

**Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Monitoring Report**

SCCAS Report No. 2006/052

SMR- FNN 014

Oasis ID No. suffolkc1-13942

Land Adjacent to Drivers Farm, Finningham (Plot 2)

Planning Application No. 1472/03 (Plot 2 only)

Robert Atfield: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Report)
Robert Carr: Senior Archaeological Officer (Conservation)(Brief and Specification)
John Newman: Field Officer/Contracts Manager

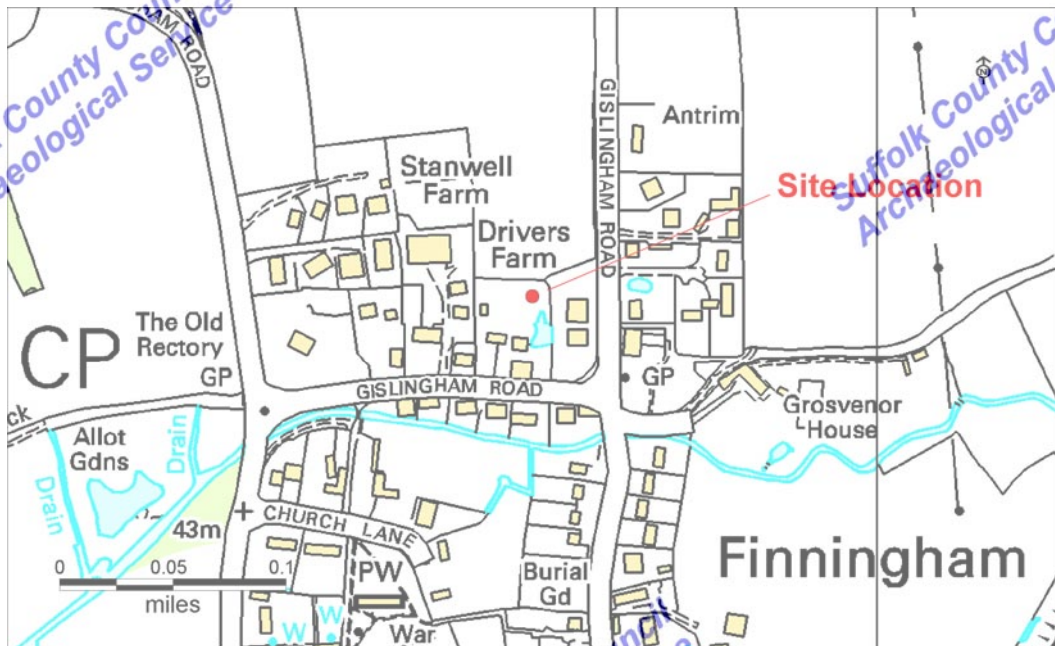
Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out as a condition of PPG16 planning application 1472/03 at the above location, which is centred on TM 0674 6960. The development would consist of two dwellings with accompanying garages situated to the north of Drivers Farm. The farmhouse is a Grade II listed timber-framed building dating to the mid-sixteenth century. Plot 2 is located within the north-east corner of the site and is owned by Jacky Rowntree and Keith Maddock who are funding the archaeological monitoring. The site was visited on the 24th March and 7th April. The first visit enabled the site to be viewed after undergrowth and debris had been cleared, along with some of the topsoil. The second visit allowed full inspection of the completed footing trenches, which had been dug using a light 360° tracked digger. Two features were observed and recorded within the trenches, a probable ditch which appeared to run west to east and a deep pond-like deposit within the southern area of plot 2 (see location plan overleaf). No finds were recovered from the features or general site area.

Introduction

The site lies within the probable medieval historic core of the settlement and is less than 150m. from the church and churchyard (Carr: 2005). Plot 2 lies north of an irregularly shaped pond, which respects the eastern boundary of the farm. The ground surface contours are generally gently undulating except for the extreme north-west corner where a hollow with a depth of around one metre is located. The site has topsoil consisting of dark grey clayey loam of variable depth, while the sub-soil is of heavy clay ranging from pale brown to grey in colour. The 1880 Ordnance Survey Map indicates that some of the boundaries of the site may have undergone relatively recent change. Plot 2 appears to have once formed part of much larger wooded

meadow, extending into a narrow strip further to the north. However, the eastern and southern edges of the pond continue to provide a south-eastern limit to the site.



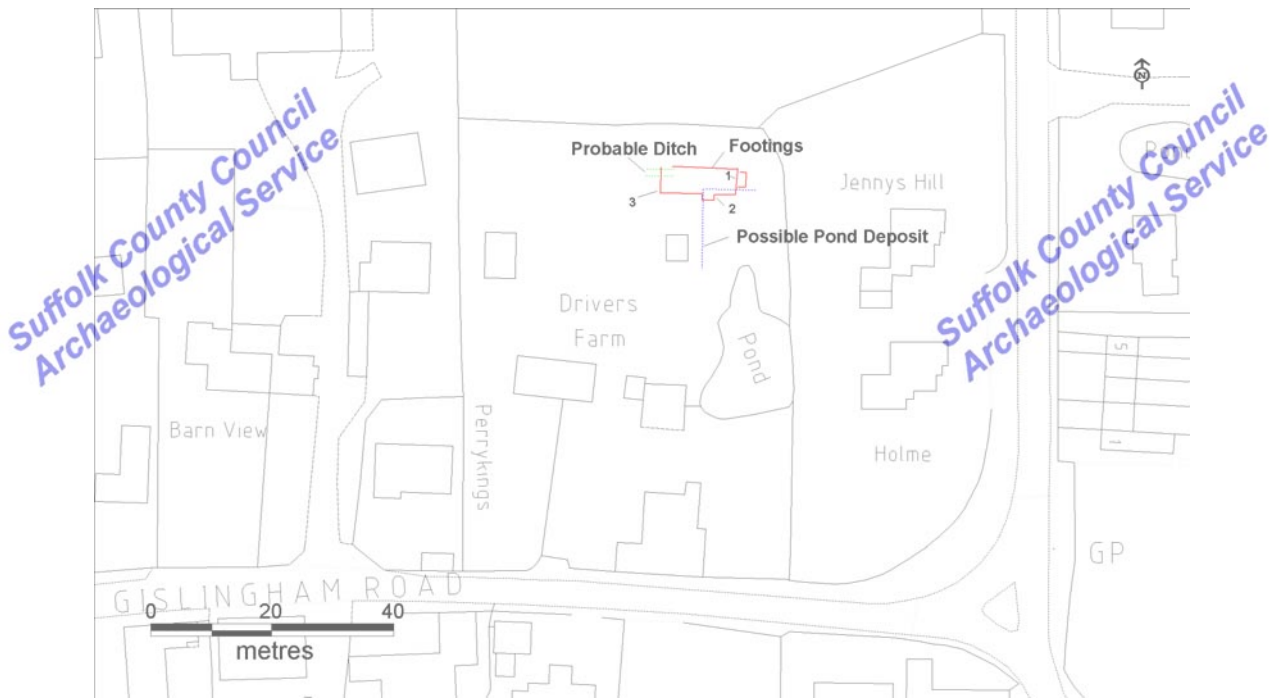
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Methodology

A sketch plan was prepared on site to enable the location of the footing trenches, along with any features and specific soil variations to be plotted. The footing trenches provided a reasonably representative impression of the soil profiles within the site. Measurements and soil characteristics were recorded at three locations (indicated by Nos. 1-3 overleaf). All of the upcast soil from the trench digging remained available for inspection on site allowing a thorough search for any datable finds. The two features which were observed were recorded in section using sketches, fill descriptions and measurements.

Conclusion

The two features, which were observed within the footings, may relate to an additional pond, to that which still survives to the south, or alternatively the pond originally covered a much larger area. If the latter possibility is accepted, it could even suggest that the feature had characteristics more associated with a moat. The probable ditch feature was briefly observed on the surface by the owner of the site to the west of the footings. This was during ground clearance and levelling shortly before being covered by aggregate. This information, together with what could be seen in the trenches suggest that the ditch ran west to east towards the hollow within the north-east corner of the site. It therefore may possibly have originally fed another pond or larger feature at the eastern edge of the site. The ditch feature was wide and almost semicircular in profile, measuring 2.20m. in width and 0.90m. deep. It had three fills, the lower fill was dark brown silty clay to a maximum depth of 0.30m.; the central fill, also around 0.30m. deep, was of orange-brown clay. The upper fill of grey clayey loam had a maximum depth of 0.20m. The feature could not be seen on



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the surface to the east of the footing trench due to a general covering of brown clay and loam across this area. Unfortunately no finds were found in association with this feature.

The second feature consisted of a deep pond-like deposit 2.00m. deep which was partially revealed within the south-eastern area of the footings. The bulk of the fill consisted of a complex mixture of silty clays which were interleaved in structure and varied in colour from dark brown at the base, through pale brown, mid-brown and finally grey with red flecks. The upper 0.30m. of fill was grey clayey loam in common with the rest of the site area. The extent of the feature could only be estimated within the immediate area of the footings, but the edge did not appear to extend any further north than the southernmost line of the footings. In profile, the base of the feature appeared to rise steeply with concave sides as it extended to the north and west, however, further to the east, the limits of the feature became far less clear. The possibility that this deposit represents an earlier margin to the pond which lies further south remains unresolved; once again, no finds were recovered from the feature. The shape of the existing pond does not appear to differ greatly from that shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map which suggests that there is little progressive natural reduction in area taking place. Another consideration is that the existing timber framed house, which was probably constructed within the old boundaries of the site, may have required large quantities of clay to be extracted and processed close by.

In conclusion, it is possible to suggest that the orientation and character of the two features indicate a contemporaneous relationship with surviving medieval features from the surrounding settlement. After considering the results of the monitoring fieldwork Robert Carr has been able to suggest ways in which the findings may be integrated within the context of the medieval settlement:

“The recorded features are consistent with enclosures and land use on the same axes as the road system and housing layout of the settlement; although without dating from finds they are probably medieval in origin and likely to be property boundaries or related to boundaries (i.e. the pond is not a boundary, but seems to be at right angles to the roadway). The absence of occupation debris makes the presence of adjacent medieval and post-medieval settlement or dwellings in the immediate adjacent area unlikely and seems to confirm the impression that this area is towards the rear of a medieval enclosure or toft fronting the road and serving Drivers Farm (mid sixteenth century) and possible predecessors” (Robert Carr: Pers.Comm. April 2006).

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April 2006

References

Carr, R. 2005 ‘Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring: Land adjacent to Drivers Farm, Finningham’ SCCAS, Bury St Edmunds.