

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2011/98

**Wolmers Barn, East End Road, Stonham Aspal
SAL 031**

HER Information

Planning Application No: 3903/07

Date of Fieldwork: June 2011

Grid Reference: TM 1524 6017

Funding Body: Mr. S. Daly

Curatorial Officer: Edward Martin

Project Officer: Linzi Everett

OASIS ID: suffolkc1- 111130

Summary

Monitoring of groundworks related to the conversion of a timber framed barn at East End Road, Stonham Aspal, was carried out as a condition of the planning consent in order to record any archaeological evidence revealed by the groundworks. Medieval pottery was recovered from part of the barns floor surface whilst strip foundations for an extension revealed made-up ground to a depth of 1m which may be the fill of a large pit or pond.

1. Introduction and methodology

Planning permission for the conversion of an agricultural barn, required a programme of archaeological works as a condition of the consent. The site lies at TM 1524 6017 (Figure 1), at a height of approximately 62m OD. The barn is a three-bay timber framed building with possible late 15th century origins and an early 17th century extension, as described in a separate Historic Building Report by Leigh Alston.

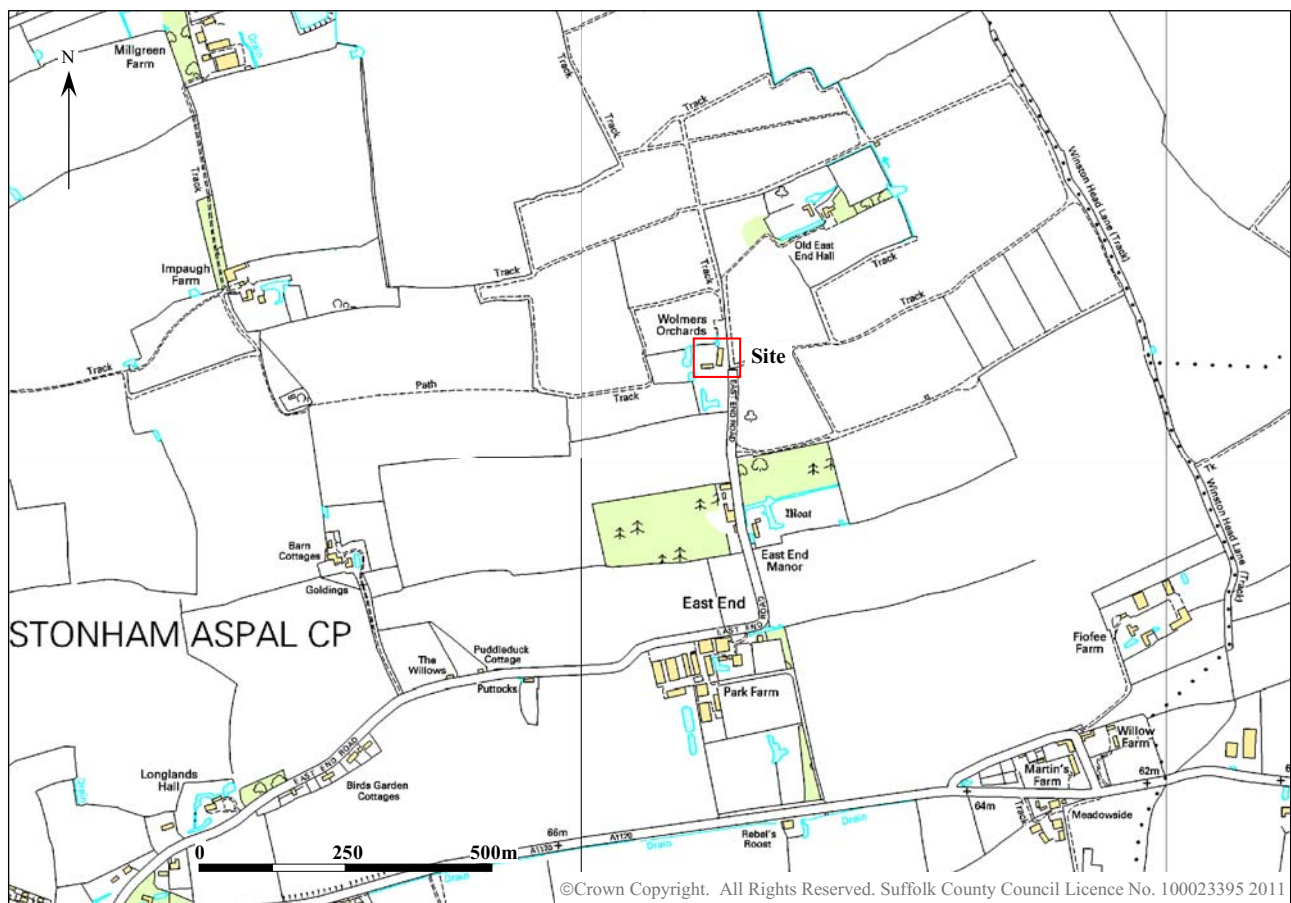


Figure 1. Site location

Several visits were made to the site by the Field Projects Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) in order to inspect the excavated ground works. A Brief and Specification for the archaeological work was produced by Edward Martin of the SCCAS Conservation Team (Appendix I). The fieldwork was commissioned by Mr. S. Daly. The monitoring archive is held in the County Historic Environment Record (HER) in Bury St. Edmunds.

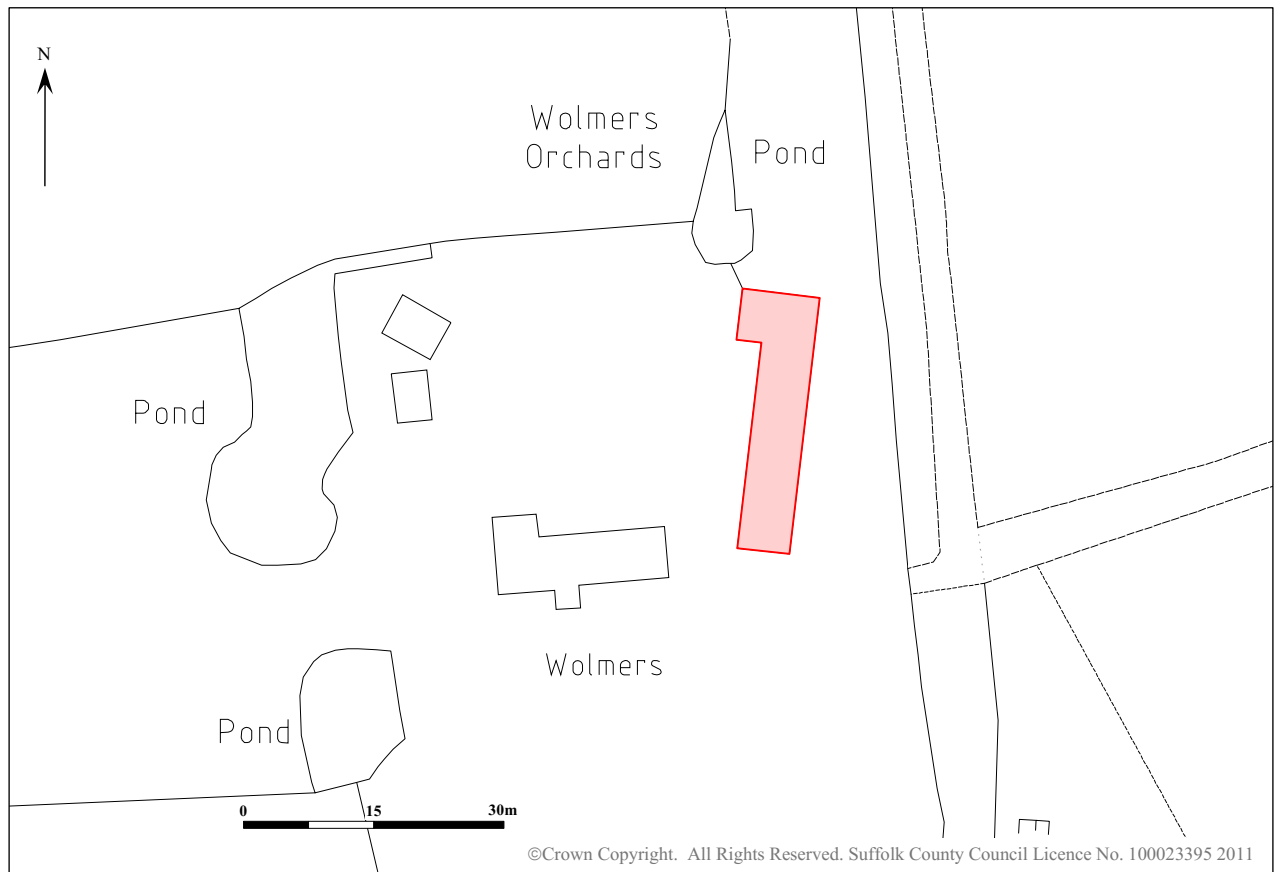


Figure 2. Location of the barn

2. Results

The floor of the barn was reduced by c.0.4m, with a series of monitoring visits carried out as the work progressed. A concrete slab was initially removed, and subsequent deposits stripped down to the required level using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working from south to north.

In the southern bay of the barn, the concrete floor had sealed amid-pale greyish brown clay mottled with orange sandy clay (0002). This measured c.0.2m thick with occasional medium flint pebbles, flecks of chalk and charcoal and several sherds of medieval pottery. This layer did not appear to be a formal floor surface and was more likely to be a

re-worked subsoil. A tie-beam ran above the line where 0002 changes to 0003, suggesting a partition once existed at this point, although no evidence of such was seen along the tie-beam. However, in the stripped surface directly below the tie-beam, a soft and heavily eroded horizontal wooden plank or beam was noted, which measured approximately 1m long and 0.1m wide (0008; Plate 1). It is possible this represents the sill of a doorway, if a partition did once exist here.

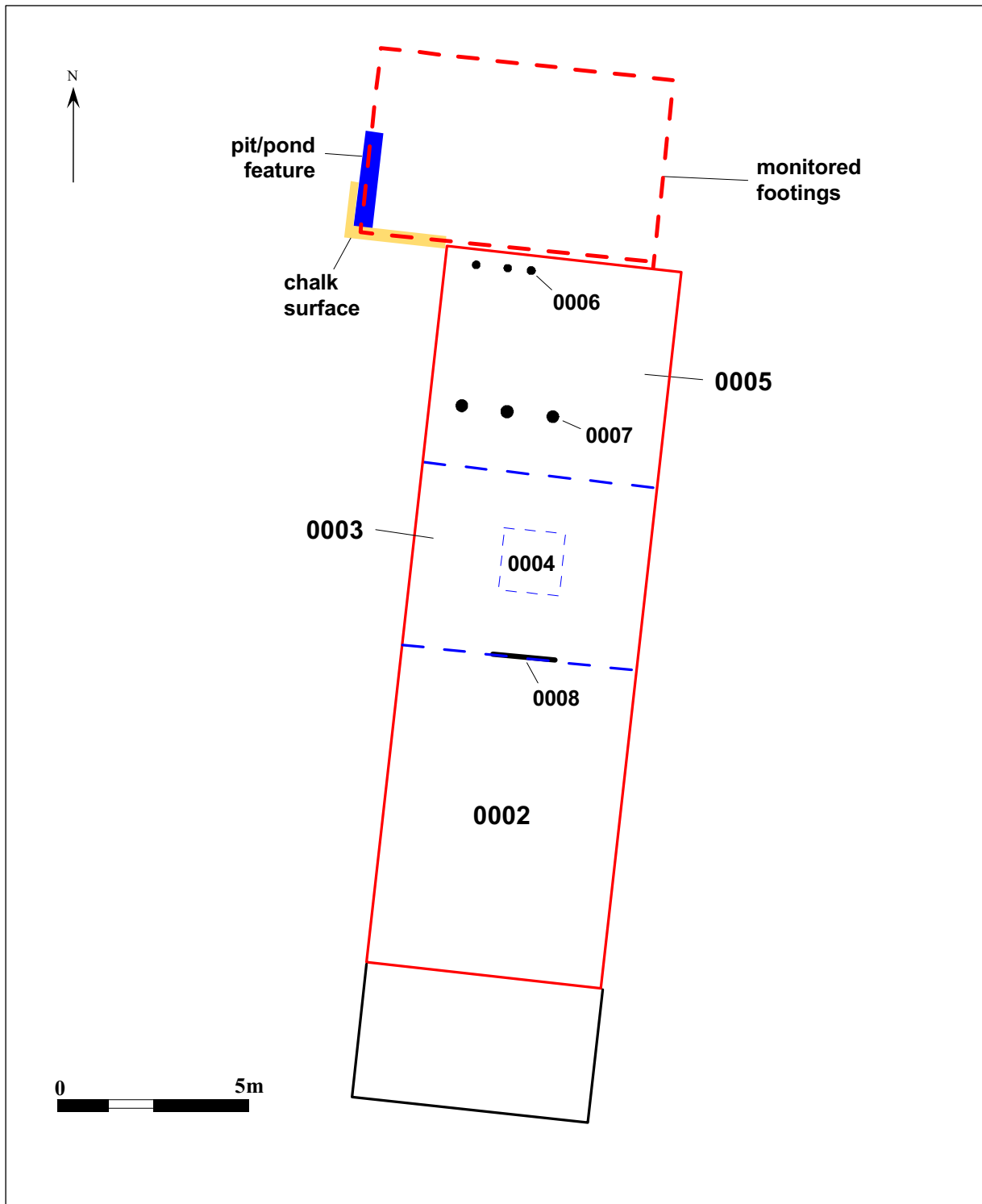


Figure 3. Plan of the monitored barn, detailing the features described in the text. Blue dashed lines show the points where the stripped floor deposits change. They also relate to tie-beams in the ceiling.



Plate 1. Remains of wooden beam 0008

Within the central bay, the concrete floor overlay c.0.25m of chalk, red brick rubble and flint cobbles loosely held in a greyish brown clay matrix (0003).

A large, 1.8m square pit was observed in the middle of the central bay (0004; Plate 2). It was filled with dense brick and tile rubble held in a loose dirty chalky clay. It is not known whether the pit cut layer 0003 or was sealed by it.



Plate 2. Pit 0004

In the northern bay, a 17th century stable added on to the earlier main barn, the concrete floor sealed a c.0.25m thick layer of chalk, red brick rubble and flint cobbles loosely held in a greyish brown clay matrix (0005). It was very similar to 0003 but also included a large number of floor bricks. The remains of six wooden posts were recorded in the

natural clay below this layer, a line of three in the southern part of the bay (0007; Plate 3) and a further line of three close to the E-W wall



Plate 3. Remains of wooden posts 0007

in the north west corner of the barn (0006; Plate 4). They were in a very poor, fragile condition and whilst 0007 was located below a tie-beam, 0006 did not appear to relate to any surviving features of the barn structure.

The natural subsoil throughout the barn floor consisted of a pale grey chalky boulder clay with orange sandy clay patches and occasional flint pebbles.



Plate 4. Remains of wooden posts 0006

A 20th century extension to the north of the barn was demolished to be rebuilt as a part of the barn conversion. Footings excavated for this measured 0.5m wide and some 2m deep. There were significant areas of modern disturbance, notably along the northern E-W footing. In the south east corner, the concrete and associated sub-base sealed the clean boulder clay natural subsoil (Plate 5). In the south west corner, outside the barn, c.0.4m of dark brown clay loam topsoil sealed a thin layer of compact chalk, possibly a former yard or floor surface (Plate 6). In the western N-S trench, a large feature was observed and photographed (Plate 7) but as the trench edges were unstable, it was not possible to accurately record its form and dimensions from a safe distance. What was visible was approximately 2m wide and 1.3m deep, with a gently rounded profile. It was filled by layers of grey clay and dark brown humic clay, with thin lenses of black humic material. It was sealed by the chalk layer and topsoil described above.



Plate 5. Footings, south east corner of extension. Looking west



Plate 6. Compact chalk layer in south west corner of footings.
Looking south



Plate 7. Large feature in the western N-S footing. Looking west

3. Finds evidence Andy Fawcett

Introduction

A total of twenty-two finds with a combined weight of 5519g was recovered from four contexts recorded during the archaeological monitoring at Wolmers Barn. A full contextual breakdown of the finds assemblage can be seen in Table 1 and a more detailed catalogue forms part of the site archive (a further access pottery table has also been added to the site database). The finds have been subjected to a rapid identification and assessment, the results of this are presented below.

Context	Pottery		CBM		Shell		Spotdate
	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	No	Wt/g	
0002	11	103	1	10	1	6	?L13th-E14th C
0003			1	1314			17th-19th C
0004			6	655			Post-medieval
0005			2	3431			17th-18th C
Total	11	103	10	5410	1	6	

Table 1. Finds quantities

The Pottery

A small quantity of medieval pottery was recorded in layer 0002. The assemblage is principally made up of body sherds which in terms of condition only display slight abrasion. The majority of sherds may be classed as general medieval coarse wares (MCW) which are dated from the late 12th to 14th century. Within this group two different rim sherd fragments are present, belonging to a cooking pot and a dish. A single sherd of Hollesley type glazed ware has been provisionally identified (13g). This fabric contains clay pellets and has a light green glaze and is dated from late 13th to early 14th century.

CBM (ceramic building materials)

A total of ten CBM fragments with a weight of 5410g was recorded during the monitoring. All of the CBM is dated to the post-medieval period. The assemblage consists of a small quantity of roof tile in a medium sandy fabric with ferrous inclusions (msfe) which was mainly located in pit fill 0004. Thereafter late brick (LB) pieces in a similar fabric were noted in layers 0003, 0005 and pit fill 0004. Of note are two abraded white fired floor bricks whose measurements are 223mm x 95mm x 65mm.

Shell

A small and abraded fragment of oyster shell was noted in layer 0002.

4. Discussion

Evidence of various phases of activity were recorded during the monitoring. The earliest datable evidence was medieval pottery within the floor surface of the southern bay of the barn. This was distributed throughout clay layer 0002, rather than derived from stratified features. 0002 may represent a floor surface where pottery has become trampled into the natural subsoil, but as the pottery significantly pre-dates the existing 16th century barn structure, it could just be a reworked layer containing evidence of 13th-14th activity in the vicinity. It is not known whether layer 0002 continued north of the southern bay of the barn but was removed when later floor surfaces 0003 and 0005 were laid.

The CBM within layer 0003 appears to post-date the construction of the earliest barn, and layer 0005 may just be contemporary with the 17th century stable bay added to the northern end. Both layers were laid using slightly different material and within bays which appear to have once been distinct from each other. It was not clear whether pit 0004 cut layer 0003 or was sealed by it. It is likely to represent a post-medieval agricultural feature, perhaps a grain store.

Wooden features 0006, 0007 and 0008 were only revealed after the rubble floor surfaces had been stripped away to reveal the natural subsoil. It was not clear whether they were features which pre-date layers 0003 and 0005 or whether poorer preservation conditions within those layers meant that evidence of them did not survive. 0008 could be the threshold of a door central to a partition between the southern and central bay whilst 0006 and 0007 are clearly the remains of upright posts. However, these do not appear to relate to any obvious features within the surviving barn structure and are most likely to be associated with internal structures within the 17th century stable.

The excavated footings to the north of the barn revealed evidence of a large feature, possibly a backfilled pond. If this is the case, it could be that the existing pond north of the barn could have once extended further south. No datable artefacts were observed within the pit. A chalk layer sealing the pit fill may be evidence of a former yard surface.

Linzi Everett
August 2011

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Brief and Specification for Archaeological Recording

BARN, EAST END ROAD, STONHAM ASPAL

TM 152 601

(listed building consent 3903/07)

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 Listed building consent for the conversion of a traditional timber-framed barn to residential accommodation at East End Road has been granted by Mid Suffolk District Council, conditional upon provision being made for an archaeologist to be present during the building and engineering operations required for the carrying out of the approved development and for them to be allowed to observe the operations and to record finds and items of interest (Listed Building Consent 3903/07, condition 7). The local planning authority was advised that this was an historic farm building.
- 1.2 The barn lies within the curtilage of Wolmers, which is a Grade II Listed Building (no. 279425) of 17th-century date. The farmstead is surrounded by a series of ponds that may be the remains of a medieval moat.
- 1.3 In accordance with the condition on the planning consent, and following the standards and guidance produced by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and specification must be produced by the developers, their agents or archaeological contractors. This must be submitted for scrutiny by the SCCAS/CT at 9-10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443. 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. The WSI should be compiled with a knowledge of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 3, 1997, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. resource assessment'; Occasional Paper 8, 2000, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy'; and the Revised Research Framework for the Eastern Region, 2008, available online at <http://www.eaareports.org.uk/>, sub ALGOA East).*
- 1.4 Neither this specification nor the WSI is, however, a sufficient basis for the discharge of the planning condition relating to the archaeological works. Only the full implementation of the approved scheme – that is the completion of the recording, the assessment of the findings and the final reporting – will enable SCCAS/CT to advise the LPA that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.

- 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, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 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 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfil the Brief.

2. **Brief for Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring of Groundworks**

- 2.1 Historic building recording, as specified in Sections 3 is to be carried out.
- 2.2 The first objective will be to compile a descriptive record of the barn at English Heritage **Level 2** (see above 1.3).
- 2.3 Secondly, any works that might disturb below-ground archaeological remains, including under-pinning, excavation of service trenches and any other ground reduction, are to be observed during stripping and after they have been excavated. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.
- 2.4 The academic objective will be to provide a detailed understanding of the nature of the building and to provide information on its historical context.

3. **Specification for Historic Building Recording and Analysis**

The survey methodology will form part of the WSI and is to be agreed in detail before the project commences; defined minimum criteria in this outline are to be met or exceeded. Any variation from these standards can only be made by agreement with SCCAS/CT, and must be confirmed in writing.

- 3.1 English Heritage Level 2 recording must be carried on the barn and its setting. Both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and photographed. Any distinctive features must be both described and photographed.
- 3.2 A block plan must be produced of the site, to locate the building within the group. The main components of the complex shall be numbered for reference in the report.
- 3.3 A historical document search (documentary, cartographic and pictorial) must be undertaken to situate the history of the building complex within the immediate local context. This must include a map study to illustrate the development of the buildings complex – typically using the tithe assessment of the 1840s and Ordnance Survey mapping of the 1880s and early 1900s (all available in the Suffolk Record Office). Note

must also be taken of the oral history of the complex, particularly relating to the historic use of the buildings.

- 3.4 The record will present conclusions regarding the location, form, date, development and use of the building.

4. **Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Groundworks**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both SCCAS/CT and the contracted archaeologist to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

- 4.2 In the case of footing and main service trenches unimpeded access of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begins. In the case of the topsoil stripping and levelling, or other ground reduction (including replacement of internal floors) unimpeded access of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begins.

- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 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.

- 4.5 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.

- 4.6 A photographic record of the work is to be made of any archaeological features, consisting of high resolution digital images.

- 4.7 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.

- 4.8 Archaeological contexts should be assessed for sampling for palaeo-environmental remains. Best practice should allow for the 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 the 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.

- 4.9 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).

- 4.10 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County HER.

5. **Report Requirements**

- 5.1 An archive of all records is to be prepared consistent with the principles contained in *Understanding Historic Buildings; A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage

2006), particularly section 7. This should be deposited with the County HER within six months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.

- 5.2 The recording contractor should 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.
- 5.3 The recording contractor 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).
- 5.4 The report should include a brief history of the buildings complex, relating it to the map study and should include illustrations of the maps at a sufficient scale and quality for the buildings to be identifiable. The report should include a description of the building fabric(s), their structural use and any particular features. It should also present the available evidence for the dating and use of the structure(s). The photographs should be listed with a description of the viewpoint and included on a CD to accompany the report.
- 5.5 A copy of the report, clearly marked DRAFT, should 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. Following approval, two hard copies, as well as a digital copy, of the report should be presented to SCCAS/CT and a single copy to the Conservation Officer of Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 5.6 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*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.7 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> should be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.8 All parts of the OASIS online form should be completed for submission to the County HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Edward Martin

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Date: 25 January 2011

Reference: SpecAR(EM)_BarnEEndRd_StonhamAspal_3903_07

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 must be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

As the work defined by this brief forms 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.

