

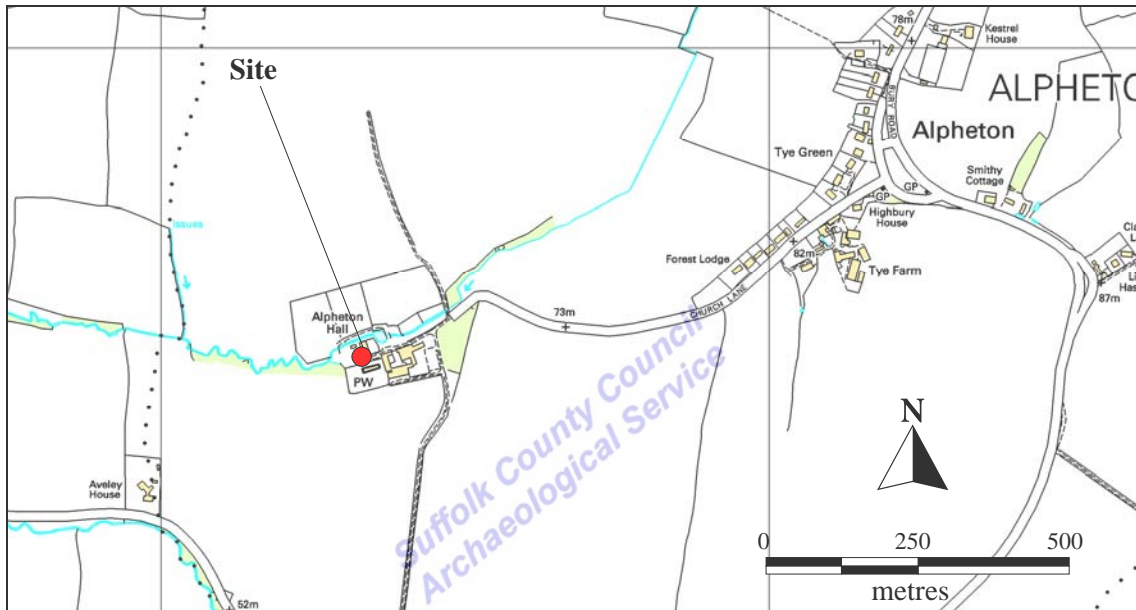
Alpheton Hall, Alpheton (ALP 019), Record of Archaeological Monitoring

SMR Information

Planning Application No.	B/05/00714	Oasis No.	Suffolkc1-12818
Map Ref.	TL 8733 5049	SMR No.	ALP 019
SCCAS Rpt. No.	2006/009	Finds	Post-medieval

Introduction

As one of the conditions on planning consent B/05/00714 covering a programme of building alterations at Alpheton Hall, Alpheton (Fig. 1) the applicant was required to provide for a programme of archaeological works.



Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2006

Fig. 1 1:12,500 scale OS map extract showing the location of the site

A Brief and Specification document was prepared by Jess Tipper of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team which detailed the level of archaeological recording, in this case deemed to be the monitoring of groundworks, that would be required to discharge the planning condition.

Subsequently, Suffolk County Council's Field Projects Team were commissioned by Clark and Willcocks (on behalf of the applicant) to undertake the archaeological monitoring, the fieldwork for which was carried out on 7th February 2006.

The hall itself, parts of which may date back to the 12th century, occupies a site c.700 metres from the present village of Alpheton immediately to the north of the church at c.63 metres OD. A small stream running from east to west immediately to the north of the hall may at one time have been channelled to form a moat.

Methodology

A visit was made to the site after the footings, drainage trench and floor lowering excavations had been completed by the contractors (*contra*. the requirements of the Brief & Specification). A visual inspection was made of the excavations and, where

available, the upcast spoil. Observations were recorded and are presented in this report.

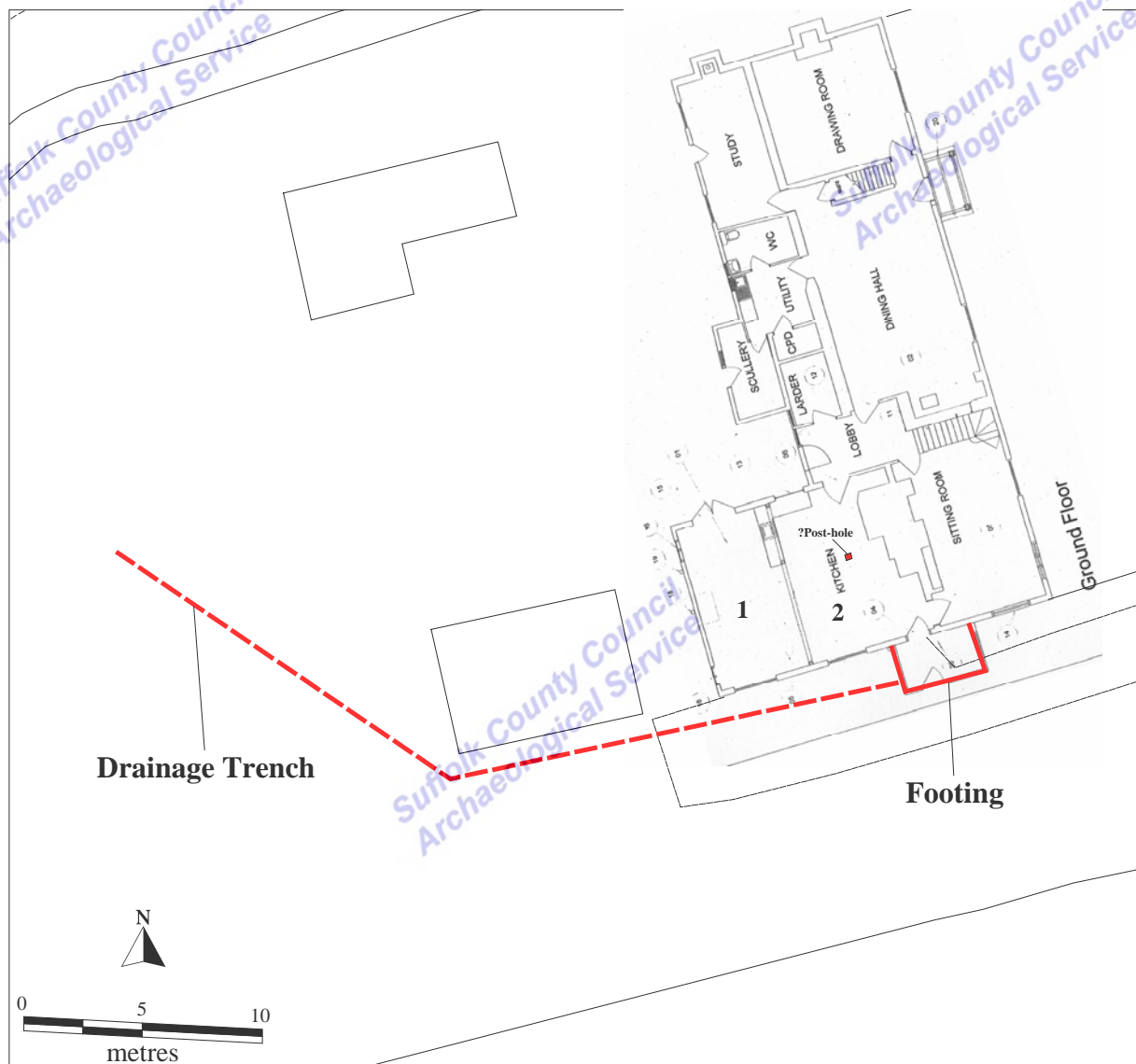


Fig. 2 1:350 scale plan

Results

Footings: a footing trench for a new porch on the southern side of the building had been excavated to a depth of *c.*0.3 metres (Fig. 2). Located in what was effectively the entrance/driveway providing access to the rear of the building, the character of the overburden reflected this use. Approximately 0.2 metres of stratified deposits, all representing metalling material for the driveway were recorded overlying a stiff grey/brown clay, possibly representing naturally occurring subsoil in the base of the trench. No archaeological features were visible and no finds were recovered.

Drainage Trench: a trench excavated to contain a pipe taking rainwater to a soakaway extended in a west-south-westerly direction away from the footing for a distance of *c.*20 metres before turning to the north-west for a further *c.*16 metres and terminating at an existing soakaway (Fig. 2). No archaeological features were

recorded and the only finds seen in the upcast spoil were post-medieval building debris.

The section excavated to the south of the existing buildings was between 0.3 and 0.4 metres in depth. The overburden was similar to that seen in the footings with brick rubble also present, possibly as a layer of hardcore.

However, the south-east to north-west section of trench had been excavated through material of an entirely different character, effectively in the rear garden of the hall. While the trench had been excavated with a constant fall on its base from one end to the other, the ground surface was less regular with the trench cutting through a marked hump. This resulted in a depth of trench varying between 0.4 and 0.8 metres. The overburden comprised *c.*0.3 metres of black loam overlying a grey/brown, relatively homogenous silty clay. This material may represent naturally deposited alluvium from the adjacent stream. The naturally occurring boulder clay seen in the footing trench to the east was not encountered in this section of trench.

Floor lowering: Part of the alteration works involved lowering the floor levels in two rooms of the existing building, marked **1** and **2** in Figure 2. This entire operation had been undertaken prior to the monitoring visit. As a result, the composition and stratigraphy of the removed material was not observed by an archaeologist.

Approximately 0.3 metres of material had been removed revealing an uneven surface of grey/brown clay. It was unclear whether this layer represented naturally occurring subsoil as it had been dirtied by the passage of feet. While small pieces of brick and tile were present, these may have been pushed into its upper surface. However, the level of this layer did coincide with that of similar material seen in the external footing, which does suggest that they are comparable.

Only one feature of interest was recorded, a possible post-pad/hole in the kitchen (Fig. 2). The feature was *c.*0.3 metres square comprising orange clay with a suggestion of a rectangular post-setting (*c.*0.15 metres square) at its centre.

Conclusions

All of the excavations associated with the building alterations were monitored. No archaeological features were present within the externally excavated trenches. With regard to the lowered floor the situation was less certain. It would have been helpful if a visit had been made during the removal operation in order to record the stratigraphy of the removed material, as the potential for earlier floor levels was high. In addition, even in the short time that had elapsed between the excavation and the site visit had led to the exposed surface becoming dirty making it difficult to define features. Having said that, features occurring at this level will not be destroyed by the alteration works and will be available for the future.

The one post-pad/hole recorded may have formed part of an earlier building phase.

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