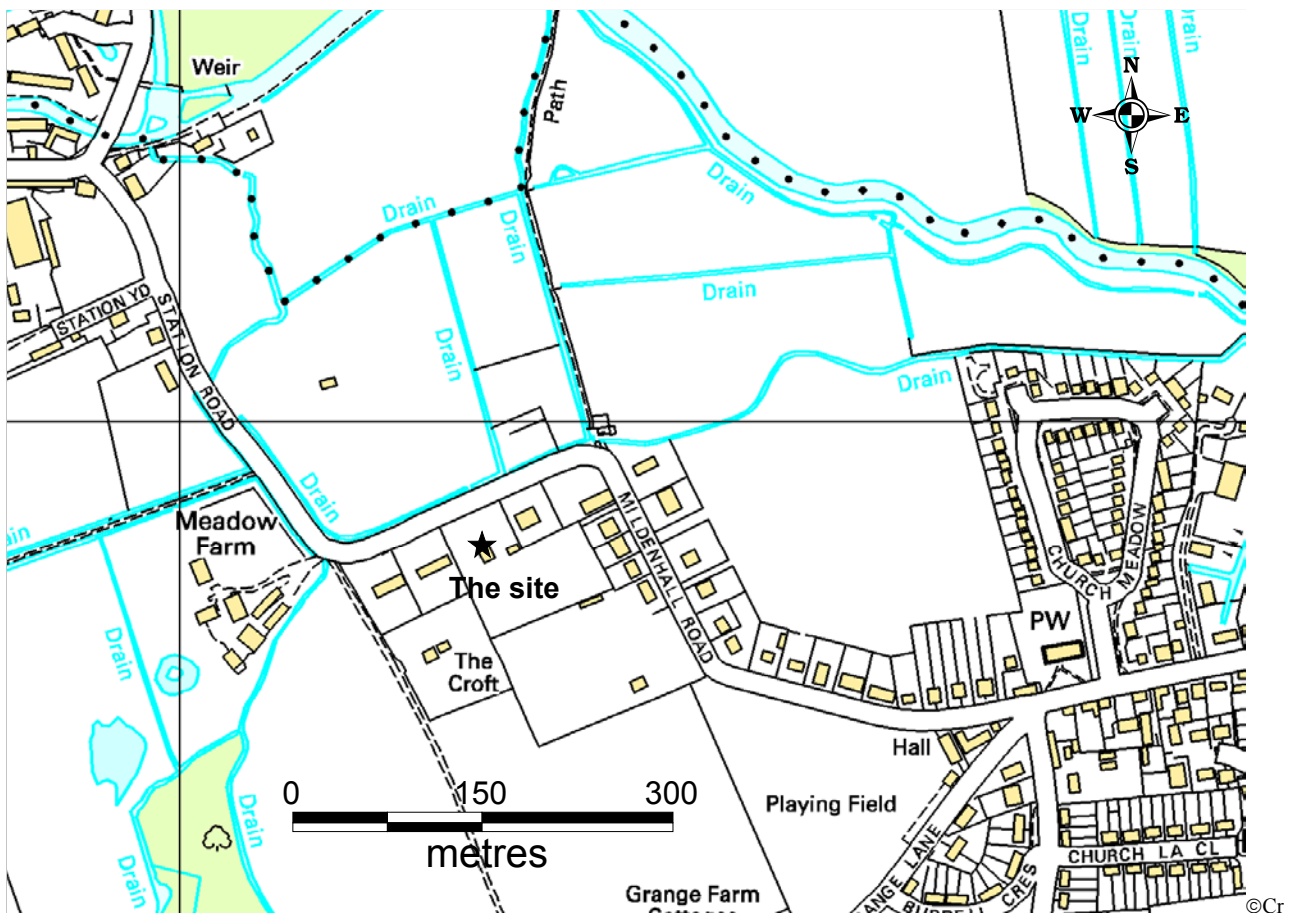


Results of initial visit to 21, Mildenhall Road, Barton Mills

A visit was made to assess the condition and archaeological potential for 21, Mildenhall Road, Barton Mills in accordance with a brief issued by Jude Plouviez, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team. The visit was made on 26th September 2006. The site lies at grid ref TL 7124 7388 and below the 10m contour (Fig. 1)

Topography

- The front (northern) c.45m is flat and lies at the same approximate level as the flood plain between the road and the River Lark.
- After this point the western side of the site rises gradually to a plateau c.1.2m (not measured) higher.
- On the eastern side of the site, the ground has been cut away, but it can be seen that this area was more steeply and suddenly sloped than the west side, although the final height is the same as to the west.



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Figure 1. Site location

Site condition

- The existing house and garage have been removed. The house was apparently laid on a 3' raft of concrete, much of which was below ground.
- The area of the new house has been stripped of apparently 8" of topsoil and a layer of crushed brick and rubble laid down.
- Piles for the new house have been inserted.

- Behind (south of) the house plot the south-east corner of the site has been levelled to a point c.40cm higher than the house plot (proposed site of the garage). This has cut up to 70cm from the ground level, but no natural was seen and laminated layers suggest that this is all redeposited. A mid 20th century building and a septic tank have been removed from here.
- The area of the second proposed house, currently at appeal, is largely intact. Some grass has been stripped in places but topsoil is still present. A pile of brick rubble and a spoil heap sit on the site.

Summary of investigations

- A hand-dug hole, c. 30cm square was excavated into the front of the site, east of the original driveway at the junction between the grass and the new building. This showed >55cm of a mid brown silty loam with frequent, evenly distributed chalk flecks (up to 3mm) which was not bottomed. There was no indication of modern or archaeological intrusion.
- A second hole was dug at the back of the plot into the truncated area. This showed a continuation of the fairly homogeneous mid brown silt seen in the section at the back of the site. A single small piece of 1st-2nd century Roman pottery was recovered. This was c.25cm deep and failed to locate any natural.
- At the machined level in the southeast corner of the plot some dark brown-black silt patches were investigated, but these proved to be laminations in the soil, possibly the result of the recent work, but equally possibly an indication of earlier soil redeposition.
- No finds were made from the spoil heaps.

This suggests a significant depth of overlying brown silt-loam over much of the site and there was no indication that archaeological features have been disturbed. The landowner reported that peat could be found underlying the brown soil and overlying chalk over the lower flat part of the site (depths not established). This is probably true, given the topographical appearance of the site which looks as if it lies in the flood plain of the River. The west side of the site is probably in tact and the gently sloping profile looks natural. In the southeast truncated corner the soil removed all appears to be redeposited and natural was not seen.

The landowner reported a filled in pond at the road edge and this may be where the cremations came from, however it is not known which deposit they were recovered from.

Development proposals

- The piles for the house are in. The only remaining groundworks are for the ground beams across the piles. It appears to be intended the raise the house slightly and shutter the ground beams (which will be 400mm deep), which will mean excavating to a depth of c.250mm at the back (south) of the site, but possibly not at all at the front (north).
- A garage with strip foundations is planned for the southeast corner, working from the existing (truncated) ground level.
- Presumably drains are also proposed.

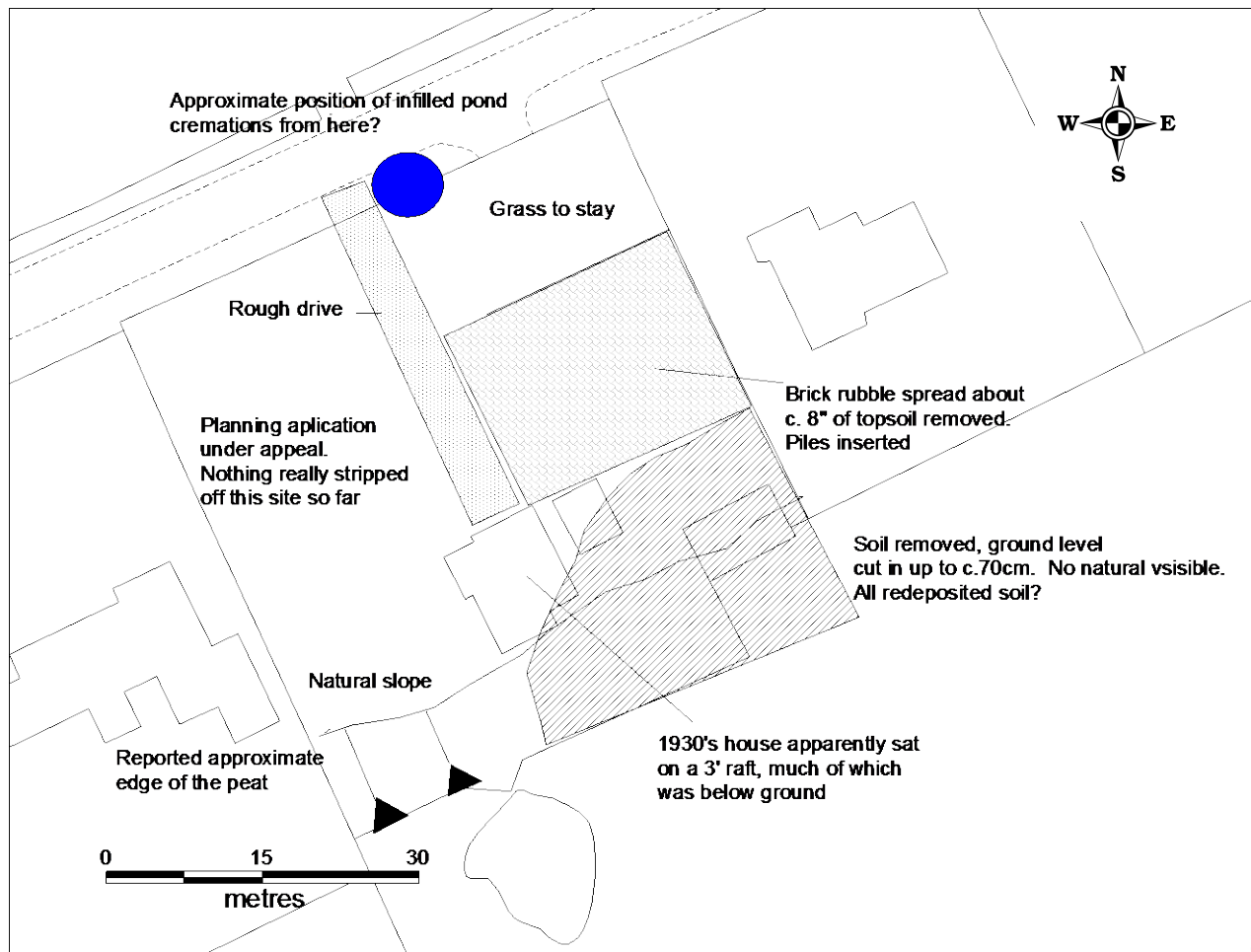
Conclusions and recommendations

There is good potential for the survival of well preserved archaeological remains on the site as there is no evidence that anything has so far been disturbed and the depths of soil deposits seen offer protection to buried horizons. However the remaining work planned for the site will have on a minimal impact on any such deposits. The remaining work associated with the house construction will be relatively shallow and unlikely to penetrate through the brown silt seen. The footings for the garage will reach natural subsoil (chalk probably) and have greater potential to cause damage to the site. It is therefore recommended that an appropriate mitigation strategy would be for the

archaeological monitoring of all further groundworks, with intensive monitoring during the excavation of the garage footings.

No recommendations for the plot currently at appeal are proposed at this stage as there will be benefit in assessing the results from the first plot and the proposed construction methods are comparable.

Jo Caruth
September 2006



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Figure 2. Site plan