

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

FNG 032

Site of Pear Tree House, High Road, Great Finborough

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2006
(Planning app. no. 0471/05)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Hamax Developments Ltd. and was monitored by Bob Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Division (SCCASC)).

Project assistant Phil Camps, Supervisor Rob Atfield and Project Officer Clare Good, all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team, carried out the evaluation.

Clare Good directed the project which was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

Finds processing was carried out by Gemma Adams, and Richenda Goffin compiled the specialist finds report.

Summary

Great Finborough, Site of Pear Tree House, High Road, Great Finborough. (TM 0128 5727, FNG 032).

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of the construction of a number of dwellings on the site of Pear Tree House, Great Finborough, in order to characterise the nature of any surviving archaeological deposits. The site lies on the outskirts of Great Finborough, a village at least medieval in origin, and is thought to be sited on or near the edge of a former medieval green. Three trenches were excavated over the development area, and were stripped to the level of the natural subsoil. Three pits, thought to be post medieval or modern in date were discovered in the centre of the plot, but no further archaeological evidence was revealed. No conclusive evidence to indicate the former presence of a medieval green in the area was recorded during the evaluation, though a few sherds of this date were recovered as residual finds.

(C. Good, for SCCAS and Hamax Developments Ltd.; 2006/119)

SMR information

Planning application no.	0471/05
Date of fieldwork:	25-05-2006
Grid Reference:	TM 0128 5727
Funding body:	Hamax Developments Ltd.

1. Introduction

An application has been made to construct a small number of dwellings on the site of Pear Tree House, High Road, Great Finborough. Planning consent was conditional on an archaeological evaluation being undertaken. The site is centred on TM 0128 5727 with Pear Tree House demolished and the site partially stripped on commencement of the evaluation.

The total area of development covers some 2000 square metres and lies at approximately 66m OD. The plot is flat with an underlying drift geology of heavy clay. It is surrounded by a road to the west, houses to the north and south and open farmland to the east.

The site is believed to lie across the edge of a medieval green (Carr, pers. comm.) and so has high potential for medieval settlement, including the remains of dwellings and associated deposits. Some 400m south of the development, a small background scatter of medieval pottery was recovered during fieldwalking in advance of construction of a pipeline (FNG Misc.). The village of Great Finborough is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 and so is at least medieval in origin, with a medieval parish church of St Andrew (FNG 012) still extant.

Considering the location of the site in relation to this medieval evidence, it was deemed necessary to evaluate these plots in the first instance. Due to the plot changing hands during development, a standard Brief and Specification was not prepared. However, a trench plan was produced by Bob Carr of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS) Conservation Division and the work was carried out by Clare Good of the SCCAS Field Team, funded by Hamax Developments.

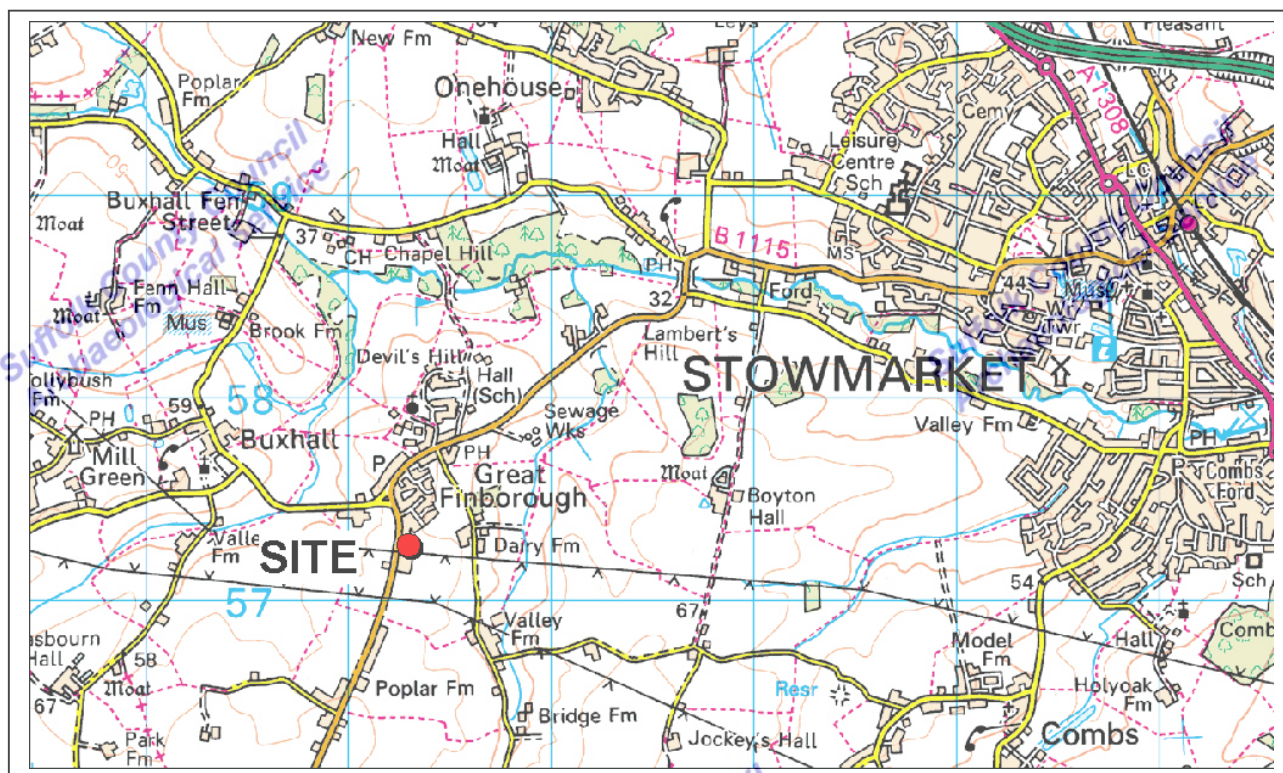
2. Methodology

Three trenches were excavated to the level of the natural subsoil in May 2006 using a wheeled JCB machine fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket. These were located across the development area in an attempt to sample as much of the plot as possible, in locations agreed by SCCAS Conservation Team (Fig. 2). A total of 85.75m in length was excavated representing a sample of approximately 6.5% of the total area, under constant supervision from the observing archaeologist.

Both the excavated topsoil and the exposed surface of the trenches were examined visually for finds and features. Where features were revealed, they were cleaned manually for definition and each allocated 'observed phenomena' (OP) numbers within a unique continuous numbering system under the SMR code FNG 032 then partially excavated in order to recover dating evidence as well as to observe their form and possibly determine any function. Sections were drawn on site at a scale of 1:20 and recorded photographically using a digital and SLR camera with a black and white film. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and their locations within the development area determined manually using measuring tapes. The site archive will be deposited in the County SMR at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

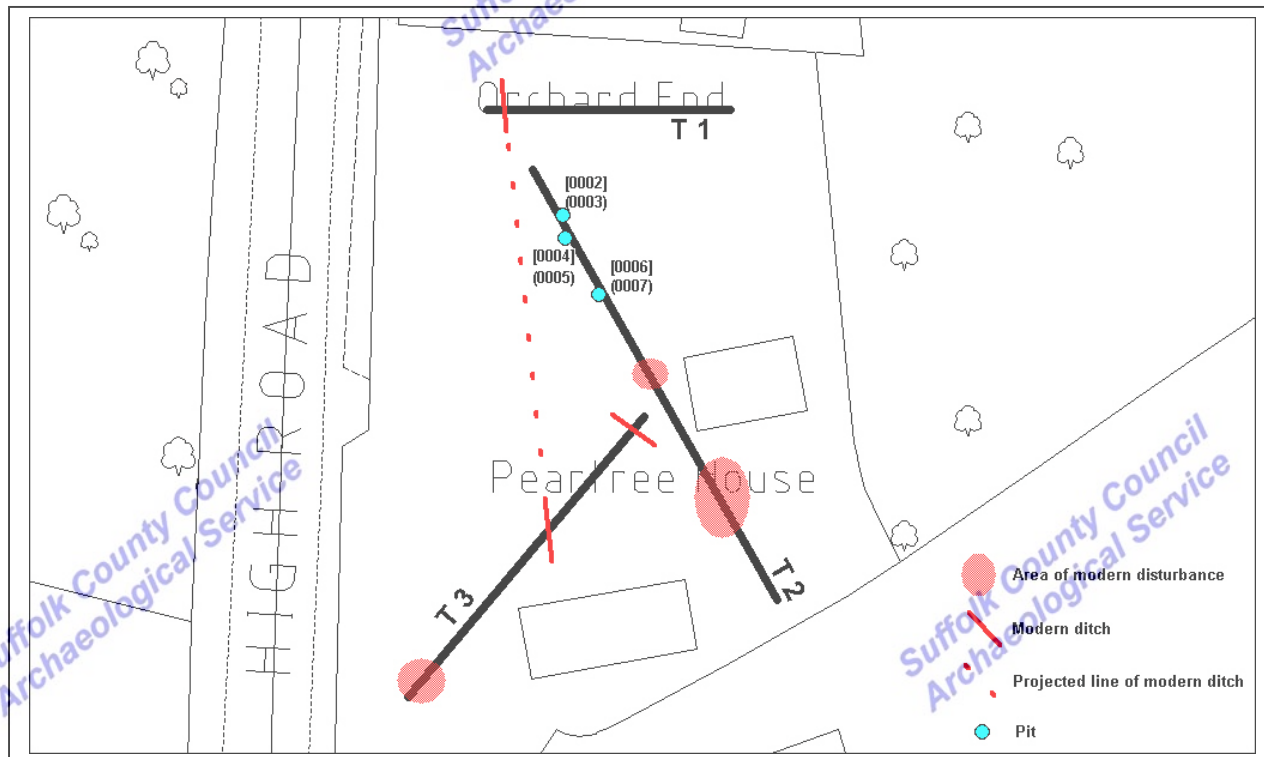
All finds were washed and marked before being quantified, identified and dated by the finds staff of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (see section 4. The Finds). Hamax Developments funded all archaeological work.

The site and subsequent results are recorded on OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the code Suffolkc1-15327.



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Figure 1: Site Location



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Figure 2: Trench and feature location plan

3. Results

Topsoil was similar over the whole site and comprised a dark brown clay. It was, on average, 0.3m deep throughout. A number of unstratified finds were recovered from this layer, including six clay pipe sherds, a number of shell fragments, seven sherds of medieval and post medieval pottery and two fragments of worked flint, probably Bronze Age in date.

Visibility in all the trenches was reasonably good throughout the evaluation, with the exception of areas of modern disturbance, due to the former property and its demolition.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 19m long. It was excavated to an average depth of c.0.3m, down to natural solid mid yellow brown clay.

A modern ditch was seen at the western end, and was 2.5m wide. Pieces of modern wire and waste were protruding from the feature, thought to be a modern soakaway. No other finds or features were seen in this trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned NW-SE and was 38.75m long. It was excavated to an average depth of c.0.3m, down to natural solid mid yellow brown clay.

Areas of modern disturbance including drainage and soakaways were visible at 17-19.5m and 24-31m. The remainder of the trench had small patches of disturbance, related to the former structure on the site.

Three pits were seen in this trench. Pit 0002 was only partially revealed in the east side of the trench, some 4m from the northern end of the trench. It was steep sided (near vertical) with a U shaped profile and was roughly 2m wide by 1m deep. It was filled by 0003, a grey/pale brown silty clay with occasional chalk lumps and occasional stones. The fill was loosely compacted and contained 17 oyster shell fragments, 13 pieces of animal bone, some iron fragments including nails and a sherd of post medieval pottery. This feature was visible through the topsoil.

Pit 0004 was also only partially revealed, in the west side of Trench 2. Its section shape was uncertain due to its location at the trench edge, but it was seen to have fairly steep sides with a flat base. It was roughly 1.8m wide by 0.9m deep and again was visible through the topsoil. It was filled by 0005, a pale grey brown heavy clay with occasional chalk flecks and lumps and occasional charcoal flecks. The fill was firmly compacted and contained a single sherd of medieval pottery, four sherds of post medieval pottery, some iron fragments and a small fragment of ceramic building material.

Pit 0006 was smaller than the others and again, only partially revealed in the west side of Trench 2. It was steep sided and shallow, with an almost flat base. It was 0.8m wide by 0.5m deep, and was visible beneath the topsoil layer. It was filled by 0007, a mixed pale brown/grey heavy clay with regular chalk lumps and occasional stones. It was firmly compacted and contained a 16th-18th century sherd of pottery and a fragment of slag.

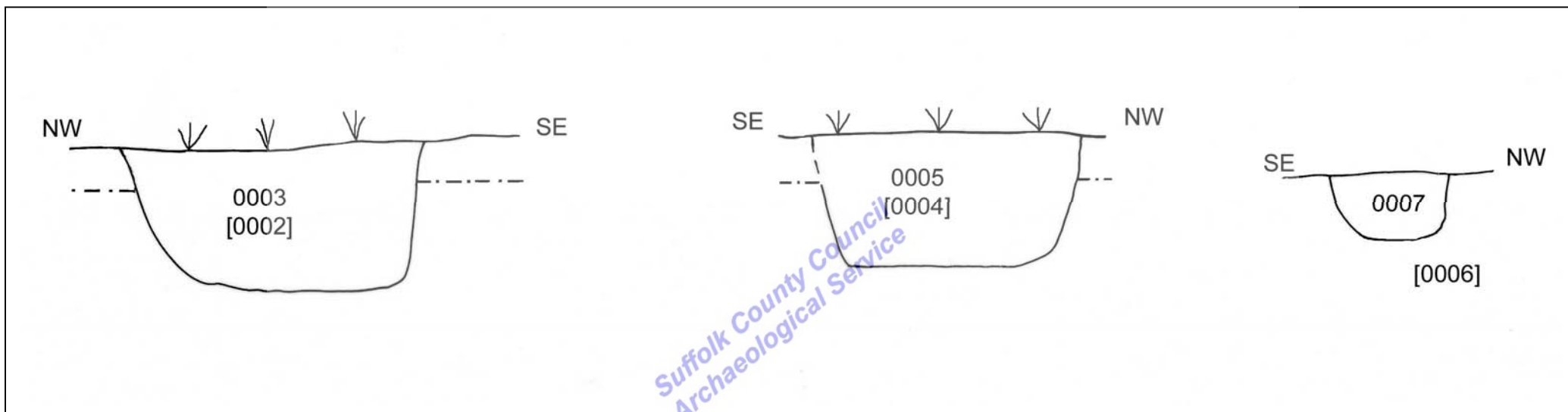


Figure 3: Sections, scale 1:40

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned NE-SW and was 28m long. It was excavated to an average depth of c.0.3m, down to mid yellow brown solid clay natural.

The same modern ditch seen in Trench 1 was through this trench also as well as a further modern ditch at the eastern end. A large area of modern disturbance was noted at the western end, with the trench extended here slightly to determine the size of this feature. However the presence of modern coal and rubbish in the feature meant this trench was abandoned at this point. No further finds or features were seen.

Again due to the plot changing hands during development, the subsequent monitoring condition imposed on the area surrounding the pits in Trench 2 was not undertaken. No further archaeological evidence was obtained from this site.

4. Finds Evidence

Richenda Goffin

Introduction

Finds were collected from four contexts, as shown in the table below.

OP	Pottery		CBM		Clay pipe		Animal bone		Miscellaneous	Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g		
0001	7	84			6	26			2 flint @ 65g, 3 shell @ 63g	Unstratified
0003	1	8	2	691			13	360	17 shell @ 176g, Fe 7 @ 143g	16th-18th C
0005	5	273	1	108					Fe 2 @ 17g	16th-17th C
0007	1	33							Slag 1 @ 8g	17th-18th C
Total	14	398	3	799	6	26	13	360		

Table 1: Finds quantities

Pottery

A total of 14 fragments of pottery were recovered from the evaluation (0.398kg). Four sherds of medieval date were identified (0.033kg), three of which were unstratified. One of these is especially thickwalled and sandy with large quartz inclusions, but is still likely to be medieval rather than earlier. The remaining three sherds are unspecified medieval coarsewares dating from the Late 12th to 14th century. The fourth fragment, a residual sherd found in the fill 0005 of a possible pit 0004, is a fine micaceous greyware, possibly a Hollesley product, dating to the 13th-14th century.

Ten fragments are post-medieval (0.366kg). The four unstratified sherds are Glazed red earthenwares and a fragment of Frechen stoneware of Late sixteenth to seventeenth century date.

Several large fragments of an abraded glazed redware jar or pipkin were found in the possible pitfill 0005. Although Glazed red earthenware, the vessel has similarities to LMT ware and may date to the sixteenth century rather than later. Glazed red earthenwares were also present in 0003 and pitfill 0007, dating from the 16th-18th century.

Ceramic building material

Three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered (0.799kg). A fragment of post-medieval roof tile was present in the possible pitfill 0003, and an abraded fragment of a post-medieval brick (LB4). A small and abraded fragment of ?brick made in a fine pale fabric with red clay pellets found in another pitfill 0005 is also post-medieval.

Clay tobacco pipe

Six pieces of clay pipe were collected as unstratified finds (0.026kg). Fragments of two decorated bowl fragments with moulded decoration dating to the first half of the 19th century were identified (Oswald 98-99). One of these has a foot with the remains of an initial (obscured) on one side.

Metalwork

A total of nine iron fragments were recovered from two contexts, 0003 and 0005. Two nails and two possible nails were present in 0003, but there were also three additional iron objects. One of these has a solid square section and is slightly tapering, whilst two other pieces are wider and thinner. One fragment may be a knife blade. Two additional nails were present in possible pitfill 0005.

Slag

A small vesicular fragment of slag was found in pitfill 0007 with an abraded sherd of post-medieval pottery.

Flint (identifications by Colin Pendleton)

Two fragments of worked flint were unstratified. One unpatinated flake has crude steep edge retouch and is Late prehistoric in date, probably Bronze Age. A second small crude flake core is of a similar date.

Animal bone

Thirteen pieces of animal bone were collected from the fill 0003 of the possible pit 0002 (0.360kg). Some of this is very fragmentary, but a pig's canine and mandible, a bovine molar, and mandible fragment were identified, and some large cattle rib fragments.

Shell

A total of 20 shell fragments were recovered. All of these were oyster shells, apart from a land mollusc present in 0003.

Discussion

This small assemblage is mainly post-medieval in date, although residual medieval pottery is present in small quantities. All three of the pits contained variants of Glazed red earthenwares, and post-medieval building material was also recovered from fills 0003 and 0005. The contents of the pits may reflect the occupation of nearby dwellings.

5. Conclusion

The three pits discovered in Trench 2 are likely to be post medieval rubbish pits. Certainly pits 0002 and 0004, visible through the topsoil and containing post medieval pottery and iron work, are thought to be relatively modern in date, with residual pottery probably from earlier occupation in the nearby village. The cottage formerly on the site is thought to date from the early 20th century, and the demolition of this limited the visibility to some degree.

Archaeological monitoring of the area surrounding the pits in Trench 2 would have been useful to determine the presence of any further evidence, but it is felt that little or no archaeology was destroyed during the house construction. The small number of medieval pottery sherds recovered as residual finds during the evaluation cannot be taken as clear evidence for the former presence of a green in this area.

References

Oswald, A., 1975, Clay pipes for the archaeologist, British Archaeological Reports 14

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. 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 service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Appendix 1: Context List

<i>OP</i>	<i>Feature No</i>	<i>Trench</i>	<i>Identifier</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Finds</i>
0001		All	Unstratified finds	Unstratified finds	y
0002	0002	2	Pit Cut	Possible pit cut, only partially revealed in E side of trench 2. Approx 1m from pit 0004. Steep sided (near vertical) U shaped profile. Base slightly concave/dished.	
0003	0002	2	Pit Fill	Fill of possible pit 0002. Grey/pale brown silty clay with occasional chalk lumps and stones and regular fine sharp gravel. Charcoal layer near base. Loosely compacted.	y
0004	0004	2	Pit Cut	Possible pit cut, only partially revealed in W side of trench 2. Approx 1m from pit 0002. Section shape uncertain - fairly steep sided with shallow/flat base.	
0005	0004	2	Pit Fill	Fill of possible pit 0004. Pale grey/brown heavy clay with occasional chalk flecks/small lumps and occasional charcoal flecks/lumps. Firm compaction with fine CBM fragments throughout (occasional).	y
0006	0006	2	Pit Cut	Probable circular pit cut, not fully exposed, in west face of trench 2. Moderately steep sided with a nearly flat base.	
0007	0006	2	Pit Fill	Fill of pit 0006. Mixed pale brown/grey heavy clay with regular fine chalk lumps and occasional stones. Firmly compacted.	y

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