

STREET FARM, OAKLEY (OKY 027) Archaeological Watching Brief Report

SMR Information

Planning Application No: 1497/02

Date of Fieldwork: 30/09/03 – 18/06/04

Grid Reference: TM 1651 7793

Funding Body: N/A

Introduction

Planning permission (1497/02) has been made to construct 7 new dwellings with associated access and services at Street Farm, Oakley (centred on NGR TM 1651 7793). The site encompasses a total area of *c.* 3500m² and lies on steeply sloping land falling from *c.* 28m AOD at the southern end of the site to *c.* 24.5m AOD along the road frontage.

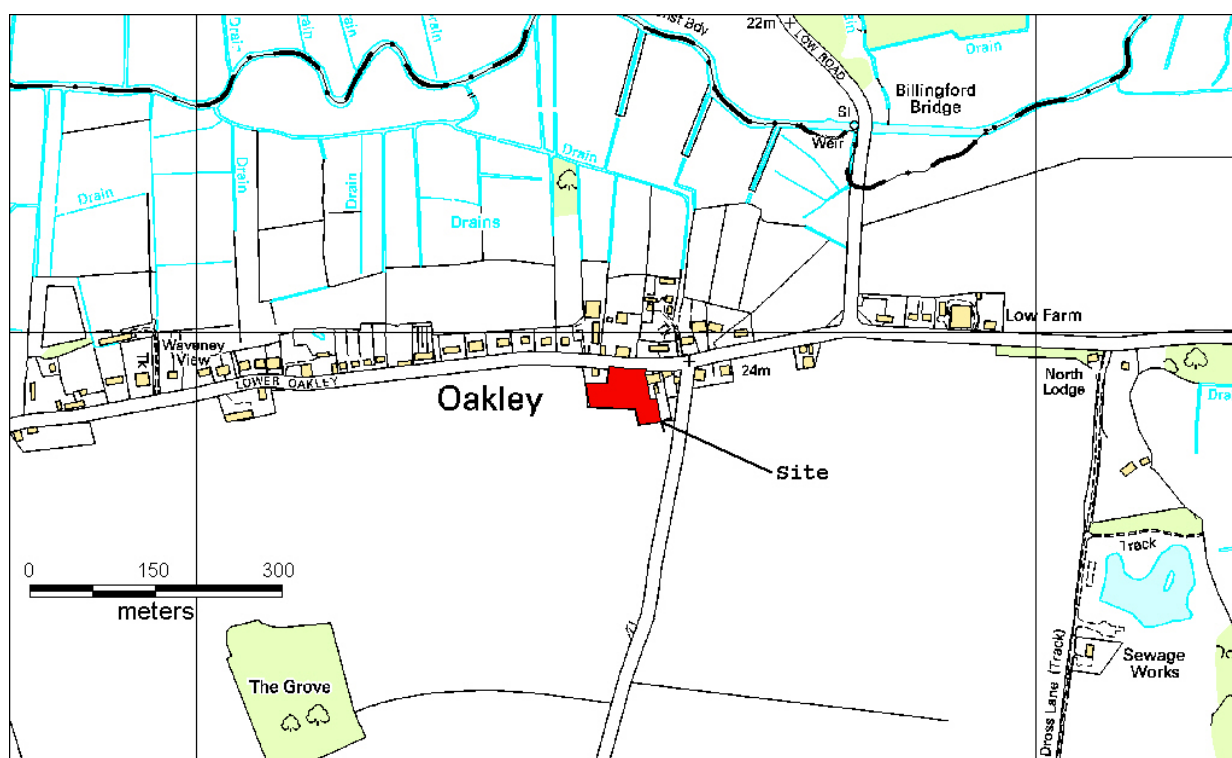


Figure 1. Site location

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The Development Area contains no known archaeological sites recorded in the County SMR. Indeed, there are only two recorded sites within a 500m radius of the DA:

- OKY 023 refers to the post-medieval bridge across the Waveney on Low Road *c.* 370m to the north-east
- OKY 021 where medieval potsherds have been recorded as surface finds at Poplar Farmhouse *c.* 370m to the west.

Given the archaeological potential of the site, lying as it does along the former medieval road frontage, and the intrusive nature of the groundworks (strip foundations) an Archaeological Watching Brief was recommended by Robert Carr of the SCCAS Conservation Team.

Methodology

The following visits were made:

- 30/09/03 To observe the initial levelling/stripping of the northern part of the site.
- 03/10/03 To observe the levelling/stripping of the southern part of the site.
- 16/06/04 To observe the strip foundations excavated for plots 1 and 2.
- 18/06/04 To observe the strip foundations excavated for plots 6 and 7.

All strip foundation trenches were 0.7m wide and had been excavated to a uniform depth of *c.* 0.85m using a small 360° tracked mechanical excavator (minidigger). 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 OKY 028. A written and drawn record of all recorded deposits was maintained throughout.

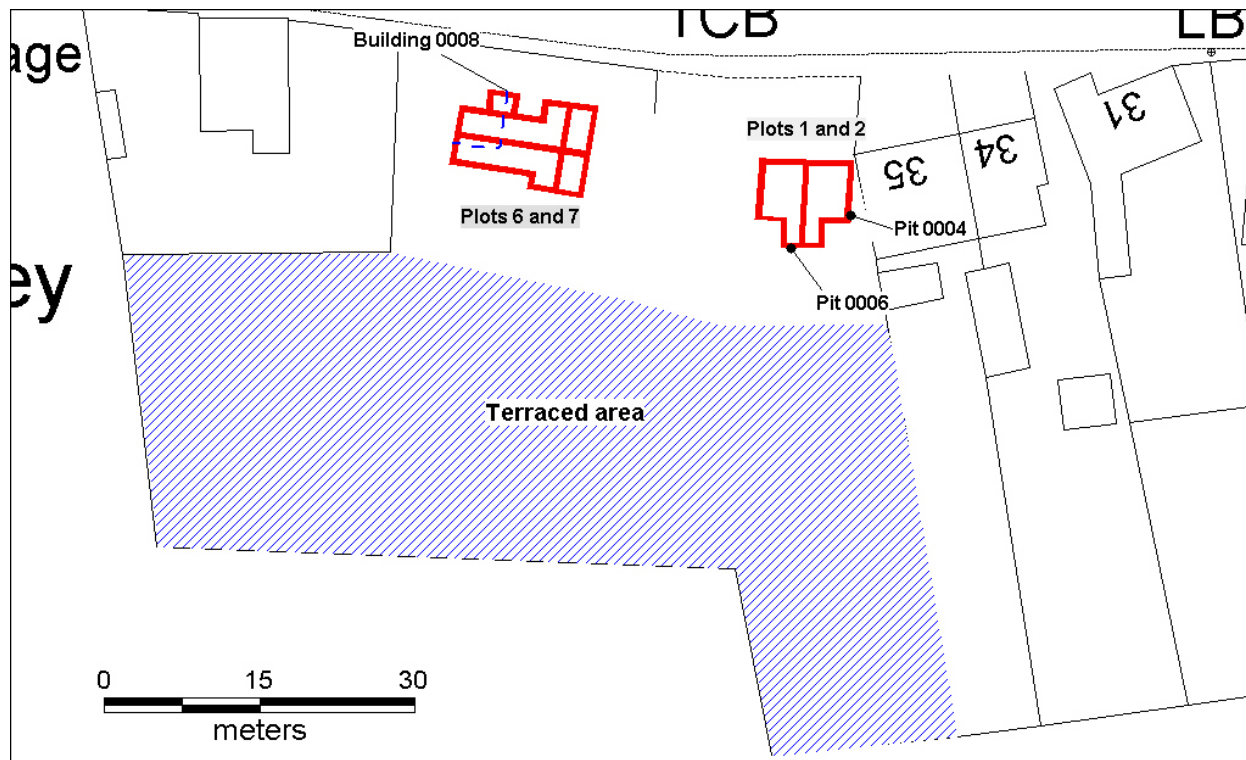


Figure 2. Location of foundation trenches, archaeological features and area of terracing

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Results

The reduction/levelling carried out prior to the digging of the foundation trenches was such that a substantial part of the rear (southern) part of the site was terraced to an extent that precluded the survival of any archaeological deposits (see Figure 2). Continuous monitoring of these operations was not carried out. However, the following observations were made during two visits made to observe the initial stripping of the site:

- On the first visit (30/09/03) the north-western part of the site had been reduced by some 0.45m below existing ground level (bgl). At this depth no natural deposits were observed and the excavation had only disturbed a colluvial subsoil (0002), described as a soft mid brownish grey silty sand with rare flint pebbles. A lot of 18th/19th century debris and brick foundations (possibly belonging to a 19th century ?forge thought to occupy the site) was observed. A small number of medieval potsherds were recovered from the subsoil in this area (see below). An area in the south-eastern corner of the site was also excavated to a depth of 0.35m bgl and clean natural sands were observed at that depth in this part of the site. These natural deposits (0007) were recorded as soft light yellowish brown medium sands with occasional greyer slightly silty pockets. A small number of post-medieval finds were observed in this part of the site, but not retained.

- On the second visit (03/10/03) much of the rear south-eastern quarter of the site was reduced to some 1.1m bgl. Clean natural sands (0007) were observed at this depth and a small number of modern finds were noted.

In the area of Plots 1 and 2 colluvium/subsoil 0002 was recorded to a depth of between 0.25m to 0.5m bgl and overlay natural sands 0007. Two archaeological features were recorded (see Figures 2 and 3).

Pit/post-hole 0004 had smooth near vertical sides with a gradual break of slope to a blunt rounded base. It was 0.55m wide (north to south) and 0.72m deep. Its shape in plan remains unknown as the trench was fully excavated at the time of the visit and the feature was only visible in section. Its single fill, 0003, was a soft dark grey silty sand with common poorly sorted small to large sub-angular/angular flint pebbles and cobbles. It contained a single piece of struck flint, possibly a core fragment of prehistoric date, thought to be residually derived (see *The Finds*, below). Although quite large this feature could be interpreted as a post-hole, given its profile and the nature of its fill.

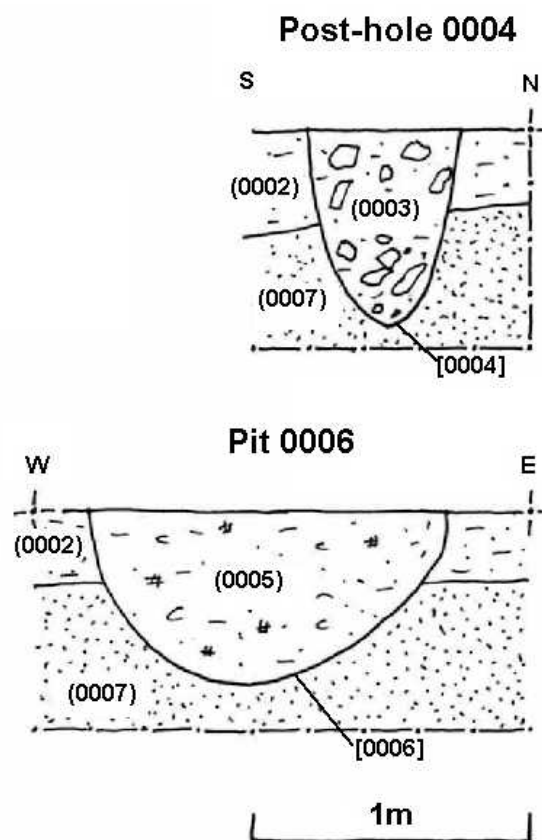


Figure 3. Section drawings

Pit 0006 was 1.3m wide (east to west) and 0.65m deep and had near vertical sides becoming more concave and moderately sloping toward the bottom where it broke imperceptibly to a rounded slightly irregular base. It contained a single fill, 0005, of firm dark slightly brownish grey (with occasional greenish mottling) sandy clayey silt with occasional charcoal and chalk flecks. It yielded a single sherd of 11th to 12th century pottery and a retouched flint flake (probably residual). Too little of this pit's fill was available for excavation for any conclusions about its function to be drawn.

In the area of Plots 6 and 7 colluvium/subsoil 0002 was between 0.4m and 0.7m thick and directly overlay natural sands 0007. No incised archaeological features were observed. The foundations of the building observed during the first visit (see above) were seen to continue to a depth of at least 0.85m. No detailed recording of the fabric was undertaken. The 'inside' of this structure (the north-western corner of the Plot 6/7 foundation trench) contained a deposit of firm dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent brick/tile fragments to a depth of at least 0.85m bgl. This may simply represent demolition debris, but given the depth of the deposit it is possible that the building had a cellar that was later backfilled.

The Finds

by Sue Anderson

The unstratified finds recovered during the first two visits comprised twelve sherds of pottery. Two pieces of a grey micaceous coarseware vessel (7g) may be Thetford-type ware, or possibly late medieval and transitional ware. An abraded sherd of medieval coarseware (6g) was probably of 12th-13th century date. Four sherds of green glazed late medieval and transitional ware were found (19g) and are dated to the 15th-16th centuries. All other sherds were post-medieval and consisted of a fragment of ?Frechen stoneware (3g, 16th-17th century), a post-medieval slipware base (12g, ?19th century), a yellow ware base (6g, 19th-20th century), and two base sherds of English stoneware bottles/jars (26g, 19th century).

One piece of brown worked flint (39g), possibly a core fragment, was found in fill 0003 and is probably residual. A grey flint flake (4g) with possible retouching or use wear along one edge was collected from pit fill 0005, together with a small sherd (2g) of early medieval ware pottery (11/12th century).

Conclusions

Although only two archaeological features were recorded there was evidence for occupation during several periods.

A small number of residually derived fragments of worked flint hint at the possibility of prehistoric occupation in the vicinity of the site.

A single pit (0006) has been assigned a medieval date, although the dating evidence (a single sherd of 11th to 12th century pottery) was very sparse. Unfortunately, the evidence is insufficient to suggest anything about the precise nature of occupation during the period.

A second feature (0004) could be interpreted as structural but unfortunately could not be dated.

Evidence of post-medieval occupation in the form of building remains was recorded in the far north-western corner of the site. It is worth noting that no building is indicated in that part of the site on the First Edition (1880s) Ordnance Survey map, which may suggest that the remains encountered during this Watching Brief were demolished before the last quarter of the 19th century.

Report No. **2004/101**

Rhodri Gardner for SCCAS, July 2004.