

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/324

**Thorington Hall, Stoke by Nayland
SBN 087**

HER Information

Date of Fieldwork: November 2009 - January 2010

Grid Reference: TM 0131 3546

Funding Body: The National Trust

Project Officer: Linzi Everett

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring of new service trenches was carried out at Thorington Hall, Stoke by Nayland (TM 0131 3546; SBN 087). Two features were noted both of which related to activity at the Thorington Hall since its 17th century construction, and included a large rubbish pit of 18th-19th century date. A small number of medieval ceramic sherds were collected as unstratified finds from the upcast spoil, suggesting activity of this date in the near vicinity.

1. Introduction

New service trenches to the rear of Thorington Hall, Stoke by Nayland (TM 0131 3546; SBN 087), were subject to archaeological monitoring during their excavation.

The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential due to the presence of significant known archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity that are recorded in the county Historic Environment Record (HER). It was felt therefore that the development work would cause ground disturbance with the potential to destroy archaeological deposits were they present. As such, there was a requirement for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. The SCCAS (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service) Field Team was subsequently commissioned by The National Trust to undertake the fieldwork.

2. Geology and topography

The site is located immediately west of the River Box and overlooks the River Stour to the south. It lies at a height of c.11m OD with a gentle rise towards the west. The underlying drift geology comprises glaciofluvial deposits of deep sand.

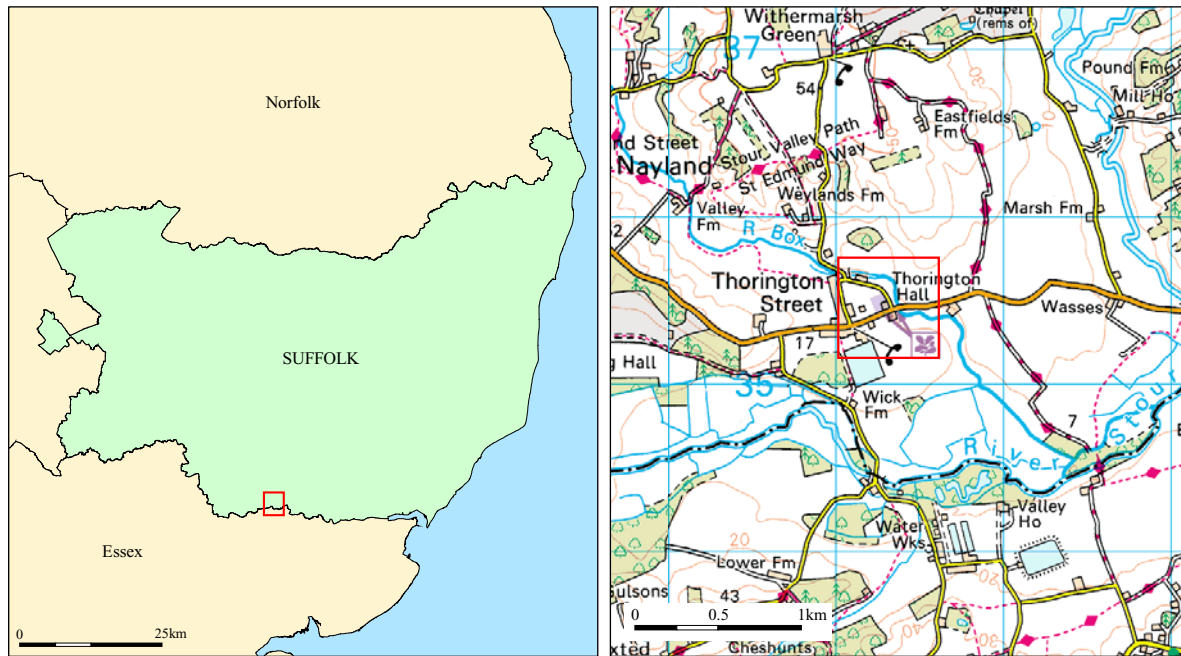


Figure 1. Site Location.

3. Archaeological and historical background

The perceived high archaeological potential for the site was based predominantly on the presence of significant known archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity that are recorded in the county HER. Immediately east and south of the site, aerial photographs show a series of complex crop mark features of unknown date (SBN 029, 030, 051 and 059) whilst a collection of eight undated ring ditches exist as cropmarks 400m east of the site. Thorington Hall itself is a Grade II* listed timber framed building of 17th century date but with medieval origins, situated in the isolated hamlet of Thorington Street in the south east of Stoke by Nayland parish. No systematic archaeological investigation has taken place within the development area.

4. Methodology

Monitoring visits were carried out between November 2009 and January 2010 whilst the service trenches were machine excavated.

The site was recorded under the HER code SBN 087. Context information was recorded on Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service 'pro-forma' recording sheets.

A photographic record of both monochrome prints and digital shots was made throughout the fieldwork. The monitoring archive is held in the County HER in Bury St. Edmunds.

5. Results

The trench measured 0.5m wide and 0.8m deep directly behind the house, 1.2m deep to the west of the house and was excavated through broadly the same stratigraphy:

- *Topsoil* 0001 c.0.3m thick, a dark brown sandy clay loam, heavily disturbed by roots and containing regular flints and fragments of ceramic building material (CBM).

- *Subsoil 0002* c.0.15m thick layer of friable mid brown sandy clay with regular flints.
- *Subsoil 0003* Pale yellowish brown sandy silty clay, friable-compact, with occasional flints and CBM lumps. Present to the full excavated depth of the trench directly behind the house, and measured c.0.5m thick to the west of the house. Probably represents a reworked natural subsoil or alluvial deposit.

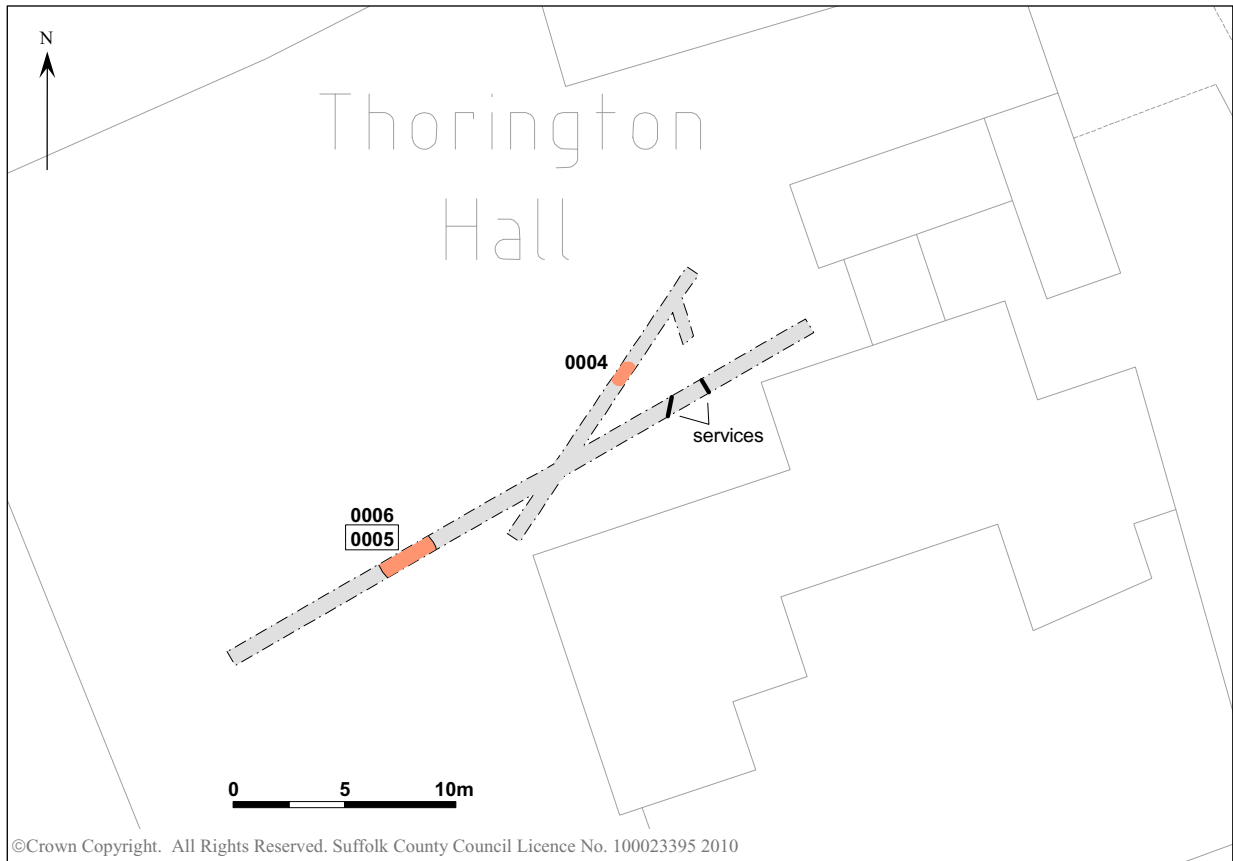


Figure 2. Location of monitored groundworks and recorded features

0004 was a thin, discreet layer of densely packed brick and tile fragments located above 0003 but sealed by 0002 (Plate 1).

0005 was a large, deep pit measuring 2.5m wide and over 1.2m deep in the exposed section. It was sealed by topsoil but cut subsoil layer 0003. It was filled by 0006, a loose dark greyish brown loamy clay sand with frequent CBM inclusions, the majority of which were of post medieval date, glass and animal bone. Poor light and the fact that the trench was extremely narrow meant a photograph was not possible.

Unstratified finds included four sherds of pottery and a representative sample of CBM which were recovered from the upcast spoil during excavation.



Topsoil 0001

Subsoil 0002

Layer 0004

Subsoil 0003

Plate 1. NE-SW soil profile showing layer 0004



Plate 2. General shot of the trench to the west of the house, looking SW

6. Finds evidence (Richenda Goffin)

Introduction

Finds were collected from three contexts, as shown in the table below.

Context	Pottery		CBM/F clay		P-med glass		Animal bone		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0001	4	84	8	1390					Med/lmed/p med, unstratified
0004			5	272					Early/Pmed
0006	4	680	1	75	5	1150	2	384	L18th-19th C
Total	8	764	14	1737	5	1150	2	384	

Table 1. Finds quantities

Pottery

A total of eight fragments of pottery was recovered from the monitoring, dating to the medieval and post-medieval period. The ceramics have been fully quantified and catalogued (Appendix II).

A small quantity of medieval pottery was identified amongst the unstratified material. These included the abraded remains of a medieval coarseware jug handle, and a sherd of Colchester-type ware.

The remainder of the pottery dates to the late medieval to post-medieval period. A fragment of Late Colchester type ware dating to the 15th-16th century was present as an unstratified find. Two fragments of an English stoneware jar with lid-seating were found in pit fill 0006, with an abraded sherd of Glazed red earthenware and a deep redware bowl, both dating c.16th-18th century.

Ceramic building material

Fourteen fragments of ceramic building material were collected (1.737kg), all of which was fully quantified and recorded.

Three fragments of roofing tile were present in deposit 0004. One of these dates to the medieval or late medieval period as it has a reduced core, whilst the others date to the late/post-medieval period. A fragment of a hard-fired brick with clinkery slag inclusions and irregular voids is also post-medieval.

A single piece of red-fired roofing tile dating to the late medieval/post-medieval period was identified in pit fill 0006.

The remainder of the assemblage consists of unstratified roof tiles, and two brick fragments. One of these is a white-fired brick which may have been used as a floor brick during the 18th-19th century. The other brick fragment is overfired and partially vitrified.

Fired clay

A single fragment of fired clay made in a fine sandy fabric with cream bands and red clay pellets in deposit 0004 is likely to date to the late medieval/early post-medieval period. The fragment has no distinguishing features, apart from a single flat side.

Post-medieval bottle glass

Five fragments of post-medieval bottle glass were collected from pit fill 0006. The group is made up of three large bottle bases, and the remains of the upper parts of two wine bottles. The best preserved fragment has a neck and rim which can be dated to the late eighteenth century, c.1770-1800 (Noel Hume, 67-68).

Animal bone

Mike Feider

Pit fill 0006 contained a fragmented cow humerus with signs of pathology on the lateral distal end, possibly resulting from an infection within the *olecranon fossa*. Additionally, there were some possible scrape marks on the shaft of the bone, but due to surface weathering they could not be positively identified as such.

7. Discussion

The only features identified within the trenches were a probable post medieval rubbish pit and a layer of building rubble, both of which are likely to be associated with different phases of occupation of the hall. The finds recovered from pit fill 0005 appear to have been deposited in the late eighteenth century.

Small quantities of unstratified medieval pottery and ceramic building material provide some evidence for the early history of the site but no indication of activity before the medieval period was recorded during this monitoring. However, the monitored groundworks only represent a small keyhole into the site and further evidence is likely to survive beyond the trench limits.

Bibliography

Noel-Hume, I., 1980, *A guide to artifacts of colonial America*, Alfred A Knopf, New York

Appendix I- Context list

CONTEXT	FEATURE	IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	FINDSYN
0001	0001	Unstratified	Topsoil and unstratified finds. Dark brown sandy clay loam, heavy root disturbance with regular flint cobbles, occasional CBM frags. 0.33m thick		0002			Y
0002	0002	Deposit	Mid brown friable sandy clay with fine roots throughout. Regular flint inclusions. 0.15m thick		0003; 0004	0005	0001	N
0003	0003	Deposit	Pale yellowish brown sandy silty clay alluvium/reworked subsoil to the full depth of the trench. Friable-compact with occasional flint and CBM inclusions.			0005	0002; 0004	N
0004	0004	Layer	Dense patch of brick and tile fragments in a discrete patch within the service trench		0003		0002	Y
0005	0005	Pit cut	2.5m wide, over 1.2m deep	0002; 0003				-
0006	0005	Pit fill	Dark brown loamy sandy clay, friable, similar to 0001. Oyster shell and post-medieval finds recovered					Y

Appendix II- Ceramic quantification

Context	Ceramic Period	Fabric	Form	Sherd No.	Est. No. Vessels	Weight(g)	State	Comments	Fabric	Context
0001	MED	MCW	JUG	1	1	68	A	Coarseware jug sherd with strap handle	L12th-14th	Unstratified
0001	MED	MCW	BOD	1	1	4				
0001	MED	COLC	BOD	1	1	8		?Jug sherd, reduced core, oxid ext margins	L13th-M16th	
0001	MED	COLL	BOD	1	1	4		Fully oxidised	15th-16th C	
0006	PMED	ESW	JAR	2	1	375		2 joining sherds of lid-seated jar	17th-19th C	17th-18th
0006	PMED	GRE	BOD	1	1	182	A	Worn internally	16th-18th C	
0006	PMED	PMRE	BOW	1	1	120		Unglazed, except small spot. Ext flange. Sim to Cotter Fig 138 No 64	16th-18th C	