

# Crows Hall, Debenham DBN 150

## **Archaeological Monitoring Report**

**SCCAS Report No. 2014/32**

**Client:** Ms Caroline Spurrier

Author: Stuart Boulter

March 2014

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Editor: Rhodri Gardner

Report Date: March 2014



## HER Information

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**Site Code:** DBN 150  
**Site Name:** Crows Hall, Debenham  
**Report Number** 2014/32  
**Planning Application No:** MS/0067/14  
**Date of Fieldwork:** 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
**Grid Reference:** TM 1913 6277  
**Oasis Reference:** suffolkc1-173744  
**Curatorial Officer:** Dr Richard Hoggett  
**Senior Project Officer:** Stuart Boulter  
**Client/Funding Body:** Ms Caroline Spurrier  
**Client Reference:** N/A

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.

Prepared By: Stuart Boulter

Date: March 2014

Approved By: Rhodri Gardner

Position: Contracts Manager

Date: March 2014

Signed: .....



# Contents

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Summary

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Site location, geology and topography</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Archaeology and historical background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Methodology</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Results</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Finds and environmental evidence</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Discussion</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>9. Archive deposition</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10. Acknowledgements</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11. Bibliography</b>	<b>10</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Location map	3
Figure 2. The monitored area and recorded archaeological features	6
Figure 3. Extract from the OS 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition map of c.1880	9

## List of Plates

Plate 1 The stripped area taken from the west (2m scale)	6
Plate 2 Pit 0002 taken from the west (2m scale)	7
Plate 3 Ditch 0004 taken from the south (2m scale)	7

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Written Scheme of Investigation	
Appendix 2. Oasis data collection form	





## Summary

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken of the groundworks, principally a reduced level strip, associated with the construction of a new grain drying facility at Crows Hall, Debenham.

The sharp interface between the removed overburden and the underlying naturally occurring clay subsoil suggested that the area had previously been stripped to that level. This hypothesis was strengthened by the frequent presence of a layer of flint pebbles with modern brick fragments at the junction between the two layers.

Other than irregular local areas of disturbance where building debris and stones appeared to have been pushed into the surface of the clay subsoil, only two features were encountered: a modern pit and a north-north-west to south-south-east orientated ditch.

Dating evidence recovered from the surface of the ditch was limited to brick and tile fragments, the former comprising exclusively of 2 – 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch thick pieces, some poorly fired and vitrified, consistent with a 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century date and were similar to those used in the construction of the adjacent barn and Crows Hall itself. It is thought that the ditch could formed part of the contemporary agricultural landscape surrounding the hall, becoming redundant before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where it was absent from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map of 1880.

(Stuart Boulter for Suffolk County Council and Ms Caroline Spurrier)



## **1. Introduction**

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One of the planning conditions imposed upon the construction of a new grain store at Crows Hall, Debenham (TM 1913 6277, Fig. 1) required that archaeological monitoring should be undertaken during all associated groundworks (MS/0067/14).

The details of the required archaeological works were outlined in a Brief prepared by Dr Richard Hoggett of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team and dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

Subsequently, Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Team (hereafter SCCAS/FPT) were asked by the project architect (Shaun Soanes of Nicholas Jacob Architects) to provide a quote covering the necessary work. A written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was also prepared by SCCAS/FPT and has been included as Appendix 1 of this report.

SCCAS/FPT was then commissioned to undertake the monitoring works, the fieldwork for which was carried out on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

## **2. Site location, geology and topography**

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The site lies on a west facing spur of higher ground above the 55m contour line and overlooks the south-east flowing River Deben c.650m to the south and one of its tributaries c.500m to the north, the latter flowing westwards until joining the larger river on the eastern margin of Debenham c.1.5km to the west (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by an arable field to the south, an existing unmetalled farm track to the west and the extant farmyard to the north and east.

The underlying drift geology comprises heavy glaciogenic boulder clay.

### **3. Archaeology and historical background**

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The building complex at the site (Sites & Monument Record No. DBN 007) has elements dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (components of a brick-built main hall & gatehouse on a revetted moated platform, converted dovecote, a large barn & associated landscaping), with significant alterations and additions of 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

The manorial history of the site extends back to 1086 with Ranulph Peverel named as the first owner (Sandon 1977, 258-9). Clearly, none of the standing structures date prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although it is speculated that some timber framing and fittings such as doors were reused from earlier buildings (Sandon 1977, 259; Martin 1990). That there were earlier buildings is attested by a document of 1519 that mentions a chapel at Crows Hall.

While the evidence recorded during fieldwork associated with a major refurbishment programme to the hall in 2006 (Boulter 2006) showed that there was a phased progression of building work relating to the brick Tudor hall, Sir Charles Framlingham is put forward as the most likely builder during the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Sandon 1977, 259). His coat of arms, now illegible, were those over the gatehouse and the evidence suggests that this was one of the earlier building components.

Prior to the recording programme detailed above, no formal archaeological works had been carried out at the site, although an organised site visit was made by members of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History in 1990, under the direction of Edward Martin, during which a number of interesting observations were made.

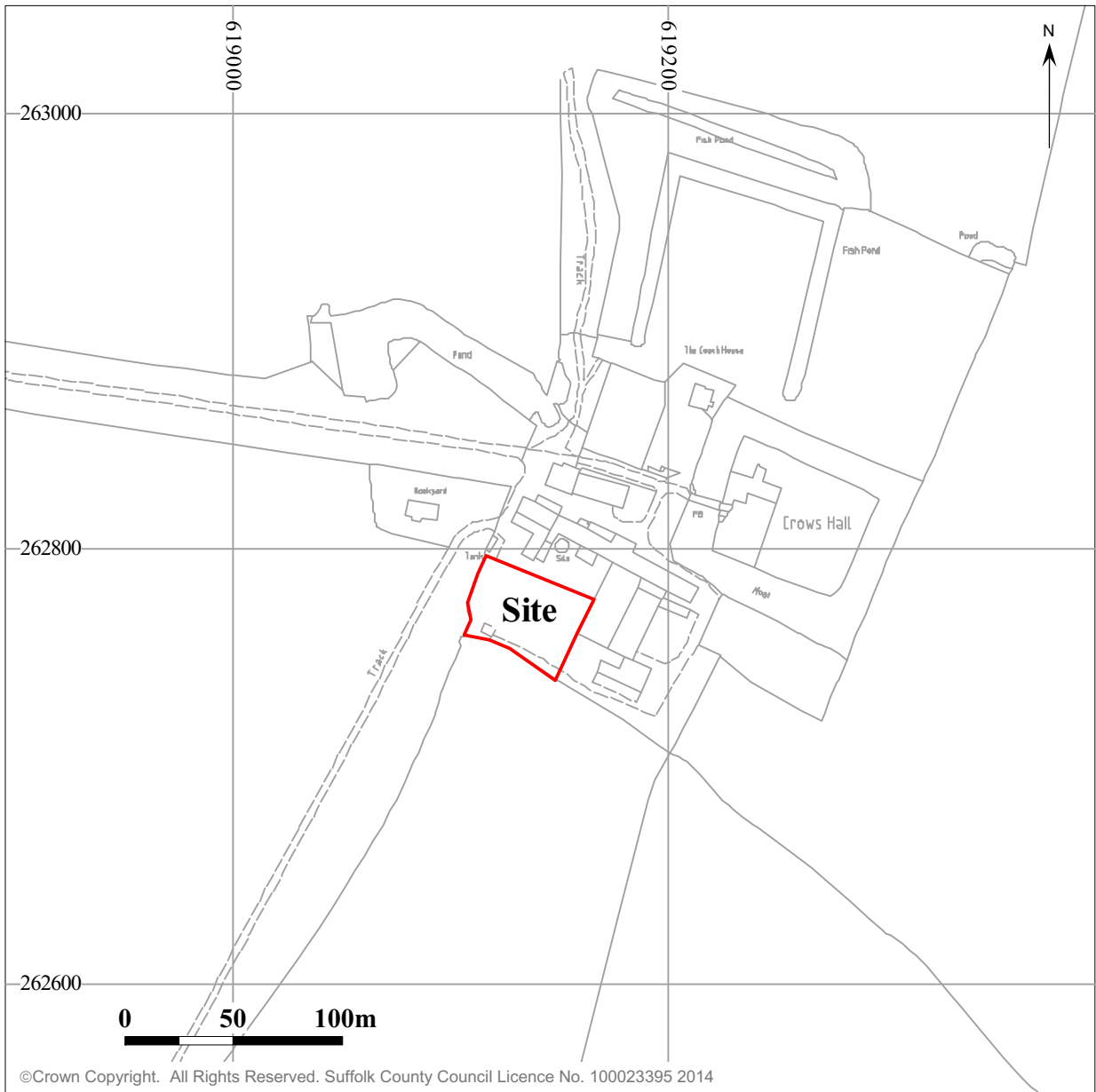
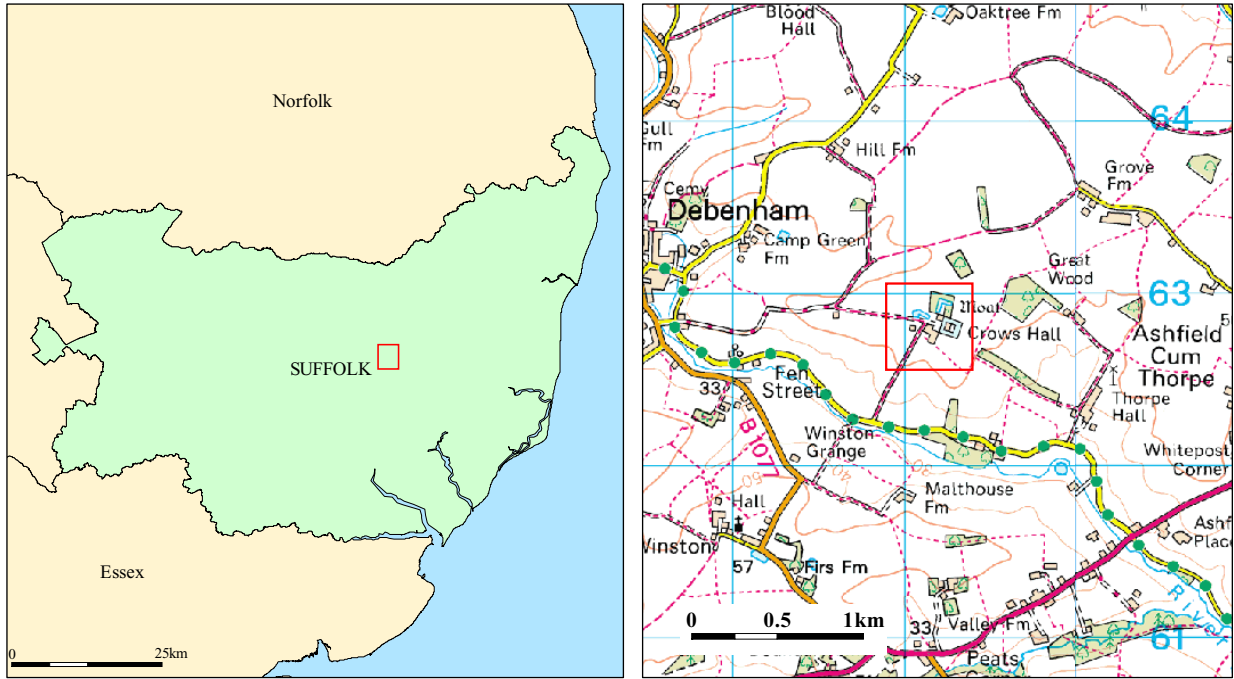


Figure 1. Location map

## **4. Methodology**

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A monitoring visit was made during the reduced level strip over the footprint of the exposed building (Fig. 2). In addition, the opportunity was taken to inspect the sides of a recently re-cut drainage ditch immediately to the south of the stripped area.

The soil-strip was carried out by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket which provided a good clean cut. A visual inspection of the exposed surface was undertaken with observations entered into a site notebook.

The locations of the features were recorded in pencil on plastic drafting film and a photographic record (high resolution digital shots only) was made and were subsequently entered into the SCCAS/FPT photographic archive database under the film codes HWX 66 - 75.

Contextual information was recorded in a 'unique continuous' numbering system on SCCAS Field Team 'pro-forma' context sheets under the HER code DBN 150.

## **5. Results**

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Virtually the entire footprint of the new building was observed during the monitoring visit (Fig. 2 and Plate 1). The only exceptions being a small area at the western end, coinciding with the location of earlier below ground concrete structures which had recently been removed, and a small area on the north side below the existing concrete hard standing where the archaeological levels had already been compromised.

The soil-strip involved removing a c.0.3m depth of a deposit which included topsoil, but also a high concentration of mixed building debris. The interface between the removed material and the underlying naturally occurring clay subsoil was sharp and for much of the area was characterised by the presence of a concentration of flint pebbles with brick and tile inclusions at the junction between the two layers. The bricks included pieces of 20<sup>th</sup> century flettons. These observations gave the overall impression that the area had

previously been stripped, with the flint pebbles deliberately introduced to function as a hard surface forming an extended part of the farmyard to the north.

While there were several irregular areas of disturbance recognised, all including modern building debris, sometimes apparently just pushed into the surface of the underlying clay, only two discrete features were recorded.

Pit 0002 was located towards the south-west corner of the stripped area (marked as Modern pit on Fig. 2 and Plate 2). The feature was circular, c.2.5m in diameter, with a fill (0003) comprising homogenous dark grey/brown humic/rooty loam with occasional stones. The finds, none of which were retained, included glass bottles, drink tins, and iron nails which confirmed the modern date of the feature.

Ditch 0004 was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east across the stripped area, but was not seen in the sides of the open ditch c.3m to the south (Fig. 2 and Plate 3). The feature was c.2.5m wide with fill (0005) comprising stiff grey silty clay with moderate small stones, chalk lumps and roots with frequent inclusions of CBM (ceramic building materials in the form of bricks and roof tile).

An inspection of the included bricks revealed that the only surviving measurable dimension was thickness which varied between 2 inches and 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. The majority of the brick fabrics exhibited a relatively deep red colour with some darker surfaces with localised vitrification. These bricks were consistent in both size and character with those seen in the 16<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century phases of the standing buildings which locally included diaper-work utilising similar over-fired bricks to form the geometric patterns.

Given that this feature was not going to be further compromised by the construction work, it remained unexcavated.

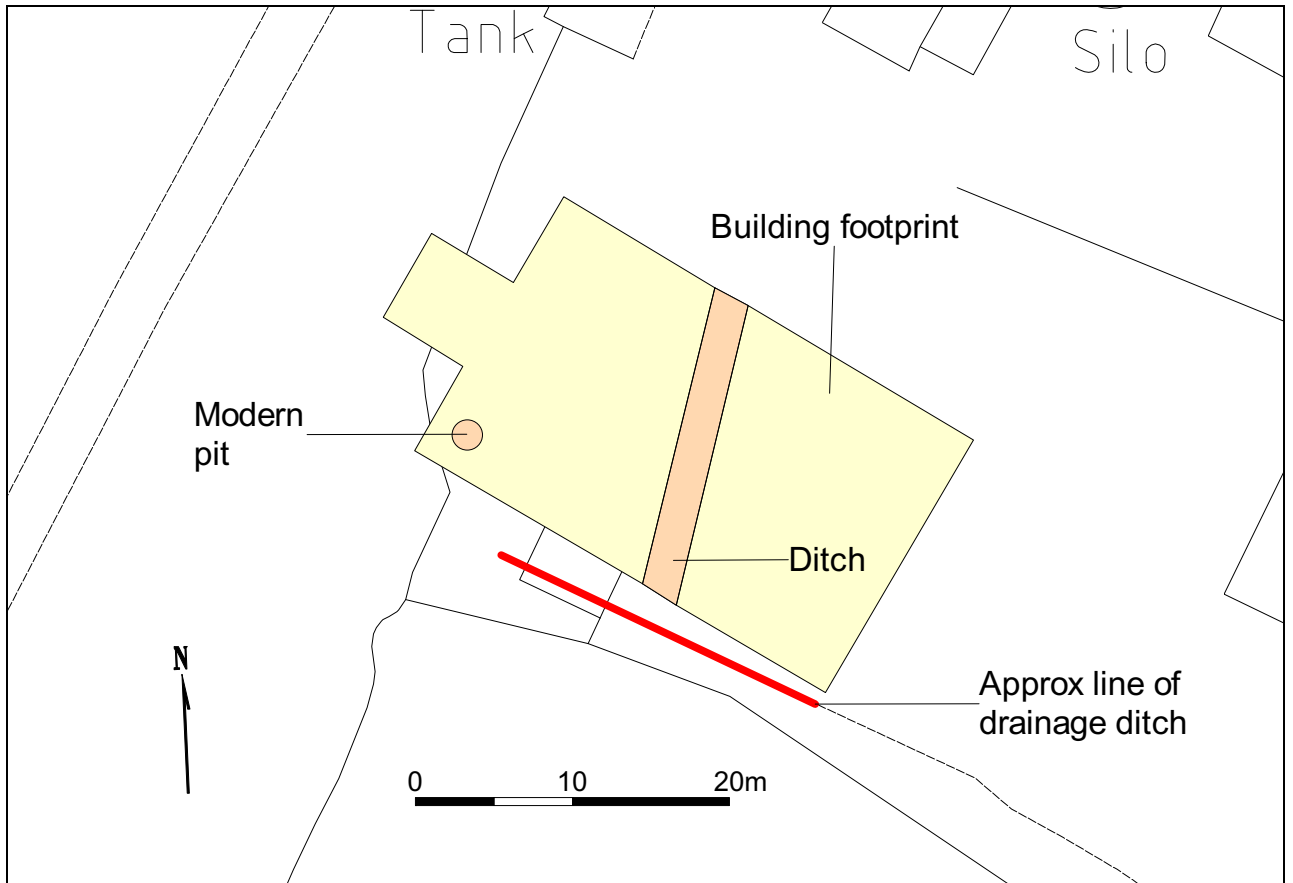


Figure 2. The monitored area and recorded archaeological features



Plate 1 The stripped area taken from the west (2m scale)





Plate 2 Pit 0002 taken from the west (2m scale)



Plate 3 Ditch 0004 taken from the south (2m scale)

## **6. Finds and environmental evidence**

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No finds were retained during the fieldwork and no environmental samples were taken.

## **7. Discussion**

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The archaeological monitoring revealed that the area of the new grain store had in more recent times formed part of the working farmyard area with the presence of building rubble and flint pebbles possibly used as a means of consolidating its surface. Buried concrete had also been encountered at the western end of the site which clearly related to a relatively recent agricultural structure of some description.

One feature of interest, a north-north-west to south-south-east orientated ditch was not closely datable. However, the presence of significant quantities of tudor-type brick fragments in its fill suggest that it only became redundant after the demolition of at least part of one of the site's 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century structures. In addition, it does not appear on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of c.1880, when the area of the new grain store formed part of a small discrete field or paddock (Fig. 3), although it does appear to broadly align with a boundary to the north which runs up to the barn and then continues on a similar alignment to the north of the building.

Using the available evidence, the window for the redundancy of the ditch can be refined somewhat. On balance, it seems likely that the ditch was backfilled during the later 17<sup>th</sup> to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and while the dating of its original excavation and period of use cannot easily be determined, there is no reason why it could not have formed part of the medieval and early post-medieval agricultural landscape contemporary and directly associated with the Crows Hall building complex.



Figure 3. Extract from the OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map of c.1880

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

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The monitoring of the reduced level strip over the groundplan of the proposed new building and adjacent drainage ditch allowed for the adequate recording of exposed archaeological features. No further archaeological work is recommended in association with this project.

## 9. Archive deposition

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Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Debenham\DBN 150 Monitoring

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos\HWA – HWZ\HWX 66 - 75

## 10. Acknowledgements

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The fieldwork was carried out by Stuart Boulter who also managed the project.

The report illustrations were created by Stuart Boulter and Linzi Everett and the report was edited by Rhodri Gardner.

## 11. Bibliography

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- Boulter, S. P.,  
2006                      *Crows Hall, Debenham (DBN 124); Record of an Archaeological Evaluation & Monitoring*, SCCAS Report No. 2006/125; Oasis No. suffolkc1-20302
- Martin, E. M.,  
1993                      'Debenham, Crow's Hall' in *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History* Volume XXXVIII Part 1
- Sandon, E.,  
1977                      *Suffolk Houses, A Study of Domestic Architecture*. Baron Publishing, Woodbridge, Suffolk

## Appendix 1. Written Scheme of Investigation

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# WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR CONTINUOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

**PLANNING STATUS:** MS/0067/14

**GRID REF:** TM 191 627

**Suffolk HER No:** DBN 150

**SCCAS JOB CODE:** DEBECRO001

- The Field Projects Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (hereafter SCCAS/FPT) have provided a Written Scheme of Investigation covering the continuous archaeological monitoring and recording of the ground disturbance associated with the erection of a new grain store at Crows Hall, Debenham.
- The WSI has been produced at the request of the Shaun Soanes and adheres to a Brief prepared by Rick Hoggett of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team (hereafter SCCAS/CT) on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (hereafter LPA).
- An allowance has been made to cover the projected cost of this work and the relevant estimate has previously been provided that will remain current for all work undertaken before the end of September 2014.

### **1. Project Aims**

- To produce a permanent record of the site in an archive that will be deposited with Suffolk Heritage Environment Record (hereafter HER).
- The site will be recorded under a new HER site code that will be allocated when the project has been confirmed. An OASIS form will be initiated prior to the start of

fieldwork and a .pdf version of the report uploaded on to the website <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit> for immediate release.

## **2. Monitoring of Groundworks: method statement**

- An experienced field archaeologist from SCCAS/FPT will be in constant attendance during all ground disturbance/excavations. Contractors will allow time during and after their excavations for archaeological recording to be undertaken.
- Any archaeological features exposed during the work will be sectioned by hand with sampling at a normal standard for medieval and earlier deposits (i.e. 100% of structural features or graves/cremations, 50% of contained features e.g. pits, and 10-20% of linear features).
- Deposits will be sampled for environmental material as appropriate (and as suggested by EAA Occ. Paper Research Agenda- Environmental Archaeology). If thought appropriate and of archaeological benefit a metal detector search of exposed surfaces and spoil will be undertaken.
- Site records will be made on SCCAS/FPT pro forma context sheets under a continuous and unique numbering system and conventions compatible with the county HER will be used throughout the monitoring. Site plans will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and sections at 1:10 or 1:20 (all on plastic drawing film) and related to the OS map cover. A photographic record (high resolution digital shots) of the site and any archaeological features will be made where appropriate. The site will be registered within the OASIS system as is normal for the county.
- A Ministry of Justice licence for removal of human remains will be obtained if necessary (any such find would require work in that part of the site to stop until the human remains have been recorded/removed). However, it is considered unlikely that this will happen on this site.

### **3. Report/Archive: method Statement**

- Site and finds records will be entered onto Microsoft Access databases and will be archived in paper and electronic form. Site plans and sections will be inked up or digitised for report and archive purposes.
- All finds will be processed at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, to minimum standards laid down by the relevant finds groups (e.g. Roman Pottery Research Group) and stored in archive stable bags/boxes. Metal finds will be x-rayed if appropriate and stabilised as necessary to ICON standards. Environmental samples will be processed and assessed by a recognised regional contractor. It is anticipated that finds will be deposited in the County Store for future reference.
- A full monitoring report summarising all the findings and containing a full assessment of all finds and samples will be produced and copies submitted to SCCAS/CT, EH and the county HER. The report will contain all appropriate scale plans and sections. The monitoring report will contain a recommendation for further analysis and publication of the results as appropriate and in accordance with regional research agendas and strategies (EAA Occ. Papers 3 and 8 and revised Regional Research Framework of 2008). The report will form the basis for full discharge of the relevant condition
- A full project archive will be submitted to the SCCAS/CT Archaeological Store and every effort will be made to ensure that the landowner agrees to the deposit of all the finds (the Field Team will take responsibility to report any finds which might qualify under the Treasure Act 1996). The archive will be in paper and electronic form. A summary of the project findings will also be produced. The landowner/developer will receive copies of the report with all finds fully listed.

#### **4. On completion of the work:**

- Hard copies and a single pdf file on CD of the report will be submitted to SCCAS/CT and the LPA.
- The project archive will be submitted to the Suffolk HER.
- The Oasis Record will be completed and a pdf version of the report uploaded for immediate release.

#### **5. Risk Assessment:**

Work in a semi-rural location close to operating mechanical plant:

- For single person working Suffolk County Council operates a 'reporting-in' procedure at the middle and end of each day.
- Site staff will wear protective clothing at all times on site (hard hat, high visibility vest, steel-toe cap boots). The PO will report to the main contractor/developer at the beginning of each site visit. All staff hold CSCS cards
- Site staff will not enter the operating range of mechanical plant
- Vehicles will be parked in a safe location
- A fully charged mobile phone will be on site at all times.
- Site staff will be aware of the location of the nearest A & E unit and a vehicle will be on site at all times. It is likely that the relevant PO will be a qualified First Aider.
- Suffolk County Council holds full insurance policies for field work (details on request).



## Appendix 2. Oasis data collection form

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**OASIS ID: suffolkc1-173744**

### Project details

Project name	Crows Hall, Debenham, Archaeological Monitoring Report
Short description of the project	Monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a new grain store at Crows Hall, Debenham revealed a single ditch with inclusions of CBM which suggested a post 16th century+ date for the redundancy of the feature.
Project dates	Start: 07-03-2014 End: 12-03-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	DBN 124 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a farmyard
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Field observation","Part Excavation","Recorded Observation","Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

**Project location**

Country England  
Site location SUFFOLK MID SUFFOLK DEBENHAM Crows Hall  
  
Study area 300.00 Square metres  
  
Site coordinates TM 1913 6277 52.2189510375 1.20837339915 52 13 08 N 001 12 30 E  
Point  
  
Height OD / Depth Min: 56.00m Max: 56.00m

**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 Richard Hoggett  
  
Project director/manager Stuart Boulter  
  
Project supervisor Stuart Boulter  
  
Type of sponsor/funding Architect on behalf of client  
body

Name of sponsor/funding body Ms Caroline Spurrier

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No  
  
Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County SMR  
  
Digital Archive ID DBN 150

Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County SMR
Paper Archive ID	DBN 150
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Plan","Report"

#### **Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Crows Hall, Debenham, Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Boulter, S. P.
Other bibliographic details	SCCAS Rpt No, 2014/32
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Place of issue or publication	Ipswich
Description	Unbound A/4 sheets
Entered by	Stuart Boulter (stuart.boulter@suffolk.gov.uk)
Entered on	10 March 2014

## **OASIS:**

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Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

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