

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/167

**42 Crown Street, Bury St Edmunds
BSE 348**

HER Information

Planning Application No: SE/09/0869

Date of Fieldwork: September 2010

Grid Reference: TL 8556 6394

Funding Body: Dr C. Friel

Curatorial Officer: Jess Tipper

Project Officer: Andrew Tester

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on land at the rear of 42 Crown Street Bury St Edmunds. A fragment of a mortar foundation for a sill beam was uncovered and a soil layer with occupation waste that was probably medieval although there were no dateable finds.

1. Introduction and methodology

An archaeological monitoring was carried out during the construction of a porch and kitchen extension at 42 Crown Street, Bury St Edmunds. The work was carried out in accordance with a Brief and Specification by Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The site was visited during the excavation of a raft footing and the lowering of the ground surface in the area of the extension.

2. Results

The surface of the extension was cleared and is recorded in plan. About one third of the extension was above a coal hole and an old manhole and therefore disturbed. The cut for the cellar, that extended beneath the entire frontage was exposed beneath the threshold and is indicated on plan. The footing trench at the front of the raft was hand dug and observed during excavation, (Fig. 2). The north-east facing section was drawn.

Section 1

The section reveals a disturbance at either end associated with an earlier porch rebuilding to the north and a drain to the south; the length of section between revealed modern laid slabs over concrete, a red brick surface, and a layer of thinner white floor bricks. Beneath these solid surfaces there was a surface of crushed chalk that could have been either inside or outside of a building. Below this was a yellow/green clay deposit that contained fragments of charcoal and occasional fragments of animal bone. Included at this level were some large flints and some irregular pieces of Barnack limestone and below this layer was a fine red silt/clay. It is

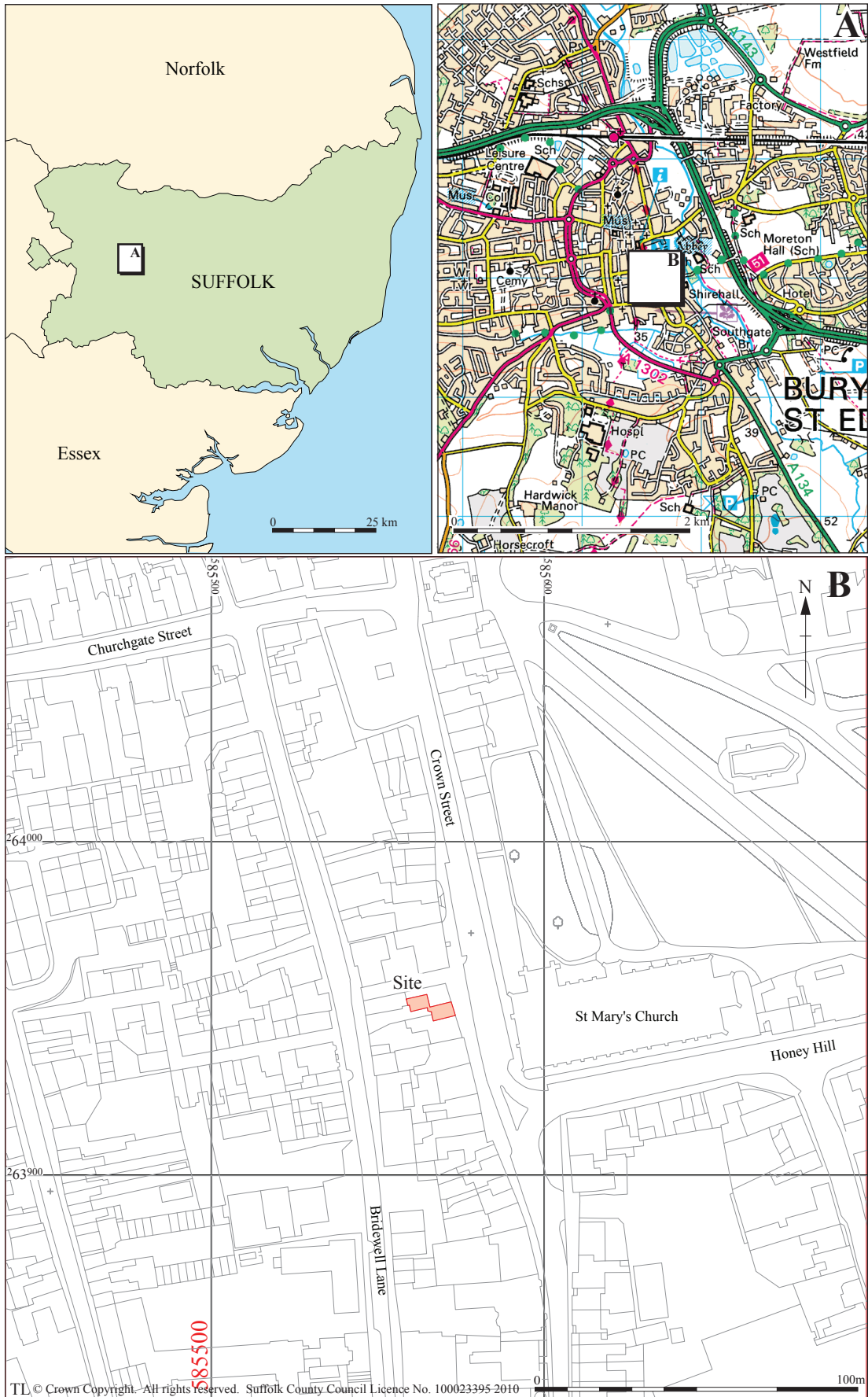


Figure 1. Location of site, showing development area (red)

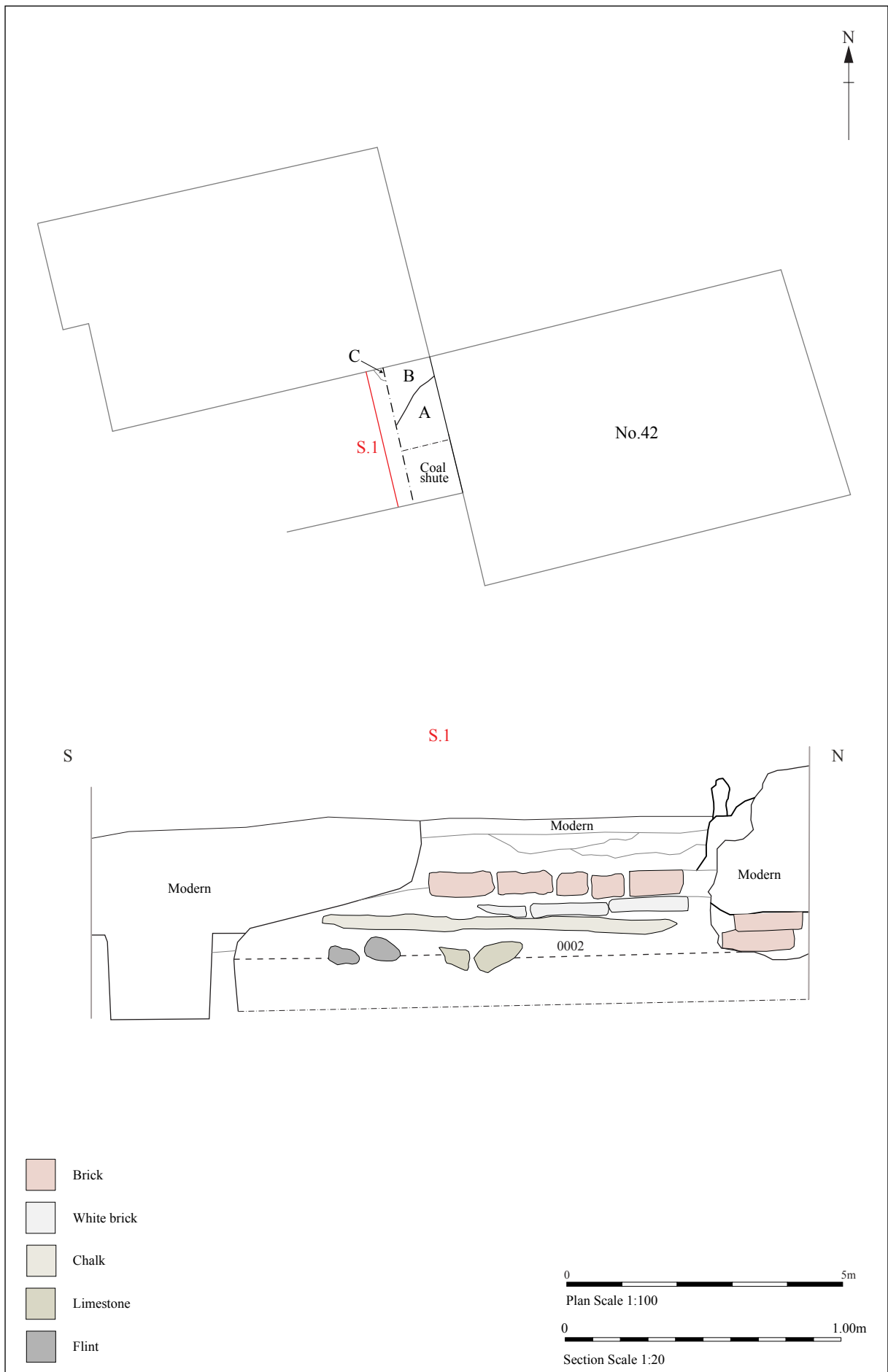


Figure 2. Plan and section

impossible to say from the small sample seen whether the flint and limestone had been laid in any pattern although neither were bonded.



Plate 1. Flint and mortar foundation for a sill beam sitting on natural at the north end of the footing trench.

A foundation of mortar with flints set on the surface of the natural was uncovered at the north end of the footing (Pl.1). It ran below the modern doorstep to the extension. No finds were recovered from the site. Fragments of peg tile were observed although none was diagnostically medieval, although some may have spanned the medieval to post medieval periods.

2. Discussion

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from such a small area but some observations can be made. The tiny area of mortar and flint shown in Plate 1 is likely to be a simple foundation on which a wall plate was laid. It would have been very shallow

and simply kept the plate off the ground to slow down the rotting of the wood. This is likely to be medieval or possibly early post-medieval in date. The wall plate has clearly gone but suggests that there was an earlier wall on the line of the present extension.

The section reveals that natural subsoil was encountered c.0.45m beneath the present level of the slabs in the garden (c.0.3m beneath the floor level in the house). The layer immediately above the natural was green/yellow clay with much charcoal and it contained the limestone fragments and flints. The appearance of this soil is typical of that found on medieval sites in Bury where building debris and occupation waste have been scattered. The formless limestone may well be off-cuts from the stone used to face the Abbey; similarly the flints may have been waste from a structure. Only a wider excavation could establish whether their location in the section held any significance.

Andrew Tester
September 2010