

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

FORMER SCHOOL PLAYGROUND MILL STREET, GISLINGHAM (SMR ref. GSG 029)

A REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED
WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SMALL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
(Application Nos. 0022/06)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/204
(OASIS Ref. Suffolk1-18690)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of two dwellings on the former primary school playground, Mill Street, Gislegham (NGR; TM 0744 7176), was undertaken during September 2006. All footings for one dwelling and part of the footings for the other were observed but no archaeological deposits, features or artefacts of any period were identified. The natural subsoil comprised pale yellow boulder clay. The site had been stripped of the former playground surface, the original construction of which may have slightly truncated the surface of the natural subsoil. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference GSG029. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned by J. Page and funded by S. Lee.

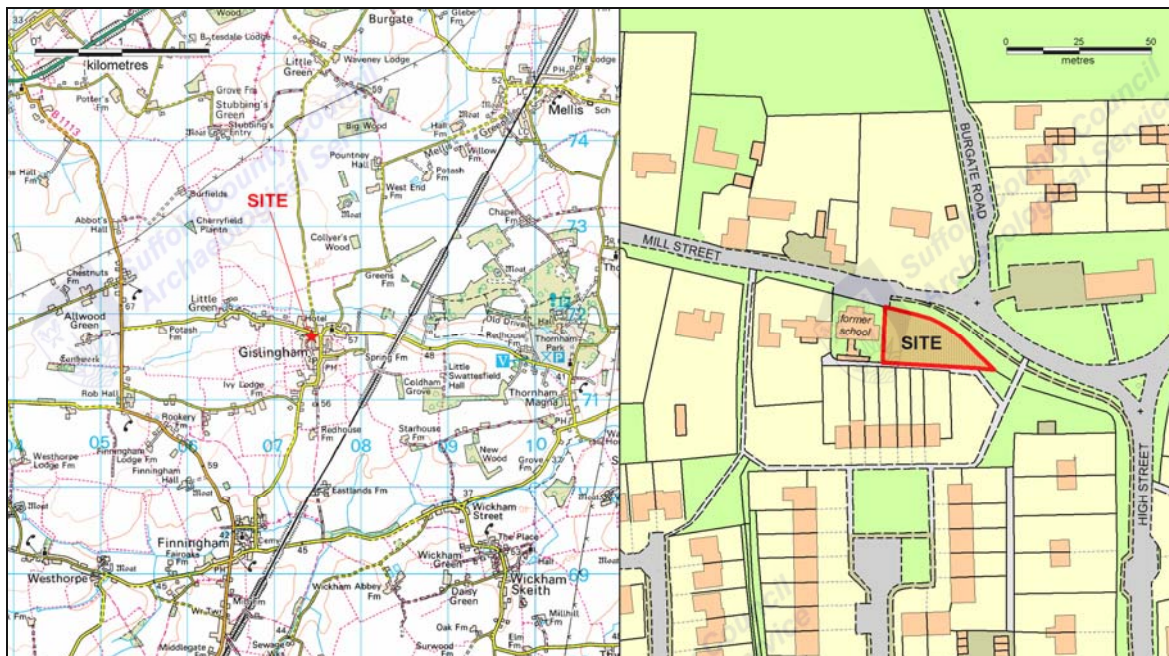


Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with a small residential development on the former playground of Gislingham Primary School was undertaken during September 2006. The development comprised two separate houses to be constructed to the east of the former school building. Interest in the site is due to its location within 90m of the medieval Church of St Mary and close to the present, and presumably medieval, village centre.

The new houses were 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 0744 7176; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference GSG 029. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned by J. Page and funded by S. Lee.

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.

Results

The site was visited on the 26th September 2006 to inspect footings that had been excavated earlier that day; see figure 2 below for their locations. At the time of the visit the site had been stripped of the former playground surface, hardcore sub-base and any residual topsoil leaving a flat level terrace. The footings for the eastern of the two houses had been completely excavated and a start had been made on the footings for the second building. The footing trenches was cut to a depth of *c.* 1.2m directly into the natural subsoil which comprised stiff pale yellow boulder clay with occasional nodules of flint. No archaeological features or deposits were noted in any of the examined footings.

The exposed surface of the natural subsoil across the site was examined but no features were observed although it was disturbed by the passage of machinery. A large spoil tip was present in the corner of the site. This was walked over and examined for artefacts but no significant finds were present.

The land to the south of the site was at a higher level and on the southern edge of the site a sheer cut face *c.* 0.8m in height and consisting entirely of dark brown topsoil was noted. It

is assumed that the development site originally sloped from the higher level down towards Mill Street prior to the creation of a level terrace, presumably to construct the playground. This may have truncated the natural subsoil surface along the southern edge of the site although as only topsoil was visible in the cut face it would appear that any truncation was negligible and would have certainly reduced towards Mill Street.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference GSG 029. The event is also recorded on the OASIS, online database under the reference; suffolkc1-18690.

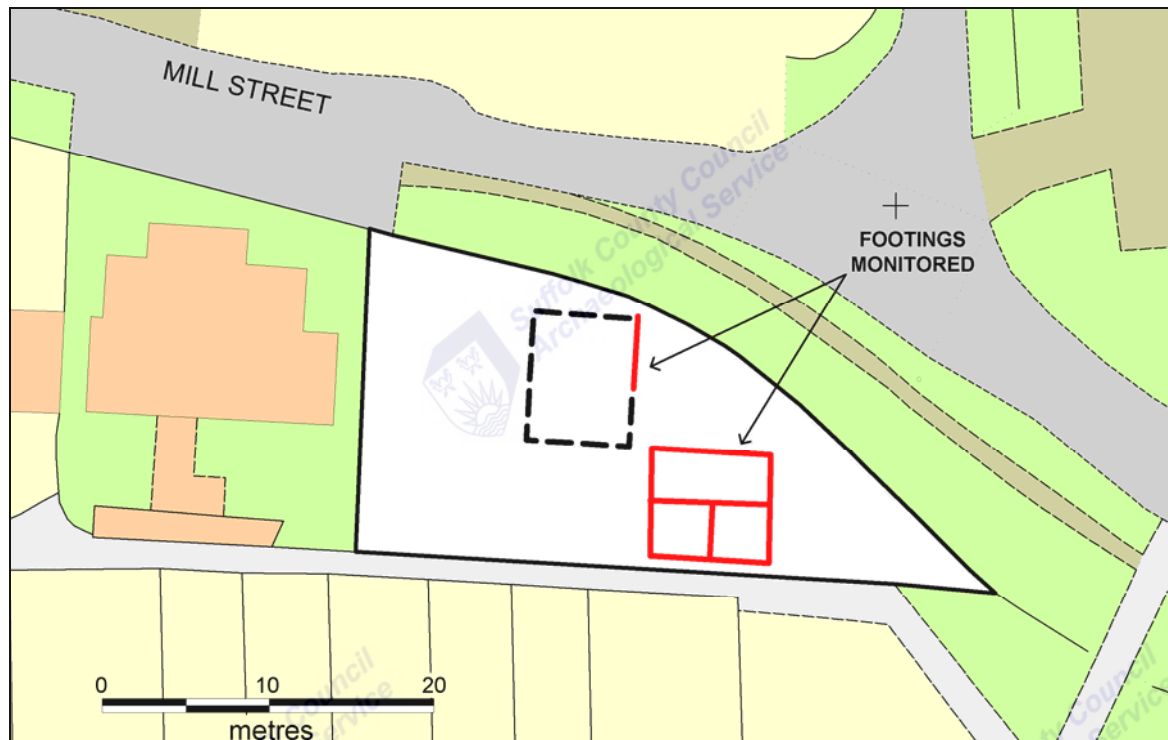


Figure 2: Monitoring Details

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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.

The original construction of the playground could have removed any stray surface finds but as it appears that no significant truncation of the surface of the natural subsoil has occurred had any cut features been present it is expected they would have survived and been noted during the monitoring visit. The complete lack of medieval features, which would be expected at a site in the centre of a medieval village, could suggest that it was an open area, possibly associated with an adjacent property or part of a small green for use by the parish.

APPENDIX

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

FORMER SCHOOL PLAYGROUND, GISLINGHAM

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3. The commissioning body should also be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities, see paragraph 1.5.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 A planning application (0022/06) has been made to develop two houses. The local planning authority have been advised that the site has high archaeological potential and that any consent should be conditional on a PPG 16, paragraph 30 condition. Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The development area is at a road junction in the centre of the village within 90m of the medieval church and churchyard. There is frontage onto an early roadway, and potential for the site to be within the historic settlement core.
- 1.3 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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. . The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with this office before execution.

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 academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.

- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (e.g. the construction of access roads, hard standing construction, and landscaping) and the excavation of building footing or ground-beam trenches.

In the case of footing trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed by an archaeologist whilst they are dug by the building contractor if upcast soil is removed from the site or after they have been dug if the soil is available for inspection on site. Adequate time is to be allowed for the recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 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, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.
- 3.3 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, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and time-table.
- 3.4 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.

4. Specification

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches 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. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.6 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P L and Wiltshire, P E J, 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.

- 4.7 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; and the archaeologist should be informed by '*Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

5. Report Requirements

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features.. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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
Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds

Date: 20 September 2006

Reference: /Former School Playground

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.