

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2013/110	Parish: Bury St Edmunds
<b>Monitoring at the rear of The Clock House</b>	Planning App No. SE/12/1131
	OASIS No. c1-158279
	HER Event No.: BSE 432
Address: 109 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds	Grid Reference: TL 8553 6466
	Number of Site visits: 4
	Date of visits: May 2013
<p><i>Background</i></p> <p>The Clock House is situated on one of the main axial roads of the 11th century street grid which once led to the Northgate, one of only five access points into the town. This location within the medieval urban core suggested a high potential for surviving archaeological deposits. The house's façade is in white brick and dates to no earlier than the end of the C18th, although whether this is a Georgian gentrification of an earlier building is unknown.</p>	
<p><i>What was seen - nature of the work, condition of trenches etc.</i></p> <p>The consent was for the construction of a garden room measuring 4m x 8m attached to the rear of the existing house in an area of former paving/patio. The garden beyond (east of) the development site was higher suggesting that the ground level had been raised or the development area previously lowered/terraced to create a level platform; perhaps when the Clock House was originally built. The ground works for this involved the removal of the patio and a modest ground reduction over the area of the footprint, the replacement of a drain, and the excavation of a narrow footing around the three sides of the Garden Room's perimeter. The footings were excavated by a combination of mini-digger and hand excavation and recorded during and after excavation.</p> <p>The trenches were 0.8m deep from the level of the 'reduced- dig' (about 1.20m in total) with the gravel of the surface geology being encountered at 0.5m from the top of the trench; approximately 14m of trench was observed in total.</p>	
<p><i>Total number/length of trenches/footings and % of which seen:</i></p> <p>It was established that the depth of ground reduction was entirely within a modern overburden and therefore the site was first observed once it had been lowered. All of the open trenches were seen and both faces of the long wall trench were cleaned and drawn.</p>	

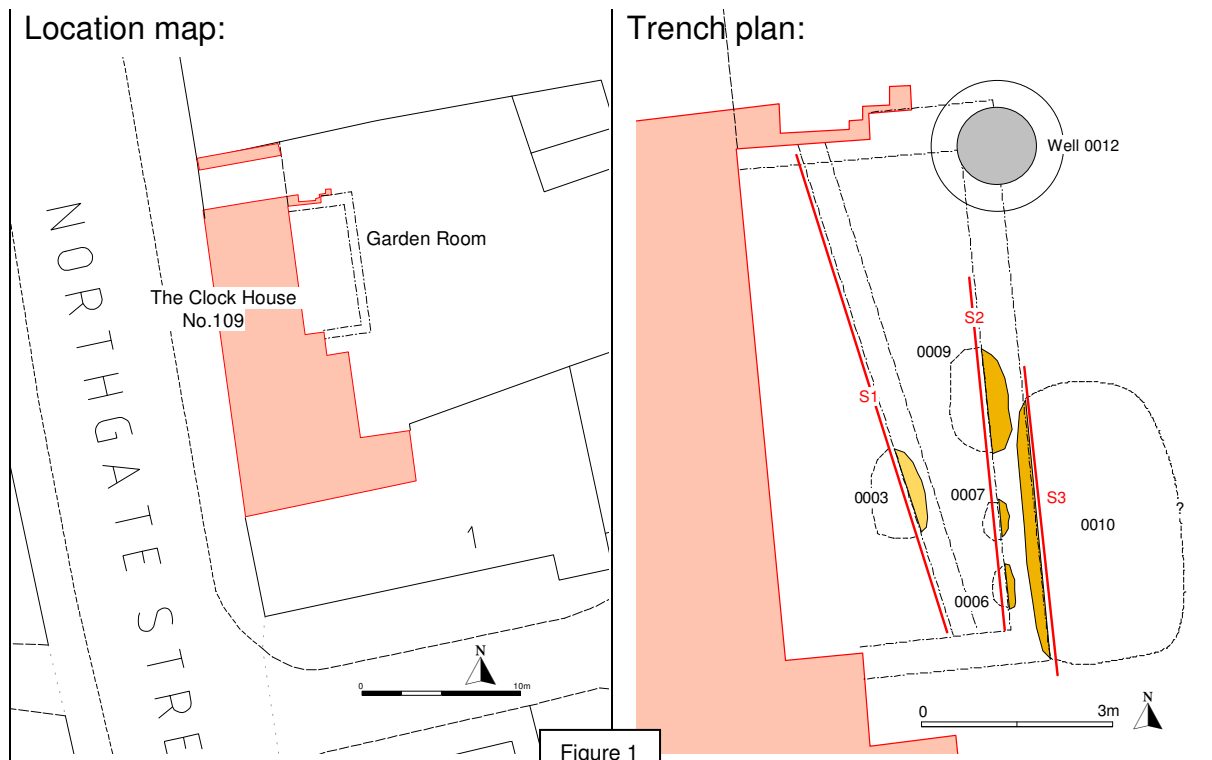


Figure 1

**Results:**

A concentration of archaeological features was found that predated the construction of the current house and relate to the previous occupation of the site. The construction of The Clock House and activity since has resulted in the truncation of the uppermost archaeological deposits leaving only the lower parts of the features and there are no indications of the former ground surface. The features included a well, possible malting oven, pits and postholes; the very limited sample means that it is difficult to draw detailed conclusions, but the features seem typical of domestic backyards within an urban context. A plan of the features is shown above and the summary of the main features is given below. Trench sections and a table, giving descriptions of each feature, are included at the end of the report.

The most intriguing of the features is the large flat-bottomed pit 0010 which was over 2.3m wide and 0.6m deep from the top of the natural gravel. It only appeared in one side of the trench and therefore had a near vertical western edge and the potential to be broad and vast. It was filled with a green/brown clay-silt characteristic of the degraded fill of a medieval rubbish or cess pit but apart from occasional fragments of oyster shell and tile was devoid of finds; rubbish pits of this width are not unusual in the town but are normally considerably deeper.

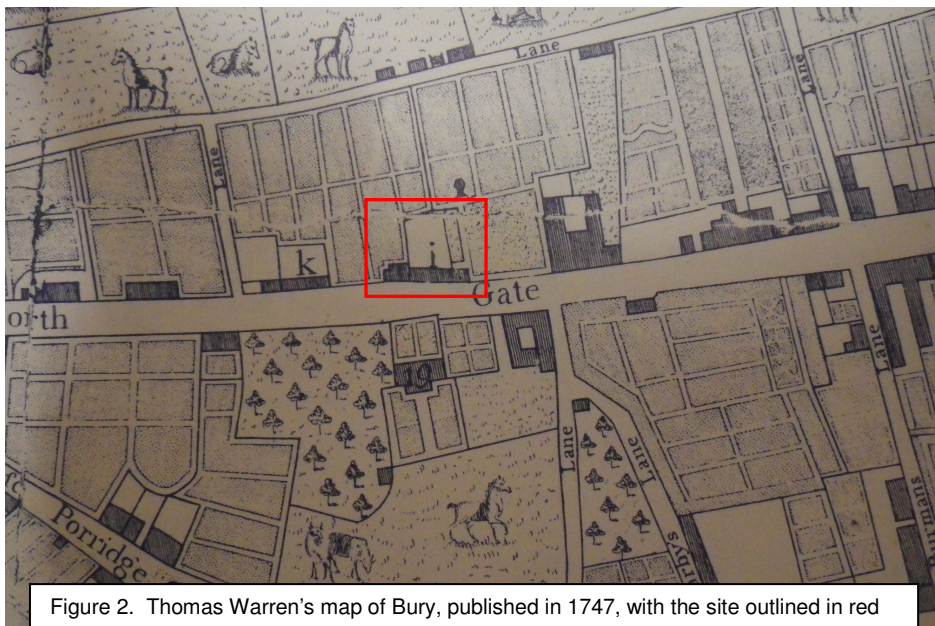
The well (0012) was constructed neatly from flint bonded with lime mortar and rendered so that the internal face was smooth. The top of the well shaft had been truncated and it was

backfilled to the top with a mixture of soil and building rubble; all of the rubble pre-dated the existing house suggesting that it had been backfilled before The Clock House was built. The well shaft was surrounded by a made up soil; either the backfill of its construction pit or cut through a worked soil horizon.

Only the edge of the putative oven (0003) was caught within the cut of the replacement drain trench and appeared only in one trench face as a pit lined with yellow clay; there were no signs of extensive burning but similar features have been identified as malting kilns (for making beer) in similar backyard locations in the town. The oven was stratigraphically later than the pits and posthole features and cut a dark soil horizon (0002) which produced brick dating to the 15th-16th century.

The site produced no pottery finds and therefore none of the features were closely datable; all of the building rubble from archaeological contexts was pre-modern suggesting that all of the features are probably the result of activity during the late medieval and early post-medieval periods.

### *Conclusion/Discussion*



The monitoring has demonstrated that a dense concentration of features exists within the plot relating to the late medieval/early post-medieval occupation of the site when backyard were used as a place for work and domestic activities such as food preparation and the disposal of rubbish. At this time, the expense of sinking a well was sometimes shared between neighbours and therefore such wells often occur on property boundaries. The current plot is quite wide for a medieval urban property suggesting that it may have encompassed more than one earlier plot and the off-centre position of the well here may

indicate a former property division. Thomas Warren's map of Bury (Fig.2) does however depict site as a large single plot with a wide street frontage by 1747 when it was occupied by the almshouses sponsored by Francis Boldero.



**Plate 1: Well shaft 0012.** The well is constructed of bonded flint and infilled with soil and building rubble. The well shaft contained no brick/tile in its construction and the mortar is consistent with that seen in Abbey building suggesting that it may be medieval in date. The rubble infill was from a building dating to c.15-16th century; presumably from the house that once occupied the site.

*BSE 432: Context list*

No.	Feature type	Description
0003	(?)oven	Vertical sided and flat-bottomed pit, measuring 1.4m across and 500mm deep. The bottom and sides were lined with yellow clay (0005) and it was backfilled with a dark silt (0004) in which produced tile, building flint and mortar; no pottery was recovered but the building debris suggested an early post-medieval date. The feature was late in the stratigraphic sequence and cut a buried soil layer (0002) which produced C15-16th brick.
0002	soil horizon	Homogenous dark horizon of well-work soil. Seals most of the features and contains small fragments early post-med, but nothing modern, suggesting last work during the (?)C16th. Oven 003 cuts and postdates this layer.
0006	posthole	Posthole, flat-bottomed and 500mm across, the top of the posthole is truncated but was it was cut deep enough to extend into the natural gravels. The posthole was filled with mid brown silt and paired with adjacent posthole (0007); neither posthole produced finds.
0007	posthole	Posthole same as 0006
0008	pit	Pit, over 500mm deep and the profile suggests re-cut. It was filled with a single fill of homogenous mid-brown silt (0009), which was archaeologically sterile and produced no finds.
0010	pit	Very large pit(?) 2.3m wide with a broad flat base and cut 0.6m into the natural. Filled with a single fill of (cessy) brown/green silt-clay (0011), very occasional oyster shell and tile frags - otherwise no finds
0012	well	Well shaft made of bonded flint and rendered smooth on the inner-face. Wall of the well shaft 0.2m thick with an internal diameter of 1.2m; no diagnostically late or closely-datable material (no CBM) in the well shaft construction. Well backfilled to the top with dark silt (0013) and building rubble, the latter from a c.C16th building. The well shaft was surrounded by disturbed soil possibly the backfill of a well construction pit.

Recorded by: David Gill/John Craven

Date: Sept 2013

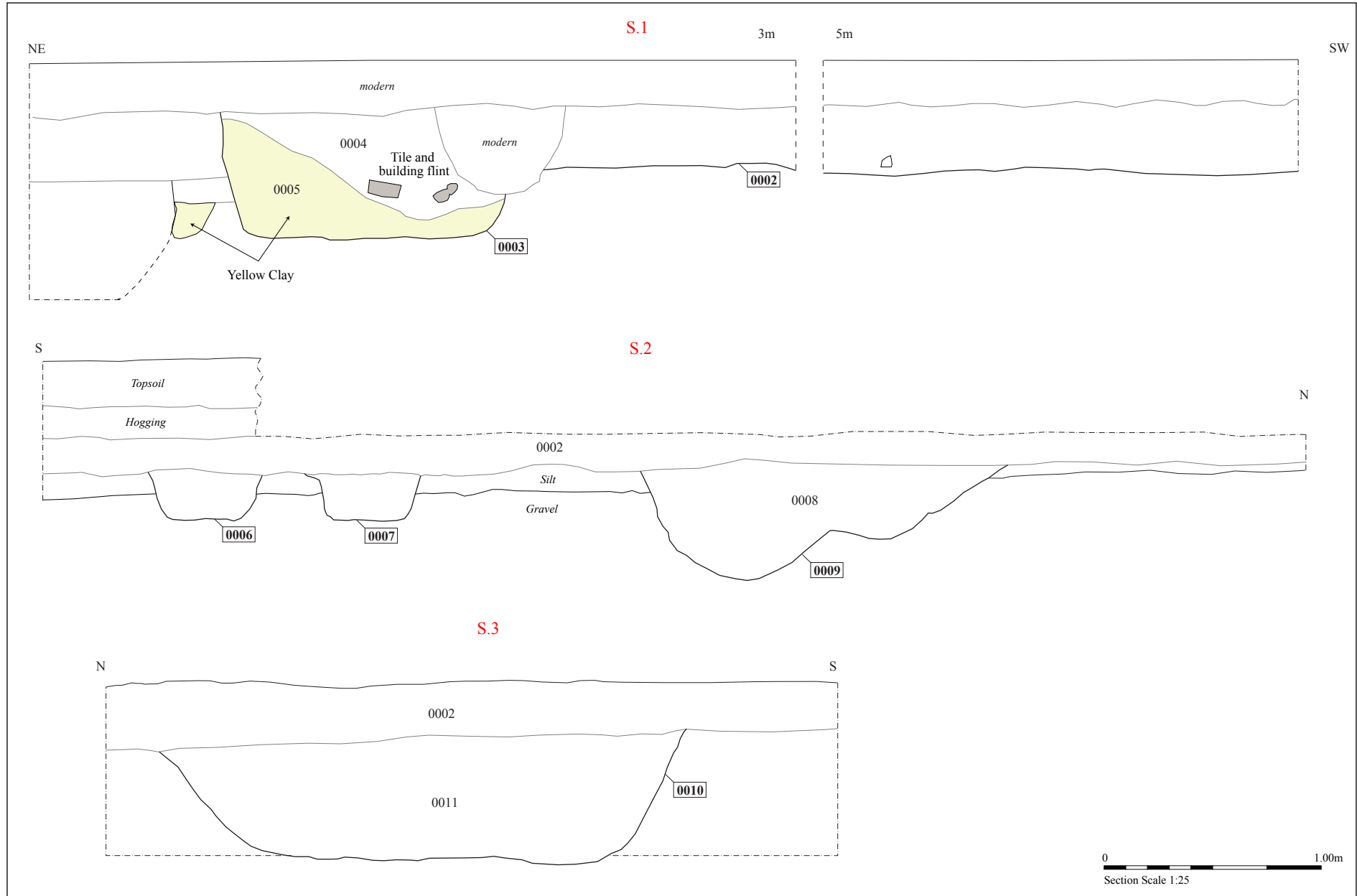


Figure 3. Trench sections

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**OASIS ID: suffolkc1-158279**

### Project details

Project name	Monitoring at the rear of 109 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds
Short description of the project	Monitoring of footing trenches for a small extension to the rear of the Clock House, a late Georgian building located within the core of the medieval town, found a concentration of archaeological features that predated the current house. The features included a well, possible malting oven, pits and postholes. The features were not closely dated but probably relate to occupation activity on the site during the medieval and post-medieval periods and are typical of urban backyards of that period.
Project dates	Start: 20-11-2012 End: 02-09-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BSE 432 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	PIT Medieval
Monument type	WELL Uncertain
Monument type	POSTHOLE Medieval
Monument type	OVEN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK ST EDMUNDSBURY BURY ST EDMUNDS 109 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds
Study area	40.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 8553 6466 52 0 52 14 53 N 000 43 05 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 35.00m Max: 35.20m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Dr Abby Antrobus
Project director/manager	Andrew Tester
Project supervisor	David Gill
Type of sponsor/funding body	Land owner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr and Mrs M Dobell

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Monitoring at the rear of The Clock House, 109 Northgate St. Bury St Edmunds
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Gill, D.J.'
Other bibliographic details	SCCAS report no 2013/110
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Place of issue or publication	Bury St Edmunds
Description	SCCAS small monitoring report. A4 sheets, unbound, colour
Entered by	David Gill (david.gill@suffolk.gov.uk)
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