

# Market Weston, Churchyard Extension MKW 017

## **Archaeological Evaluation Report**

SCCAS Report No. 2012/153

**Client: Market Weston Parish Council**

Author: Andrew Tester

October/2012

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Report Date: October 2012



## HER Information

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**Site Code:** MKW 017  
**Site Name:** Market Weston Churchyard Extension  
**Report Number** 2012/153  
**Planning Application No:** Pre-planning  
**Date of Fieldwork:** September 2012  
**Grid Reference:** TL 990 781  
**Oasis Reference:** suffolkc1-138172  
**Curatorial Officer:** Abby Antrobus  
**Project Officer:** Andrew Tester  
**Client/Funding Body:** Market Weston Parish Council

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:  
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

### Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Prepared By: Andrew Tester  
Date: 10/10/2012

Approved By: \*\*\*\*\*  
Position: \*\*\*\*\*  
Date: \*\*\*\*\*  
Signed: \*\*\*\*\*



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## Summary

Three trenches were excavated to evaluate a strip of farmland adjoining the cemetery of St Mary's Church Market Weston to inform a planning application for the extension of the cemetery. The trenching revealed a ditch, which appears to have continued the extant western boundary to the churchyard and is suggested to be medieval in date and two pits; one of the pits was later post-medieval the other was probably medieval, containing three sherds of pottery, although it was heavily truncated.



## **1. Introduction**

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An archaeological evaluation was carried out to assess the potential of land to the north of St Mary's Churchyard, Market Weston to inform a planning application to extend the burial ground. A verbal Brief for the work was provided by Dr Abby Antrobus of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team.

## **2. Geology and topography**

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The subsoil consisted of mixed sand silt and gravel drift deposits over chalk bedrock. The site lies on a gently facing eastern slope at c.40m OD.

## **3. Archaeology and historical background**

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The site lies c. 30m to the north of St Mary's Church, which dates from the 15th century but with an extensive rebuild dating from the 1840's. There are several sites and find spots recorded in close proximity these include: MKW 007 adjacent to the site where a Late Saxon/Early medieval strap end was found using a metal detector; MKW 010 to the south of the Church produced a post medieval horse fitting and other metalwork; MKW 005 at Church Farm where medieval pottery is recorded; MKW 009, to the west of the site where an Early Saxon brooch fragment was found; MKW003, to the north west has produced Roman coins and where an excavation was carried out in the 1960's, which exposed a Roman pottery kiln and MKW 008 to the north where a flint axe was unearthed. The finds undoubtedly reflect the level of work carried out with metal detectors in this area but indicate a rich archaeological background. Medieval pottery was visible on the surface of the evaluation field during the fieldwork and the potential of the site was to find evidence for settlement close to the Church.

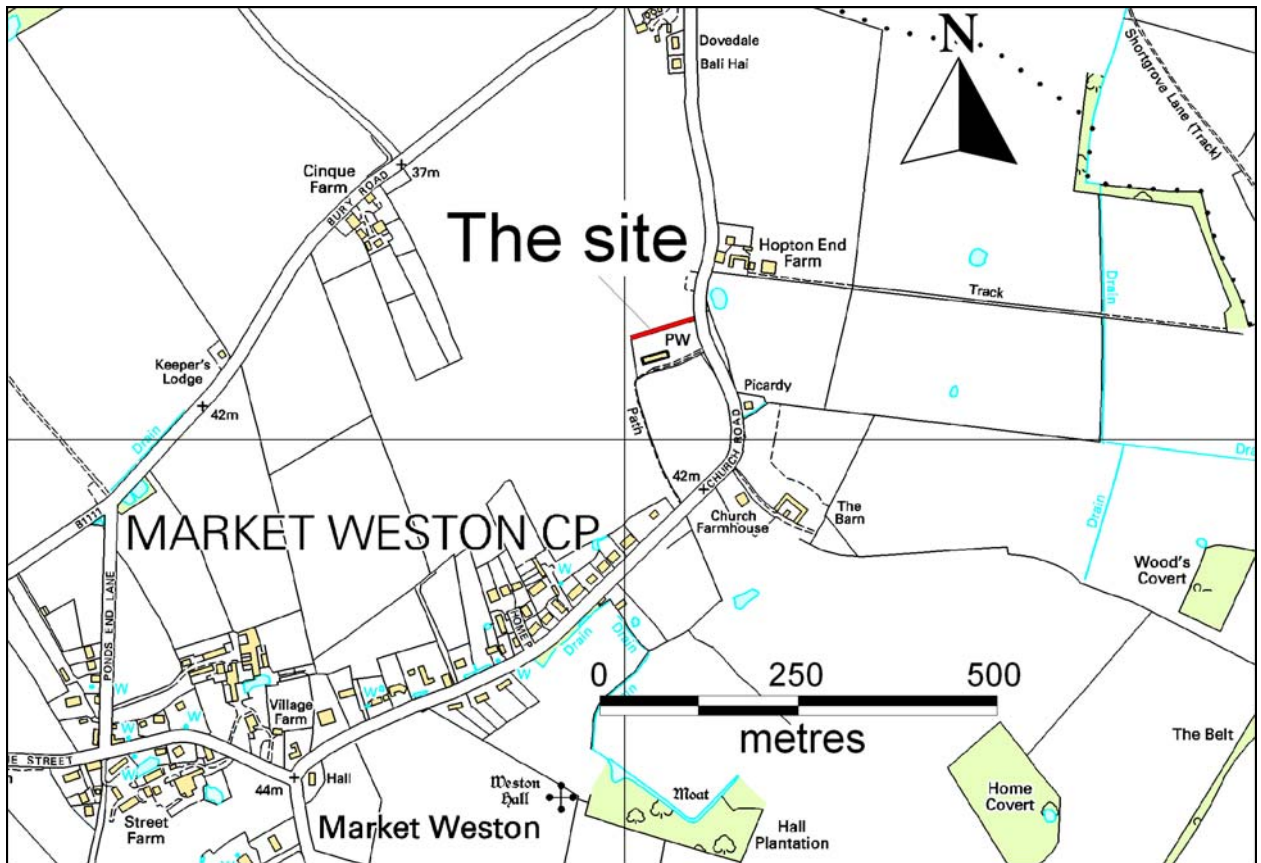


Figure 1. Location map

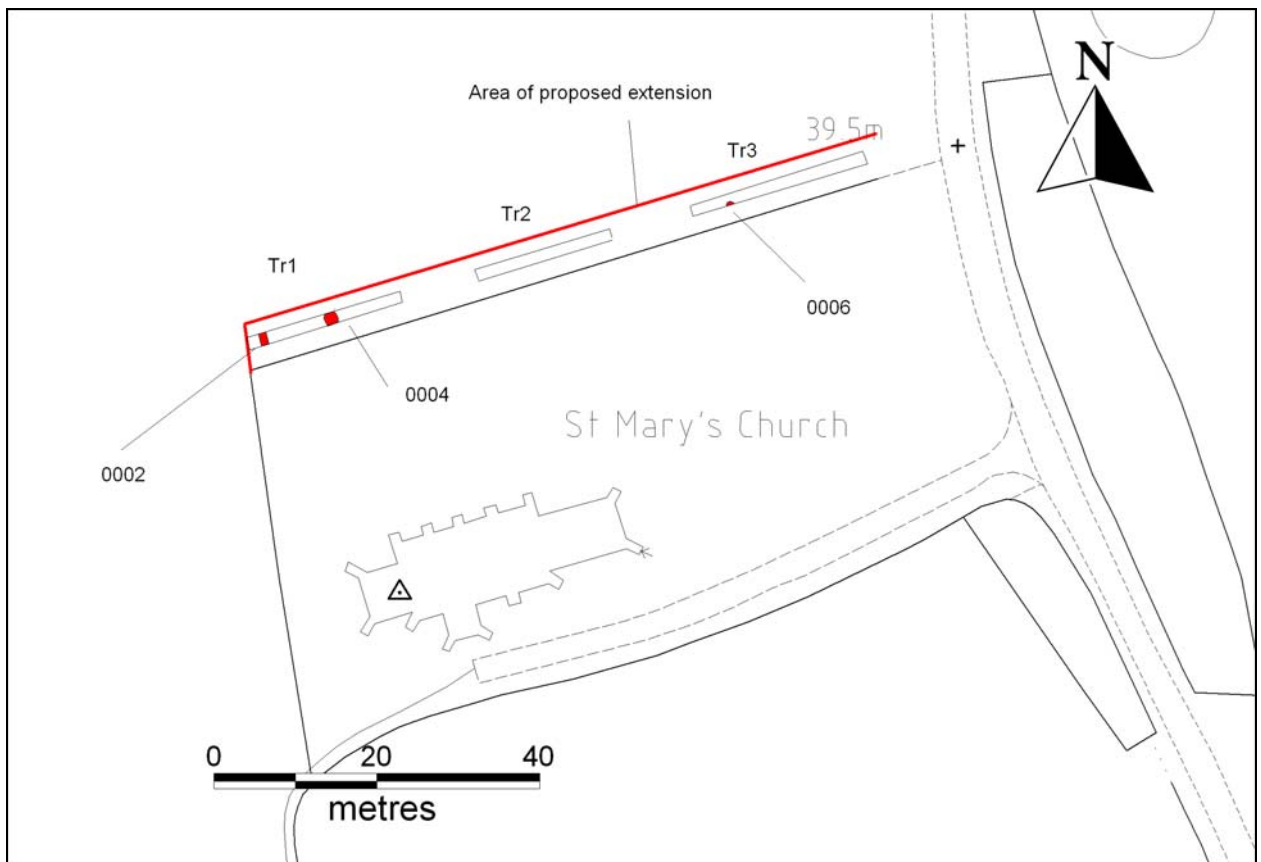


Figure 2. Trench layout plan

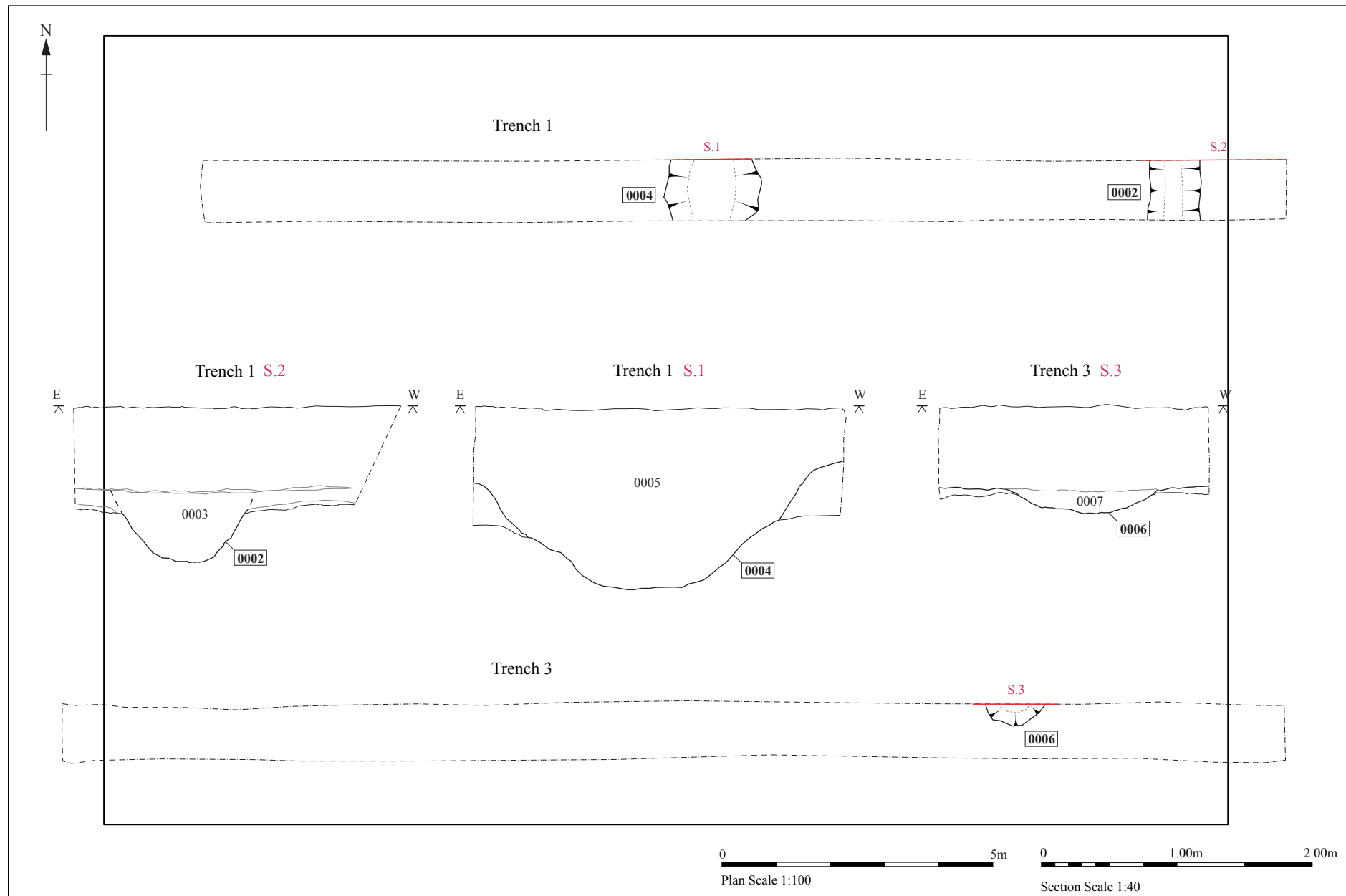


Figure 3. Detailed plans and sections

## **4. Methodology**

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A series of three trenches were excavated along the centre of the proposed cemetery extension using a mini 360 degree digger fitted with a c.1m wide flat bladed bucket. The trenches were planned and the features excavated. The sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and hand drawn plans made of the site. Because of the shape of the site and the potential difficulties that would be incurred if a monitoring condition was placed on the site a larger than normal sample of the site was evaluated.

All finds were brought back from the site with the exception of unstratified animal bone. A single sequence continuous numbering system was used for site recording and a high resolution digital photographic record was made of the features. All finds are held in archive in Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

## **5. Results**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

The following descriptions are of the trenches as excavated from west to east.

### **5.2 Trench results**

#### **Trench 1**

Trench 1 was c.20m in length and excavated to a depth of c.0.7m. The soil profile comprised a homogenous plough soil of brown silt coming down to grey silt immediately above sand and silt with flint.

#### **Ditch 0002**

A ditch was located beneath the plough soil. It was c.1.1m wide and 0.6m deep with a uniform pale grey-brown silt fill. The fill, 0003, appeared washed out possibly suggesting a level of podsolisation had occurred from which we can infer that the ditch was of some antiquity; finds include fragments of briquetage (burnt clay possibly oven debris) and fragmented animal bone. The ditch ran north to south and may align with the western boundary to the current churchyard which is not well delineated, but loosely marked by trees.

### **Pit(?) 0004**

Approximately 7m to the east of 0002 was a probable pit 0004. It was c. 2m wide (where it could first be seen well above the base of the trench) and penetrated 0.5m into the natural subsoil. The trench in this area was c. 0.8m deep and the possible pit appeared to be cut from at least midway between the base of the trench and the surface. Finds included animal bone and a fragment of brick, which is probably post-medieval in date. The brown silt fill was indistinguishable from the topsoil in this area of trench.

### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 was c.17.5m in length and 0.6m deep. A homogenous re-worked soil was directly above natural sand/silt with gravel subsoil the entire length of the trench. No archaeological features were present.

### **Trench 3**

Trench 3 was c.22.5m in length and c.0.6m deep. A homogenous plough-soil was directly above the natural subsoil throughout the trench except where a probable small pit was cut c. 0.2m into the natural.

### **Pit 0006**

This feature appeared only in the south section where it extended c. 0.5m into the trench. It was filled with pale brown silt, 0007, and contained animal bone, a possible human vertebrae and three fragments of medieval pottery. This feature was relatively broad and flat and had clearly been severely truncated by the plough-soil above. The western end of the trench had been disturbed by a modern pit. The street frontage was not investigated where the farmer has retained vehicular access.



Plate 1. Facing south Ditch 0002, scale bars at 0.5m



Plate 2. Facing north, Feature 0004, scale bars at 0.5m





Plate 3. Facing east, Feature 0004 being excavated by David Sarson,



Plate 4. Trench 2 looking east

## 6. Finds and environmental evidence

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Richenda Goffin

### 6.1 Introduction

| Context      | Pottery  |          | CBM      |           | Fired clay |          | Animal bone |           | Overall date             |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------------------|
|              | No       | Wt/g     | No       | Wt/g      | No         | Wt/g     | No          | Wt/g      |                          |
| 0003         |          |          |          |           | 2          | 9        | 4           | 54        | Medieval?                |
| 0005         |          |          | 1        | 12        |            |          | 1           | 9         | Post-med                 |
| 0007         | 3        | 5        |          |           |            |          |             |           | L12th-14 <sup>th</sup> C |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>2</b>   | <b>9</b> | <b>5</b>    | <b>63</b> |                          |

Table 1. Finds quantities

### 6.2 The pottery

Three sherds of pottery were recovered in total from pitfill 0007 (5g). A single fragment of Early medieval ware dating to the 11th-12th centuries was identified, together with two body sherds of Medieval coarseware dating from the late 12th-14th centuries.

### 6.3 Fired clay

Two small pieces of fired clay from ditchfill 0003 are made in a fine light orange fabric with sparse red pellets and occasional chalk inclusions of varying size. This chalk-tempered fabric is likely to date to the medieval period.

### 6.4 Ceramic building material

A small fragment of fully oxidised roofing tile from pit or ditchfill 0005 is post-medieval. It is made from a medium sandy fabric with ferrous inclusions (fabric type msfe) and is abraded.

### 6.5 Human bone

The fragmentary remains of a possible human vertebra was identified in 0007 (Cathy Tester, pers. comm.).

### 6.6 Animal bone

The four fragments of animal bone from 0003 include two joining pieces of the tibia of a sheep (Justine Biddle, pers.comm.) and a fragment of pelvis.

## **7. Discussion**

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The evidence from the trial trenches has revealed a deep plough soil between 0.6 and 0.9m over sand and gravel subsoil (probably deposited by glacial meltwater during successive ice ages). Two features are of archaeological interest, ditch 0002 and pit 0006; the former is undated but the presence of briguetage and the pale colouring suggest that it may be medieval. From its alignment and location it is reasonable to suggest that it was a continuation of the line of the western boundary to the churchyard. It is not possible to say whether the churchyard was once larger or if a field boundary continued the line established behind the church. Although only a few pieces of pottery were recovered from pit 0006 these were the only pieces recovered from any trench fills; from this we can suggest that the feature can be dated by the pottery to the medieval period. The wide flattish shape is likely to indicate significant levels of truncation caused by deep ploughing and sub soiling in the area. A possible fragment of human vertebrae was disarticulated.

## **8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

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The evaluation identified two features of archaeological interest, ditch 0002 and pit 0006; while the former feature is likely to be a continuation of an extant boundary the pit appears to be evidence of settlement.

The evaluation sampled an unusually large proportion of the site amounting to c.20% of the extension area. It revealed a plough soil up to c.1m deep in places with only the base of the only dated feature, pit 0006, surviving. The Street frontage is not part of the development with the farmer retaining field access. No pottery finds were identified in the machine excavated spoil. Given the nature of the development monitoring would be a difficult option but from the substantial area evaluated it is suggested that any surviving evidence on this soil strip is slight and that extending the cemetery within the proposed boundary would offer no serious threat to archaeological remains. It is therefore suggested that no further work is required in this area.

## **9. Archive deposition**

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds.

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\I Market Weston\ MKW 017.

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds. Parish boxes.

## **10. Acknowledgements**

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The fieldwork was carried out by Andrew Tester and Phil Camp, who drove the machine kindly provided by David Sarson. Andrew Tester managed the project and wrote the report with Richenda Goffin providing specialist finds advice and editing. The detailed graphics were prepared by Crane Begg.



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