

CHURCH FARM, CHURCH ROAD, BLYTHBURGH (BLB 060)

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SMR Information

Planning Application No: C/03/0482

Date of Fieldwork: 23/07/03 – 29/07/03 and
28/06/04 – 29/06/04

Grid Reference: TM 4510 7526

Funding Body: Landowner (Mr Hollingworth)

Introduction

Planning permission (C/03/0482) has been granted build a double garage to the rear of the existing property as part of a programme of renovation and remodelling at Church Farm, Church Road, Blythburgh (centred on NGR TM 4510 7526). The site lies in the historic core of Blythburgh on generally level ground at c. 8.5m AOD.

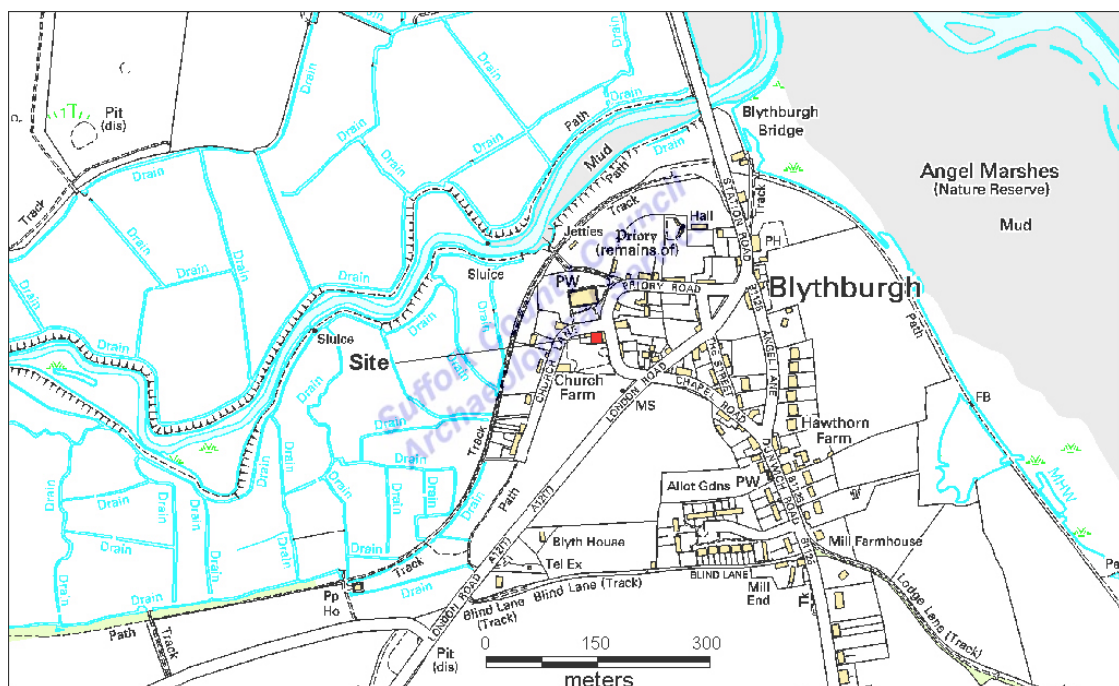


Figure 1. Site location

(© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2004)

The site lies just 50m to the south of the medieval Holy Trinity Church (a church is also mentioned at Blythburgh in Domesday) and is within the area of archaeological interest defined for Blythburgh in the County SMR. Given the clear archaeological potential of the site and the intrusive nature of the groundworks (strip foundations) an Archaeological Monitoring condition was recommended by Keith Wade of the SCCAS Conservation Team.

Methodology

Three visits were made between the 23rd and 29th of July 2003 in order to monitor underpinning carried out to the southern end of the existing property. The access pits were hand excavated prior to each visit and were left open to facilitate recording by the observing archaeologist (Linzi Everett). The three areas observed are numbered in Figure 2, below.

Two visits were made on the 28th and 29th of June 2004 in order to observe the levelling of area of the garden and the subsequent cutting of the strip foundation trenches. The maximum amount of overburden removed in the reduced area was 0.5m at its eastern end, lensing out to nothing at the western end. A total length of c. 30m of 0.5m wide trench was excavated (see Figure 2), and all was available for observation on the visit undertaken on the 29th of June. The position of the trench was recorded by triangulation from existing boundaries and features within the site.

The trench was excavated with a small 360° tracked mechanical excavator (minidigger) to a uniform depth of c. 0.8m below the ground level following reduction. 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 SMR number BLB 060. A written and drawn record of all recorded deposits was maintained throughout.

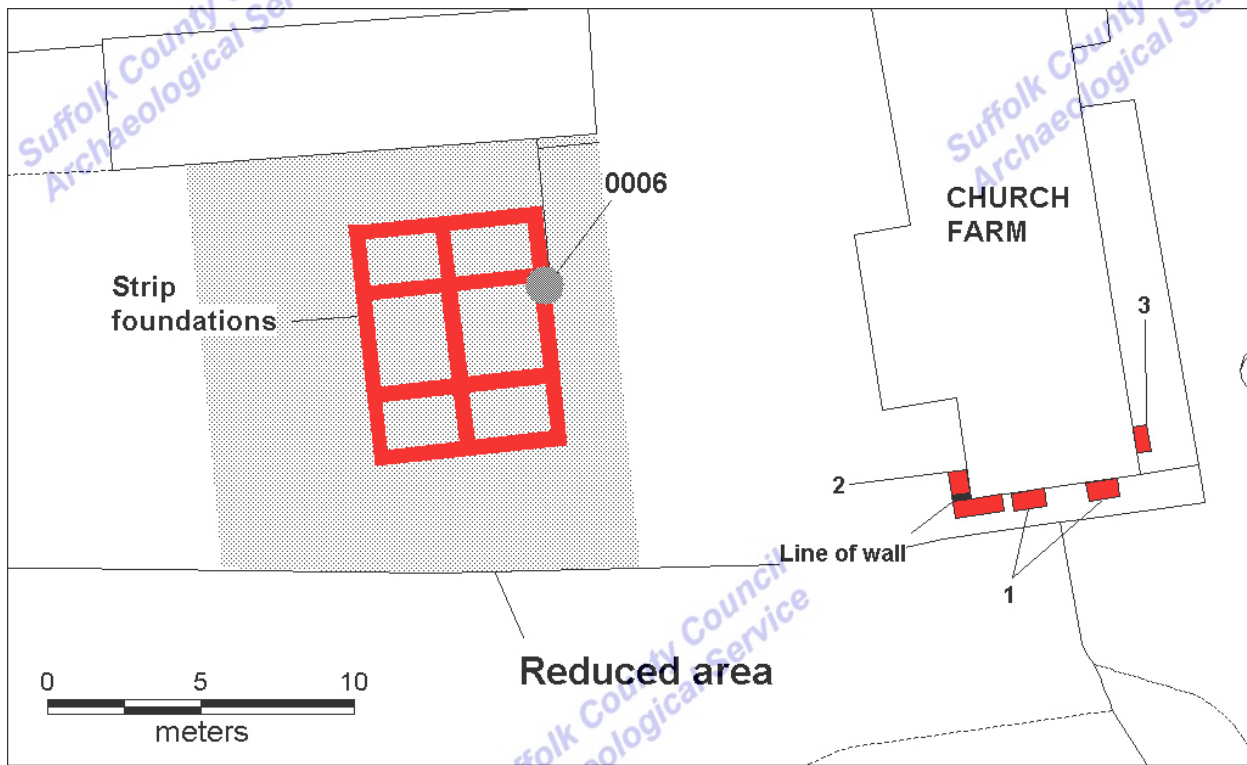


Figure 2. Location of garage foundation trench and areas of house underpinning
 (© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2004)

Results

During underpinning operations the following observations were made:

1. 0.3m of topsoil-like deposit over 0.9m of 'made ground', 0003, a mid greyish brown chalky clay with occasional charcoal and brick/tile inclusions. The human bone outlined below (see *The Finds*) was recovered from this deposit. The area exposed was very small (two small openings along the southern wall of the building) but it is possible that 0003 represents the fill of a large pit. This has been tentatively allocated the context number 0002. Clean natural sands were observed at 1.1m bgl.
2. 0.2m of concrete/rubble over made ground 0003 (as above). A stub of wall footing was observed below, and perpendicular to, the footing of the extant structure. This comprised a limestone 'rubble' base topped with a 0.15m thick layer of rammed chalk. Just visible beneath this was a clayey made ground deposit that contained rare fragments of brick/tile.
3. Very limited access was possible in this location but natural deposits were seen to lie directly beneath the extant foundations at c. 0.8m bgl.

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

Depth (bgl)	Context	Description
0 - 0.8m	0004	Overburden/backyard soil. Soft dark brownish grey sandy silt matrix with abundant 'modern' rubbish (brick/tile fragments, bottles, wood fragments etc).
0.8m+	0005	Natural Sands. Loose light yellowish brown coarse sands with very poorly sorted moderate to occasional small rounded flint pebbles/shingle.

The initial reduction/levelling carried out was not of sufficient depth to extend beyond overburden 0004.

Feature 0006 was recorded 2.6m from the southern end of the eastern arm of the strip foundation trench. This was a circular brick-built structure with an internal diameter of 1.3m and a total depth of 1.1m. The walls were constructed using unusual curved red unfrogged bricks that were 110mm broad, 65mm thick and had an 'internal length' of 190mm and an 'external length' of 225mm. They were laid (15 courses high) in a simple stretcher pattern and bonded with a soft pale yellow sandy mortar. The floor comprised a single course of 'normal' red unfrogged bricks (115mm broad, 60mm thick and 225mm long). Part of the floor had been removed revealing a make-up layer (0007) of firm greenish yellowish brown clay with rare charcoal flecks. It was not excavated further, so its depth remains unknown. The fill of this feature was indistinguishable from the general overburden (0004) encountered throughout the rest of the trench. As its shallow depth clearly precludes the possibility of it being a well this feature has been interpreted as a post-medieval brick-lined storage pit.

It was notable that the ground level on the site, prior to the reduction indicated in Figure 2, was *c.* 0.5m higher than the adjacent churchyard.

The Finds

by Sue Anderson

Five fragments of human bone and a tooth were collected from a possible pit fill or area of made-up ground (0003) during monitoring of building work. The bones consisted of part of the right arm (distal humerus, proximal ulna and complete radius) of a mature adult male, the distal half of the left femur of a slightly smaller unsexed adult, and one lower incisor.

The radius of the mature male showed signs of trauma, with new bone growth and pitting at the anterior edge of the radial tuberosity, suggesting a torn muscle followed by an inflammatory response. This bone length could be measured (RaL1=240mm) and suggested an estimated living stature of 169.7cm (5' 7"), which is average for a male in the medieval period. The single tooth was well worn (tooth wear score 6-) and could have belonged to either individual, or neither. The minimum number of individuals is therefore 2-3.

Conclusions

The observation of underpinning works revealed a fragment of wall footing pre-dating the extant building, although the presence of brick fragments in the consolidation layer beneath it suggests it was also of post-medieval date. The exposure of this wall was too limited to enable any interpretation of its function. Similarly, a number of fragments of human bone were recovered from a partially revealed deposit that may either have been a substantial consolidation layer or the fill of a large pit over which the extant house had been built. The bone is presumably residually derived from the nearby churchyard, although the circumstances of its relocation remain unknown.

Post-medieval overburden was recorded at depths of up to 0.8m across the site to the rear of the extant house, presumably derived from general occupation/dumping during the building's tenure as a working farm. The only intrusive feature was a post-medieval brick lined storage pit.

Despite its location no medieval or earlier archaeological features were encountered.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

CHURCH FARM, CHURCH ROAD, BLYTHBURGH

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning consent for alterations and the erection of a double garage on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (C/03/0482). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed foundation methods indicates that the area affected by new building can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the area of archaeological interest defined for Blythburgh in the County Sites and Monuments Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 As strip foundations are proposed there will only be limited damage to any archaeological deposits, which can be recorded by a trained archaeologist during excavation of the trenches by the building contractor.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for the Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the excavation of building footing trenches, underpinning and drainage trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 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, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity should 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.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed should be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.
- 4.6 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.
- 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. 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*, should be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets should be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 4 July 2003

Reference: /Blythburgh-ChurchFarm 07

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 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.