

COLSEY WOOD FARM, MILL LANE, STOKE ASH (SAS 001)

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SMR Information

Planning Application No: 788/03

Date of Fieldwork: 26th May 2004

Grid Reference: TM 1105 6918

Funding Body: Mr B Luby

Introduction

Planning permission (788/03) has been made to rebuild the burnt down house with the addition of a new extension within the moated enclosure at Colsey Wood Farm, Stoke Ash (centred on NGR TM 1105 6918). The site lies on generally level ground at c. 51m AOD and is approximately 1.2km to the east of centre of Wickham Skeith and 1.4km to the south of the historic core of Stoke Ash.



Figure 1. Site location

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The moat itself is almost certainly of medieval origin and is recorded in the County SMR as SAS 001. It was therefore thought that the site had high potential for evidence of occupation (early dwellings, ancillary buildings, yards, occupation deposits etc.) to be preserved. Given the intrusive nature of the groundworks for the extension (c. 25m of strip foundation trench) Robert Carr of the SCCAS Conservation Team recommended that a programme of Archaeological Monitoring be carried out. The SCCAS Field Team was subsequently commissioned by the client, Mr B Luby, to carry out the work.

Methodology

A single visit was made on the 26th of May 2004 in order to monitor the cutting of the strip foundations for the car port. Some 25m of trench was excavated to a depth of 1.4m below the existing ground level, and all was available for examination by the monitoring archaeologist. The trenches were excavated using a small 360° tracked mechanical excavator (mini-digger) fitted with a 0.7m wide bucket. The base of the foundation trenches and upstanding soil sections were hand cleaned where necessary to further define any archaeological features or stratigraphy. All the deposits

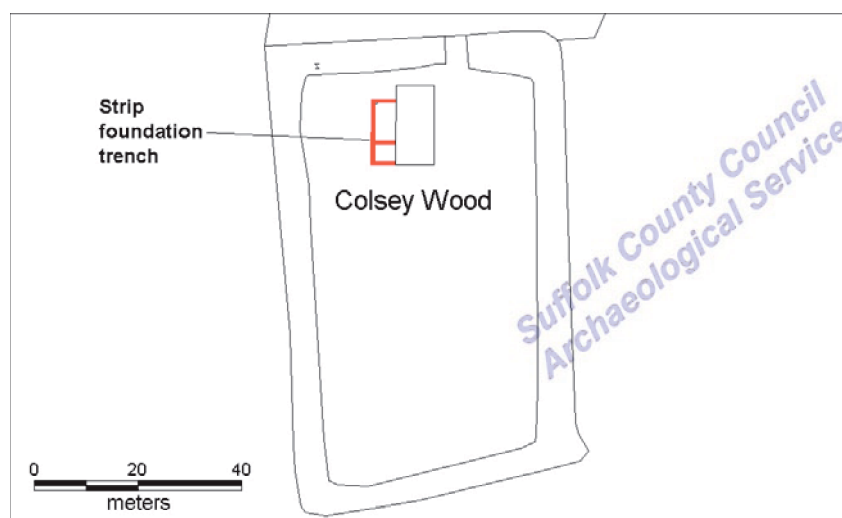


Figure 2. Location of foundation trenches

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encountered were individually described and allocated context numbers in a continuous numbering system. The site was assigned the existing SMR number SAS 001. A written and drawn record of all recorded deposits was maintained throughout.

Results

The following general stratigraphy was recorded throughout the whole of the foundation trench:

Depth (bgl)	Context	Description
0 - 0.35m	0002	Topsoil. Very soft mid brownish grey loam with occasional brick/tile flecks.
0.35 - 1.4m+	0003	Natural Boulder Till. Firm to stiff slightly yellowish brown clay with moderate chalk flecks and rare sub-angular flint pebbles.

No incised archaeological features were recorded anywhere in the trench and no dateable finds could be recovered.

Conclusions

Despite the site's sensitive location and its consequently high archaeological potential no evidence of occupation (medieval or otherwise) was observed.

It remains highly likely that evidence of medieval occupation is preserved somewhere within the moated platform but it was not encountered in the specific area monitored during this development.

Report No. 2004/97

Rhodri Gardner for SCCAS, July 2004.