

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

CHURCH FARM, MENDHAM (SMR ref. MDM 121)

A REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED
WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXTENSION
(Application Nos.2522/05/FUL)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/160
(OASIS Ref. Suffolk1-18236)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to Church Farm, Mendham (NGR; TM 2835 8074), was undertaken during September 2006. All footings for the extension were monitored but no archaeological deposits, features or artefacts, other than a post-medieval pit, were identified. The natural subsoil comprised pale brown silty clay and was overlain by a thick deposit of garden soil indicating the area had been built up. Although it could not be conclusively determined it was possible that the ground surfaces may have been previously truncated. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference MDM 121. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the owner, Mr T. Carless.

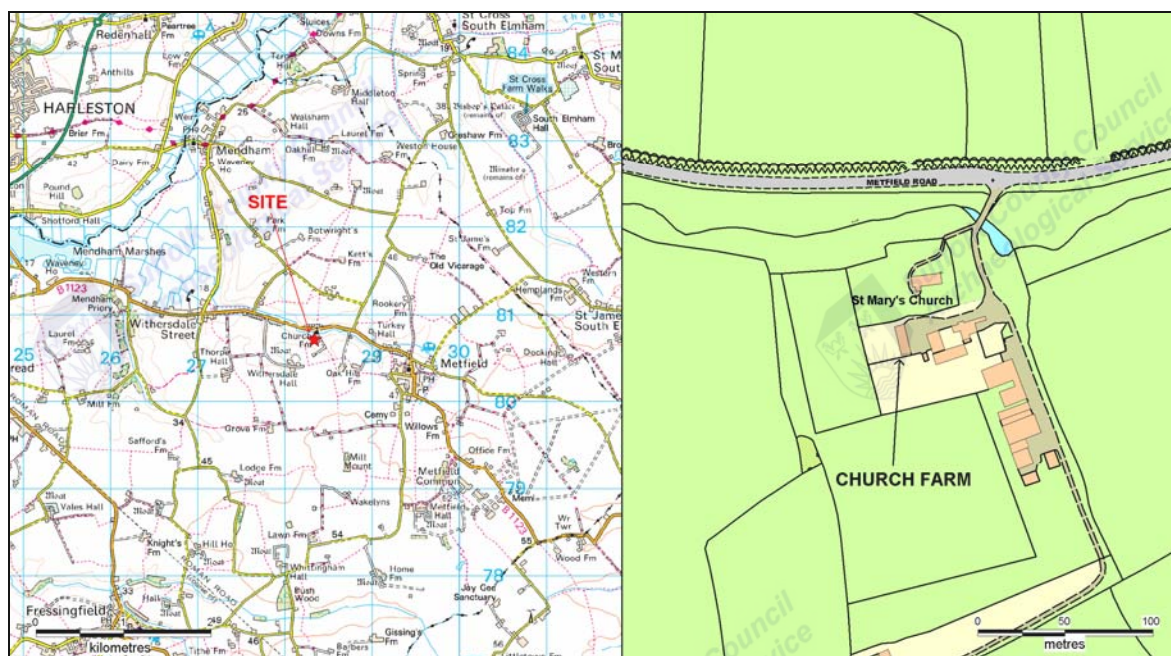


Figure 1: Location Plan

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SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with construction of an extension to Church Farm, Mendham, was undertaken during September 2006. The development comprised a single storey extension to the rear of the property. Interest in the site is due to its location adjacent the 12th century Church of St Mary and due to the fact that Church Farm itself contains 15th century components (designated as a Grade II structure on the Lists of Buildings of special architectural and historic interest).

The new extension was to be built on strip foundations which would involve significant ground disturbance with the potential to destroy any archaeological deposits or features that may be present. Consequently an archaeological condition was placed upon the planning consent to allow for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks in order to provide a record of any archaeological features or deposits revealed by the groundworks associated with this development. To detail the archaeological work required a Brief and Specification was produced by Mr R. Carr of the Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (see Appendix).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 2835 8074; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference MDM 121. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the owner, Mr T. Carless.

Methodology

A site visit was made to inspect the footings once they had been excavated by the building contractor. The revealed soil profiles were recorded, with the depths and thickness of any layers identified being noted. A small number of digital photographs were also taken. The surfaces of any spoil tips present on site during a monitoring visit were quickly examined for archaeological artefacts. The location of the monitored footings is illustrated in Figure 2.



Plate I: View of footing trench - facing south

Results

The site was visited on the 6th September 2006 to inspect the footings which had been excavated earlier that day. The footing trench was cut to a depth of c. 1.2m of which the top 0.5m comprised garden soil which immediately overlay the natural subsoil. The natural subsoil consisted of a pale brown silty clay (Plate I). The interface between the topsoil and the natural subsoil was relatively abrupt which may indicate that the surface of the subsoil had been previously exposed and possible truncated although this could not be conclusively determined.

A single pit type feature was noted along the length of the footing. It measured c. 1m in diameter and cut to a depth of c. 1.1m. Only a proportion was visible in the eastern face of the north-south footing but it was presumed to be roughly circular in shape. The fill comprised of dark silty loam from which two sherds of a pottery were recovered. These were in an orange fabric and had an orange/brown glaze on what appeared to be the exterior and were of a post-medieval date. A further, similar sherd was recovered from the spoil; the finds were not retained.

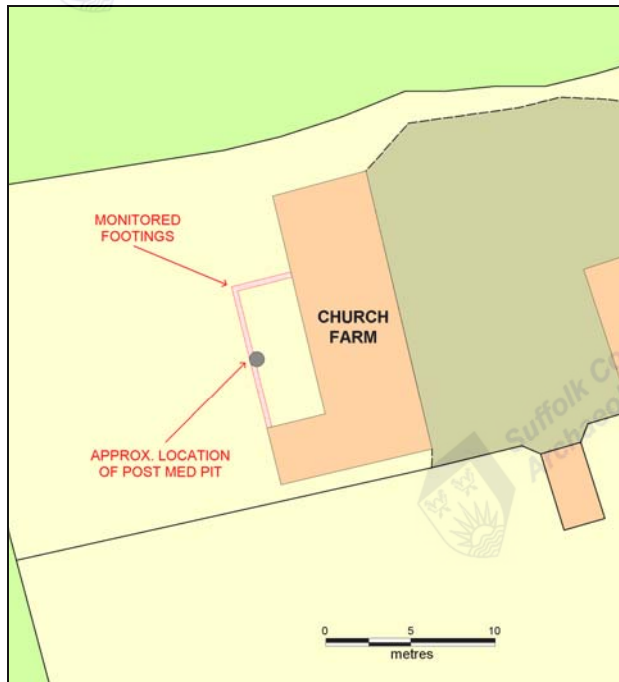


Figure 2: Monitoring Details

No other features or deposits were noted. The spoil, which was retained in a nearby field, was briefly examined but, other than the sherd referred to above, no artefacts were identified.

No further visits were made.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference MDM 121. The event is also recorded on the OASIS, online database under the reference; suffolkc1-18236.

Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits or features appear to have been destroyed by this development as no significant features or deposits were noted in the monitored footings. All observed excavations were cleanly cut and had any archaeological features or deposits been present it is highly likely they would have been identified. Although there was no positive evidence of the natural subsoil having been truncated it could not be ruled out. The extreme thickness of the topsoil indicates that the area had been raised and this was confirmed by Mr Carless.

The complete lack of medieval evidence in the form of stray finds which would be expected at such a site could be a result of previous landscaping although it must be noted that only a relatively small area of ground was disturbed by this development.

APPENDIX

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

CHURCH FARM, WITHERSDALE STREET, MENDHAM

Although this document covers the work of the archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that its requirements may affect the work of a building contractor and may have financial implications (e.g. see paragraphs 2.3); there may also be Health & Safety responsibilities (e.g. paragraph 1.4).

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission is being sought (2522/05/FUL) to develop on this site. The local planning authority have been advised that the site has high archaeological potential and that any consent should be conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out. The available evidence indicates archaeological monitoring of development, with provision for a record of any archaeology as it occurs, will be an adequate programme of work.
- 1.2 The development takes the form of a replacement to an existing extension, c. 4m of footing will be in new ground with c. 8m on the line of existing footings which are likely to be replaced. The house is within 30m of the 12th century church and churchyard, and is itself a Listed Building (LBS 280029) which includes 15th century elements.

The principal objective of the monitoring will be to establish whether there is pre 15th century settlement at this location.

It is intended that, subject to archaeological conditions, this monitoring should not be an extended or complex exercise. Provided building excavations are properly timetabled, and accurate notice given, it should be possible to complete monitoring in one visit with the whole process of monitoring and report writing being achieved in one working day.

- 1.3 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in "Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England" Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.
- 1.4 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination.
- 1.5 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.

- 2.3 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are the excavation of building footing trenches.

Trenches and the upcast soil are to be observed by an archaeologist after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Unimpeded access at the rate of one and a half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin.

- 2.4 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service.
- 2.5 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site.
- 2.6 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor.
- 2.7 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.
- 2.8 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 2.9 Opportunity must be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 2.10 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 2.11 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 2.12 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 2.13 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 2.14 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 2.15 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: R D Carr

Date: 17 March 2006

Reference: /Mendham03-ChurchFm-2522

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.

**CONSERVATION TEAM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
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