

70 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds
BSE 422

Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2013/031

Client: E. E. Mortimer

Author: Andrew Tester

March 2013

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70 NORTHGATE STREET
BURY ST EDMUNDS
BSE 422

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SCCAS Report No. 2013/031

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HER Information

Site Code: BSE 422
Site Name: 70 Northgate Street
Report Number 2013/031
Planning Application No: SE/12/0212
Date of Fieldwork: February 2013
Grid Reference: TL8549 6502
Oasis Reference: 1-143541
Curatorial Officer: Abby Antrobus
Project Officer: Andrew Tester
Client/Funding Body: E. E. Mortimer
Client Reference: QB12-073

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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: 2013

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Summary

Evaluation trenching and the monitoring of footings were carried out on land behind 70 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. The site lies almost next to the site of the medieval North Gate. Evidence was uncovered of recent light industrial use, which cut a horizon of redeposited clay with gravel below. This layer may have been a demolition deposit from buildings that were located close to the North Gate. It may also have been a deliberate attempt to raise the ground level on the edge of the floodplain. Beneath this layer was a buried medieval soil with some evidence of medieval features below including a probable gravel quarry pit. Few finds were recovered from the site and it seems likely that despite the medieval activity demonstrated by the cut features, occupation in this area of the town was not dense.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of the construction of a house on land behind 70 Northgate Street on Etna Road. The evaluation was a condition on planning application SE/12/0211 and the work was carried out according to a Brief and Specification prepared by Dr Abby Antrobus of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team. Due to the limited space on the site, because there were outbuildings requiring demolition, it was agreed that the work would take place once the site was opened up. Following the results of the trenching it was agreed between the planning archaeologist and the client that a monitoring would be carried out immediately following the evaluation allowing footing trenches and services to be excavated and that the results should appear in a single report.

2. Geology and topography

The site is situated c.120m to the west of the River Lark, close to the confluence with the Tayfen, which feeds the river from the west. Historically this area has been subject to flooding and the underlying soils consist of sand and gravels.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The site lies just over 20m to the east of the medieval North Gate of Bury St Edmunds, which was seen recently during the refurbishment of the Victorian brick drains that ran through the centre of the gate, BSE 069 (Fig.1). Other selected sites from the HER include:

BSE 016. A monitoring by Dr Stanley West recorded a section across the town bank.

BSE 137. An evaluation trench uncovered part of the town ditch at Tayfen House including part of the town wall, which had been pushed in.

BSE 0138. The underground course of Tayfen Water is plotted where it runs along the line of the old town ditch. Tayfen Water followed the course of the ditch west of the roundabout at the bottom of Station Hill and Ipswich Road (also see Pl. 1).

The site lies within the medieval town just to the east of Northgate Street, one of the main arteries into the town along the Lark valley from Icklingham and Mildenhall. Little excavation work has taken place in this area although Nos. 89-90 Northgate Street is a

surviving late medieval timber-framed property. An approximate location of the site has been superimposed over Thomas Warren's map of 1747 (Pl. 1); this seems to suggest that the site was behind the junction of properties that fronted onto a trackway(?) towards the floodplain of the River Lark and Northgate Street. Both streets were rebuilt in the 19th century with Etna Road replacing the trackway with houses on both sides and the site fronting onto Etna Road.

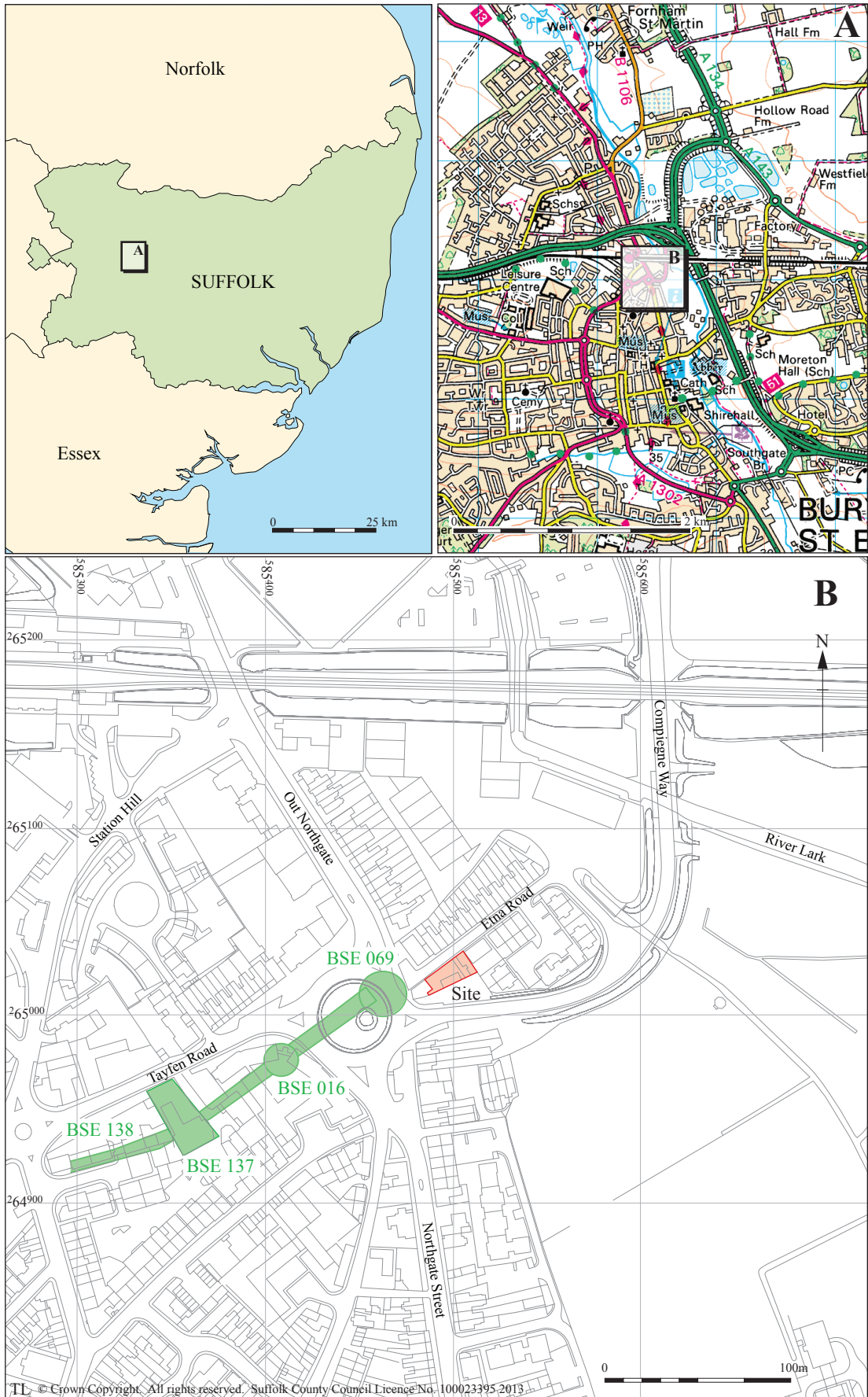
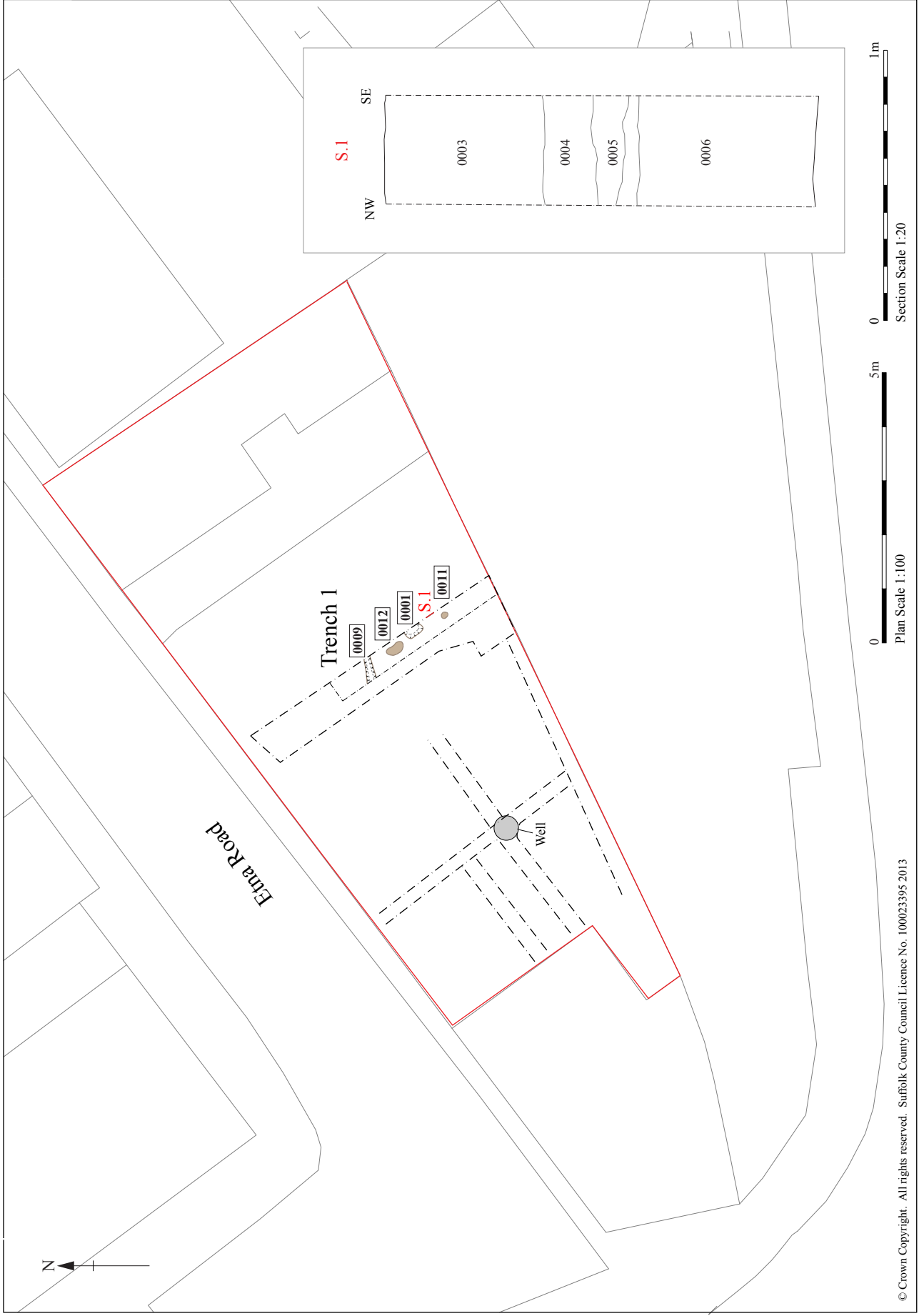


Figure 1. Location of site and Historic Environment Record entries (green)



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Figure 2. Plan of Trench 1 with section and location of monitored footing trenches

4. Methodology

The site was formerly built over with light industrial buildings and it was agreed between the planning archaeologist, Dr Abby Antrobus, and the developer that evaluation trenching should follow the site clearance allowing clear access to undertake fieldwork. It was agreed that an east-west trench would be excavated across an area of the site designated in the plan for car parking in order to investigate the possibility of medieval defences surviving in this area. Following the site clearance a 1.2m bucket was used to excavate a trench 0.8m deep. This revealed an extensive build-up of soil and exposed a made layer of clay over much of the site; in order to allow access to the trench it was widened slightly and a 0.6m bucket was used to expose the natural silt and gravel while allowing the safe examination of the lower trench at c.1.6m. The trench location was recorded using a TST, a plan of the lower trench recorded at a scale of 1:50 and a representative section drawn at a scale of 1:20. A single context recording system was employed and digital photographs taken of the trench. Due to the depth of the archaeology and the presence of archaeological features at the base of the trench it was decided not to excavate a second trial pit but to monitor the footing trenches as they were excavated.

Approximately 75% of the footings were monitored during excavation and recorded photographically (Fig. 2). Footing trenches that were not seen ran alongside Etna Road, where there were services, and the north south footing at the east end of the new building which was parallel to the evaluation trench.

5. Results

5.1 Trench results

Trench 1

A trench 5.5m long and 1.2m wide was excavated from north to south across the site (Fig.1, Pl. 1). The initial excavation was to a depth of c.0.6-0.7m. This exposed a surface of mixed redeposited clay, 0004, with a layer of redeposited natural orange silt 0005 beneath, which were up to 0.4m thick in places and cut by various later 19th and 20th century features including pits and a modern drain at the north end of the trench. Of particular interest were two lime-filled features: a concrete lined 'tank' 0007, which was 1.6m in length and c.1m wide and at least 0.4m deep, which was filled with lime but included several animal bones including two horn cores, 0008 (Pls. 2 and 3); a second, smaller tank, 0013, was visible extending c.0.5m into the trench from the south end that was 0.6m wide and c.0.4m deep.

Following the cleaning of the trench surface it was widened and a deeper section was dug. The resultant trench was 3.75m in length and c.1.6m in depth, and measured 0.6m wide to the base of the archaeological level. It was recorded in plan (Fig. 2) with a representative sample section.

Section 1

Section 1 (Fig. 2, Pl. 5) comprised 0.6m of mixed dark soil containing 19th and 20th century remains (0003); this overlay 0.2m of mixed yellow and green clay with occasional burnt fragments, 0004, over 0.1 to 0.2m of orange sand and gravel with intermittent clay at the base, 0005. Below this was a layer of green brown gravel and silt, 0006, which extended to the top of the natural subsoil of orange gravel and sand. Several features and possible features were visible on the surface of the natural and these are described from south to north. Feature 0011 which measured 0.25m x 0.2m had a pale green brown fill, similar to the base of the overlying soil 0006. It was only 0.15m deep. A possible posthole or small pit 0001 was c.0.75m long and approximately 0.4m wide; it was 0.2m deep and filled with a green brown soil 0002 similar to the overlying soil. A similar but slightly darker feature was located 0.25m north of this 0012; it was unclear at what depth this was cut from but the fill was similar to 0002 in

appearance. A small possible ditch, 0009, 0.25m deep and 0.5m wide, was located to the north. The fill, 0010, was of an orange red gravel and silt; this was close in colour to the natural with little if any organic fill. It was cut from below or close to the base of the soil layer 0006. The north end of the trench was inaccessible due to an active foul drain.

Monitoring

Figure 2 shows the monitored footing trenches. The evidence from the monitoring was consistent with that from the evaluation trench. The south wall footing was c.1.6m deep to the top of gravel with a large pit at the west end, which was c.2.2m deep from the ground surface (Pl. 6). The trench was too deep and unstable to access but revealed an homogenous green brown fill, similar to that from layer 0006 in the evaluation trench. No finds were observed during the excavation. Where two footings crossed there was a well dating to c.19th-20th century, which was backfilled (Pl. 7). Over the rest of the footings mixed post-medieval soils overlaid a green brown buried soil. The clay layer, 0004, from Trench 1 was intermittent across the site and there was evidence of concentrated burning in some of the clay, which may perhaps be indicative of light industrial usage.

Plates



Plate 1. Evaluation trench to the top of the clay, 0004. Intercutting later post medieval features and a modern drain in the foreground facing south



Plate 2. Evaluation trench to the top of the clay, 0004. Concrete tank 0007 in the foreground facing north



Plate 3. Tank 0007 cut through clay 0004 facing east. Scale bars at 0.5m



Plate 4. Lower trench looking north with feature 0001 in the centre. Scale bars at 0.5m

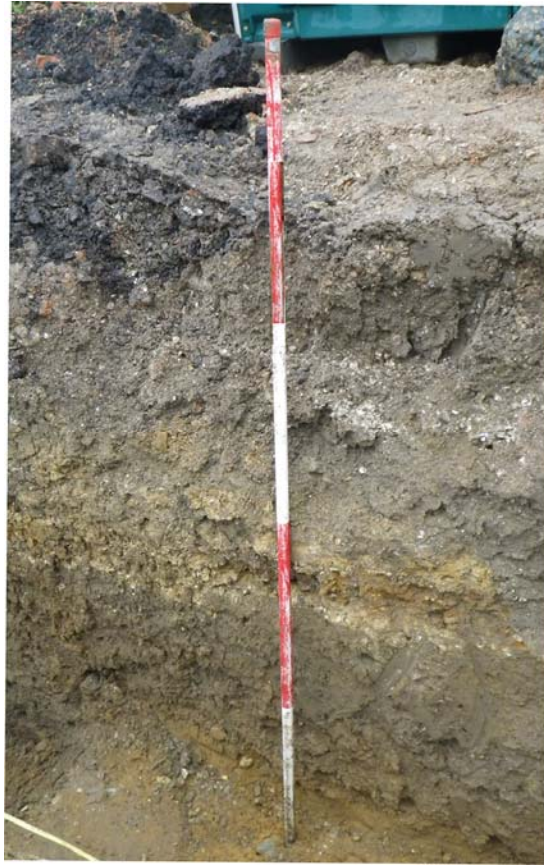


Plate 5. Section 1 showing clay and gravel over medieval soil (?) and natural gravel and sand. 2m scale



Plate 6. South wall footing trench at 1.6m with a possible medieval quarry pit 0014 at 2.2m and partially under water in the foreground facing north.



Plate 7. Junction of footings over late –post-medieval well,(beneath the plank) with green brown soils over gravel.

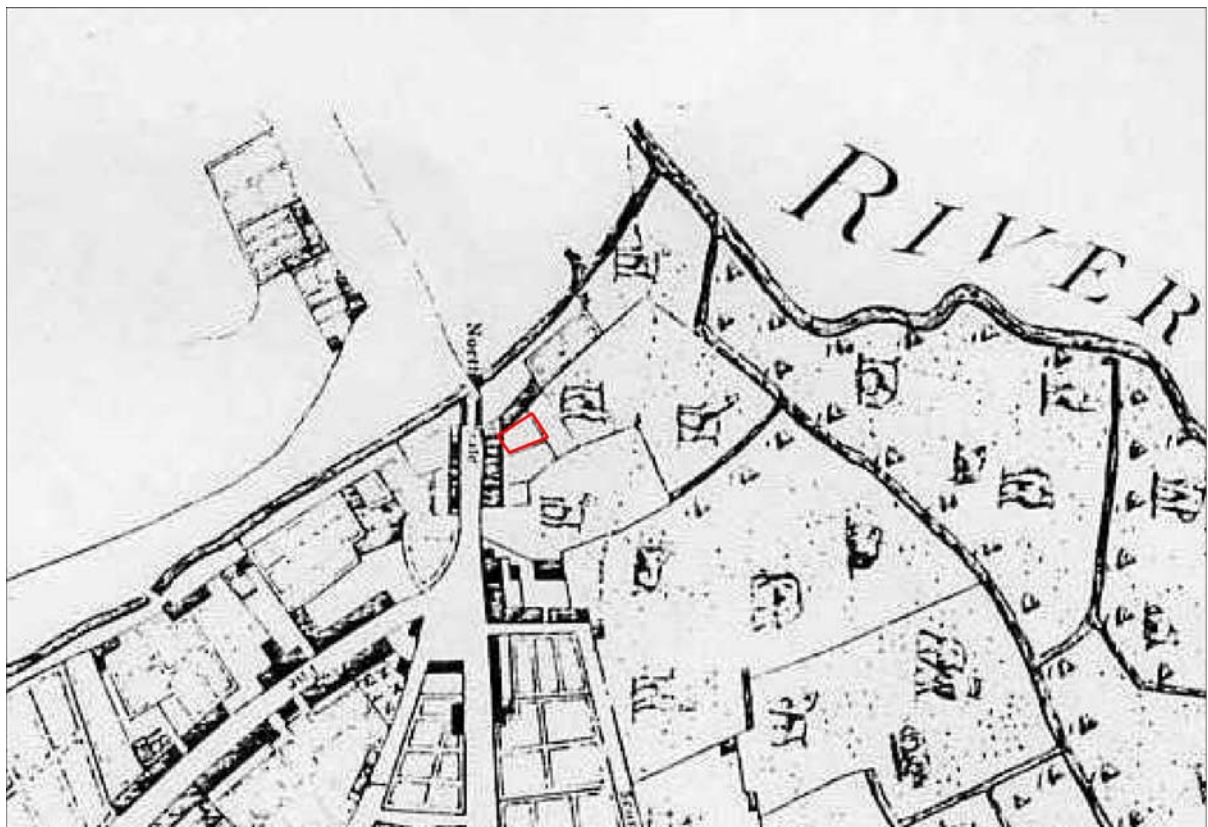


Plate 8. Approximate site of plot imposed on the 1747 Warren map of Bury St Edmunds also showing the old North Gate and Tayfen feeding into the River Lark. The site is suggested be a field at the backs of several small buildings.

6. Finds and environmental evidence

Andy Fawcett

6.1 Introduction

Finds were recovered from two contexts, layer 0006 and pit fill 0008. They consisted of small quantities of pottery (2 sherds @ 17g), mortar (1 fragment @ 3g) and animal bone (9 pieces @ 777g). The finds are briefly described below.

6.2 The Pottery

Medieval

Two body sherds of slightly abraded medieval pottery were recorded in layer 0006. The first of these is a Bury sandy ware (BSW) dated from the late 12th to 14th century. It has dark grey surfaces with a brown core and contains ill-sorted quartz. The second sherd is a possible Bury glazed ware (BGW) dated from around the 13th to 14th century. Although the sherd is slightly heat-affected, the remnants of a green glaze can be seen on one surface. The fabric appears light grey (with possible red margins) and has a slight grey core. It contains ill sorted quartz alongside silver mica and sparse (?iron rich) grog.

6.3 Mortar

A small and abraded fragment of mortar (3g) was recorded in layer 0006. It has a reduced, medium sandy fabric and contains ill-sorted quartz sand with sparse lime.

6.4 Faunal Remains

Identified by Justine Biddle

The animal bone assemblage was recovered from a late post-medieval lime pit and the fragments correspondingly have suffered considerable wear on their surfaces. The group is almost entirely made up of cow bone pieces. These include fragments of pelvis, radius, skull, atlas (first vertebrae), metacarpal and horn core. Of these only the radius and vertebra show signs of chopping as a result of carcass dismemberment; the radii were perhaps utilised for bone marrow extraction. Two fragments of sheep bone are also present within the group, a radius and a mandible.

7. General Discussion

The evaluation and monitoring has demonstrated that natural sands and gravels occurred at c.1.5-1.7m below the present ground surface. This was overlain by dark green/brown silt that was up to 0.6m thick. Very little of this was hand excavated but the bulk of soil that was seen contained few finds. Several features were observed cutting the natural and were infilled with this material; in particular there was a very large pit 0014 at the east end of the south wall footing trench (Pl. 6); the uniform fill, similar to the overlying soil, leads to the suggestion that it was primarily an extraction pit, probably for gravel to be used in construction or road building during the medieval period which became infilled with topsoil. The North Gate and town wall were very close to the site and both would have required flint and sand. This interpretation is consistent with what is known of areas of terrace alongside Cotton Lane and elsewhere on the Lark floodplain within the town where gravels were extracted for the many stages of building over several centuries at the Abbey and other building works throughout the town.

Features in the base of the deeper evaluation trench hint at other activities although there were few finds from the site, which suggests that it may have not been a heavily populated or wealthy area of the town. The early soil was sealed over much of the trench by dump layers of gravel and clay. The clay layer was directly overlain or cut by various post-medieval features. This could represent an attempt to reclaim land on the edge of the floodplain or it may have been a side effect from the clearance of a building site. Above these layers were various pits of 19th century date; of particular interest was pit 0007 that was lined with concrete, and therefore built after c.1870, and filled with lime. Within the pit were several horn cores. Although much earlier in date, being medieval, the association of lime pits with horn cores has been made at 40 Peckham Street in Bury St Edmunds, (Gill 2012). Horn cores can be a waste product of leather working, where the hides were often sold with hooves and horns attached to tanners, or horn workers, where the horners removed the horn and discarded the waste themselves; equally it could simply represent butchery waste. Lime mortar was used quite generally in building up at least until the Second World War and the appearance of concrete to make a trough in which to prepare building lime should not be surprising given its quick drying and waterproof qualities.

8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The results of the evaluation and monitoring suggest that the area may have been marginal land during the medieval period although there is some evidence for gravel extraction. Concentrated light industrial use is evidenced from recent times in the upper 0.5m of trenches with 19th and 20th century features. There was no evidence of the medieval town defences which are likely to be further to the north and closer to the site of Tayfen. No further work is recommended for this site.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\
Archive\Bury St Edmunds\BSE422 Evaluation

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\
Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos.

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork and report writing was carried out by Andrew Tester. Finds processing and analysis was undertaken by Andy Fawcett who also produced the specialist finds report; additional specialist advice was provided by Justine Biddle and Richenda Goffin.

The report illustrations were created by Gemma Adams and the report was edited by Richenda Goffin.

11. Bibliography

Gill, D., 2012, *Excavations at 40 Peckham Street, Bury St Edmunds, BSE 353*, Post-excavation Assessment, SCCAS Report 2012/052



Economy, Skills and Environment
9–10 The Churchyard, Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 1RX

Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation

AT

70 NORTHGATE STREET, BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK

PLANNING AUTHORITY:	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:	SE/12/0211
HER NO. FOR THIS PROJECT:	To be arranged
GRID REFERENCE:	TL 854 650
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:	Erection of dwelling/commercial extension/car parking
AREA:	Small
CURRENT LAND USE:	190 sq m
THIS BRIEF ISSUED BY:	Abby Antrobus Archaeological Officer Conservation Team Tel.: 01284 741241 E-mail: abby.antrobus@suffolk.gov.uk
Date:	24 May 2012

Summary

1.1 Planning permission has been granted with the following condition (Condition **) relating to archaeological investigation:

‘No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work has been secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.’

1.2 The archaeological contractor must submit a copy of their Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) or Method Statement, based upon this brief of minimum requirements (and in conjunction with our standard Requirements for Trenched Archaeological Evaluation 2011 Ver 1.1), to the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council’s Archaeological Service (SCCAS/CT) for scrutiny; SCCAS/CT is the advisory body to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on archaeological issues.

- 1.3 The WSI should be approved before costs are agreed with the commissioning client, in line with Institute for Archaeologists' guidance. Failure to do so could result in additional and unanticipated costs.
- 1.4 Following acceptance, SCCAS/CT will advise the LPA that an appropriate scheme of work is in place. The WSI, however, is not a sufficient basis for the discharge of the planning condition relating to archaeological investigation. Only the full implementation of the scheme, both completion of fieldwork and reporting (including the need for any further work following this evaluation), will enable SCCAS/CT to advise the LPA that the condition has been adequately fulfilled and can be discharged.
- 1.5 The 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. If the approved WSI is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected.

Archaeological Background

- 2.1 No. 70 Northgate Street lies on the edge of the medieval town of Bury St Edmunds (County Historic Environment Record BSE 241), just within the North Gate of the town (BSE 069) and the line of the medieval defences. This area was occupied in the medieval period. The site is therefore one of archaeological potential. Further, the possibility that part of the defensive wall/bank/ditch of the town runs under the site should be borne in mind. The projected line of the defence, as shown on Warren's map of 1747, would appear to run along a watercourse to the north of the site (and hence outside it), but it has never been fully characterised in this part of the town (BSE 069).

Planning Background

- 3.1 There is high potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed by this development. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 3.2 The Planning Authority was advised that any consent should be conditional upon an agreed programme of work taking place before development begins in accordance with PPS 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment* (Policy HE 12.3) to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets (that might be present at this location) before they are damaged or destroyed.

Fieldwork Requirements for Archaeological Investigation

The site should be cleared to ground level only until archaeological evaluation has been undertaken. There should be no grubbing out of foundations etc or below ground disturbance.

- 4.1 A linear trenched evaluation is required of the development area to enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified.
- 4.2 Trial Trenching is required to:
 - Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.

- Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
 - Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.
 - Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.
- 4.3 Further evaluation could be required if unusual deposits or other archaeological finds of significance are recovered; if so, this would be the subject of an additional brief.
- 4.4 A trial trench 10m long or trial trenches that add up to a total of 10m in length should be excavated to adequately sample archaeological deposits on the site. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.80m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated. Test pitting could also be a valid evaluation methodology. There should, however, be some N-S sampling across the site to explore the presence/absence of town defences.
- 4.5 A scale plan showing the proposed location of the trial trenches should be included in the WSI and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before fieldwork begins.
- 4.6 The evaluation exercise should include consultation of readily available documentary and cartographic information in the HER to assess past land-use of the site.

Arrangements for Archaeological Investigation

- 5.1 The composition of the archaeological contractor's staff must be detailed and agreed by SCCAS/CT, including any subcontractors/ specialists. Ceramic specialists, in particular, must have relevant experience from this region, including knowledge of local ceramic sequences.
- 5.2 All arrangements for the evaluation of the site, the timing of the work and access to the site, are to be defined and negotiated by the archaeological contractor with the commissioning body.
- 5.3 The project manager must also carry out a risk assessment and ensure that all potential risks are minimised, before commencing the fieldwork. The responsibility for identifying any constraints on fieldwork (e.g. designated status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites and other ecological considerations) rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor.

Reporting and Archival Requirements

- 6.1 The project manager must consult the Suffolk HER Officer to obtain an event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on all documentation relating to the work.
- 6.2 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared and must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for deposition in the Archaeological Service's Store or in a suitable museum in Suffolk.

- 6.3 It is expected that the landowner will deposit the full site archive, and transfer title to, the Archaeological Service or the designated Suffolk museum, and this should be agreed before the fieldwork commences. The intended depository should be stated in the WSI, for approval.
- 6.4 The project manager should consult the intended archive depository before the archive is prepared regarding the specific requirements for the archive deposition and curation (including the digital archive), and regarding any specific cost implications of deposition.
- 6.5 A report on the fieldwork and archive must be provided. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance. The results should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the Suffolk HER.
- 6.6 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given, although the final decision lies with SCCAS/CT. No further site work should be embarked upon until the evaluation results are assessed and the need for further work is established.
- 6.7 Following approval of the report by SCCAS/CT, a single copy of the report should be presented to the Suffolk HER as well as a digital copy of the approved report.
- 6.8 All parts of the OASIS online form <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be completed and a copy must be included in the final report and also with the site archive. A digital copy of the report should be uploaded to the OASIS website.
- 6.9 Where positive results are drawn from a project, a summary report must be prepared for the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*.
- 6.10 This brief remains valid for 12 months. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the brief may need to be revised and re-issued to take account of new discoveries, changes in policy and techniques.

Standards and Guidance

Further detailed requirements are to be found in our Requirements for Trenched Archaeological Evaluation 2011 Ver 1.1.

Standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14, 2003.

The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

Notes

The Institute for Archaeologists maintains a list of registered archaeological contractors (www.archaeologists.net or 0118 3 78 6446). There are a number of archaeological

contractors that regularly undertake work in the County and SCCAS will provide advice on request. SCCAS/CT does not give advice on the costs of archaeological projects.

Appendix 2- Context List

Context No	Feature No	Feature Type	Description/Interpretation	Finds	Overall Date	Env. Sample	Trench
0001	0001	pit/posthole Cut	Small pit, or posthole 0.75, appears in section so width unknown. Unknown, but cut from base or near base of medieval(?) soil 0006	No		No	
0002	0001	fill Fill	Green brown soil, similar or same as 0006. Unknown small soil sample taken but bnot very exciting	No		No	
0003		Layer	Topsoil, mixture of 19th-20th century reworked soild and features etc	No		No	
0004	0004	Layer	Layer of redeposited clay Possible levelling layer from demolition?	No		No	
0005		Layer	Layer of orange gravel redeposited with clay layer Deliberate ground build-up layer	No		No	
0006		Layer	Mid -green/brown silt gravel with occasional charcoal flecks and animal bone frag + potttery Medieval soil incorporating low level of mixed general waste, NI tile + suggest all medieval	Yes	L12th-14th C	No	
0007	0007	Pit Cut	Lime pit concrete (portland cement with some aggregate) lined and filled with thick lime.	No		No	
0008	0007	Pit Fill	Two horn cores recovered from this in dense lime Lime pit for caustic properties. Horn cores may be residue from use.	Yes		No	
0009	0009	Ditch Cut	Possible ditch at oblique angle to trench. Located at base of trench	No		No	
0010	0009	Ditch Fill	Red-brown fill, lighter than overlying soil therefore cut from below if not natural feature.	No		No	
0011	0011	Cut	Uncertain worther natural gully or cut feature but suspect latter although Slight feature possbly posthole in base of medieval soil with same fill. possible posthole	No		No	

Context No	Feature No	Feature Type	Description/Interpretation	Finds	Overall Date	Env. Sample	Trench
0012	0012	Cut	Shallow grey mark, possibly base of postholes. Filled with green brown silt. May have been cut through medieval soil but uncertain as fill similar to 0006. base of small pit or postholes	No		No	
0013	0013	Pit Cut	Tail end of lime pit cut through clay 0004 and similar to 0007 but without concrete lining and smaller. 19th century lime pit	No		No	

Archaeological services Field Projects Team

Delivering a full range of archaeological services

- Desk-based assessments and advice
- Site investigation
- Outreach and educational resources
- Historic Building Recording
- Environmental processing
- Finds analysis and photography
- Graphics design and illustration

Contact:

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www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Archaeology/