

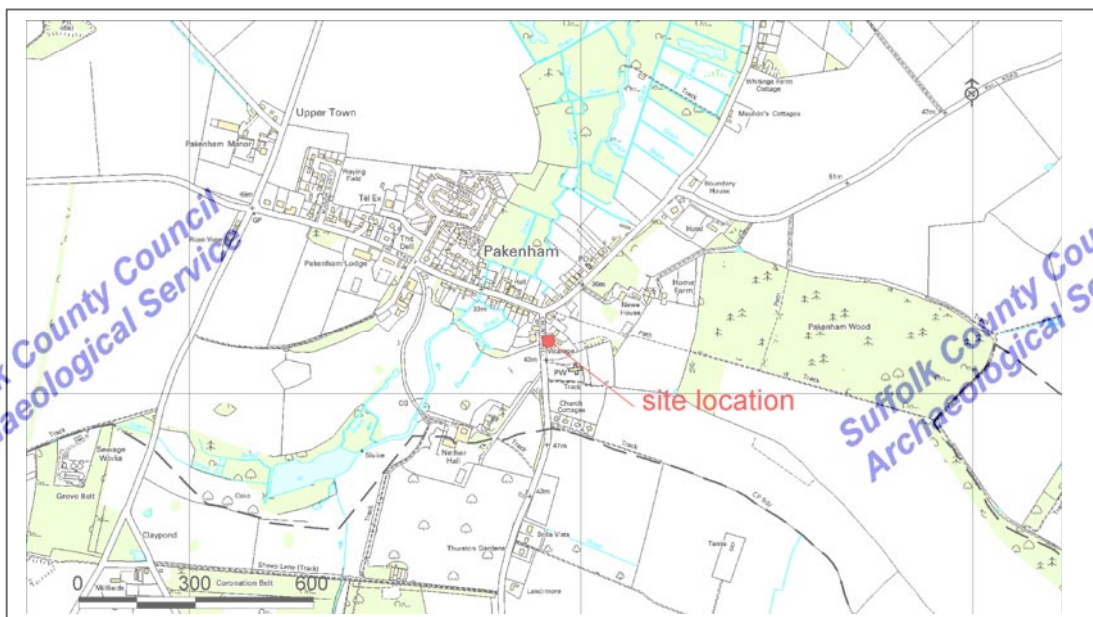
# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## Mulberry House, Church Hill, Pakenham (SMR refs. PKM 054)

REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DETACHED GARAGE  
(Application Nos. SE/06/2229)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2007/045  
(OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-24623)

*Summary:* Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Mulberry House, Church Hill, Pakenham as a condition of planning application SE/06/2229. English Heritage Buildings (Anglia) Ltd. funds the archaeological monitoring. The site is centred on TL9292 6713 where a detached garage is to be constructed in front of the existing dwelling. This entailed lowering the ground levels at the western end of the plot by up to one metre, along with more minor ground reduction to the east. A single visit was made to the site on the afternoon of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2006. It was possible to examine the majority of the area of lowered ground under conditions that provided good visibility. A large quantity of the upcast soil was also available for inspection. A large medieval feature (0003) was partially revealed as a result of the ground reduction in the north-western corner of the site area. The feature consisted of a thick layer of roughly laid materials including flint, chalk and clay, together with quantities of oyster shell. The deposit was possibly intended as levelling, perhaps within a natural hollow, but also to provide a firm yard surface. No evidence of any structural remains were found and therefore the deposit is less likely to represent a floor or base for a floor surface. Seven fragments of pottery were collected from deep within this deposit, which date to between the late 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

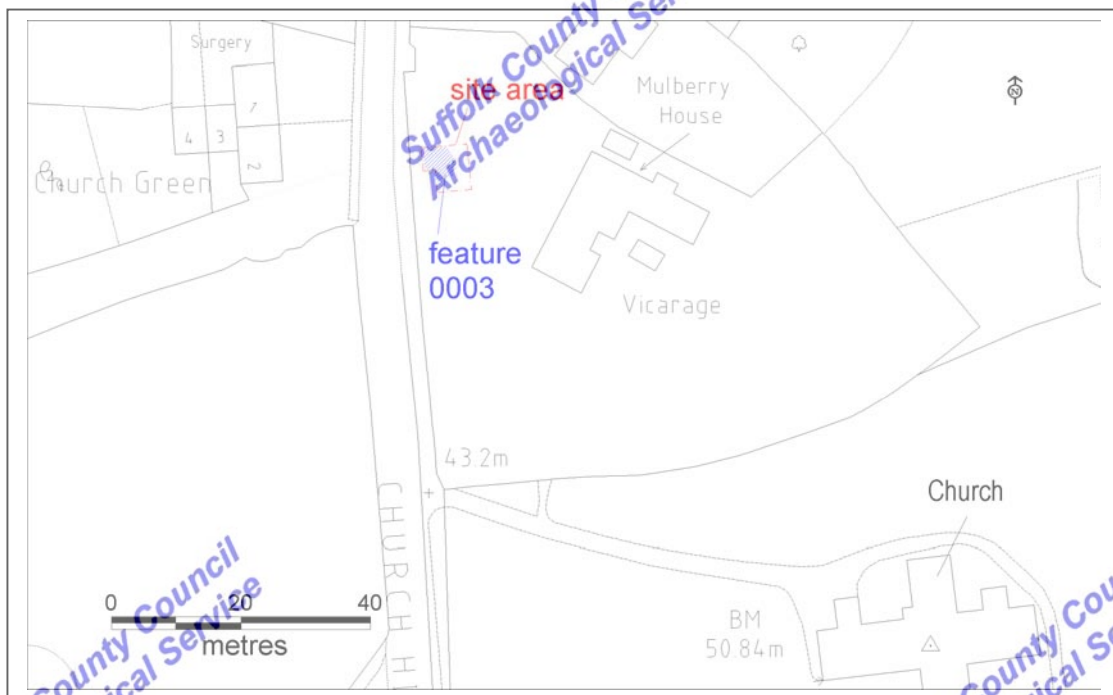


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## Introduction

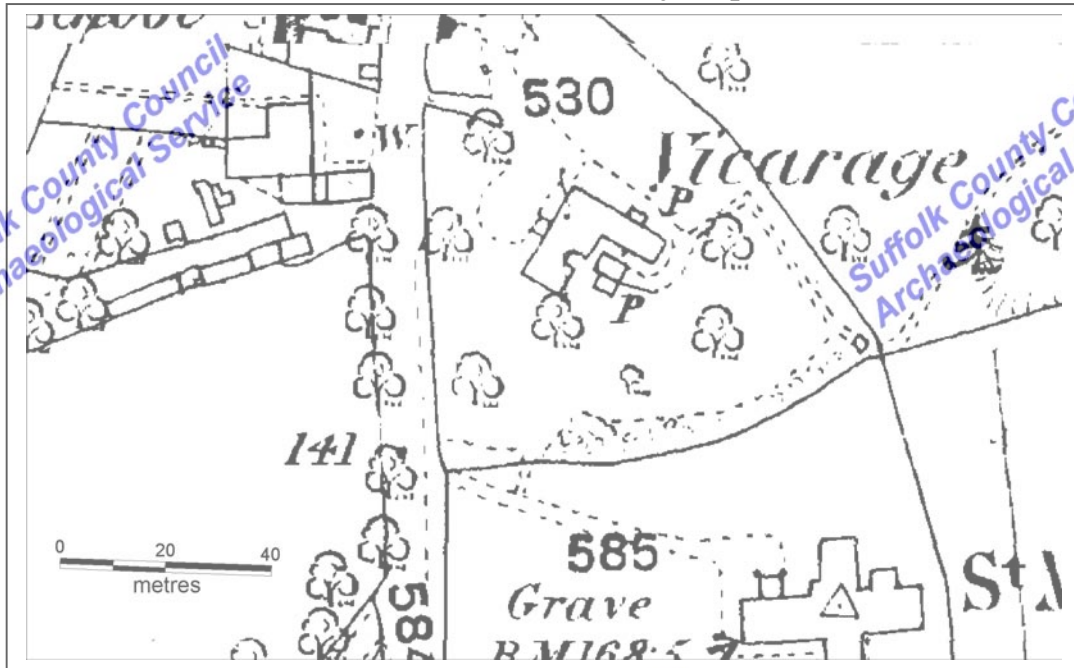
The Brief and Specification for the monitoring was produced and issued by Jess Tipper of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (dated 09-10-2006) (Tipper 2006). The site lies immediately north of the church and churchyard (PKM 034) at a height of around 40 metres OD. This area is likely to have formed part of the historic settlement core. Further north lies an Anglo-Saxon find spot (PKM 016) which is also thought to be indicative of settlement during this period (Tipper 2006). Mulberry House is a Grade II listed former vicarage dating to the mid-sixteenth century which was modernised and extended during the early nineteenth century (English Heritage 2007). The first editions of the Ordnance Survey maps indicate that the layout and features of the immediate landscape have remained relatively unchanged during the past century. The site area is likely to have formed part of the formal garden of the vicarage. The character of the upper deposits, which were revealed during the ground reduction, also suggested this. The topsoil consisted of very undisturbed rich loamy garden soil up to half a metre in depth.

Site Area and Location of Feature 0003



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First Edition Ordnance Survey Map c. 1880



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**Methodology**

The ground levels were reduced by up to 1.00m. at the western edge of the site to around 0.60m. at the eastern site limit. A mechanical 360° tracked mini-digger fitted with a 0.50 wide toothless bucket was used for these ground works. A measured sketch plan was produced at the beginning of the site visit, in order to accurately record the location and extent of the footing trenches along with other areas of ground disturbance. Five localised soil profiles were also recorded within the site area, with notes of deposit depths and soil descriptions. A small amount of hand cleaning was carried out in order to define the deposits. Digital photographs were taken from all aspects of the trenched area. An examination of all of the trench faces and base of the excavation was made in order to locate any archaeological features or datable finds. A small quantity of upcast soil was also examined for any finds. Feature 0003 was observed in the northwest corner of the site and was recorded using measured 1:50 section and plan drawings, observed phenomena recording forms and digital photography. The finds were all retrieved from the western (site edge) section of feature 0003.

**List of Contexts**

OPNO	feature	component	identifier	description
0001	—	0001	Topsoil	Mid-brown loamy sand (garden soil) covering entire site area.
0002	—	0002	Subsoil	Pale-brown natural clay and chalk
0003	0003		Yard surface	Re-deposited flint, chalk, clay and domestic refuse. Probable medieval yard surface.

## Results

The topsoil deposits (0001) were generally consistent across the site, with a constant depth of around 0.50m. The deposit consisted of rich and established loamy and sandy garden soil, mid-brown in colour; containing only occasional small pebbles. Extensive root disturbance was evident throughout this deposit, some as a result of generations of previous tree and shrub growth, but also current activity from a number of established garden species. The subsoil (0002) was only revealed in the south and eastern areas of the site and consisted of pale brown natural clays with occasional chalk lumps; this deposit was very firm in consistency.

Feature 0003 occupied the entire northwest area of the site, covering around twenty-five square metres and measuring up to 0.50m. in depth. However, the feature clearly covered a far greater area, as only the eastern extent could clearly be ascertained. The edges of the feature were irregular and curving with a gradually graded profile. This suggests that the deposit occupied a graduated depression in the landscape, which may be natural, but perhaps could equally be evidence of minor clay extraction.

## Mulberry House, Pakenham (PKM 054): The Finds

Richenda Goffin

### Introduction

Finds were collected from a single context of the monitoring, as shown in the table below.

OP	Pottery		CBM		Miscellaneous	Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g		
0003	7	178	1	20	1 frag oyster shell @ 4g	Med-P. Med
Total	7	178	1	20		

**Finds quantities**

### Pottery

A total of seven fragments of pottery was recovered from deposit 0003, a possible yard surface created by deliberate levelling or infilling. Two joining fragments from the sagging base of a medieval coarseware dating to the Late 12th-14th century were identified, with two other coarsewares, one of which is a heavily sooted body sherd similar to Bury Coarseware (Gritty variant). Two additional fragments of an oxidised coarseware with shallow thumbing impressions are likely to date to the end of this date range.

### Ceramic building material

One small fragment of ceramic building material was collected from the possible yard surface 0003. It is a small piece of roof tile, made in a red-firing hard sandy fabric with occasional ferrous inclusions. The remains of mortar adheres to one of its sides. Such tiles are mainly post-medieval and it is possible that this fragment is intrusive, coming from the topsoil 0001.

### Oyster Shell

A single piece of oyster shell from deposit 0003 was recorded and discarded.

## Discussion

The small quantity of pottery recovered from deposit 0003 is medieval in date, with two sherds dating to the later part of the medieval period. The presence of a single post-medieval fragment of building material might be explained by it coming from the topsoil deposit above. The other alternative is that the medieval pottery was redeposited during the post-medieval period, but the general condition of the pottery which is relatively unabraded, and includes two large joining sherds, suggests that this was not the case.

## Conclusion

Little evidence of any buried topsoil or other accumulations were seen at the interface of deposit 0003 and the underlying, apparently natural clay. It is therefore perhaps less likely that the depression is entirely natural, but rather the result of small-scale clay extraction. Deposit 0003 produced a concentrated group of medieval pottery fragments, which were largely unabraded (Goffin 2006: this report). These finds were closely accompanied by significant quantities of oyster shell, which were located within undulating horizontal bands within the centre of deposit 0003. The intermittent, but also horizontally layered, concentrations of medium to large flints, chalk lumps and clay within this feature suggest that the deposit was roughly but deliberately laid, possibly over some period of time. The deposit did not appear to simply represent rubbish disposal within a convenient hollow, but a more systematic attempt to level and consolidate this area of ground. The feature therefore is most likely to represent an informal yard surface.

## References

English Heritage, 2007 'Mulberry House, Pakenham: LBS Number 283662' Listed Buildings Online. <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm>

Tipper, J., 2006 'Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development: Mulberry House, Church Hill, Pakenham' Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team, Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.