

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

‘Spenmar’, Roper Lane, Long Melford

LMD 175

Planning Application No.: B/07/00826

NGR: TL 8582 4399

Oasis Ref. Suffolkc1-38241

Funded by: Mr. G. Rudd.

SCCAS Report no. 2008/013

Summary

A large undated ditch was recorded during monitoring of footing trenches for a new dwelling in the grounds of ‘Spenmar’, Roper Lane, Long Melford.

Introduction

Two visits were made to Spenmar, Roper Lane, Long Melford to monitor the groundworks associated with the refurbishment and extension to the existing building and the construction of a new dwelling within its garden (Fig. 1). The monitoring was a condition of the consent on planning application B/07/00828 and completed in accordance with a brief and specification by Jude Plouviez of Suffolk County Council’s Archaeological Service, Conservation Team. The visits were made during September 2007 by members of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service’s Field Team and funded by the applicant Mr. G. Rudd.

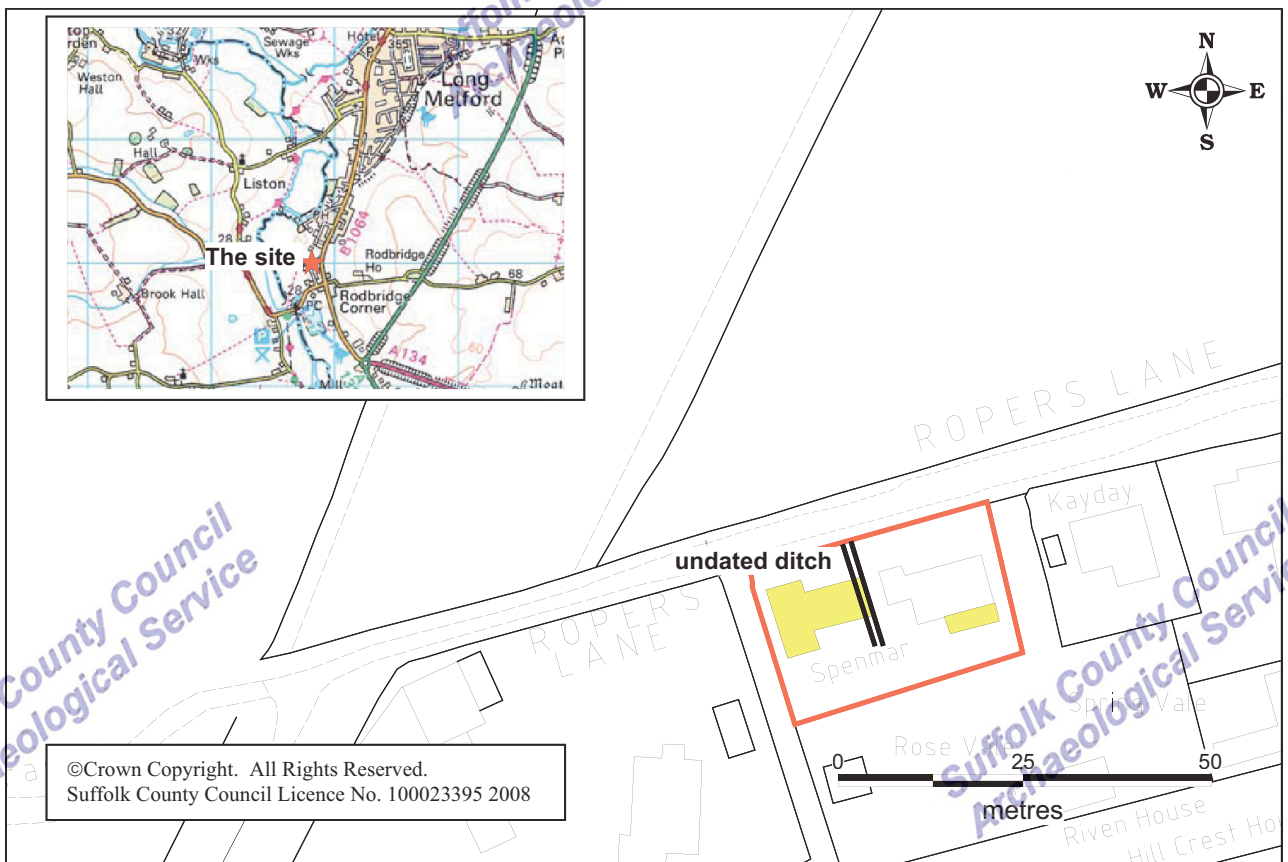


Figure 1. Site and location plan with new development shown in yellow

The site's potential for archaeology lies in its proximity to several known sites recorded on the county's Historic Environment Record (HER). It lies close to the line of a Roman road that runs through Long Melford near the line of the High Street and there is a substantial villa that has been identified on high ground to the east of the site. Two hundred metres to the south of the site there is evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement and the full extent of this site is unknown.

The computerised first edition Ordnance Survey maps held by the county council do not cover the development area, but the second and third editions (published c.1890 and 1920) show the site as part of a brick works (Fig. 3).

Results

The visits were made during excavation of the footing trenches and all of the trenches for the new dwelling were available for inspection. For engineering reason the trenches were in excess of 2m deep and it was not safe to climb into the excavations. The soil profile consisted of a reworked garden soil lying directly over the geological clay. A single deep ditch was recorded, which ran north south along the line of the north wall of the new building. The ditch was orientated at an approximate right angle to Roper Lane suggesting that it was aligned with respect to it. The ditch was 2m wide and 1.5m deep and infilled in two stages, a primary silting layers of fine clay and a backfill of dark clay loam. No finds were recovered from the ditch but the presence of a decaying branch at mid-depth and the general impression of the feature was that the ditch had not been infilled in antiquity.

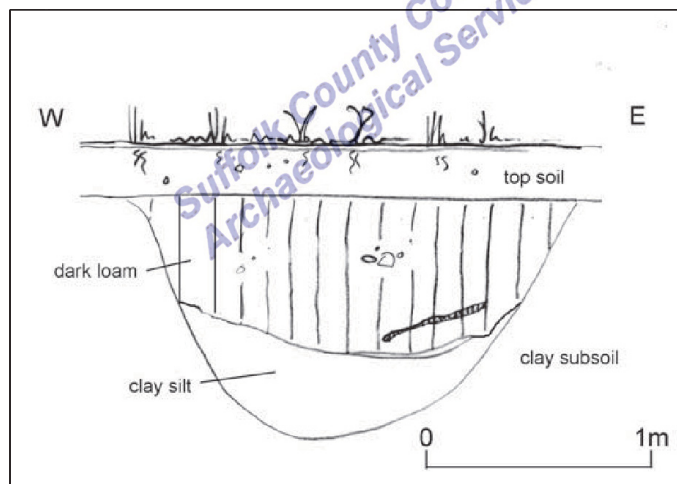


Figure 2. Ditch section

Conclusion

The monitoring failed to produce evidence of Roman or Anglo Saxon activity. The ditch that ran north south across the site is either a field ditch or associated with the brick works. The ditch seems too large for a simple field boundary and it may have been dug for the extraction of materials, as the subsoil here is clay. The ditch although not positively dated is not thought to be of a great age but it does not appear on the 1890 or 1920 OS. Its orientation in respect of Roper Lane suggests that it does not pre-date the lane but the date of Roper Lane is unknown; although the lane is bridged by and therefore likely to be earlier than the railway line.

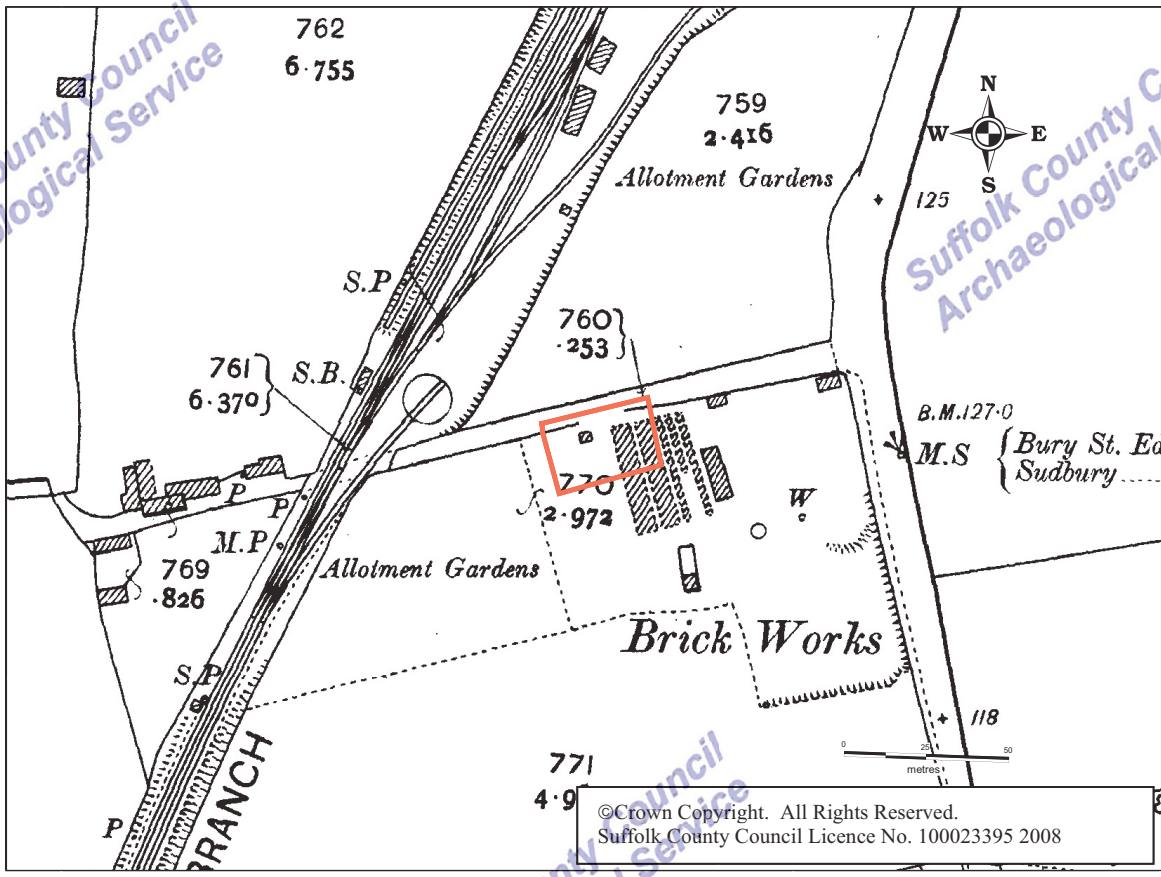


Figure 3. 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 1890 showing the brick works and position of the site

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