

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

EARL SOHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL (SMR ref. ESO 012)

A REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HALL AND PLAYGROUND (Application Nos. C/05/0709)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/021
(OASIS Ref. Suffolk1-13564)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of a new school hall and playground at Earl Soham Primary School (NGR; TM 2348 6330), was undertaken during February 2006. The school lies across the line of a Roman road. Observation of the soil strip for the construction of a new playground revealed only a soft brown silty clay beneath the existing topsoil which has been interpreted as a 'hillwash' deposit that has buried any earlier ground surfaces. No archaeological features or deposits were noted and no artefacts were recovered. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference ESO 012. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the Suffolk County Council Education Department.



Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with construction of a new school hall and playground at Earl Soham Primary School in Earl Soham was undertaken during February 2006. Interest in the site is due to its location within c.150m of the medieval St Mary's Church and as such is likely to be within the medieval core of the settlement. It also lies across the probable line of a substantial Roman road (Margary 346). The precise

route through the village is unconfirmed but it survives as the modern A1120 to the southwest and northeast of Earl Soham.

The new school hall is to be built on piles with connecting ground beams which are likely to cause only limited damage to any buried archaeological deposits or features that may be present. The new hall is to be located on the existing playground and consequently a new playground is to be formed immediately to the northeast. The new playground's construction will entail the mechanical stripping of its footprint to a depth of c. 0.6m with the potential to expose archaeological features and deposits. An archaeological condition was placed upon the planning consent calling for monitoring of the groundworks in order to provide a record of any archaeological features or deposits that may be revealed. To detail the archaeological work required a Brief and Specification was produced by Jude Plouviez of the Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (see Appendix I).

Earl Soham lies within a valley with a stream aligned approximately north-south whilst the school lies within a smaller valley formed by a tributary to the stream with high ground to the north, east and west. The tributary runs to the northwest of the school after having run down the side of the main valley.

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 2348 6330; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference ESO 012. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the Suffolk County Council Education Department.

Methodology

Site visits were to be made to inspect the groundwork underway. Stripped areas were to be examined for archaeological features and deposits which would be excavated and recorded. Any significant soil profiles revealed by the groundwork were to be recorded, with the depths and thickness of any layers identified being noted. Any on-site spoil tips would be examined finds.

Results

The site was visited on the 16th and 17th February 2006 to observe the soil strip and ground reduction carried out for the construction of the new playground (see figure 2). This was undertaken using a large 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. After the removal of the topsoil a further 0.3m of material was excavated. This comprised a homogenous fine-grained deposit of soft pale brown silty clay with sand. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed and no artefacts were recovered from the stripped area or any temporary spoil heaps.

During these visits piles were being driven for the new hall foundation. The ground beams were excavated shortly after but only the pale brown silty clay with sand was encountered.

A Site Investigation Report, dated February 2005 and produced by JP Chick and Partners Limited details the results of trial pit and borehole tests which indicate that the soft brown silty clay is present over the hall and playground areas to a depth of c. 1.2m.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference ESO 012, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-13564.

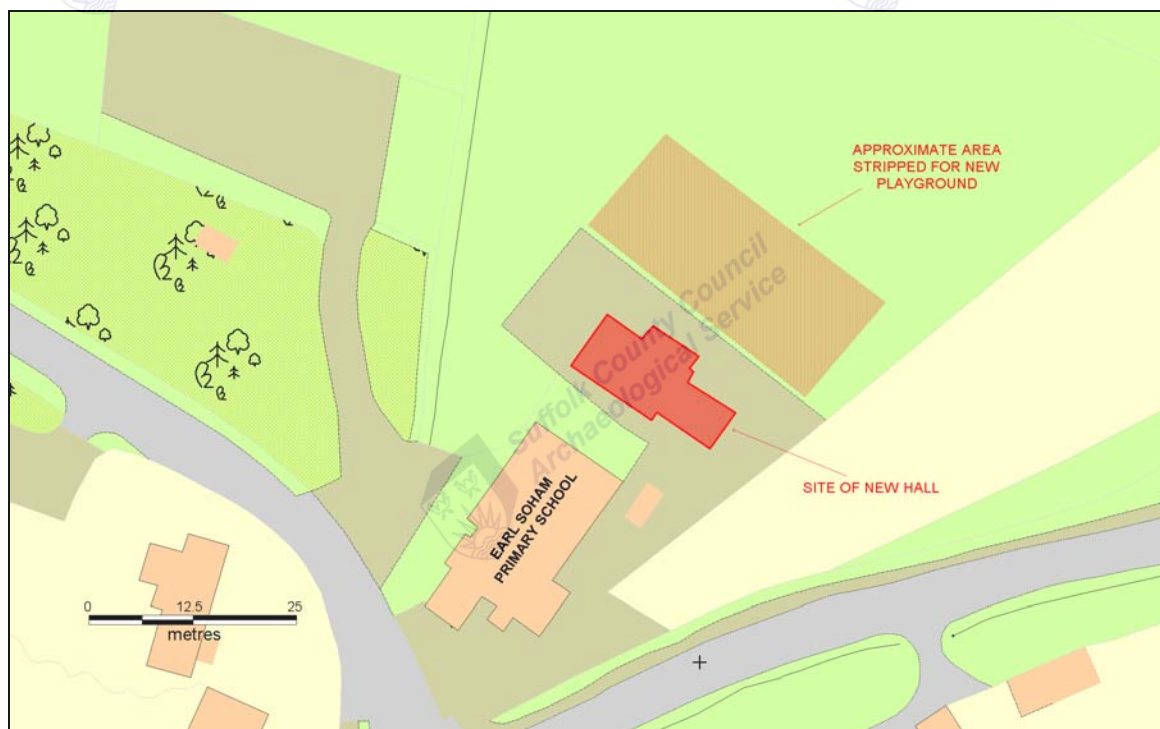


Figure 2: Monitoring Details

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Conclusion

Only a deposit of softy pale brown silty clay and sand was seen. This has been interpreted as a 'hillwash' that has come down the valley slope to the northeast and buried any earlier ground surfaces. Consequently no significant archaeological deposits or features were noted in any of the monitored excavations. The natural subsoil is believed to lie at a depth of c. 1.2m, as indicated by the Site Investigation Report, and no excavations to this depth were observed.

Whether evidence for the Roman road presumed to run across this area lies buried under the hillwash is impossible to ascertain as the period, or periods, when this deposit accumulated is unknown.

APPENDIX I

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

EARL SOHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application C/05/....). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The development lies at TM 234 632 with a stream to the south and minor tributary very close to the west. A substantial Roman road (Margary 346) is projected to run across the development area but the precise route of the road within the village has not been confirmed although it survives as a modern road on high ground to the south-west and north-east of the medieval settlement. The development is also c.150m from St Mary's Church, lying at the north-east end of the medieval village.
- 1.3 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in "Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England" Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.
- 1.5 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. . The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.

- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.

- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be any site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (e.g. the construction of access roads, hard standing construction, and landscaping) and the excavation of building ground-beam trenches.

If site preparation works involve topsoil stripping the stripping process and the upcast soil are to be observed **whilst** they **are** excavated by the building contractor.

In the case of ground beam trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed **after** they **have been** excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

3. **Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.

- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.

- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.

- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

- 4.2 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

- 4.3 In the case of ground beam trenches unimpeded access at the rate **of one and a half hours per 10 metres** of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.

- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.

- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

- 4.6 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains*

excavated from Christian burial grounds in England' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Judith Plouviez
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Date: 17 January 2006

Reference: /EarlSohamPrimarySchool01

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.