

CASTLE COTTAGE, CASTLE LANE, ORFORD (ORF 108)

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

SMR Information

Planning Application No: C/03/1939 & 1940 Date of Fieldwork: 2nd July 2004
Grid Reference: TM 4210 4999 Funding Body: N/A

Introduction

Planning permission (C/03/1939 & 1940) has been made to refurbish and extend Castle Cottage, Castle Lane, Orford (centred on NGR TM 4210 4999). The site lies in the historic core of Orford at c. 12m AOD, on land that slopes down to the south and east to c. 8m AOD at the bottom of Market Hill.

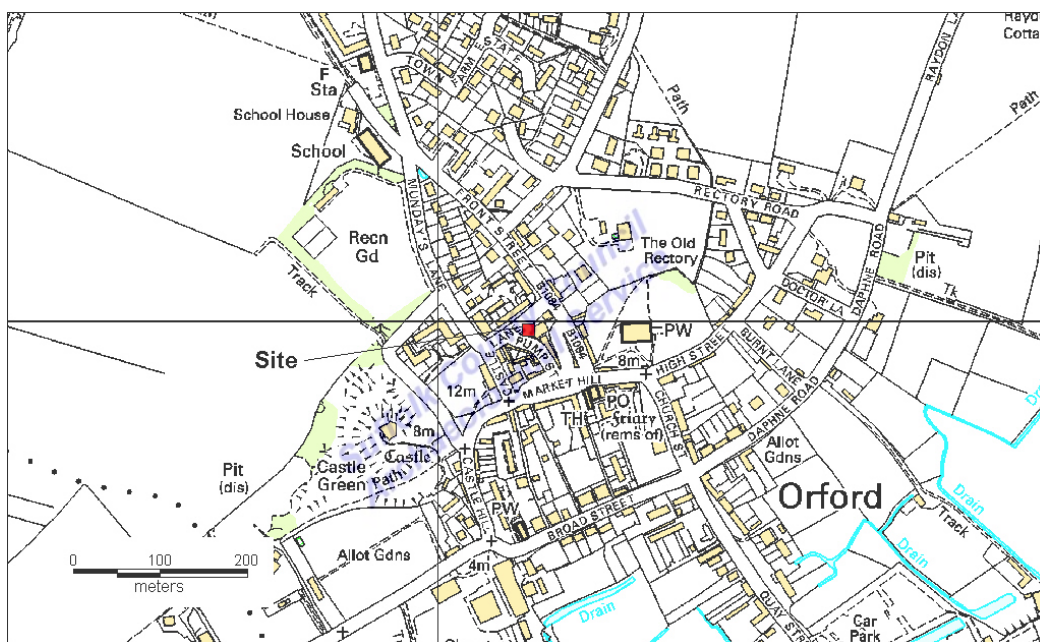


Figure 1. Site location

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The site is some 200m to the east of the Castle keep itself and 100m west of the church of St Bartholemew. A number of other sites are recorded in the County SMR within a 100m radius. These include:

- ORF 026. Medieval finds recorded in 1998 during redevelopment of Haven House, Front Street c 90m to the north-east.
- ORF 012. Medieval walls observed during building works at Manor House, Market Hill c. 60m to the south.
- ORF 017. Medieval (13th – 14th century) pottery recovered from spoil dug out during building works in the north-west corner of Market Hill in 1986 c. 65m to the south.
- ORF Misc. A record of silver pennies of Henry V and Edward II found in the 1960s in Raydon Road and Front Street c. 100m to the west.
- ORF 013. Medieval and post-medieval pits recorded on the opposite side of Castle Lane c. 30m to the west.

Given the clear archaeological potential of the site and the intrusive nature of the groundworks (strip foundations) an Archaeological Watching Brief was recommended by Keith Wade of the SCCAS Conservation Team.

Methodology

A single visit was made on the 2nd of July 2004 in order to examine the strip foundation trenches. The 0.6m wide trench (total length c. 9m) was already excavated at the time of the visit and appeared to have been hand excavated. Its depth was a uniform 0.85m, except where features were observed (see below). 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 encountered were individually described and allocated context numbers in a continuous numbering system. The site was assigned the existing SMR number ORF 108. A written and drawn record of all recorded deposits was maintained throughout.

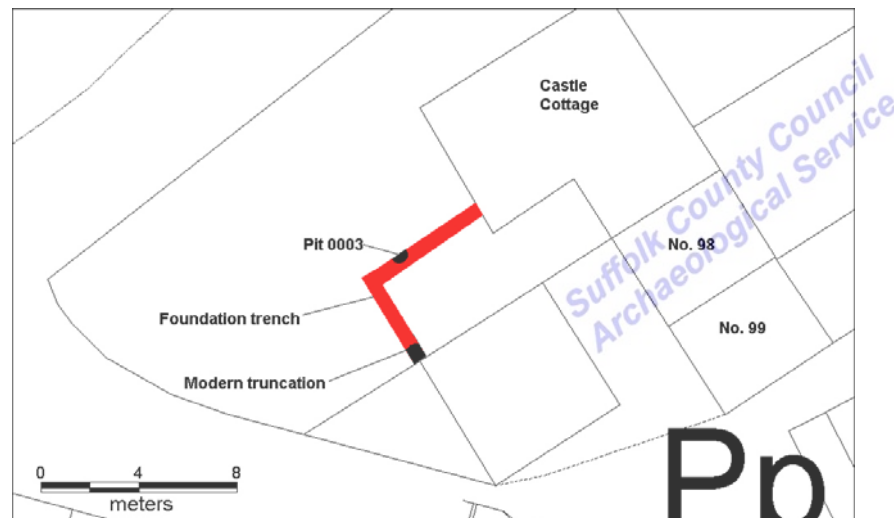


Figure 2. Location of foundation trench and pit

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Results

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

Depth (bgl)	Context	Description
0 - 0.85m	0002	Topsoil/garden soil. Soft mid grey sandy silt with moderate modern brick/tile fragments, occasional 20 th century pottery fragments, rare animal bone fragments and small rounded flint pebbles, very rare oyster shell.
0.85m+	0005	Natural Sands. Firm ("panned" in noticeable lenses/layers) mid orange-yellow fine sands with few notable inclusions.

The south-eastern end of the trench was occupied by a 1.1m wide modern truncation (containing heavy root disturbance and late 18th/early 20th century rubbish e.g. carnival glass) that extended to a depth of 1.2m below the existing ground level (bgl).

Pit 0003 was partially revealed some 3.4m from the north-eastern end of the trench. This was 0.65m long (north-east to south-west), at least 0.4m wide and 0.55m deep with smooth near vertical sides that broke sharply to a flat base. It single fill, 0004, was indistinguishable from the topsoil recorded above, except that very frequent root disturbance was evident. No dateable finds could be recovered from the surviving fill in the side of the trench. This has been interpreted as a post-medieval or modern garden feature.

Conclusions

Despite the site's sensitive location no medieval or earlier archaeological features were recorded. Some modern truncation was evident and a single post-medieval/modern pit was recorded.

Report No. 2004/99

Rhodri Gardner for SCCAS, July 2004.