

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## LAND ADJACENT TO CHESTER COTTAGE CHURCH LANE, WENHASTON WITH MELLS (SMR refs. WMH 031)

REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE DWELLING  
(Application Nos. C/06/1258/FUL)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2007/037  
(OASIS Ref. Suffolk1-23206)

*Summary: Archaeological monitoring of groundwork for a residential development on land adjacent Chester Cottage, Church Lane, Wenhaston with Mells (NGR; TM 4243 7540), was undertaken during January 2007. Visits were made to the site to examine the open footings for a new dwelling but no significant archaeological deposits or features were identified although a large disturbance of unknown purpose or date was noted within the centre of the site. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference WMH031. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the developer, DC Homes Limited.*

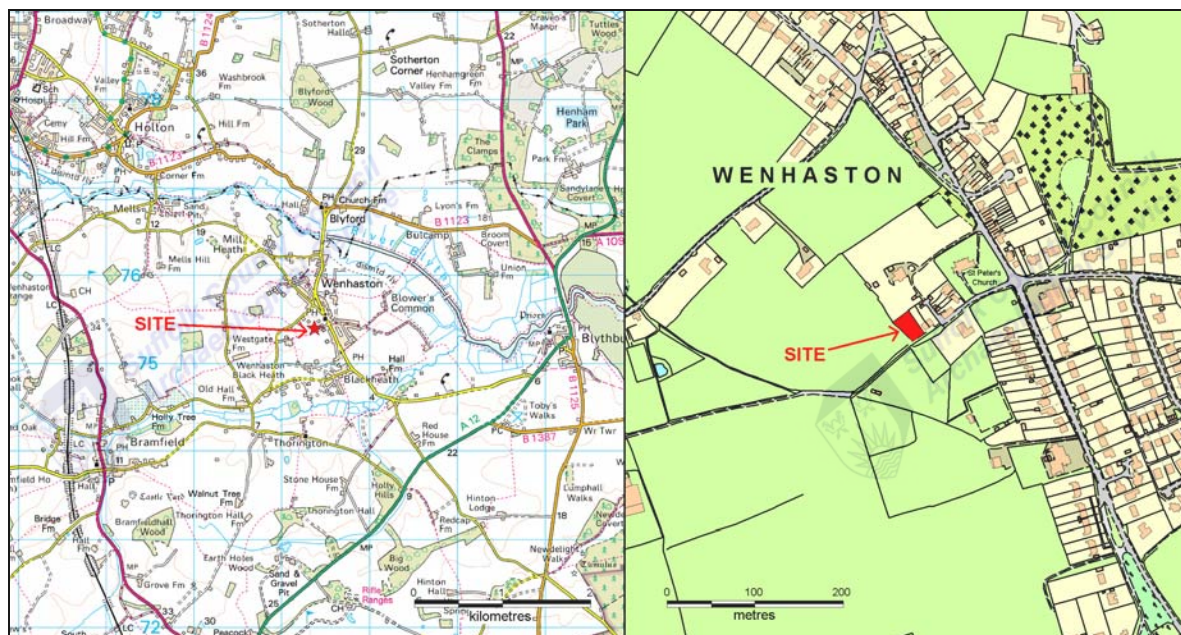


Figure 1: Location Plan

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## Introduction

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork associated with the construction of a single dwelling on land adjacent to Chester Cottage, Church Lane, Wenhaston with Mells, was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Interest in the site is due to it being located close to the medieval church of St Peter's, which is c. 50m to the east of the site. It is also

a similar distance from an undated cropmark recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (ref. WMH 015) and located in the field to the south of the site.

The excavation of the foundation trenches for the proposed dwelling would involve significant ground disturbance with the potential to destroy any archaeological deposits or features that may be present. To ensure there was no loss of any significant evidence an archaeological condition was placed upon the planning consent (application no. C/06/1258/FUL) to allow for archaeological monitoring of the groundwork in order to provide a record of any archaeological features or deposits that may be revealed. To detail the archaeological work required a Brief and Specification was produced by Dr J. Tipper of the Suffolk County Council Conservation Team (see Appendix).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 4243 7540 (for a location plan see figure 1); the site lies at a height of approximately 21m O.D. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference WMH 031. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, who were commissioned and funded by the developer, DC Homes Limited.

## Methodology

Site visits were made to inspect the footing trenches once they had been excavated by the onsite contractors. They were examined for cut features and archaeological deposits which, if located, were to be sampled through hand excavation in order to assess their shape, depth and to recover datable artefacts. The revealed soil profiles were recorded, with the depths and thickness of any layers identified noted. A small number of digital photographs were also taken. The surfaces of any spoil tips present on site during the monitoring visits were quickly examined for archaeological artefacts. The location of the monitored excavations are illustrated in Figure 2.

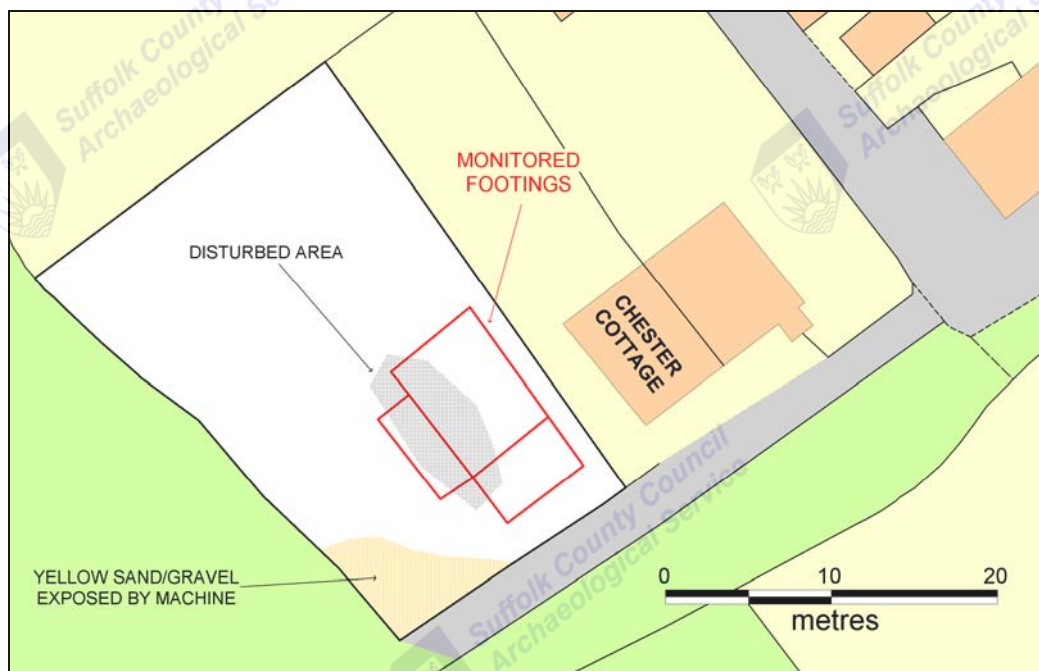


Figure 2: Monitoring Details

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## Results

The site was visited on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007 to inspect the excavated footing trenches, all of which had been excavated by the time of the second visit. The footings had been cut to depths of between 1.2m to 1.4m.

Along the footing for the eastern wall the revealed soil profile comprised 0.45m of dark rich topsoil over *c.* 0.25m of pale brown silty sand which in turn overlay the natural subsoil which consisted of yellow silty sandy gravel and was encountered at a depth of *c.* 0.7m (Plate I).



Plate I: footing for eastern wall  
camera facing northeast

The footings for the western half of the proposed house were cut to 1.4m of which the top 1.2m to 1.3m were cut through a large disturbance. The fill of the disturbance comprised topsoil over redeposited yellow sand and gravel over a buried layer of topsoil which lay on the presumably truncated surface of the natural subsoil at a depth of *c.* 1.3m. The fill was relatively clean and contained no obvious artefacts. The approximate limits of this are marked in figure 2 although it is not known how far this disturbance extended beyond the footprint of the proposed house.

During the second visit an area of the southwest corner of the site was lowered with the machine revealing yellow sand and gravel at a depth of *c.* 0.1m. The surface was initially level but dipped off as the stripping proceeded north and eastwards. The material appeared to be similar to the natural subsoil noted in the footing trenches but it was also similar to the redeposited sand and gravel noted in the fill of the disturbance. No cuts into this material were identified.

The spoil from the foundation trench was temporarily stored in a heap in the northwest corner of the site. The surface of spoil heap was examined during both visits but no significant finds were present.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference WMH 031. The event is also recorded on the OASIS, online database under the reference; suffolkc1-23206.

## Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits or features appear to have been destroyed or damaged by this development as no significant features or deposits were noted in the monitored excavations.



The date and purpose of the disturbance noted in the footing trenches is unknown but the relatively 'fresh' appearance of the buried topsoil layer suggests it is a modern phenomenon.

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 yellow sand and gravel revealed in the southwest corner of the site had the appearance of a natural subsoil and the fact it dipped towards the north and east suggest that it is a natural subsoil. The pale brown material noted beneath the topsoil in the eastern footing is possibly weathered natural subsoil. Consequently the difference in height between the natural subsoil noted in the southwest corner of the site and that noted in the footing trench is c. 0.35m.

It was noted that the field to the southwest of the site is approximately 0.5m higher than the site. The varying height of the natural subsoil and thickness of topsoil noted in this area is probably due to the fact that the site may be situated on a slight terrace. The land in this area naturally slopes off towards the River Blyth, which is to the northeast of the site. It is likely that over time, either deliberately or as a result of occupation and regular ploughing, a slight terrace has developed across the slope due to movement and collection of the topsoil against a boundary. Within such a terrace the thickness of the topsoil would vary from being relatively thin at the back edge of a terrace and thicker at the down slope edge maintaining a level surface as the underlying natural dropped away.



Plate II: general view of site, camera facing east

# APPENDIX

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM *Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development*

### PART SIDE GARDEN, CHESTER COTTAGE, CHURCH LANE, WENHASTON WITH MELLS

***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.***

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission for the erection of a dwelling with garage on Part Side Garden of, Chester Cottage, Church Lane, Wenhaston with Mells, Halesworth (TM 4243 7540), has been granted by Suffolk Coastal District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application C/06/1258/FUL). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 This application lies c. 50m west of the medieval church and churchyard (WMH 010), in an area likely to be historic settlement core. In addition, it lies immediately north of an undated cropmark enclosure (WMH 015), recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record. There is high potential for encountering medieval occupation deposits at this location. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 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 Before commencing work the project manager must carry out a risk assessment and liaise with the site owner, client and the Conservation Team of SCCAS in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

#### 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 medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the groundworks associated with the construction of the house and garage. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological 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. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.3 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.4 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with the Conservation Team of SCC Archaeological Service during the course of the evaluation).
- 4.7 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

### 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. Account must be taken of any requirements the County SMR may have regarding the conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage of excavated material and the archive.
- 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 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.
- 5.6 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).

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**This brief and specification remains valid for six 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.**