

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

WIXOE BARN, WIXOE (SMR ref. WIX 018)

A REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED
WITH A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
(Application Nos. SE/07/0333)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2007/107
(OASIS Ref. suffolkc1-27405)

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of groundwork at Wixoe Barns, Wixoe (NGR: TL 7166 4286) was carried out on 17 May 2007. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference WIX 018. The fieldwork was conducted by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, and was commissioned and funded by the landowner Mrs S Sheargold. A standing building survey was undertaken (by Mr L Alston) prior to the archaeological monitoring and is the subject of a separate report.

The fieldwork revealed a geological stratum of clay-with-flints overlaid by approximately 0.40m of relatively recent "made ground". No archaeological features or deposits were observed and no artefacts were recovered.

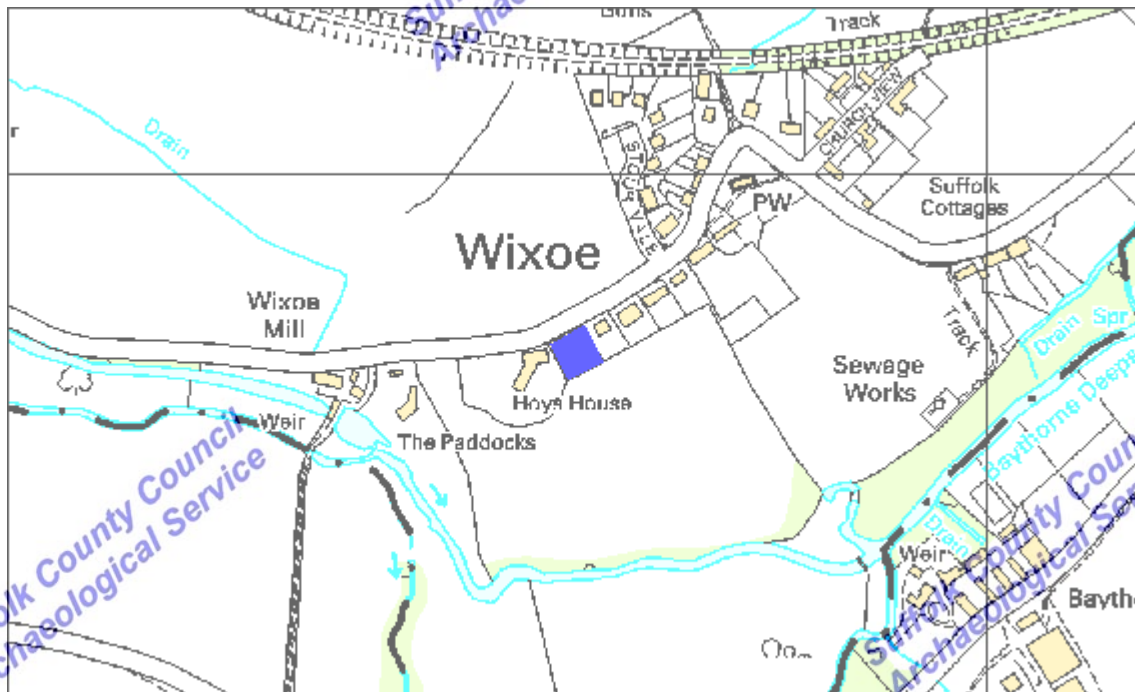


Fig 1: Map showing the location of Wixoe Barns (coloured blue)

Introduction

An archaeological monitoring of groundwork was conducted at Wixoe Barns, Wixoe (Fig 1) as part of an archaeological condition in relation to planning permission for the conversion of a redundant farm building to residential accommodation. A standing building survey was carried out also (by Mr L Alston) and is the subject of a separate report.

The site is located at the south-western end of Wixoe village, on the north side of the Stour valley at a height of approximately 57m OD. Known archaeological sites in the vicinity include Roman and medieval find scatters (WIX 008 and WIX 010, respectively).

Based on a study of early Ordnance Survey maps, the barn intended for conversion is thought to have been constructed between 1890 and 1920. It is located against the eastern boundary of the property (see Fig 2). The walls of the barn are to be retaining, and tied to new internal walls. In addition there are to be a number of new cross-walls. All new walls are to be built on 600mm deep, concrete strip footings. The excavation of the trenches for the strip footings was anticipated to cause significant ground disturbance that would have an impact on any archaeological features or deposits that existed within the area of the building.

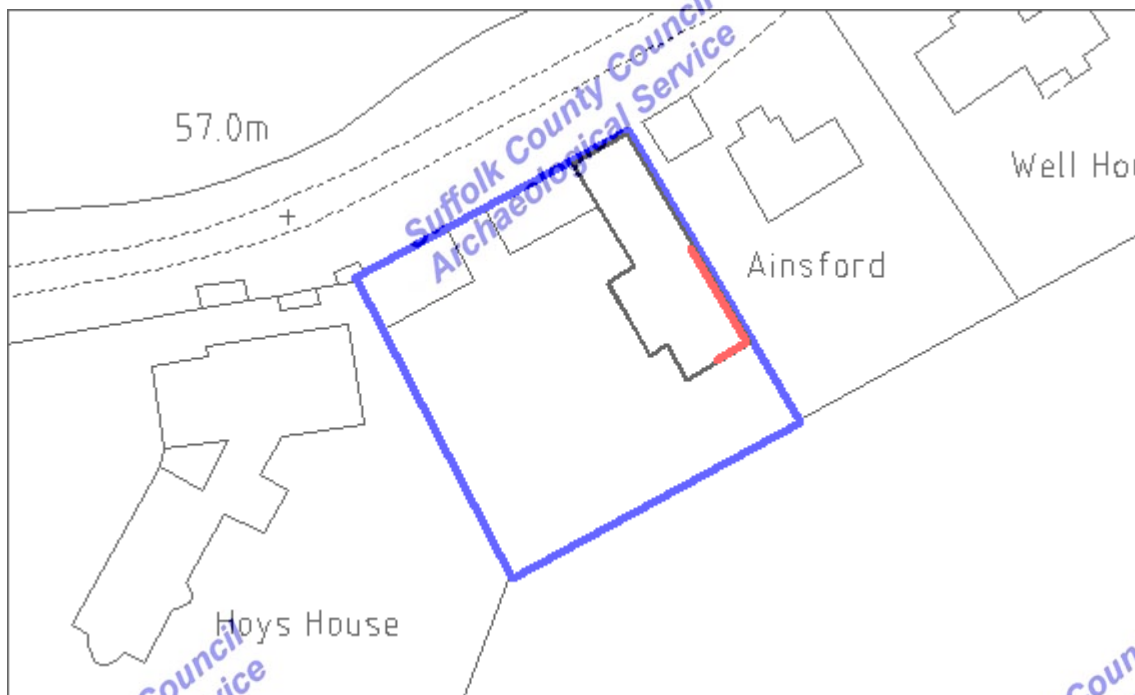


Fig 2: Plan showing the site outline (blue), the barn intended for conversion (black) and the location of the monitored trenches (red)

Methodology

The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with a Brief and Specification written by Dr J Tipper of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team (see Appendix).

The writer visited the site on 17 May 2007. At that time an asphalt floor had been removed in the southern half of the barn and trenches for the new strip footings had been excavated along parts of the eastern and southern walls of the building (see Fig 2). These trenches are estimated to represent approximately 10-15% of the area likely to be affected by the groundwork. The trenches were 0.80m wide and 0.60m deep, the latter being the formation level for the new footings. The trenches were examined for archaeological features and deposits and for evidence of the natural strata. The excavated material was scanned for artefacts that might be dated archaeologically. A representative cross section of one of the trenches was drawn, and a photographic record was made.

Results

The trenches exposed the stepped brick footings of the barn, as shown on Figure 3. These are founded on a geological deposit of stiff, greyish brown *clay-with-flints* that can be seen on Fig 3 at the base of the vertical section to the right of the footings, just above the water line. The *clay-with-flints* was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.25m. It was sealed by a layer of re-deposited clay mixed with flint, brick and slate rubble, with a thickness of about 0.40m. This deposit covered the brick footings and formed the make-up for the floor of the barn.

No archaeological features or deposits were seen in the monitored trenches and no artefacts were recovered from the excavated material.



Fig 3: View of the monitored trench on the east side of the barn, looking south

Conclusion

There was no evidence for a natural soil profile overlying the geological deposit of *clay-with-flints*. Since the ground level of the adjacent property to the east is approximately 0.50m higher than the surface of the natural stratum within the barn, it is assumed that this part of the site was terraced when the building was constructed. Any archaeological features or deposits that might have existed on this part of the site would probably have been destroyed at that time. Based on this evidence, it is considered unlikely that the groundwork associated with the barn conversion will have any impact on archaeological remains.

Kieron Heard
Project Officer, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team

05 June 2007

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Appendix: Brief and Specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Recording and Monitoring of Development

WIXOE BARN, WIXOE, CO10 8UD

*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 conversion of a redundant farm building at Wixoe Barn, Wixoe, CO10 8UD (TL 7166 4286), has been granted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application SE/07/0333). The local planning authority have been advised that the building is important and will need to be recorded before development. In addition, areas of ground disturbance will be recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The planning permission concerns the conversion of a farm building to residential accommodation.
- 1.3 The development concerns a traditional farm building. A policy statement on historic farm buildings by English Heritage and the Countryside Agency, endorsed by English Nature and the Rural Development Service (*Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings*, 2006 – available at www.helm.org.uk) advises that recording of such structures before conversion works is desirable. The buildings will retain important archaeological information concerning the construction, character, date, context and use. Any groundworks associated with the conversion would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.4 In addition, the application lies in an area of archaeological interest, recorded in the County Site and Monuments Record, close to both Roman (WIX 008) and medieval (WIX 010) finds scatters. There is high potential for encountering both Roman and medieval occupation deposits at this location. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.
- 1.5 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. Detailed standards, information and guidance to supplement this brief are to be found in *Understanding Historic Buildings; A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006) and *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001). Technical standards, applicable to detailed survey, are covered by *Metric Survey Specification for English Heritage* (English Heritage 2000). 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.

- 1.6 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 (SCCAS/CT) in ensuring that all potential risks are minimised.

2. **Brief for Archaeological Recording and Monitoring**

- 2.1 To compile an English Heritage (2006) Level 2 descriptive record combined with a photographic survey of the barn before the demolition takes place.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The excavation of internal building footing trenches, as well as any other groundworks that might disturb below-ground archaeological remains, are to be observed during stripping and after they have been excavated. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.
- 2.4 The academic objective will be to provide an understanding of the nature and development of the building. There is also the potential to produce evidence for Roman and medieval occupation of the site.

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 SCCAS/CT - see 1.3 above.
- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT 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 SCCAS/CT must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 English Heritage Level 2 recording will cover both the interior and exterior of the building. Both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described and photographed. A plan, and other drawings as deemed necessary, should be made based on either an architect's drawing or the Ordnance Survey. The record will present conclusions regarding their location, form, date, development and use.
- 4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum.

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 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed with SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).

4.8 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).

Specification by: Dr Jess Tipper

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Date: 30 March 2007

Reference: /WixoeBarns-Wixoe2007

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.