ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Brockley Pumping Main replacement scheme
BKY 017

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH A REPLACEMENT PIPELINE NEAR BROCKLEY HALL, BROCKLEY.

Planning Application No. Pre Brockley
NGR: TL 8288 5565
OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-12231

Funded by: Anglian Water

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/31

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of a pipeline trench along the edge of the B1066 at Brockley located evidence of an earlier road foundation, consisting of flint and unworked limestone blocks, lying beneath the tarmac and hardcore of the modern road. The origin of this material, and whether it is associated with the medieval moated site and settlement of Brockley Hall is unclear.

Introduction

A series of visits was made to the site from 19th to 20th January 2006 to monitor the route of the new pumping main, where it was being laid in an open trench. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team), following consultation with English Heritage, to fulfil a condition on the planning application. The work was funded by the developer, Anglian Water.

This part of the pumping main route was of potential archaeological interest as it passed within 200m of Brockley Hall (Fig. 1), a nationally important site consisting of two medieval moated sites and associated settlement (Scheduled Ancient Monument 33286). The pipeline trench therefore had the potential to disturb further evidence of medieval settlement, either associated with Brockley Hall or lying along the road frontage.

Methodology and Results

Site visits were made at intervals over two days during the pipeline trench excavation. A length of trench, approximately 75m long, 0.3m wide and c.1m deep, was seen whilst fully excavated, running along the western side of the road.

The southern third of the observed trench showed a soil profile consisting of a layer, 0.15m thick, of modern tarmac over a 0.15m-0.25m thick hardcore foundation. Immediately beneath this was the natural subsoil, a thick mid yellow/grey clay with chalk flecks.

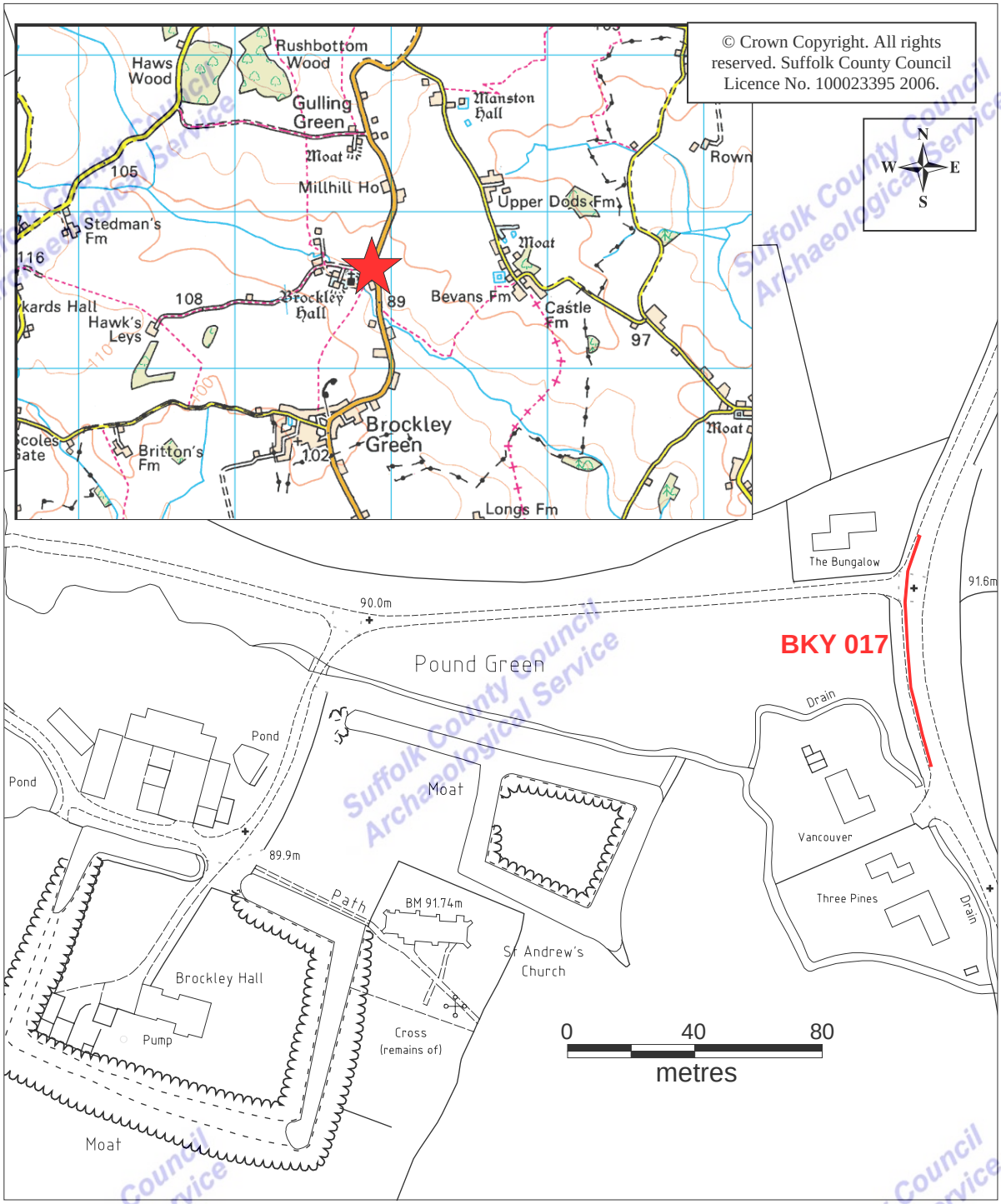

Figure 1. Site location plan

Towards the middle of the trench, 25m-35m from the southern end, the natural subsoil dropped to a depth of 0.5m below an increasingly thick hardcore layer. Up to 0.35m thick this layer now contained occasional flint nodules and pieces of limestone, up to 0.15m long at its base.

The profile in the northern half of the trench showed the subsoil dropping to a depth of 0.75m, beneath a layer, up to 0.4m thick, of flint and limestone which now appeared to be separate from the overlying modern hardcore and tarmac. The unworked limestone blocks also increased considerably in size, up to 0.75m long and 0.3m thick, although the size of the trench mean that whole blocks were rarely visible and measurements were limited.

Discussion

The trench, which was wholly cut into the existing road, did not locate any firm evidence of medieval settlement with modern road deposits overlying, and probably truncating the natural subsoil in the southern part of the trench. The remainder of the trench however did show a substantial layer of limestone blocks and chalk nodules. This was clearly a deliberate, imported deposit, which was probably used as a previous foundation for the road. The origin and date of this material was unclear, although, despite the fact that the limestone blocks were unworked, may be reused material from the nearby medieval settlement around Brockley Hall.

J. A. Craven, January 2006