

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

LAND NORTH OF LANGTON LODGE, VICTORIA HILL, EYE EYE 070

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2004
(Planning app. no. OL/146/03)

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Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Ryden Developments and was monitored by Robert Carr of the SCCAS Conservation Division.

The project was jointly directed by Rhodri Gardner and managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report. The excavation was carried out by Rhodri Gardner, James Rolfe and Jonathan van Jennians, all from the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Field Team.

Finds processing was carried out by Sue Anderson and Kelly Powell, who both contributed to the specialist finds report.

Summary

Eye, Land North of Langton Lodge, Victoria Hill, Eye (TM 1441 7472; EYE 070). A trial trench evaluation was carried out in advance of residential development. Three trial trenches (with a total evaluated area of *c.* 112m²). A major boundary feature, thought to indicate the line of the original medieval Green Edge, was recorded crossing the site and extending to the north where a series of ponds and the results of a previous evaluation meant that the boundary's alignment could be conjectured for further 300m. Four other features were recorded, although these could not be accurately dated. A programme of monitoring was recommended. (Rhodri Gardner, SCCAS, for Ryden Developments, report no: 2004/86)

SMR information

Planning application no.	OL/146/03
Date of fieldwork:	14 th May 2004
Grid Reference:	TM 1441 7472
Funding body:	Ryden Developments

Introduction

Planning consent (OL/146/03) has been sought for the erection of dwellings and associated services on land to the north of Langton Lodge, Victoria Hill, Eye. The site is centred approximately on NGR TM 1441 7472 and lies on generally level ground at *c* 42m AOD. The land is bounded to the north and east by a drain and ditch (still water-filled in places), to the south by the grounds of Langton Grove and an associated substantial pond, and to the west by open playing fields.

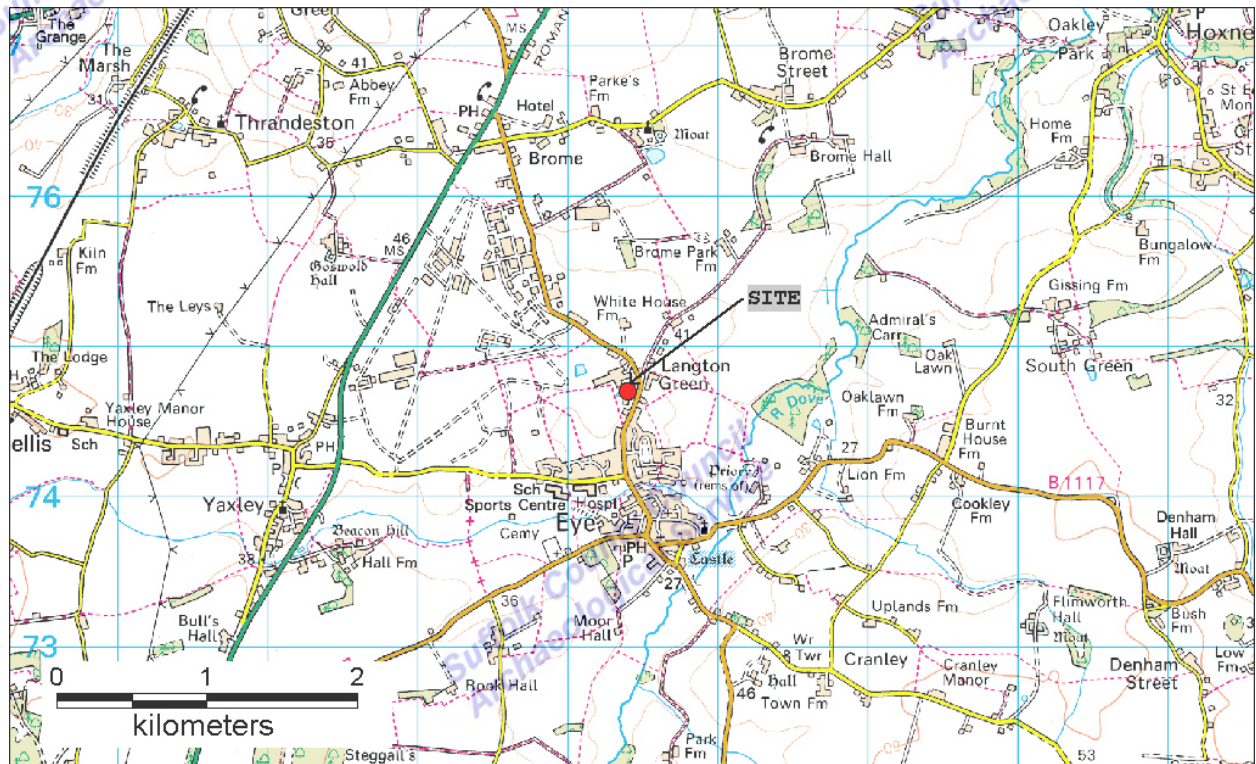


Figure 1. Site location

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Planning consent was conditional upon an agreed programme of archaeological works before development commenced, as the complex pattern of ponds and ditches extending from the area of the site itself for *c.* 300m north through Langton Green are evidence of medieval settlement and property boundaries. It was therefore thought that the site had significant archaeological potential and may contain evidence of medieval Green Edge settlement, in the form of the remains of dwellings, ancillary structures and possible backyard features further back from the road line. Indeed, a previous archaeological evaluation carried out by the SCCAS Field Team some 200m to the north during an earlier phase of development (EYE 063) revealed three ditches and a pit, all of 15th to 17th century date.

An archaeological field evaluation was recommended by Robert Carr of the SCCAS Conservation Team. The SCCAS Field Team was subsequently commissioned by the client, Ryden Developments, to carry out the work.

Methodology

The evaluation was carried out on 14/05/04. Three trial trenches were excavated using a 180° wheeled mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a 1.6m wide flat bladed ditching bucket (see Fig. 2). All mechanical excavation of topsoil and overburden was carried out under archaeological supervision until the top of the first appropriate

archaeological horizon or undisturbed natural drift deposits were encountered. The surface of each trench and any relevant upstanding sections were then cleaned by hand where necessary to further define any archaeological features. The trenches were located by triangulation to existing boundaries and other features within the landscape. Metal detecting was carried out throughout the trenching exercise and the upcast spoil was examined for finds. The Brief specified 5% coverage of the site's area of c. 2650m². This would require some 80m of 1.6m wide trench. However, a large modern spoil heap and recently dug drainage trench restricted access to suitable trenching locations. Consequently, only 70m (112m²) of trial trench was excavated.

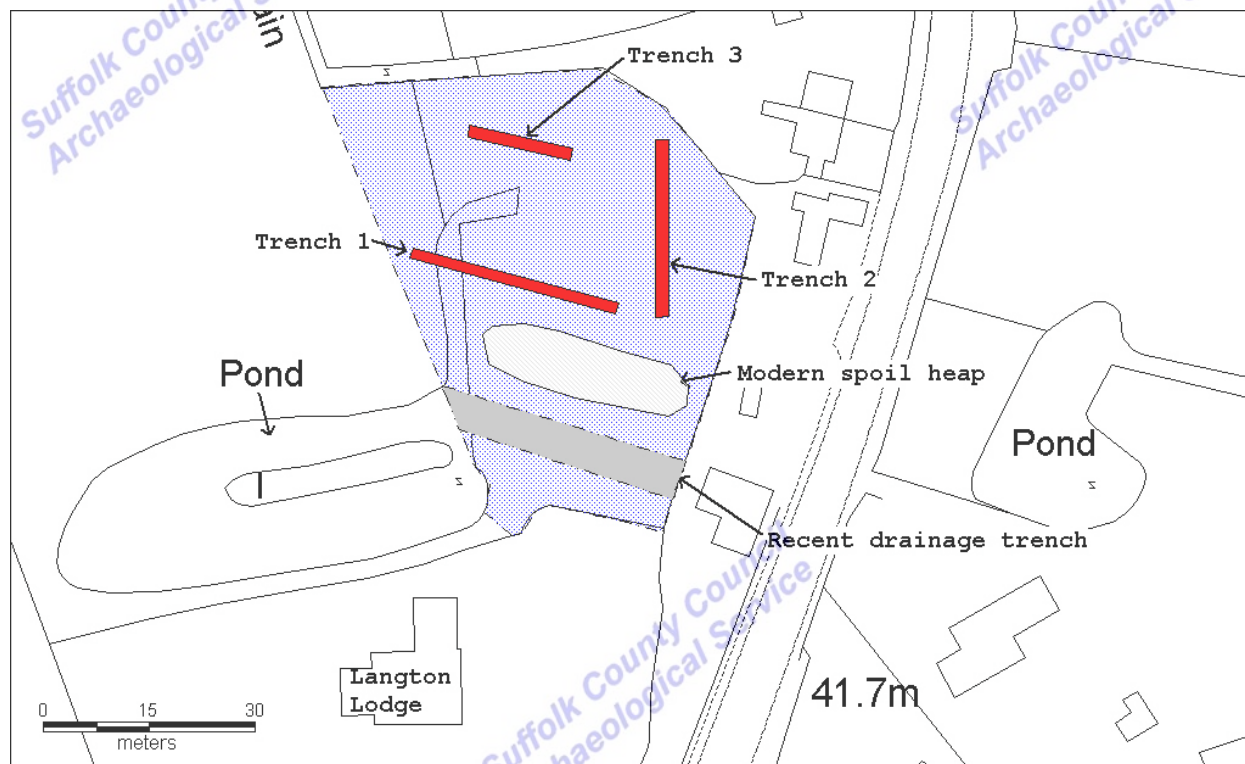


Figure 2. Trench locations

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The SMR reference number EYE 070 was allocated to the site and all the stratigraphic elements of the deposits were given unique context numbers within a continuous numbering system. This context information is shown in Appendix 1. All excavated features were recorded in a series of 1:50 scale trench plans and 1:20 scale section drawings. Context records were entered onto an Access97 database, and inked copies of the drawings were prepared on archive quality drafting film. All finds were processed and quantified by in-house staff, with the data then input onto a Microsoft Access97 database. Subsequently the different finds were examined by the relevant specialists and their findings are presented on page 4.

Results

Basic details of each trench are given below in Table 1. A narrative account of the findings of each trench is then presented on a trench by trench basis. Plans and sections are shown in Fig. 3.

Trench	Dimensions	Area	Archaeological Features	Depth of Topsoil
1	30m x 1.6m	48m ²	Ditch/pond 0010, pit 0008, ditch 0012	0.5m
2	25m x 1.6m	40m ²	Post-hole 0004, pit 0006	0.55m (S end) - 0.7m (N end)
3	15m x 1.6m	24m ²	Ditch/pond 0010	0.4m (centre) - 0.6 (E end)

Table 1. Evaluation trench summary

Trench 1

The principal feature recorded in this trench was large ditch/pond 0010, with its western edge approximately 3.5m from the western end of Trench 1. This was a substantial feature, aligned

broadly north to south, being some 5.5m wide and at least 1.5m deep with steeply (*c.* 60°) sloping slightly irregular sides. Its base could not be examined in detail due to the rapid ingress of water that commenced once a depth of *c.* 1.2m had been excavated. In this segment only one fill, 0011, could be identified. This was a dark grey clayey silt containing large quantities of waterlogged wood, including substantial portions of almost complete felled trees laid lengthways in the ditch as well as many brick, tile and concrete fragments. This clearly represented a continuation of the large pond (see Fig. 2) to the north across the site. No attempt to recover any dating evidence was made as local knowledge (two occupants of adjacent houses) independently suggested that this part of the ditch had been backfilled in living memory.

At the western end of this trench pit 0008 was partially revealed. This extended partly beyond the northern edge of the trench but was approximately circular, with a diameter of *c.* 1m and was 0.22m deep. It had moderately sloping concave sides that broke gradually to a flat base. Its fill, 0009, comprised a soft mid greyish brown silty clay. No dateable finds were recovered.

Beginning *c.* 15m from the western end of Trench 1 ditch 0012 was recorded. This was aligned north-west to south-east and was some 4m wide and at least 0.5m deep with sharply stepped sides that became almost vertical. Unfortunately the base could not be excavated due to the rapid ingress of water (again when a depth of *c.* 1m below the existing ground level had been reached). It contained a soft mid brownish grey silty clay (0013) with occasional small flint pebbles and fragments of animal bone. It contained no dateable finds.

Trench 2

Some 6.5m from the southern end of this trench feature 0004 was recorded. This was oval (0.35m long east to west and 0.18m wide north to south) and just 0.08m deep with smooth concave sides and a rounded base. It contained a single fill, 0005, of soft mid brownish grey silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks, rare chalk flecks and occasional fragments of fired clay. This feature has been interpreted as a post-hole.

At the far northern end of the trench pit 0006 was observed. Sub-rounded and 1.2m long (east to west) by at least 0.75m wide (north to south) and 0.2m deep this had gently sloping uneven sides that broke imperceptibly to a flattish base. It contained a single fill comprising soft mid brown (frequent reddish mottling) silty clay (0007) with rare burnt flint pieces and very common fragments of burnt/fired clay.

Trench 3

Just 2m from the western end of this trench a large ditch on the same alignment as that seen in Trench 1 was observed. This was clearly a northern continuation of 0010. Again this was approximately 5.5m wide. Full excavation was not possible due the ingress of water (see below). It was clear that it had been backfilled in a different manner to Trench 1 however. The uppermost fill of firm orange-brown slightly sandy weathered clay (0014) with frequent chalk and flint pebbles inclusions appeared to have been deliberately deposited as a clay 'plug' to properly seal the ditch. This was 0.75m deep and sealed water very effectively, as once it had been cut through to reveal the lower fill of very soft dark greyish brown clayey silt (0015) led to rapid ingress of water, which caused excavation to be halted at 1.25m below the existing ground level. This lower fill contained frequent brick/tile and waterlogged wood fragments as well as some lengths of plastic drain. It should also be noted that the same sources of local knowledge did not remember the ditch being open in this northern part of the site.

Finds and Environmental Evidence

Sue Anderson, May 2004.

Finds were collected from three contexts, as shown in the table below:

OP	Fired clay		Burnt flint		Animal bone		Spot date
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0005	4	7					?
0007	8	33	1	46			?
0013					18	402	?
Total	12	40	1	46	18	402	

Fired clay from posthole fill 0005 and pit fill 0007 was all in a medium sandy dense fabric containing common coarse chalk and occasional flint. Some pieces appeared to have smoothed surfaces, but all were abraded. Their use is uncertain although fired clay of this type from other sites is often medieval oven dome waste.

One fire-reddened flint was collected from pit fill 0007. It was not a prehistoric potboiler and was probably simply a flint that had been exposed to fire in a hearth or oven.

The 18 fragments of animal bone from ditch fill 0013 consisted of the proximal end of a cattle metatarsal and one tooth; the distal end of a horse radius, a talus, and fragments of maxilla and teeth; a medium mammal pelvis; and pieces of a large mammal rib. All were in good condition and likely to be of medieval or later date.

Discussion and Conclusions

The principal finding of this evaluation relates to the large boundary ditch/drain 0010, which was seen to continue through the site on a broadly north-north-east to south-south-west alignment. When the arrangement of ponds to the north and the recording of a further probable large pond/drain in the previous evaluation 200m to the north (Everett, 2003) is considered the line of the medieval Green Edge boundary can be conjectured as shown in Fig. 4.

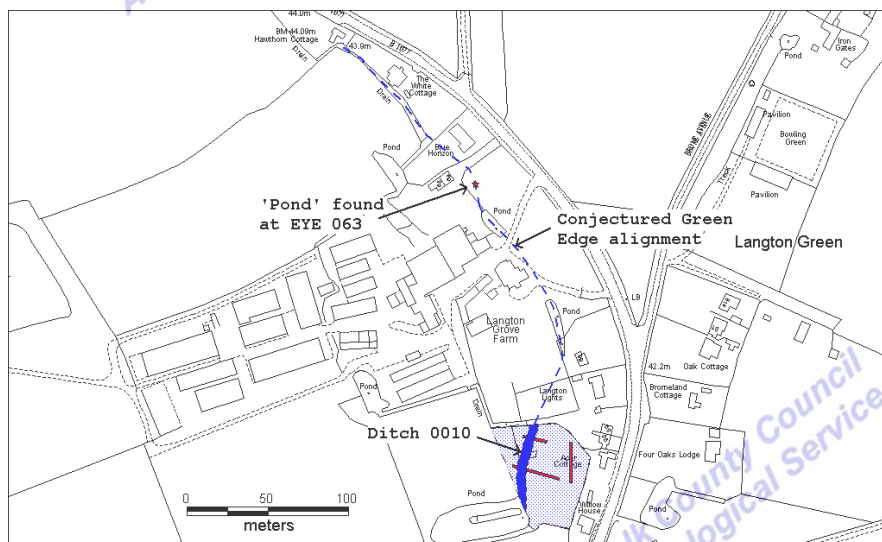


Figure 4. Projected line of major boundary feature

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The southern part of this ditch as seen in Trench 2 had been filled comparatively recently (within c. 30 years) and has been open at least since the 1880s when it is clearly visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5, below). The same map shows that the northern part of the ditch, as seen in Trench 3, had already been filled by the 1880s. However, the excavated

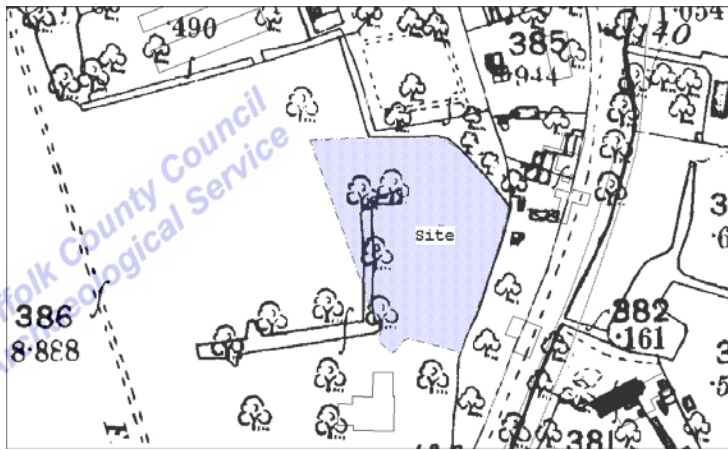


Figure 5. First Edition OS map with site overlay
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archaeological occupation of the site. The presence of a notable quantity of fired clay in two of these features (post-hole 0004 and pit 0006) suggests the possibility of ovens or kilns of likely medieval date in the vicinity of the site. It is notable that three of these features are within the area of the medieval green, rather than surrounding it. These may indicate some sort of communal activity or use of the green space.

Recommendations for Further Work

Although the evaluation revealed archaeological features, they were relatively few in number and of unknown date. In addition, the alignment of the principal boundary ditch could be adequately characterised by means of trial trenching, although the date of its original abandonment in the northern part of the site remains unknown.

It is not thought that these findings merit open area excavation of any part of the site.

A programme of monitoring is recommended however. The lack of any detailed building design/construction details at the time of writing means that some of the following recommendations may not prove applicable.

It is recommended that archaeological monitoring be carried out wherever the following circumstances arise during the development:

- Where substantial topsoil stripping or ground reduction of more than 0.5m below the existing ground level be undertaken, as this will likely reveal other archaeological features.
- Where the northern part of the ditch (anywhere north of Trench 3) is to be cleared out, as this may enable the recovery of artefacts that may be used to date its original abandonment.
- Where strip foundation are to be excavated, as further features may be identifiable in the sides of any footing trenches.

References

Everett, L, 2003, *Langton Grove Farm, Eye, EYE 063*, SCCAS Report No. 2003/36

Report No. 2004/34

Rhodri Gardner, for SCCAS, March 2004.

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

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APPENDIX 1 Context List

OP No	Feature	Type	Identifier	Description	Dimensions (L x W x D) (meters)	Under	Over	Cut by	Cuts	Trench
0001			Finds	Unstratified finds from whole site.						
0002		Deposit	Topsoil	Topsoil/overburden encountered in all trenches. Very soft to soft mid greyish brown clayey loam with rare CBM fragments, flint pebbles and modern rubbish.		+	All			All
0003		Deposit	Natural	Natural Boulder Till. Firm to stiff light yellowish brown clay with moderate chalk flecks and rare small flint pebbles.			-			All
0004	0004	Cut	Post-hole	Oval with smooth concave sides and rounded base.	0.35 x 0.18 x 0.08	0005	0003			2
0005	0004	Fill	Post-hole	Soft mid brownish grey silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks, rare chalk flecks and moderate fired clay fragments.		0002	0005			2
0006	0006	Cut	Pit	Oval with gently sloping slightly uneven sides and shallow rounded base.	1.2 x 0.75+ x 0.21	0007	0003			2
0007	0006	Fill	Pit	Soft brown silty clay with frequent reddish mottling. Rare burnt flint fragments and very common fired clay pieces.		0002	0006			2
0008	0008	Cut	Pit	Round with moderately sloping concave sides and a flat base.	1 x 0.65 x 0.22	0009	0003			1
0009	0008	Fill	Pit	Soft mid greyish brown silty clay.		0002	0008			1
0010	0010	Cut	Ditch	Large ditch with steeply sloping sides. Broadly aligned N-S. Base not excavated due to ingress of water.	30+ x 5.5 x 1.5+	0011, 0014	0003			1 and 3
0011	0010	Fill	Ditch	Single fill of ditch 0010 recorded in Tr 1. Dark grey clayey waterlogged silt with large quantities of wood, brick, tile and modern refuse.		0002	0010			1
0012	0012	Cut	Ditch	NW-SE aligned ditch with steeply stepped sides. Shape of base unknown due to ingress of water.	2+ x 4 x 0.5+	0013	0003			1
0013	0012	Fill	Ditch	Single fill of ditch 0012. Soft mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional small flint pebbles and fragments of ANBN.		0002	0012			1
0014	0010	Fill	Ditch	Uppermost fill of ditch 0010, as seen in Tr 3. Firm orange-brown slightly sandy weathered clay with frequent chalk flecks and moderate small flint pebbles.		0002	0015			3
0015	0010	Fill	Ditch	Lowest fill of ditch 0010 observed in Tr 3. Very soft mid to dark greyish brown clayey silt with modern plastic drain pieces, CBM and waterlogged wood fragments.		0014	NFE			3