

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Holywell Cottage, Boon Close, Bury St Edmunds BSE 192

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2002 and 2006
(Planning app. Nos. E/99/3263/P and SE/05/02385)

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All Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service unless otherwise stated.

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by the owner Mr D. Reid and the archaeological work specified by Mr Bob Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The fieldwork was carried out by Jo Caruth from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

Summary

Archaeological monitoring during two extensions to Holywell Cottage, Boon Close, Bury St Edmunds, a former Pesthouse, identified a flint platform probably laid down prior to construction in 1665, in order to raise the building above that of the surrounding water meadows.

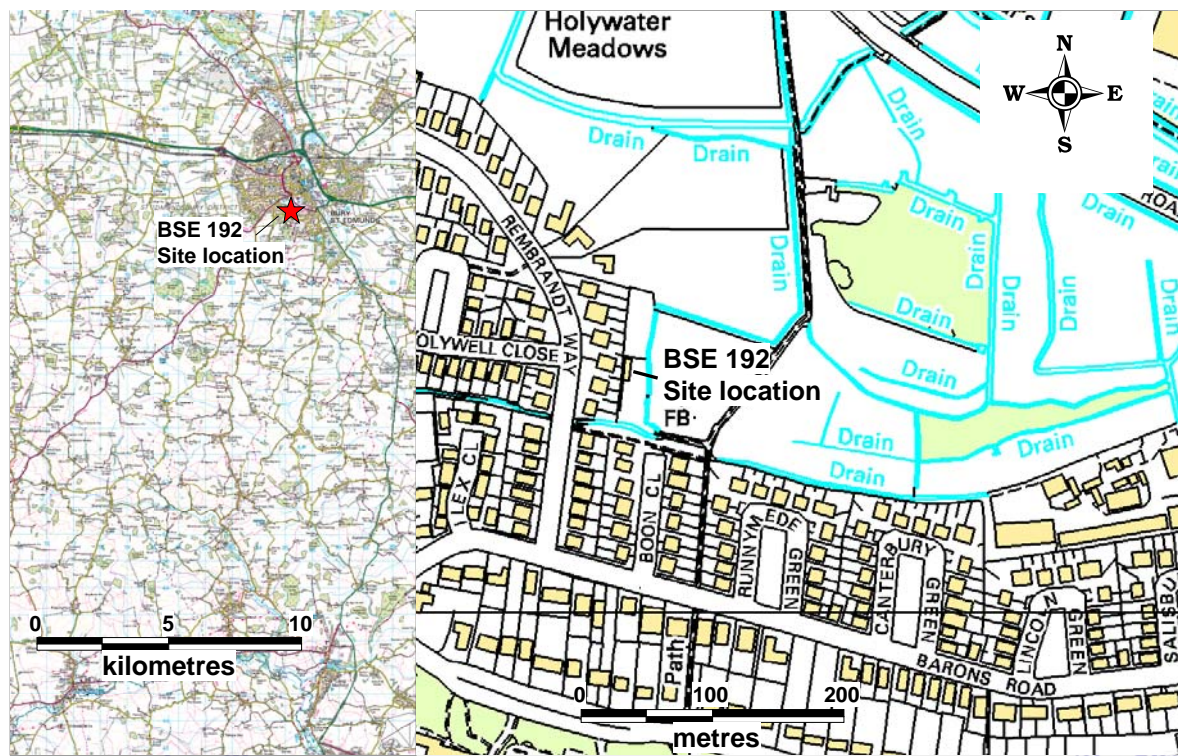
SMR information

Planning application nos. E/99/3263/P SE/05/02385
Date of fieldwork: April 2002 and October 2006
Grid Reference: TL85204 63182
Funding body: Mr D Reid
Oasis reference. Suffolkc1-27049

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during extension works in April 2002 and October 2006 to Holywell Cottage, Boon Close, Bury St Edmunds. The site lies at TL 85204 63182, at 35m OD on the south-west edge of Holywater Meadows, a medieval water meadow (Fig. 1). Holywell Cottage is the surviving one of two buildings constructed as a Pesthouse in 1665 in case of an outbreak of plague in the town, and although it does not appear to have been used for this purpose there is some evidence that it may have been used for smallpox cases.

Archaeological monitoring was initially carried out in advance of the construction of an extension to the southern end of the building in April 2002. This work was carried out to a Brief and Specification produced by Mr R.D Carr on 6th December 2001 in response to an archaeological condition on planning application E/99/3263/P. In October 2006 following a revised planning application, SE/05/02385, also with an archaeological condition, further monitoring was carried out during the groundworks for an extension to the east side of the building. This work was subject to the requirements of a second Brief and Specification (Appendix 1) by Mr R.D. Carr. In both cases a continuous monitoring of the groundworks was required in order to allow for the recording and, if necessary, hand excavation of archaeological deposits.



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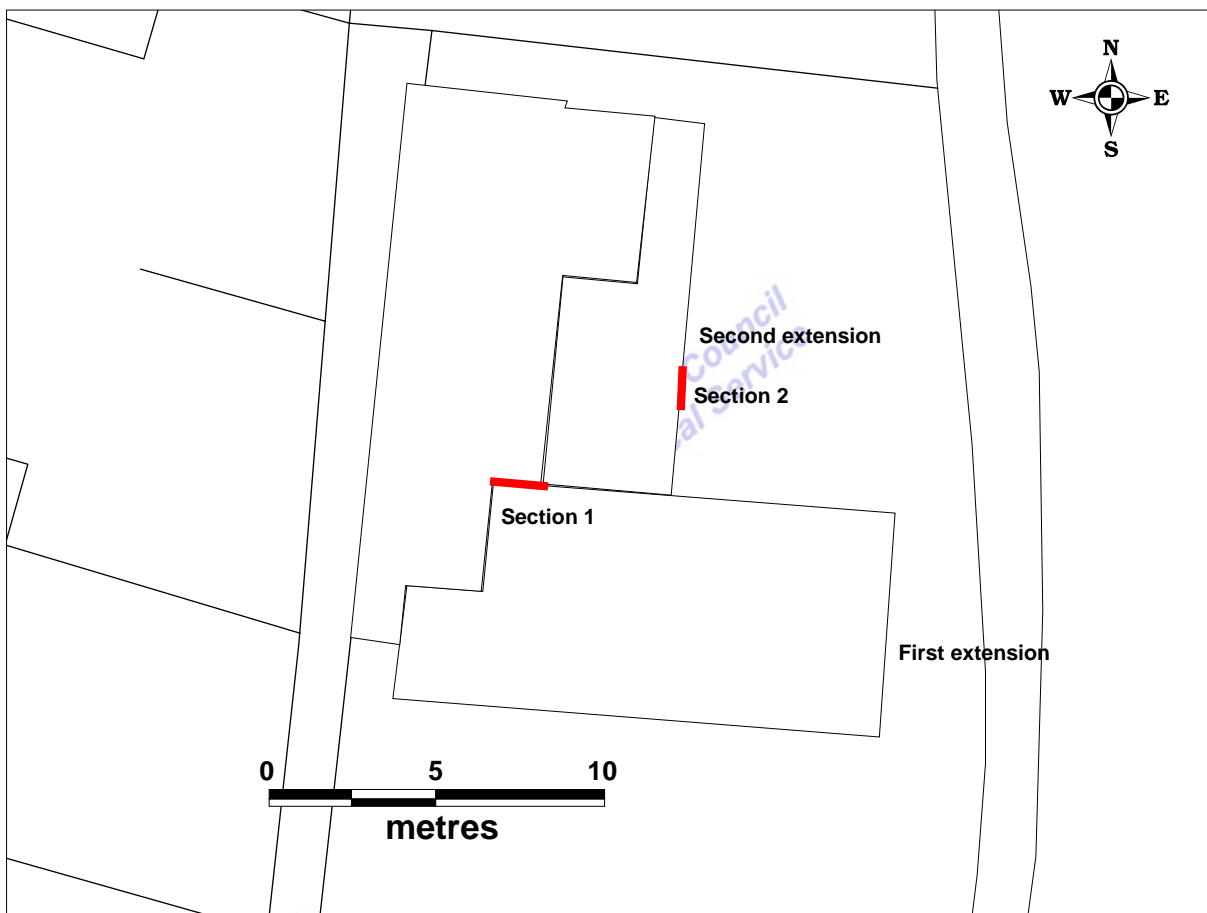
Figure 1. Site location

The site is approached down a slope from Boon Close and is separated from the meadow in front of the house by a large ditch which is crossed via a small vehicle bridge. The house sits on a slightly raised platform, up to 1m higher than the surrounding water meadow.

Methodology

On both occasions the monitoring was carried out by Jo Caruth and all groundworks were observed as they were excavated and the upcast spoil examined for finds. The groundworks for the first extension covered an area of c.78m² and the second c.31m² (Fig. 2). Each monitoring was undertaken in two stages, first the site strip over the footprint of the building which removed topsoil to a depth of c.15cm and secondly the excavation of the footing trenches which were 0.6m wide and generally c.1.2m deep but up to 1.6m deep in places. Plans and sections were recorded at 1:20 and black and white, colour transparencies and digital photographs were taken during the works. All finds were kept.

The site is recorded under the SMR number BSE 192 and the archive kept in the archive and finds stores at SCCAS in Bury St Edmunds. A copy of the report has been lodged with the OASIS on-line database under the reference Suffolkc1-27049



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Figure 2. Location of each extension and sections

Results

Results were recorded in plan and section of the footing trenches. Footing trenches for both areas recorded similar soil profiles, with evidence for a deliberately laid flint platform, probably, underlying the existing building. Potential archaeological deposits identified in the upper layers of Extension 1 during the site strip were 19th century or later.

Detailed descriptions of the results of each area and a full list of contexts are included below.

Context no.	Feature no.	Identifier	Description	Finds
0001		Unstratified finds	Number allocated to unstratified finds from across the site	None
0002	0002	Layer	Layer of brick rubble etc. underlying 0003	16th-19th century CBM
0003	0003	Spread	Linear, N-S aligned deposit of large (up to 12cm) unworked flints, a single course thick. Appears to separate 0004 from 0005 with 20th century rubble directly overlying 0002 at the south end and 0002 overlies rubble deposit 0003.	
0004	0004	Layer	Orange-brown loam containing building rubble, including slate. This was found between 0003 and the standing house.	
0005	0005	Layer	Mixed topsoil and redeposited soil found to the west of 0002.	
0006	0006	Layer	Modern topsoil overlying all other deposits	
0007	0007	Layer	Yellow-brown silt overlying 0008 and under 0002, 0004 and 0005. This had some brick rubble pressed into the top but was otherwise clean.	
0008	0008	Layer	Layer of large loose flints (up to 18cm) with coarse gravel and pea-grit. This was 15-20cm deep and covered the whole building platform.	
0009	0009	Layer	Thin, c.5cm, layer of coarse yellow sand under 0008.	
0010	0010	Layer	Even well-worked stony brown silt.	
0011	0011	Trench cut	Cut of trench alongside house footing.	
0012	0012	Trench fill	Loose brick rubble and gravel. All 19th century +.	
0013	0013	Footing	Footing for standing building, bonded flint under brick.	

Table 1. List of contexts

Extension 1

The footprint strip was c.0.25m deep and removed a mixed layer of topsoil and redeposited orange-brown sandy loam, 0006. Brick, slate and glass fragments were present throughout its depth. The only feature within this was a patchy single course of north-south aligned large (up to 20cm long) loose flints c.0.5m wide. This was mainly visible in the southern half of the site, but the feature could also be seen as a band of loose flint with some crushed brick rubble at the extreme north end of the topsoil stripped area (Fig. 3). However the presence of a modern drain and the nature of the topsoil between these meant that the flints were absent over c.40% of the width and although it is likely that the line was originally continuous it was not possible to be certain of this. However the flints did separate two deposits, and this division was noticeable for the full width of the site. To the west of the line the soil had a higher orange silt-sand content, 0004, whereas to the east it was predominantly topsoil, 0005. A sample hole through the flints showed that these and the material either side of them all came down onto a clean orange-brown silt, 0007, and that there was no distinction in the lower layers either side of the flints.

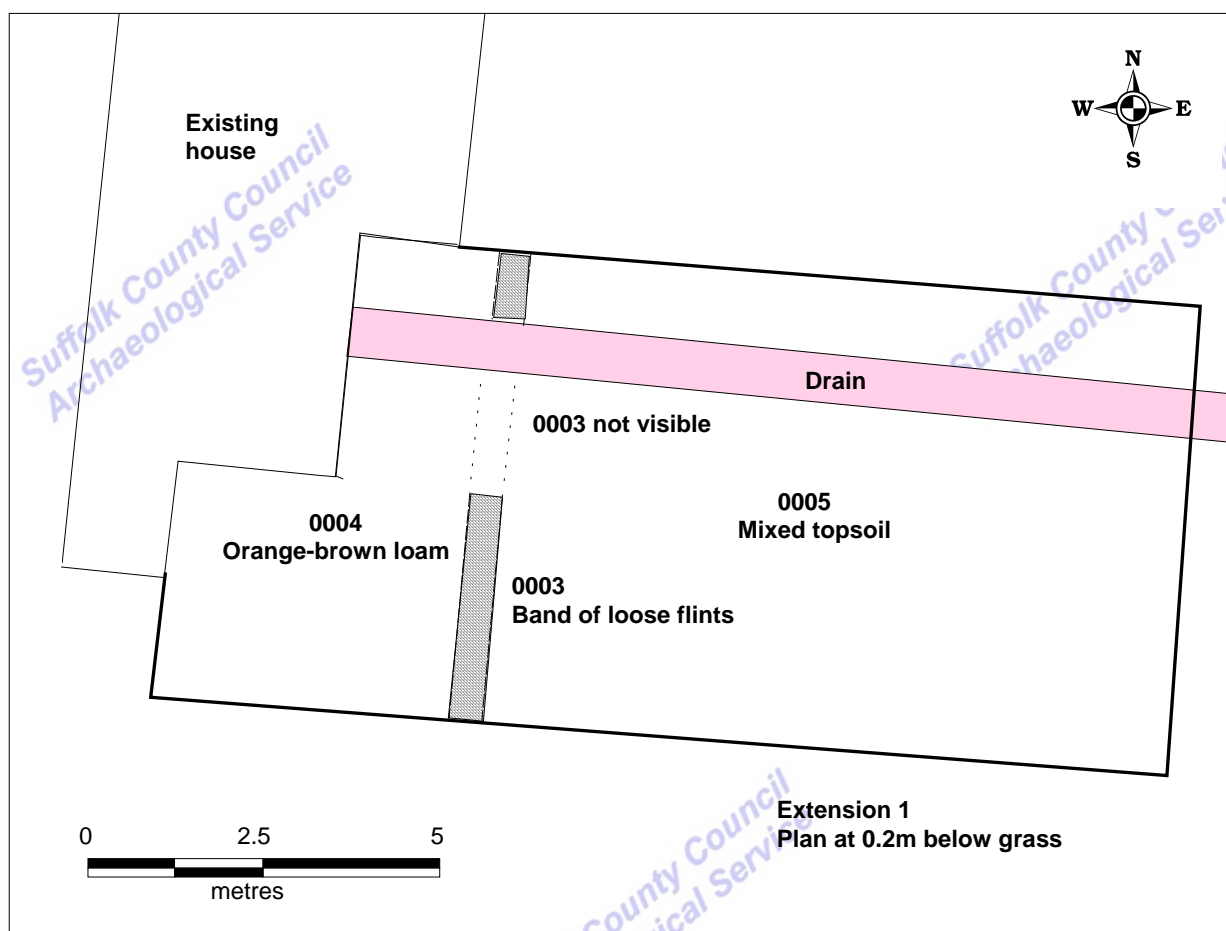


Figure 3. Plan of footprint strip for Extension 1

Excavation of the footing trenches showed clearly stratified deposits in the western half of the site with 0.35m of topsoil (a combination of 0004 and 0006), over c.0.46m of yellow-brown silt, 0007, overlying a 0.15m thick layer of loose flints, 0008 forming a crude surface. 0008 overlay c.0.1m of coarse yellow sand, 0009, over a layer of even, well worked stony brown silt, 0010. The trenches were 1.2m deep and the basal layer was still present at the base of the trench and no natural was seen. A section against the corner of the house showed that the footings for the house were constructed of bonded flint and bricks, 0013, and that this lay directly onto the flint surface, 0008. A trench, 0011, had been cut outside the footing, through the upper yellow-brown silty layer and this had been filled with loose brick rubble and coarse gravel, 0012. The line of the new footing trench in the eastern half of the site contained a large soakaway and therefore all potential archaeological deposits had been destroyed.

Extension 2

The topsoil strip of the building footprint failed to penetrate modern topsoil and all archaeological information was recovered from the sections of the footing trenches. The footing trenches were 0.6m wide and were excavated to a depth of 1.2m, covering a total length of 11.2m. Natural yellow silt was just perceptible in places at the base of the trenches, but it was not fully exposed. The soil profile in the trench sections showed 0.35m of dense modern topsoil, 0006, over 0.25m of even homogeneous yellow-brown silt, 0007, which was generally clean, but with some rubble fragments in the top of the layer. This overlay 0.2m thick layer of large, up to 0.18m across, flints, 0008, within gravel and pea-grit. At the base of this was a thin, c.0.05m layer of yellow silt, 0009, which may have been washed through the stones and this overlay a 0.4m thick layer of clean, mid-brown silt with occasional chalk flecks, 0010. This soil profile is almost identical to that seen in the Phase 1 monitoring and suggests that it is likely that these layers cover the whole area of the building.

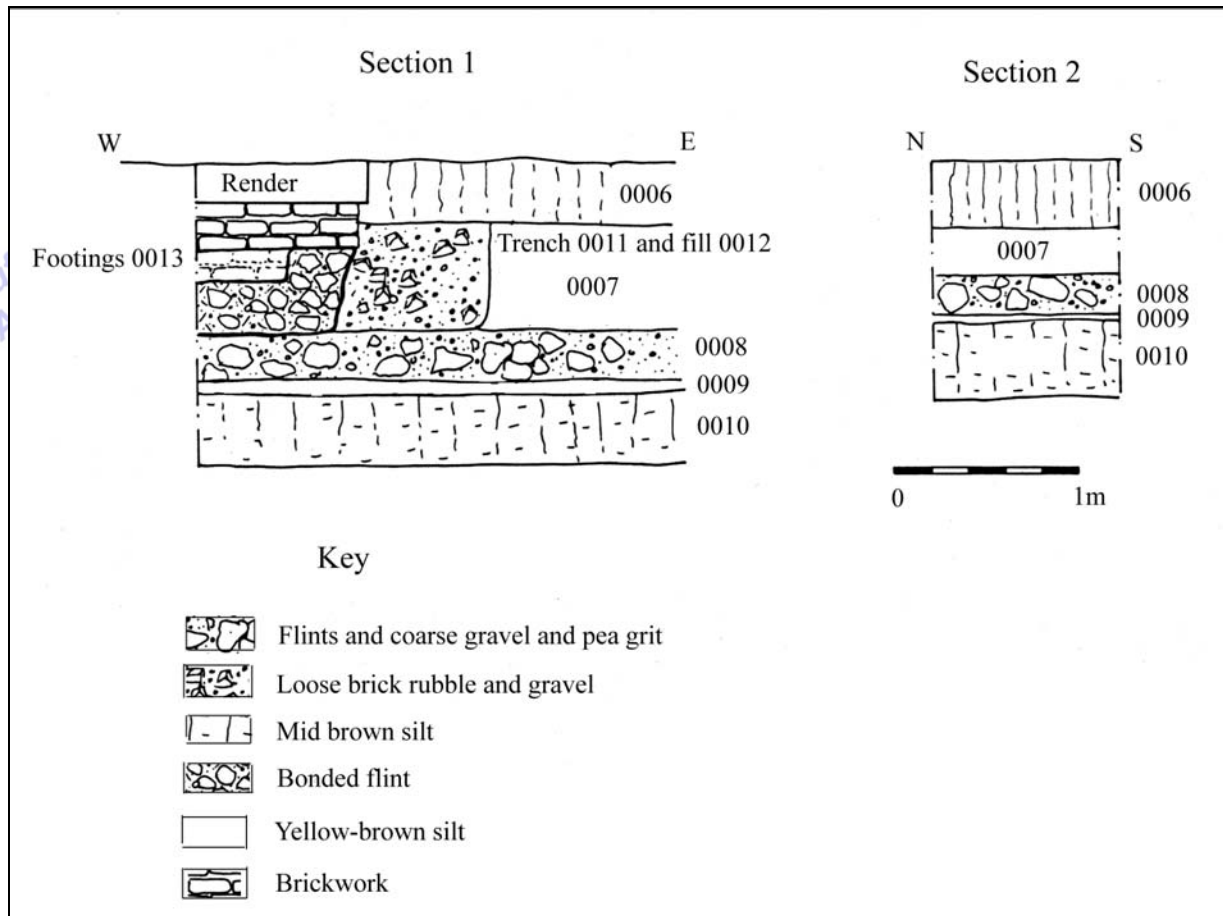


Figure 4. Sections

Finds and environmental evidence by Sue Anderson

All finds were collected from context 0002. They consisted of one fragment of machine-made pantile (51g), ten brick fragments (1284g), and one piece of clay pipe stem (7g). The brick was all in sandy red fabrics typical of local late and post-medieval bricks, with grog-tempered and poorly mixed calcareous-tempered fabrics. Two fragments were part of a single brick which had a narrow central channel in the upper surface, either a frog or a moulding. This measured 63mm thick and 110mm wide and is likely to be of 17th-18th century date. None of the other material could be closely dated, although the pantile must be 19th century or later, and the clay pipe stem is likely to be relatively early due to the wide bore and thickness of the stem.

Discussion

In both stages of the monitoring distinct soil/aggregate layers were identified. At the base of the soil profile was a layer of mid brown silt, 0010, approximately 0.4m thick which probably represents an original topsoil. This was overlain by a c.20cm thick layer of large flints, 0008, within a gravel/pea-grit matrix, with a thin deposit of yellow-brown silt, 0009, at the base, which may have been washed through the stones from above. The flint layer looked like a deliberate deposit laid on topsoil to raise the ground level above that of the surrounding water-meadow and provide a solid platform for construction. The base of the house footings sat directly onto the flints, but the presence of a trench, 0011, against the footing obscured the relationship between the footing and the silt layer. Trench 0011 was filled with loose brick rubble and coarse gravel, 0012, suggesting that this may have been a later cut against the house to act as a French drain.

Documentary evidence (Breen 2000) suggests that the Pesthouse of 1665 was built onto an undeveloped field and that the existing building is the only surviving one of two original structures, from which it seems logical to suggest that the platform was laid down in order to allow the construction of the Pesthouse, raising it above the adjacent water meadow. It is probable, but cannot be confirmed, that the silt layer was laid down during the construction of the upper parts of the house to fill around the footings and raise the outside levels to close to interior floor levels.

The band of loose flints, 0003, found in the upper levels of the first extension may represent a form of crude surface or footing, perhaps for a garden wall. However material, 0002, recovered from beneath it was spot-dated to 19th century and therefore 0003 is a modern deposit.

Conclusion

Monitoring of two small extensions to the former Pesthouse at Holywell Meadow identified a possible construction platform made up of large flints and pea grit probably laid down in 1665 in order to provide a solid dry base for the new building. No footings for ancillary structures or hard surfacing was seen.

References

Breen, A., M., 2000, *Documentary Survey, Holywell Cottage, Boon Close, Cullum Road, Bury St Edmunds* Unpublished.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

**HOLYWELL COTTAGE, BOONE CLOSE,
CULLUM ROAD, BURY ST EDMUNDS**

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 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application SE/05/022385) . Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The existing dwelling is the remaining element of the 'pesthous' first erected on the site in the 17th century. There is a documentary report which describes the history of the buildings and shows that there were no substantial structures to the south of them which would fall in the development area. Early mapping, however, is not of sufficient detail to demonstrate the existence or form of yard surfaces, paths or peripheral structures which may have been associated with the pesthouse. In general these are an unusual class of structure which are poorly understood, evidence of their associated local landscape should be recorded before destruction.
- 1.3 The proposed building extension to the existing building will be built with strip footings for the external walls. The design will require soil to be removed from the entire building footprint.
- 1.4 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.

- 1.5 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 surfaces and structures associated with the 17th and 18th century use of the site as a pesthouse.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the stripping of soil to reduce ground level to the footprint and the excavation of strip footings. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed whilst they are 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 observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of the Suffolk County Archaeological Service (Suffolk County Council, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone/Fax: 01284 352443) 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 County Archaeologist 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 order that the general ground lowering is achieved in a manner suitable to the archaeological process a toothless machine bucket of 80cm or greater width must be used by the contractor. A contingency should be made for breaks or delays in machine use whilst the general ground lowering takes place as it is expected that archaeological levels (if they exist) will be between 150mm and 300mm deep.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 All archaeological features exposed must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.6 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.
- 4.7 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.8 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 archaeological records and finds is to be prepared and 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 project report must also be prepared summarising the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, a period by period description of 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. 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).
- 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: Robert Carr

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 10 January 2006

Reference: /HolywellCottage200601

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.

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