

# West Stow Lodge, West Stow WSW 085

## **Archaeological Monitoring Report**

**SCCAS Report No. 2013/087**

**Client: Mr Steve Turpie**

Author: J. A. Craven

June 2013

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## HER Information

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**Site Code:** WSW 085  
**Site Name:** West Stow Lodge  
**Report Number** 2013/087  
**Planning Application No:** SE/12/0584  
**Date of Fieldwork:** May 2013  
**Grid Reference:** TL 8191 7061  
**Oasis Reference:** 153114  
**Curatorial Officer:** Dr Abby Antrobus (SCCAS/CT)  
**Project Officer:** John Craven  
**Client/Funding Body:** Mr Steve Turpie

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.



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## Summary

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Monitoring of trenching for the construction of a new residential property at West Stow Lodge, West Stow, Suffolk, following demolition to ground-level of a former dwelling, showed, despite heavy levels of disturbance, that the plot lay on a north-facing slope. The slope possibly descended into a natural channel associated with a stream to the north and a series of alluvial silt/sand/gravel deposits was seen to extend up to a depth of up to c.1.75m below ground-level.

No finds material was seen or collected during the monitoring works to add to the fragments of human bone and sherds of medieval and Iron Age/Roman pottery identified in the earlier evaluation. This suggests they are isolated or redeposited finds, with the human bone in particular likely to have come from the adjacent medieval graveyard, there being no indication of an earlier or larger cemetery in the trenching.



## **1. Introduction**

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A continuous monitoring was carried out at West Stow Lodge, West Stow, Suffolk during the groundworks for the construction of a new residential property, following the demolition to ground-level of the former dwelling. The work was required by a condition on planning application SE/12/0584 in accordance with the NPPF and Policy HC9 (Site and Features of Archaeological Importance) of the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Replacement Local Plan.

The work was carried out to meet a Brief and Specification issued by Dr Abby Antrobus of Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (SCCAS/CT), the Archaeological Advisor to the local planning authority. The project was commissioned by Project Orange and funded by the developer, Mr Steve Turpie.

## **2. Geology and topography**

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The site lies approximately 20m north of the graveyard of St Mary's Church, West Stow, on a spur of high ground which extends into the Lark valley. Although the site had clearly seen previous landscaping associated with the pre-existing property and was broadly flat it was evident that there was a gentle slope descending from the churchyard northwards to a stream which ran from east to west through the gardens. The approximate height of the site was c.21m above OD. The site geology consists of alluvial clay, silts, sand and gravels over chalk bedrock.

## **3. Archaeological and historical background**

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The archaeological condition was originally placed on the planning consent as the site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, within the historic settlement core of West Stow and to the north of the medieval church of St Mary's (WSW 039). The site's topographic location, overlooking the Lark valley, is also of typically high potential. Find spots of prehistoric and Anglo Saxon material have been recorded within the immediate area (WSW 038) and the site was also thought to have potential for early remains relating to the church. Although the northern boundary of the churchyard appears to be

of some antiquity, and the site is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1884 as being an open field to the north of the churchyard, there are unsubstantiated claims of bones being discovered during the construction of West Stow Lodge.

Archaeological evaluation of the site (Cass 2013), prior to demolition of the existing property, was heavily limited due to physical constraints but identified a deep deposit of sandy silts, interpreted as being waterlain, under a thick garden topsoil. A small sondage excavated through this deposit recovered disarticulated human remains, animal bone and sherds of medieval and Iron Age/Roman pottery.

As groundworks for the development were likely to affect this deposit it was evident that they had the potential to disturb archaeological remains, in particular further evidence of human burials. A program of archaeological monitoring was therefore required to record all archaeological deposits which were damaged or removed by the sites development.

## **4. Methodology**

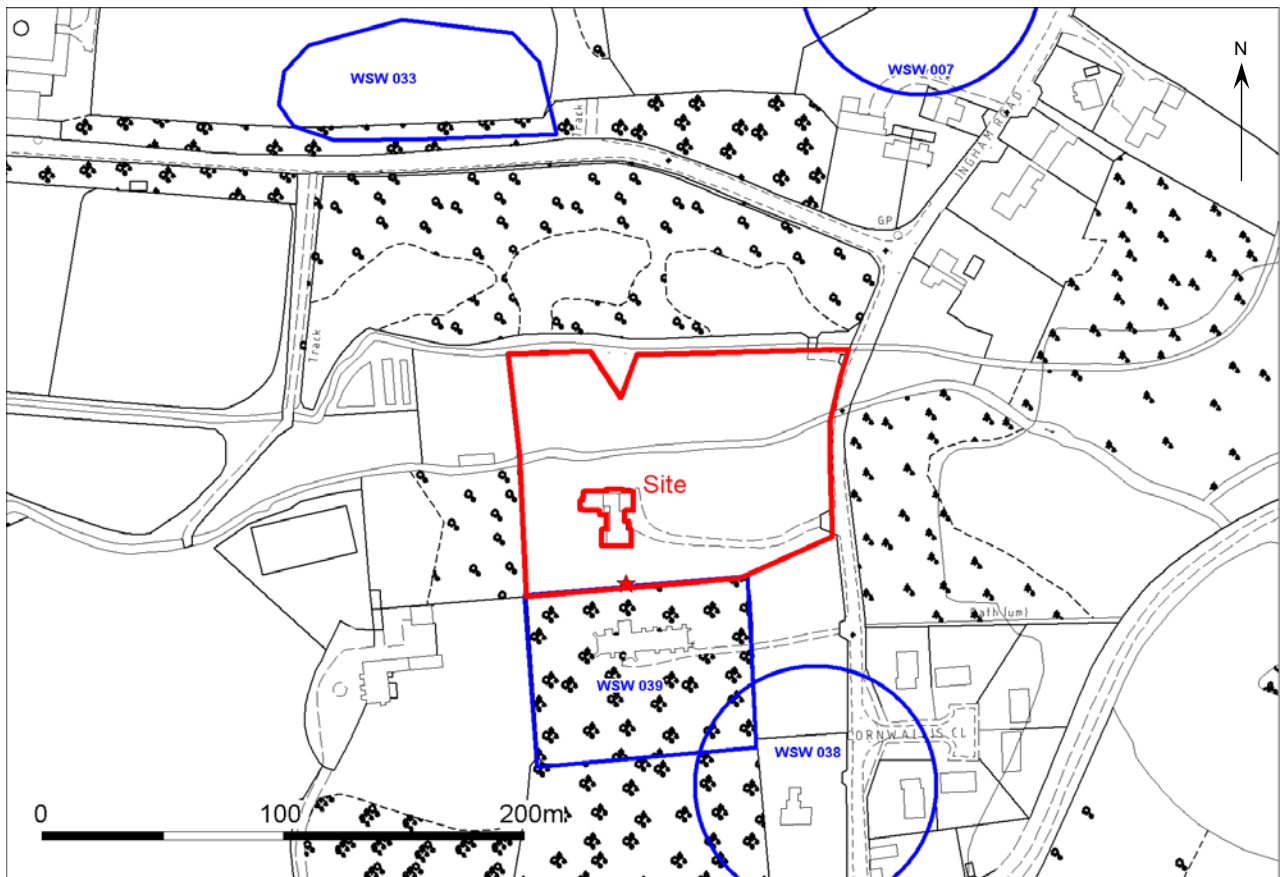
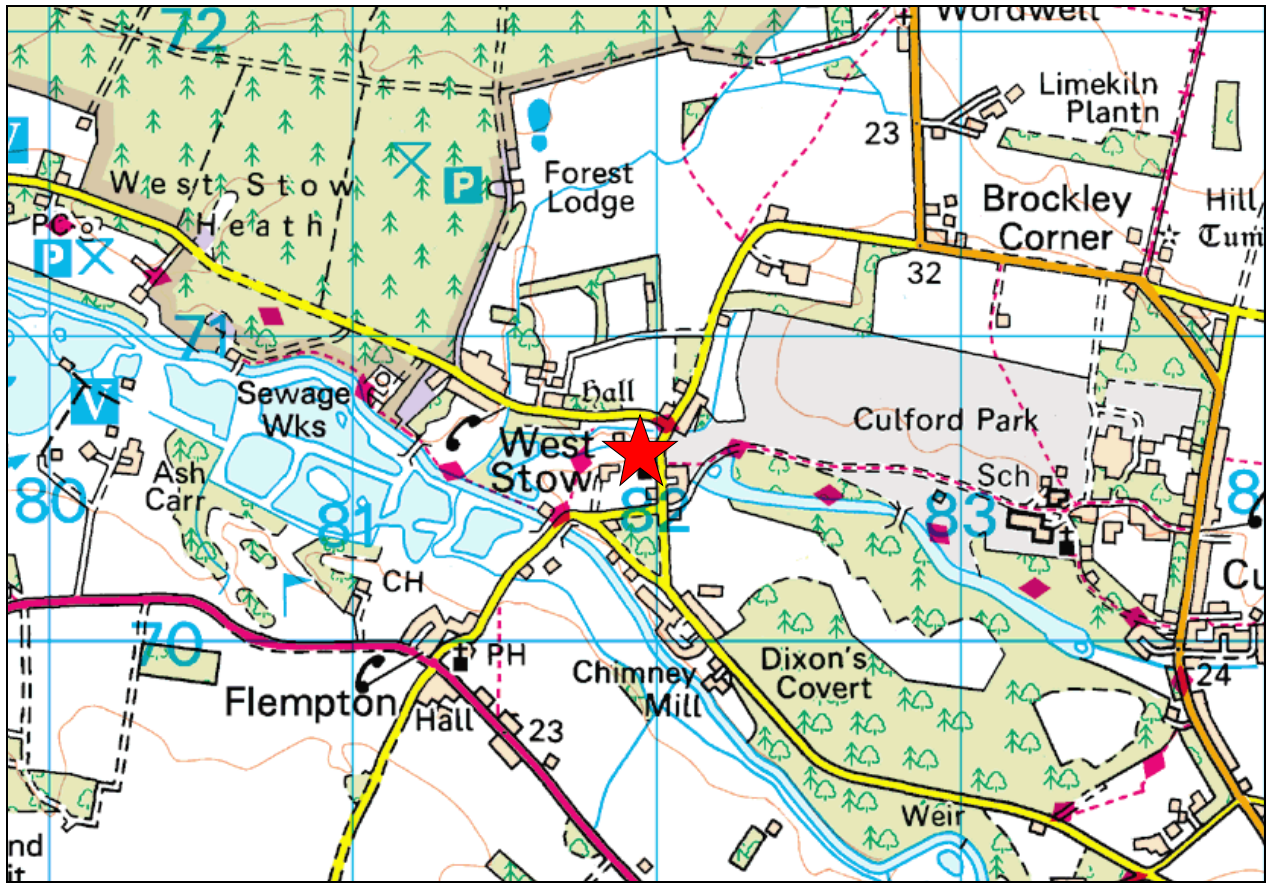
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A series of visit were made to the site from 17th-24th May 2013, after the pre-existing house had been demolished to ground-level and footings removed, during the excavation of foundation trenches for the new property.

Excavated spoil was examined for finds. Hand cleaning of trenches and features was carried out as required although access to trenches was frequently limited for safety reasons. Sections were recorded at a scale of 1:20. Digital colour photographs were taken at all stages of the fieldwork.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-153114) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>).

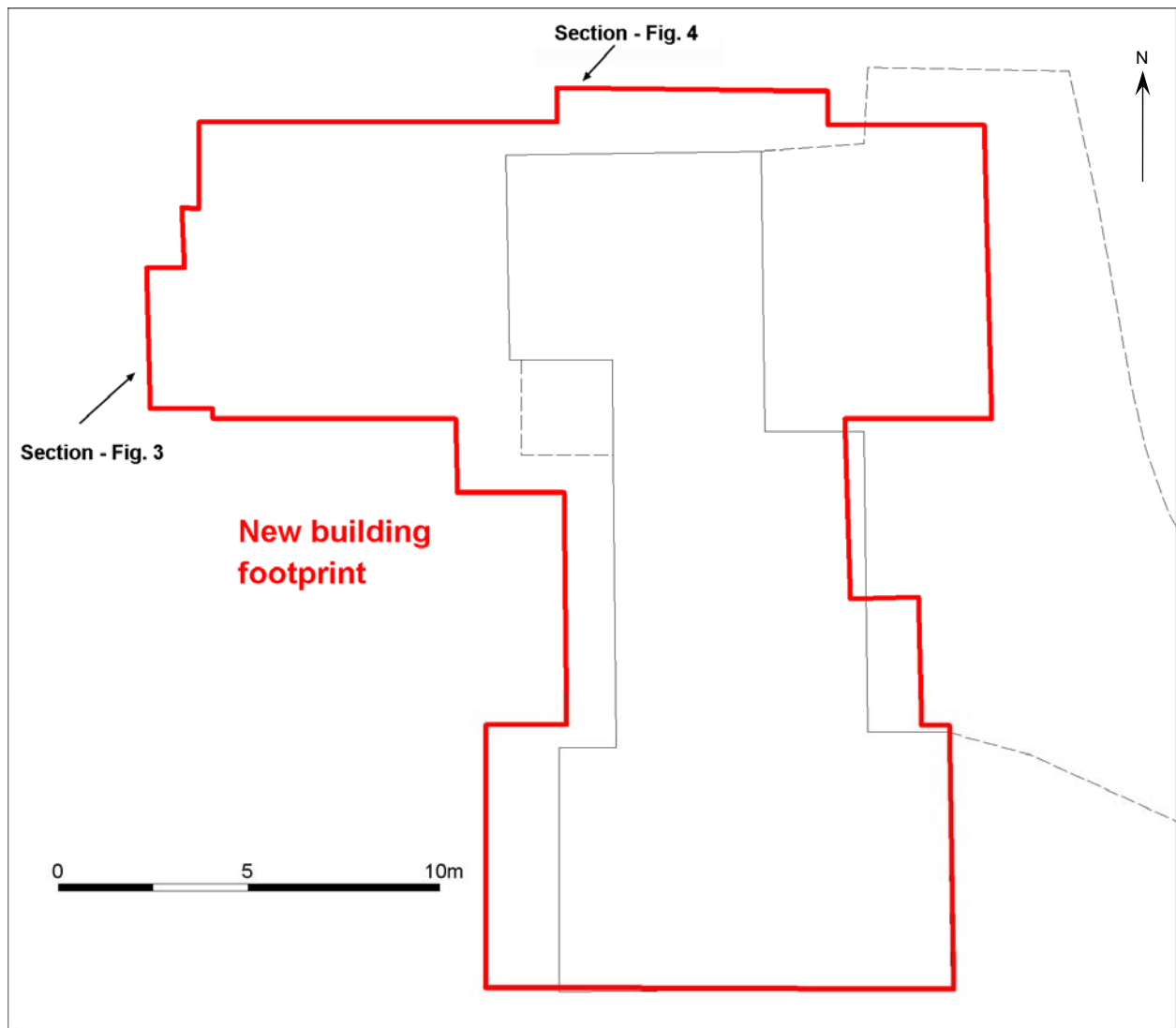
The site archive is kept in the archive store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, under HER No. WSW 085.



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 Figure 1. Location map

## 5. Results

As was expected the new footing trenches proved to be heavily disturbed to depths of up to 1.2m where they overlapped with the footprint of the former building. In the southern half of the plot this disturbance extended through to the natural subsoil, which is thought to have formerly laid c.0.8m below ground-level.



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Figure 2. Site plan

To the north the natural subsoil was seen to descend to a depth of up to c.1.75m below ground-level and, as more of the trenching lay outside of the former property footprint, this meant that some relatively intact soil profiles were observed. These profiles varied but generally showed modern deposits and topsoil overlying a series of grey, orange or brown silt/sand/gravel deposits. The northernmost 3m to 4m of the trenching showed a relatively sharp drop in the natural subsoil from c.1.1m (Fig. 3) to 1.75m, and the

accompanying development of a very dark grey/black silt/sand basal layer (Fig. 4). As this deep trenching rapidly became waterlogged the drop in the subsoil may be indicating a natural cut associated with the stream bed to the north.

No finds material was seen or collected during the monitoring works.

## **6. Discussion**

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Despite the heavy levels of disturbance the monitoring confirmed that the site lay on a north facing slope, possibly dropping into a reasonably sharply defined natural channel along the northern edge. A deep build up of soils, generally thought to be alluvial in origin, was observed across the northern half of the plot.

The absence of any further finds material suggests that the evaluation finds are isolated deposits, rather than evidence of former occupation or burial. The human bone in particular has probably been re-deposited from the nearby medieval graveyard, there being no indication of an earlier or larger cemetery.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

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The fieldwork was carried out by Simon Cass, John Craven and Andrew Tester. The project was managed by John Craven.

## **8. Bibliography**

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Cass, S., 2013, *West Stow Lodge, WSW 085, Archaeological Evaluation Report*. SCCAS Report No. 2013/018.



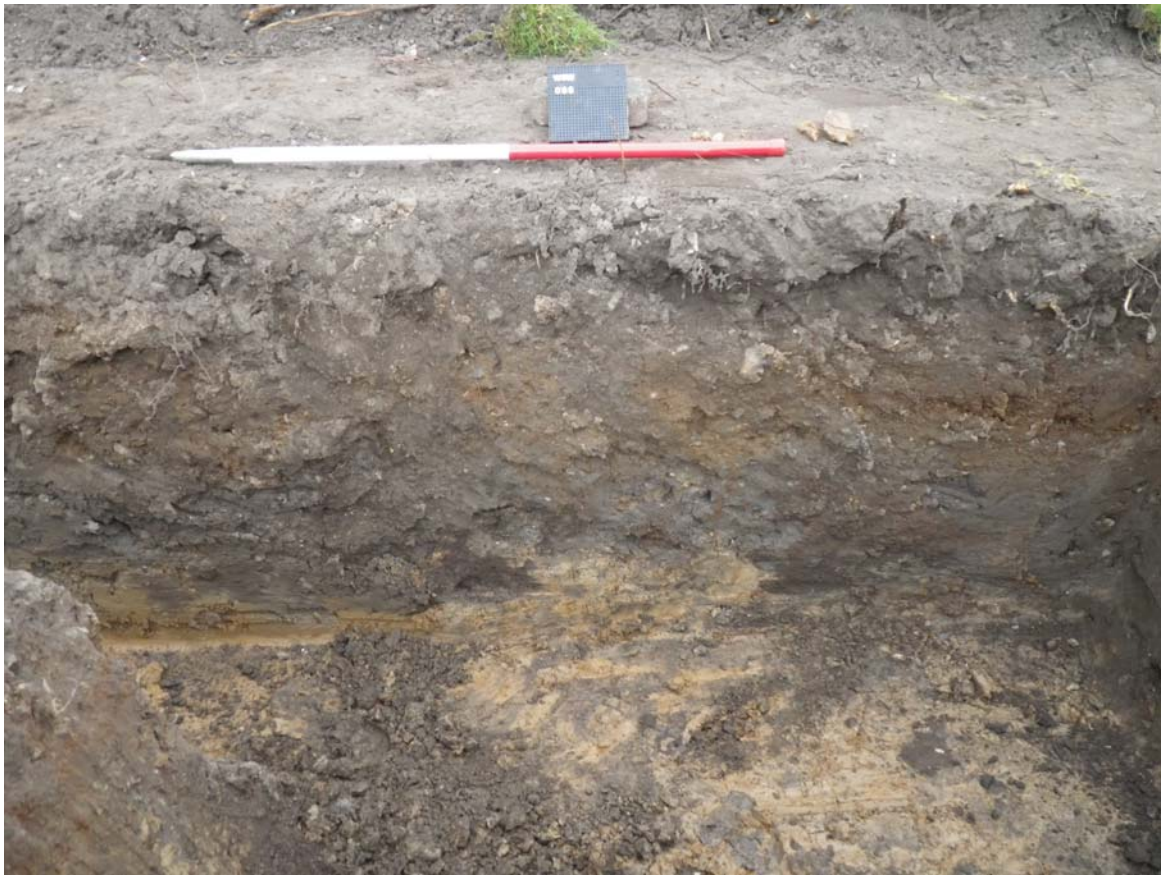


Figure 3. Soil profile on NE edge of site



Figure 4. Deep soil profile on north edge of site





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