

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## Tree Tops, The Common, Mellis MLS 019

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH  
AN EXTENSION AT TREETOPS, THE COMMON, MELLIS

Planning Application No. 0985/06

NGR: TM 0957 7460

OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-28631

Funded by: Mr M. Young

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2007/96

### *Summary*

*An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches for an extension at Treetops, The Common, Mellis identified a large undated ditch, thought to be an infilled part of the medieval or post-medieval water management systems of moats, ponds and drains that are still seen within the settlement surrounding the medieval green.*

### **Introduction**

Two visits were made to the site on the 13th and 16th July 2007 to monitor the excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the existing property. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by R.D. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application 0985/06. The work was funded by the developer, Mr M. Young.

Interest in the site was based upon its general location on the edge of the medieval green (Fig. 1). This meant that there was a high potential for medieval settlement deposits to be disturbed by the development, which would require recording by archaeological monitoring.

### **Methodology and Results**

The footings consisted of a single 'L' shaped trench, measuring c.14m in length, c.0.6m wide and up to 2m deep. The entire trench was seen to cut through a substantial ditch, 0001, which was visible below c.0.6m of modern topsoil. The topsoil slumped into the top of the ditch, increasing in depth at this point to c.0.9m.

Ditch 0001 was broadly aligned north-south (Fig. 2) and was most clearly seen in section in the southern arm of the footings. The trench had been excavated to the base of the ditch at c.2m depth but this could not be seen as the final 0.2m of trench had infilled with water. The natural subsoil, where visible in the south-west corner of the trenching, was a pale grey clay.

Due to the depth and unstable sides of the trenching the ditch cross-section could not be fully examined but it was apparent that it measured up to 3.5m wide and had moderate sloping upper sides, with a steeper sided central cut. The fill, 0002, was a generally homogenous, dense, organic black clay/silt with lenses of lighter grey clay/silt towards the top. No dateable artefactual material was seen or recovered from the fill.

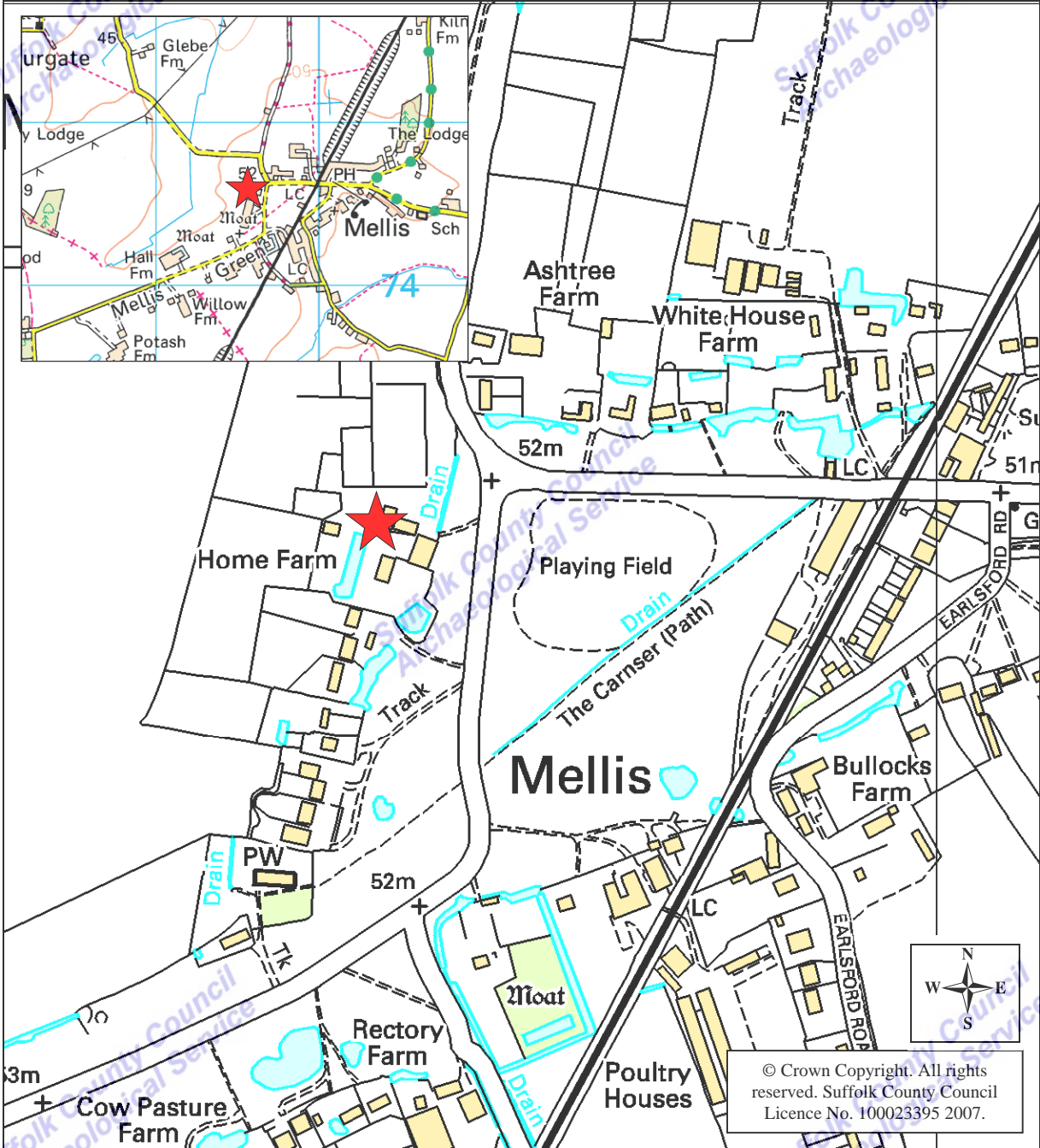


Figure 1. Site location plan

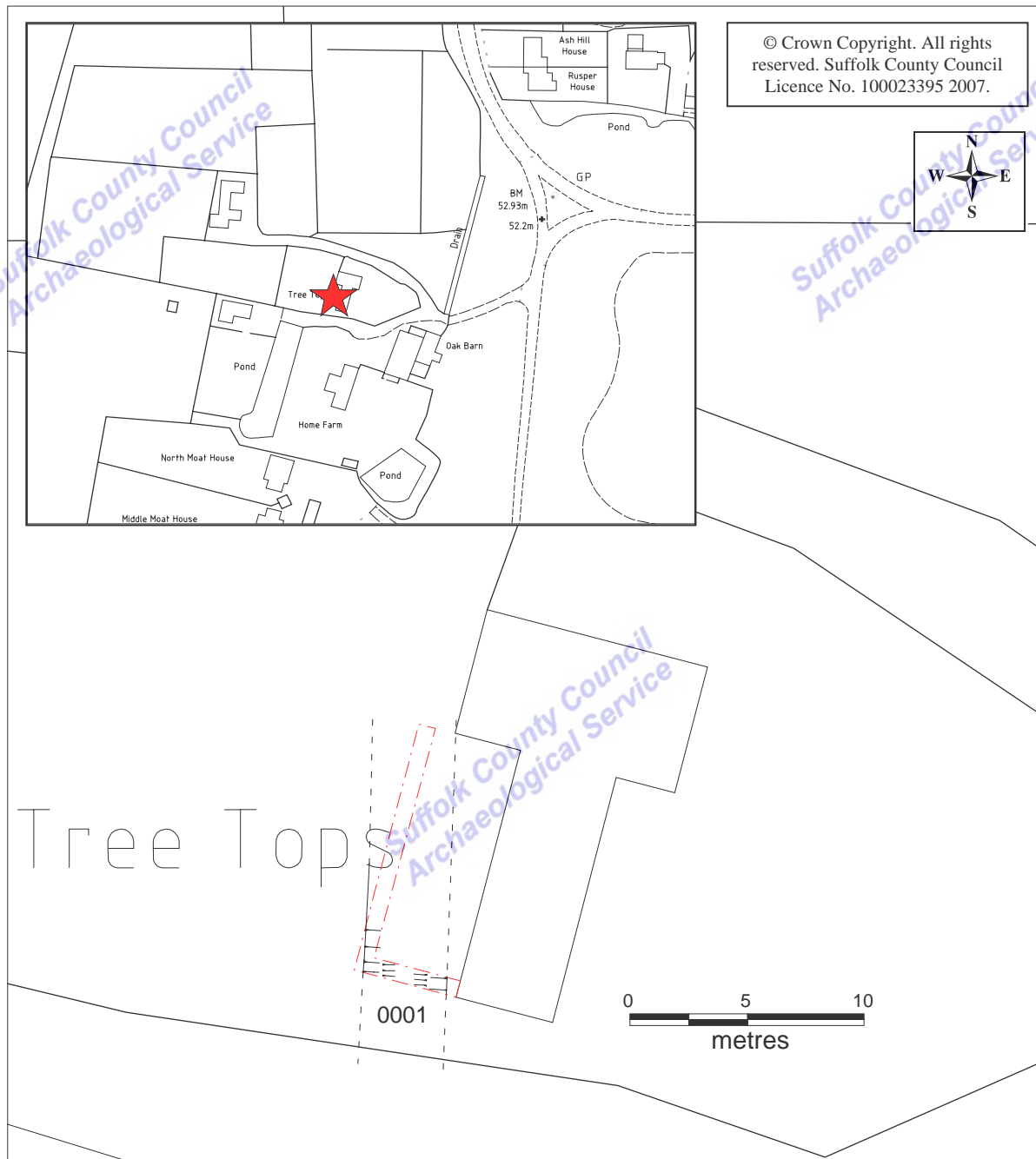


Figure 2. Site plan

## Discussion

The medieval green of Mellis is generally bordered by a range of farms and domestic buildings which has developed from the medieval period. Treetops itself is a modern building which has replaced earlier 20th structures adjacent to Home Farm. There was no indication of any earlier settlement or building evidence to be seen in the footing trench, as it was wholly occupied by ditch 0001.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 (Fig. 3) shows the site as lying in an open field to the north of Home Farm and so may always have lain just outside the areas of green edge settlement. There is no indication of ditch 0001 on this map, suggesting that it had been infilled some time before the late 19th century.

The settlement around the green edge is frequently interspersed with a series of moats, ponds and drains, forming a variety of complicated and widespread water management systems. In the immediate vicinity of the site there is only one main difference between the features shown on the First Edition OS and the existing layout, with the substantial linear pond that lies immediately to the south-west of the site being aligned with an 'L' shaped pond to the north, which is now lost.

Although ditch 0001 does not appear to align with either of these ponds it is assumed that it forms another part of this overall network of water systems, possibly being medieval in origin.

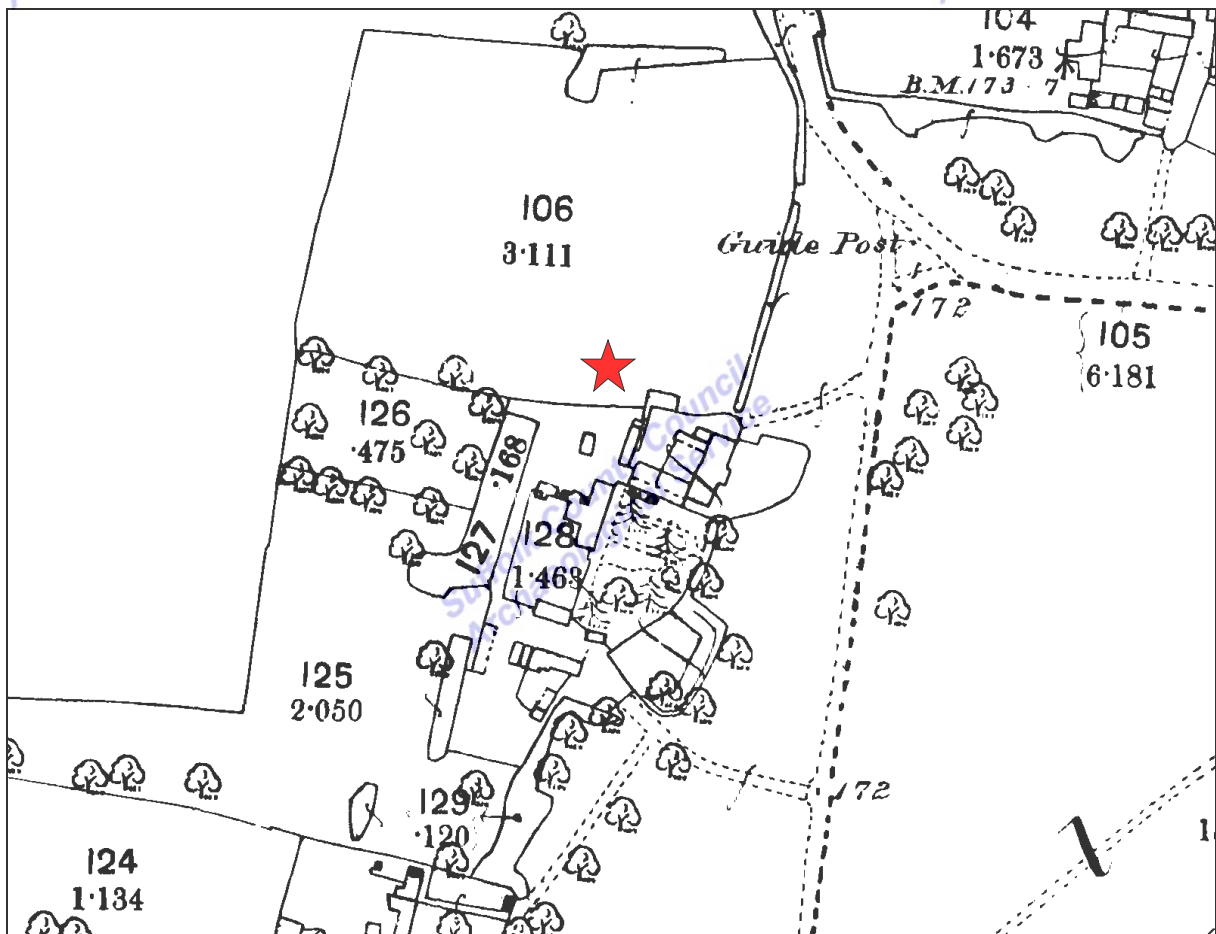


Figure 3. Site on the First Edition Ordnance Survey

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