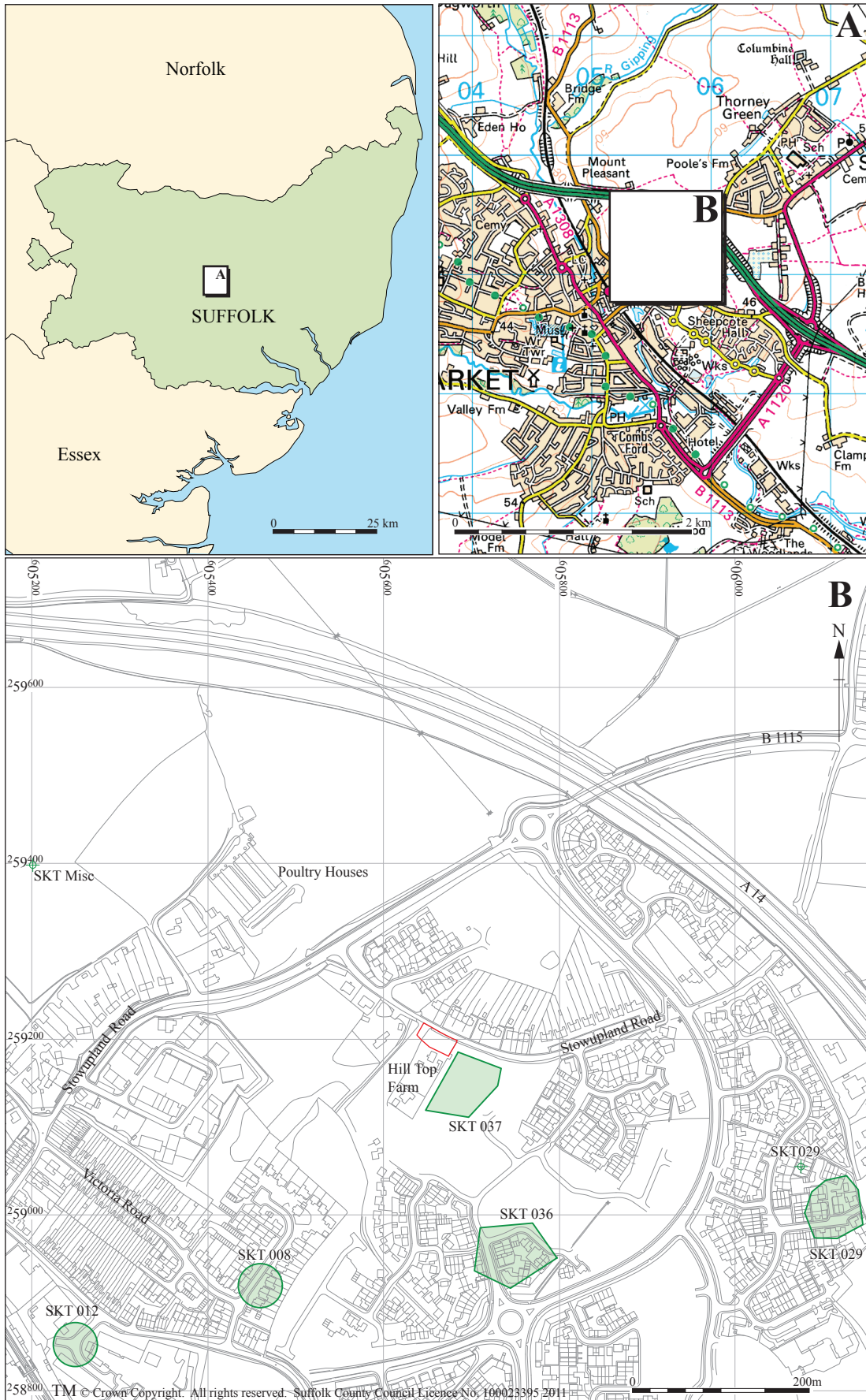


Figure 1. Location plan, showing development area (red) and HER sites mentioned in the text (green)

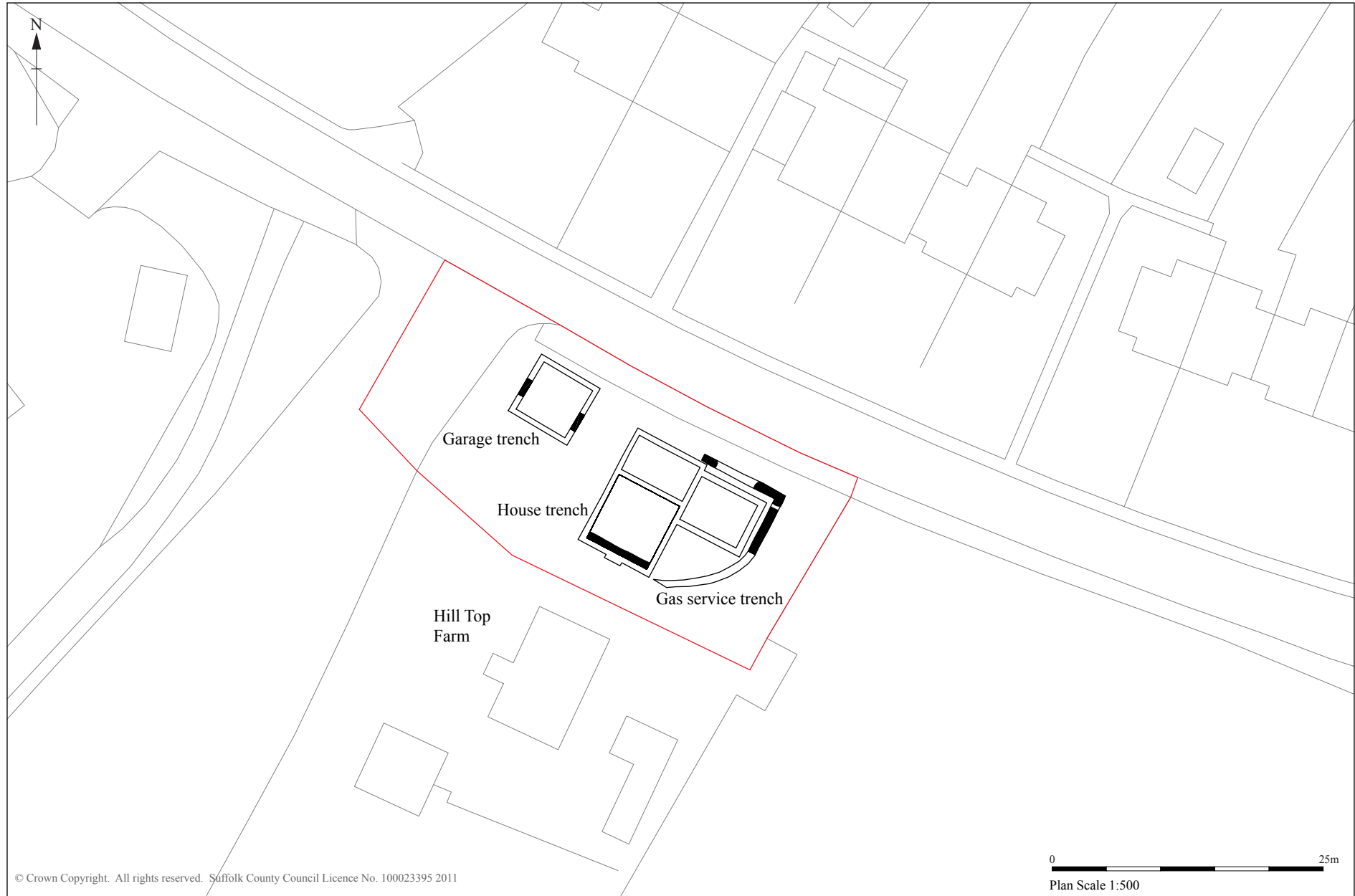


Figure 2. Trench plan, showing extent of features

4. Methodology

The footing trenches measured up to 0.5m wide by up to 1.3m deep and were excavated by a mechanical digger equipped with a toothed bucket. The total area encompassed by the groundworks covered 332sqm (Fig. 2). Groundworks were monitored and the upcast soil was sorted for finds.

Sections were cleaned where necessary in order to reveal the soil profile. The profiles were then recorded as necessary on *pro forma* SCCAS trench sheets, with a total of twelve trenches being monitored. High resolution colour digital photographs were taken at 300 x 300 dpi of the trenches and the site in general. The site was planned at 1:50 from known OS points and depths were recorded from the existing ground level. Archaeological contexts were recorded using a single continuous numbering system starting at 0001. The majority of the trenching in the garage footings was over 1.2m deep and as such there were health and safety restrictions on entering the trenches. Combined with the wet conditions at the time and the levels of disturbance in the soil profiles it was not possible to clean and record the ditch in this area fully. There was also a lot of disturbance in the area of ditch 0007.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-110449) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>). The site archive is stored in the SCCAS main store at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. SKT 057.

During the first visit to the site to monitor the housing trenches a water main had been damaged and it was raining heavily. As a result the trenches were heavily waterlogged and this made interpretation and recording very difficult. Prior to the groundworks the site had been part of a construction compound used for the housing estate to the south-east of the development. During this period the area had been heavily stripped and resurfaced with crushed concrete. This was then re-stripped under the supervision of an archaeologist, although not down to the level at which archaeology could be seen clearly below the disturbed material.

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

The trenches revealed varying levels of preservation across the site, as a result of truncation caused by service trenches and the groundworks from its use as a building compound. Four features were recorded across the site, comprising two pits and two ditches in the housing trenches, of which one ditch continued into the garage trenches (Fig. 2).

5.2 Trench results

The topsoil varied in depth from c.0.3m deep at the east of the site, to 0.85m deep where it appeared to be most heavily disturbed in the garage trenching. In places this layer contained crushed concrete (used as the surface for the compound) and overlaid the natural geology of pale orangish-grey chalky-clay, into which the features were cut.

Ditch 0001

Within the house and garage trenches a wide ditch was recorded, aligned NW-SE. This was up to 4.6m wide in the house trenches, but in the garage trenches a maximum width of 1.7m due to truncation. The topsoil in this area had also been recently disturbed and was up to 0.85m deep, which probably had further truncated the edges of the feature. The ditch was up to 1.2m deep and had 25-35° slightly concave sides and a concave base. In the eastern side of the house footprint the ditch was visible in plan, and appeared to show that the ditch may have been re-cut. The main and basal fill, 0002, contained charcoal, whilst upper fills 0009 and 0011 both contained fragments of brick and china, as well as bottle glass. In section this ditch may have cut pit 0003.

Ditch 0007

In the southern limits of the house trenching and also on a NW-SE alignment, another possible ditch was present, although its position within the trenching meant it was very difficult to see fully in section and its fill was hard to differentiate from the natural. It was >0.75m wide and in section it could not be clearly recorded. Its fill differed from the natural in that it was of a looser compaction and contained snail shells. The area

immediately north-east of this ditch was heavily disturbed, appearing to have been stripped previously to the subsoil, with the topsoil being replaced with compacted pebbles.

Pits 0003 and 0005

Two pits were partially uncovered in the eastern corner of the house trenches. These both had rounded shapes in plan, although this was not entirely clear as their edges ran under the trench baulks. They shared similar fills and fill 0004 from pit 0003 contained post-medieval bottle glass.

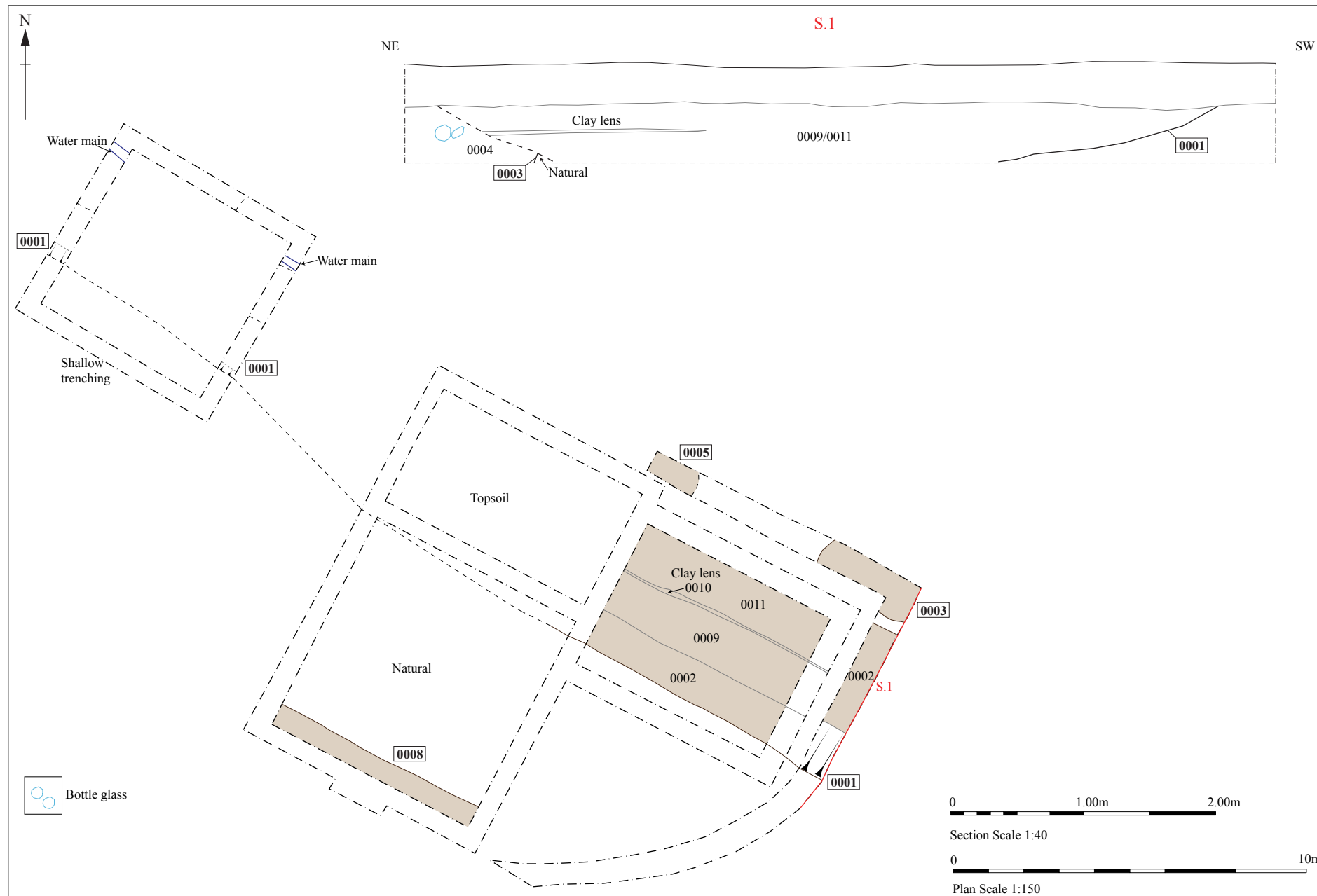


Figure 3. Plans of trenches and section

6. Discussion

Despite variable but often heavy levels of disturbance across the site, the trenching appears to have revealed evidence of previous activity in the area. This probably took the form of a road side ditch of post-medieval date, which has probably been re-cut. The other ditch to the south-west may indicate an earlier incarnation of the same feature, or may even show that the original road was slightly to the south-west of its current position, and may have been flanked by the two ditches. The presence of brick, charcoal and china in the fills reflects the site's location close to the former Hill Farm, which occupied the site since at least the late 19th century, as well as having accumulated as back-fill from manuring of the fields.

The two pits are probably post-medieval refuse features, although they may have had a primary function of being used to quarry clay. This seems unlikely though as the localised clay was quite chalky and subsequently of little practical use.

Whilst it is likely that the two pits were post-medieval in date, it is possible that the ditches were long standing medieval boundaries, which may explain why ditch 0001 appeared to have been re-cut a number of times. Although this appears to contradict the stratigraphy of ditch 0001's relationship with pit 0003 it should be noted that this relationship was only tentatively recorded in the section. Alternatively it may have been a later cut of ditch 0001 which cuts pit 0003.

7. Conclusions

Whilst the monitoring revealed evidence of the post-medieval and possible medieval use of the site for roadside ditches and refuse pits, there was no evidence of the localised Iron Age or Roman activity witnessed elsewhere in the area. This may indicate that this material does not spread into the area or that the levels of disturbance on site, which were in places quite substantial, may have truncated earlier remains.

8. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds and R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Stowmarket\SKT 057 Hill Top Farm Monitoring

9. Acknowledgements

The monitoring was carried out by David Gill and Rob Brooks from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was directed by Rob Brooks and managed by David Gill, who also provided advice during the production of the report. The production of site plans and sections was carried out by Ellie Hillen. The report was checked by David Gill and Richenda Goffin.

10. Bibliography

BGS, 2011 Information obtained from http://www.bgs.ac.uk/products/digital_maps/data_625k.html and reproduced with the permission of the British Geological Survey ©NERC. All rights Reserved

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

Brief and Specification for Continuous Archaeological Recording Hill Top Farm, Stowupland Road, Stowmarket (0698/10)

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 erection of a detached house and garage adjacent to Hill Top Farm, Stowmarket (TM 056591), has been granted by Mid Suffolk District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (0698/10 and previous applications 2534/09 etc).
- 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 situated on high ground (50m OD) overlooking the Gipping valley to the south-west; the soil is shown as Hanslope series (411d) but close to Beccles 1 (0711r), both clay soils over chalky till. Activity of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date has been found in the development of this area of the valley side, in particular Iron Age features were identified immediately to the east (SKT 037) and there is high potential for this to extend into the current development site. The area also fronts an early route out of Stowmarket (possibly with enclosed green or woodland area to the north) and thus has some potential for medieval roadside settlement. 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, and until confirmation has been sought by the applicant from the Local Planning Authority. 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 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 in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.
- 1.6 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.

- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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 construction of new buildings, principally foundation trenches and any associated ground reduction. All ground works, including topsoil stripping, and also the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after removal 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: Judith Plouviez

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Date: 1 June 2010

Reference: _HillTopFarm_June2010.doc

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.

Appendix 2. Context list

Context Number	Feature ID	Feature Type	Category	Length	Width	Depth	Description	Interpretation
0001	0001	Ditch	Cut		4.6	c.1.2	Linear, aligned NW-SE. Wide profile with 25-35° straight/slightly concave sides. Base slightly concave. Possibly cuts pit 0003, but very uncertain.	Large ditch, that gets thinner, or more heavily truncated in garage plot. Mirrors alignment of ditch 0007 and road. Post-medieval road side ditch, or at least back filled in post medieval period. Re-cut probably several times judging by number of fills and clay lens 0010.
0002	0001	Ditch	Fill			?	Brown silt. Firm compaction. Flecked with charcoal. Clear horizon clarity. Basal fill. Could not be distinguished from other fills in garage trenches- other fills possibly truncated.	Ditch fill. Charcoal suggests nearby activity, or manuring of fields with refuse. Possibly under 0009, 0010 or 0011.
0003	0003	Pit	Fill	>3	>1.3		Circular/oval? Obscured by baulk. Aligned NW-SE? Profile unclear, as was base. Possibly cut by 0001.	Post-medieval pit containing bottle glass.
0004	0003	Pit	Fill				Dark brown silt. Firm compaction. Basal/only visible fill.	Post-medieval as contained bottle glass. No details regarding context recorded on site, but assumed to be similar to 0009 and 0011 as the three contexts could be clearly differentiated in section. Possibly under 0001.
0005	0005	Pit	Cut	1	0.6	>0.8	Circular? Obscured by baulk. Profile and base not recorded.	Similar fill to 0003 - probably same phase of post-medieval activity.
0006	0005	Pit	Fill				Dark brown silt. Firm compaction. Basal/only fill.	No details were recorded on site about this context, except that it was similar to 0004. Post-medieval because it is probably the same phase as 0003/0004.

Context Number	Feature ID	Feature Type	Category	Length	Width	Depth	Description	Interpretation
0007	0007	Ditch	Cut		>0.5		Linear, aligned NW-SE.	Possible ditch cut. Only visible in plan as area very disturbed and much of feature falls within a trench. Parallel to 0001 so may be similar road side ditch.
0008	0007	Ditch	Fill		>0.5		Pale brown silt. Friable? Looser texture than natural. Contained snail shells. Basal/only recorded fill.	Ditch fill.
0009	0001	Ditch	Fill				Dark brown silt. Firm compaction. Brick fragments and china sherds. May be the same as 0011.	Ditch fill. May be same as 0011, but possibly divided by clay lens 0010. Difference in fills 0002, 0009, 0010 and 0011 was not visible in section.
0010	0001	Ditch	Fill		0.06		Yellow/grey(?) clay. Firm compaction.	Clay lens. No details recorded on site. Only visible in plan. Possibly represents re-cut of ditch. Possibly over other ditch fills, but uncertain.
0011	0001	Ditch	Fill				Dark brown silt. Firm compaction. Brick fragments and china sherds. May be same as 0009.	Ditch fill. May be same as 0009, but possibly divided by clay lens 0010. Difference in fills 0002, 0009, 0010 and 0011 was not visible in section.

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www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/