

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2012/132	Parish: Boxford
<p style="text-align: center;">Little Orchard, Boxford</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BXF 025</p>	Planning Application No.: B/12/00185/FHA
	HER Event No.: BXF 025
Address: Little Orchard, Butchers Lane, Boxford, CO10 5DZ	Grid Reference: TL 963 406
	Number of Site visits: 5
	Date of visits: 28/08-06/09/2012

Introduction

A continuous monitoring was carried out at the Little Orchard, Butchers Lane, Boxford during the groundworks for the construction of a garage to the south-west of the current property. The work was carried out to a brief issued by Jude Plouviez of Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT).

A condition was placed on these groundworks as the site lies on the north edge of the medieval village core approximately 150m from the church (HER ref BXF 008); a Bronze Age pin was also found in the river to the south (HER ref BXF 005).

The site is located in the river valley facing south-east. The valley slope was visible on site with the natural being found at 26.65m OD to the north and at c. 26m OD to the south. This slope was respected in the current ground level.

Groundworks

The groundworks covered the area of the proposed garage, the surrounding wall, the access driveways and also the foundation trenches for the structure. Firstly the turf was stripped from the site and the driveway was excavated to a depth of 150mm. Then the area for the garage was excavated to a depth of 26.65m OD using a toothless ditching bucket. At this level undisturbed natural was found at a

depth of 0.84m on the northern 2.5-3.5m of the site but to the south only the topsoil deposit 0001 was excavated, reaching a depth of 0.25m. Where the natural was present an archaeological horizon was identified. When this area had been lowered foundation trenches were excavated around the plan of the proposed garage using a 0.5m wide bucket. The foundation trenches reached a depth of 0.6m to the north but were excavated to a depth of 0.96m down the natural slope to the south in an effort to reach more stable ground and the natural undisturbed geology.

Results

Two possible features were discovered during the groundworks; one was visible cutting through the natural to the north and the other was seen during the excavation of the footing trenches.

Pit 0005 was visible under deposits 0001, 0002 and 0003 at the north western limit of excavation. Its shape in plan was unclear as it extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north, although the base was visible, suggesting that it did not extend much further. The profile from north-west to south-east was a slightly flared U-shape but much shallower from south-west to north-east as this was probably the feature's edge. It contained a dark grey brown silty clay fill (0004) with frequent ceramic building material (CBM) and charcoal flecks. Recovered from this fill was one piece of later prehistoric flint, animal bone and oyster shell, none of which can reliably date the pit.

Pit 0007 was only visible in section approximately 3.5m north-east of the northern most corner of the foundation trenches. The pit was not visible in plan as this part of the site was covered in the buried topsoil deposit 0002. It appears to be a pit as it does not appear in the opposing trench section, so is unlikely to be a ditch. It contained a dark grey brown silty clay (0006) with CBM and charcoal flecks and one piece of animal bone. No datable evidence was recovered.

Three more deposits were observed on the site, topsoil 0001 and 0002 and a subsoil layer 0003.

0001 was the latest of these and was 0.2-0.3m deep across the entire site. It was

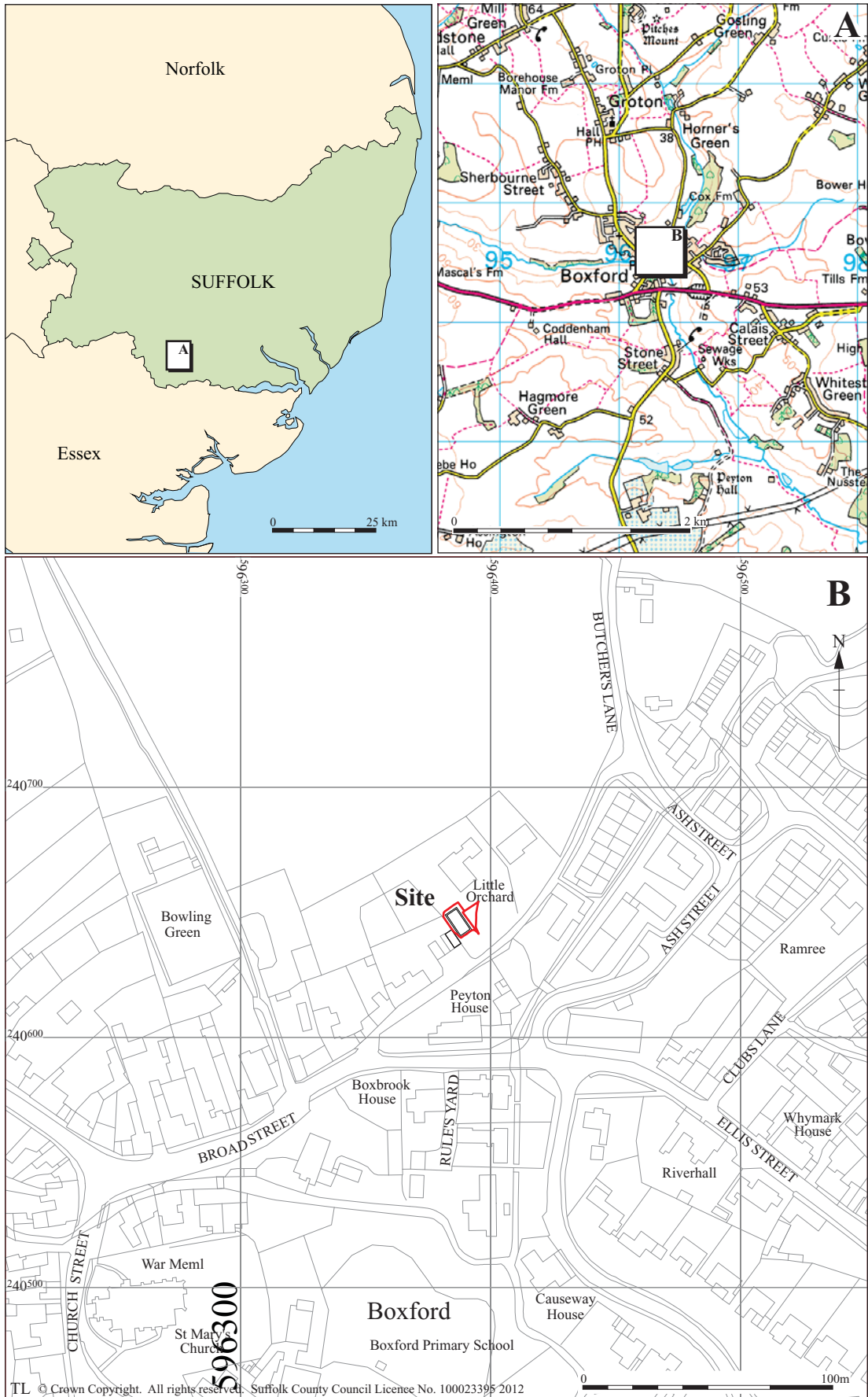


Figure 1. Site location

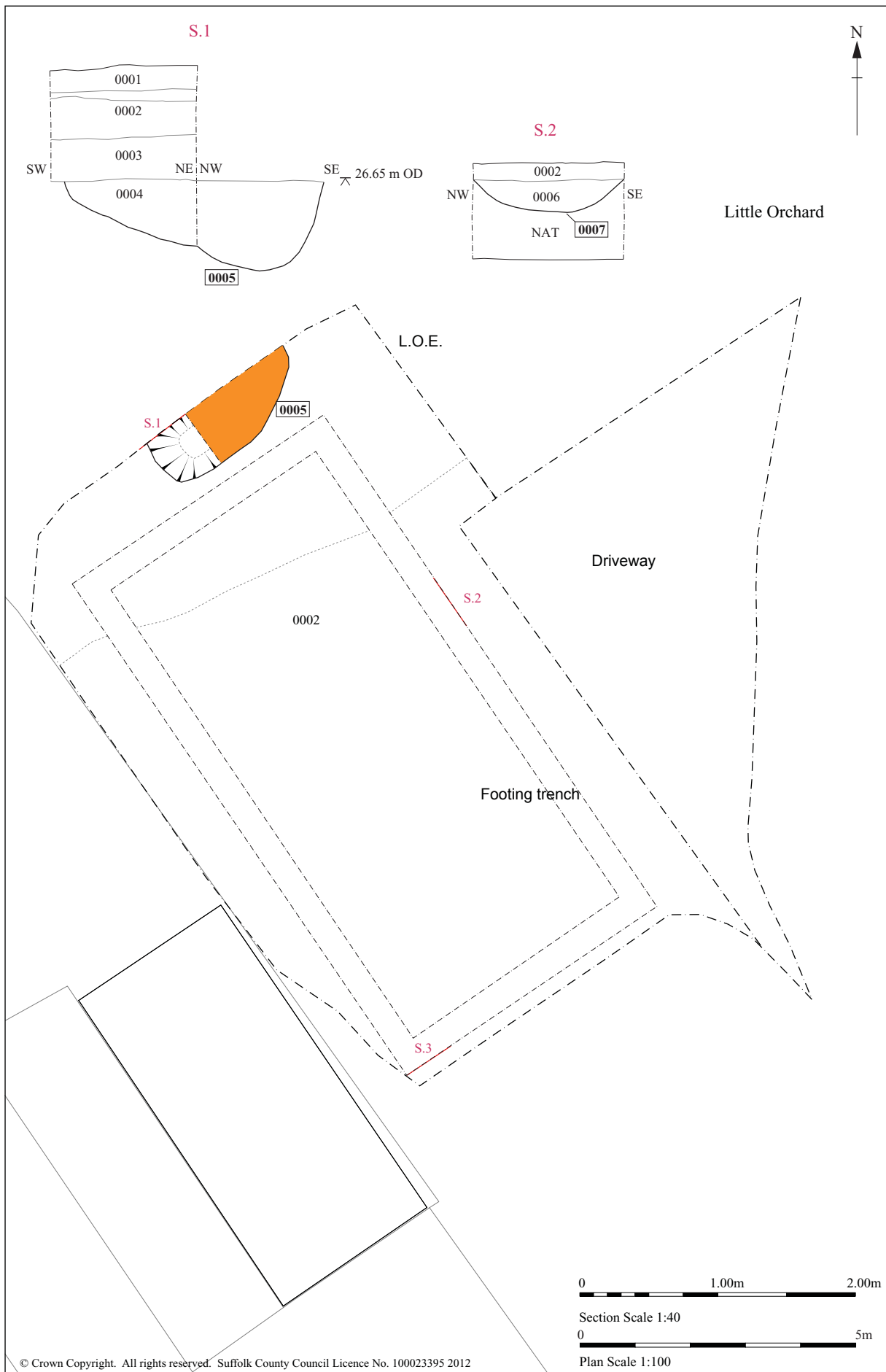


Figure 2. Site plan and sections

mid grey brown sandy silt. At the top of the slope there was an orange clay deposit at its lower horizon with 0002. At the bottom of the slope, to the south, this deposit was much darker and more organic due to frequent standing water.

0002 ranged from 0.2-0.3m in depth across the entire site. It was mid yellowish grey brown sandy silt, becoming greyer and more clay-rich down the slope, again probably due to the moisture content.

0003 was discovered at the top of the slope, being visible in Section 1, but it was only observed within c.1m of the northern baulk. It was a mottled orange and greyish brown clay and silts and sealed pit 0005.

Some medieval pottery was recovered from these deposits however it was unclear which one they came from and so they were given the unstratified number 0008.

Finds and environmental evidence

Andy Fawcett

Introduction

Finds were retrieved from two contexts pit fill 0004 and the unstratified context 0008.

Find type	No	Wgt/g
Pottery	3	14
CBM	2	38
Worked flint	1	5
Burnt flint	1	21
Animal bone	1	9
Shell	1	8
Totals	9	95

Table *1. Finds quantities

The pottery

Three slightly abraded body sherds of medieval pottery were recorded in the unstratified context 0008. These consist of one Hedingham fine ware (HFW1) dated from the mid 12th to mid 13th century (2g) and two sherds of medieval coarseware (12g) dated from the late 12th to 14th century.

Ceramic Building Materials (CBM)

Two small fragments of oxidised post-medieval roof tile were retrieved from the

unstratified context 0008.

Worked Flint

Identification by Colin Pendleton

A squat flake was recorded in pit fill 0004. It is unpatinated, hard hammer struck with a hinge fracture and a triangular cross section. The flake is dated to the later prehistoric period; however faint traces of mortar on both faces indicate its later reuse (in walling for instance).

Miscellaneous Finds

Pit fill 0004 contained a single small fragment of burnt flint, a rib bone belonging to a large mammal and oyster shell.

Discussion of material evidence

This is a small and fragmentary group of finds. The unstratified presence of medieval pottery sherds close to the village centre is not an unexpected find, given Boxford's medieval settlement history.

The finds are stored in H/80/5 Parish box.

Conclusion

Given the evidence it is hard to establish the age and function of these two pits. No diagnostic finds were recovered and the true size and shape of these features could not be recorded. The pits' location, close to the medieval settlement, and the form and appearance may suggest they were medieval or post-medieval in date, however this can not be confirmed.

Recorded by: John Sims

Date: 11/09/2012

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