

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Grapevines, Melbourne Bridge, Withersfield WTH 035

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH
HOUSING EXTENSIONS AT GRAPEVINES, WITHERSFIELD

Planning Application No. SE/07/1767

NGR: TL 6580 4669

OASIS Ref. Suffolkc1-39054

Funded by: Mr N. Fitch

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2008/029

Summary

An archaeological monitoring of footing trenches at Grapevines, Melbourne Bridge, Withersfield, located only a possible developed garden soil layer and an unstratified post-medieval find.

Introduction

A visit was made to the site on 29th February 2008 to monitor footing trenches for an extension to the property and a conservatory. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification issued by Judith Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) to fulfil a planning condition on application SE/07/1767. The work was funded by the developer, Mr N. Fitch.

Interest in the site was based upon its location close to a Roman cemetery, discovered in 1759 (WTH 001), Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age features and finds (WTH 011) and a Bronze hoard (WTH 012) as shown on Figure 1. Post-medieval activity, including kilns to the east (Fig. 2) and the railway embankment (running through the proposed plot for the conservatory), also were cause for interest in the site as well as the wider area's location within prehistoric to post-medieval landscapes.

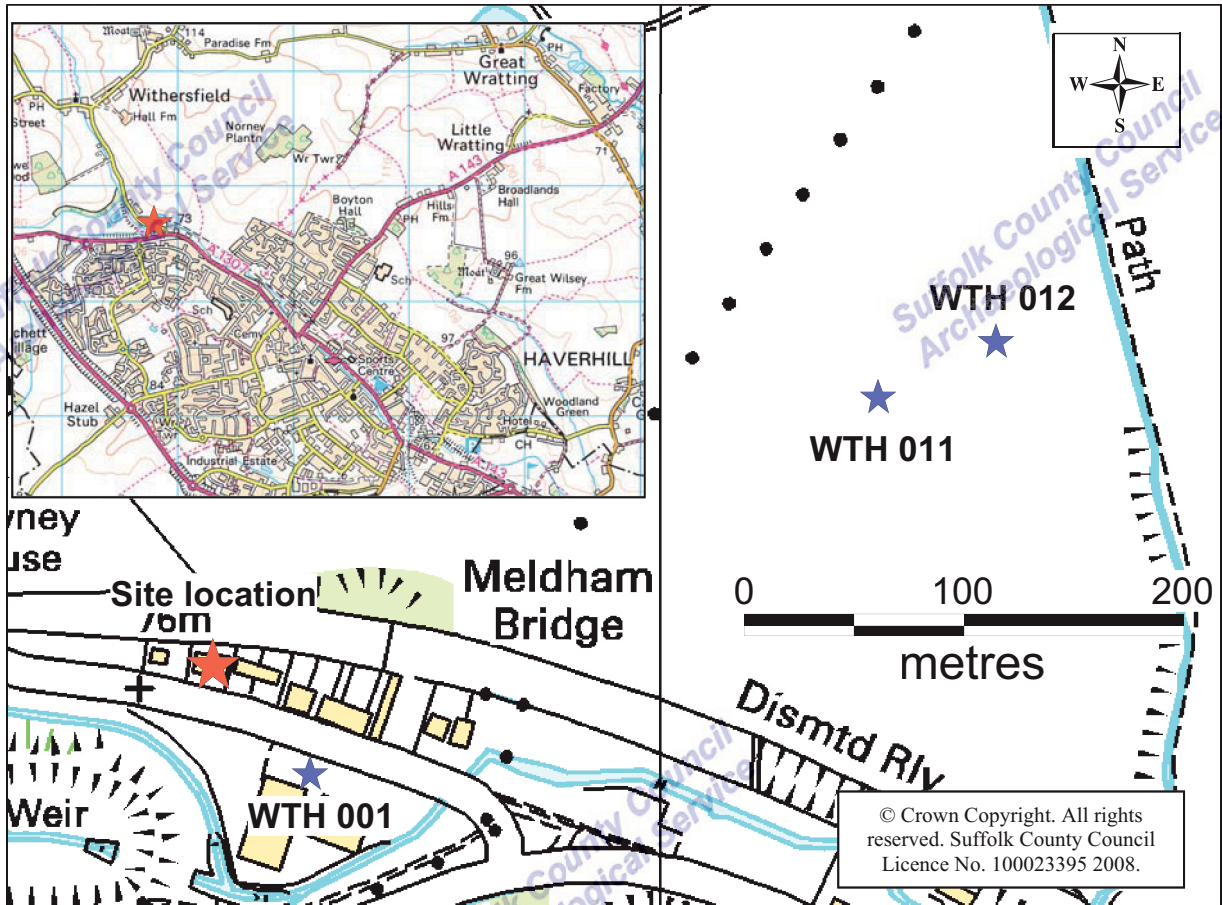


Figure 1. Site location and known archaeological listings from the HER

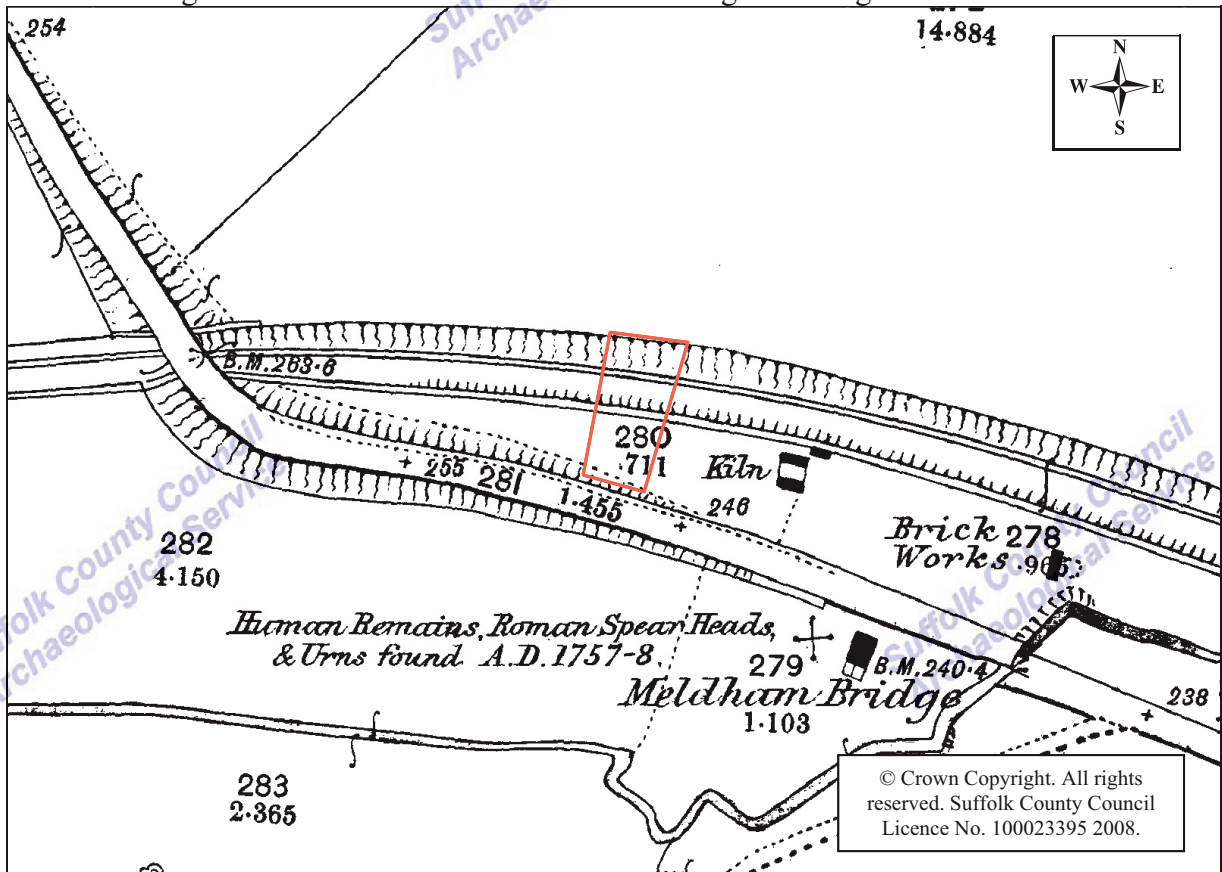


Figure 2. Site location on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1886

Methodology

The trenches were excavated by hand and measured 17.1m in total for the extension. They were c.0.5m wide and varied in depth from 1.15m to 1.45m, with these measurements and all others mentioned in the results being taken off the current topsoil height of the garden. One soil profile was cleaned by hand as required for a drawing at a scale of 1:20. All site records have been archived using the HER parish code WTH 035. Finds were washed, marked and quantified, and the resultant data entered onto the database. An inked copy of the profile section was made.

An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolkc1-39054) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/grevlit>).

Monitoring of the trenches for the conservatory could not take place as these had already been filled prior to the pre-arranged visit by the archaeologist.

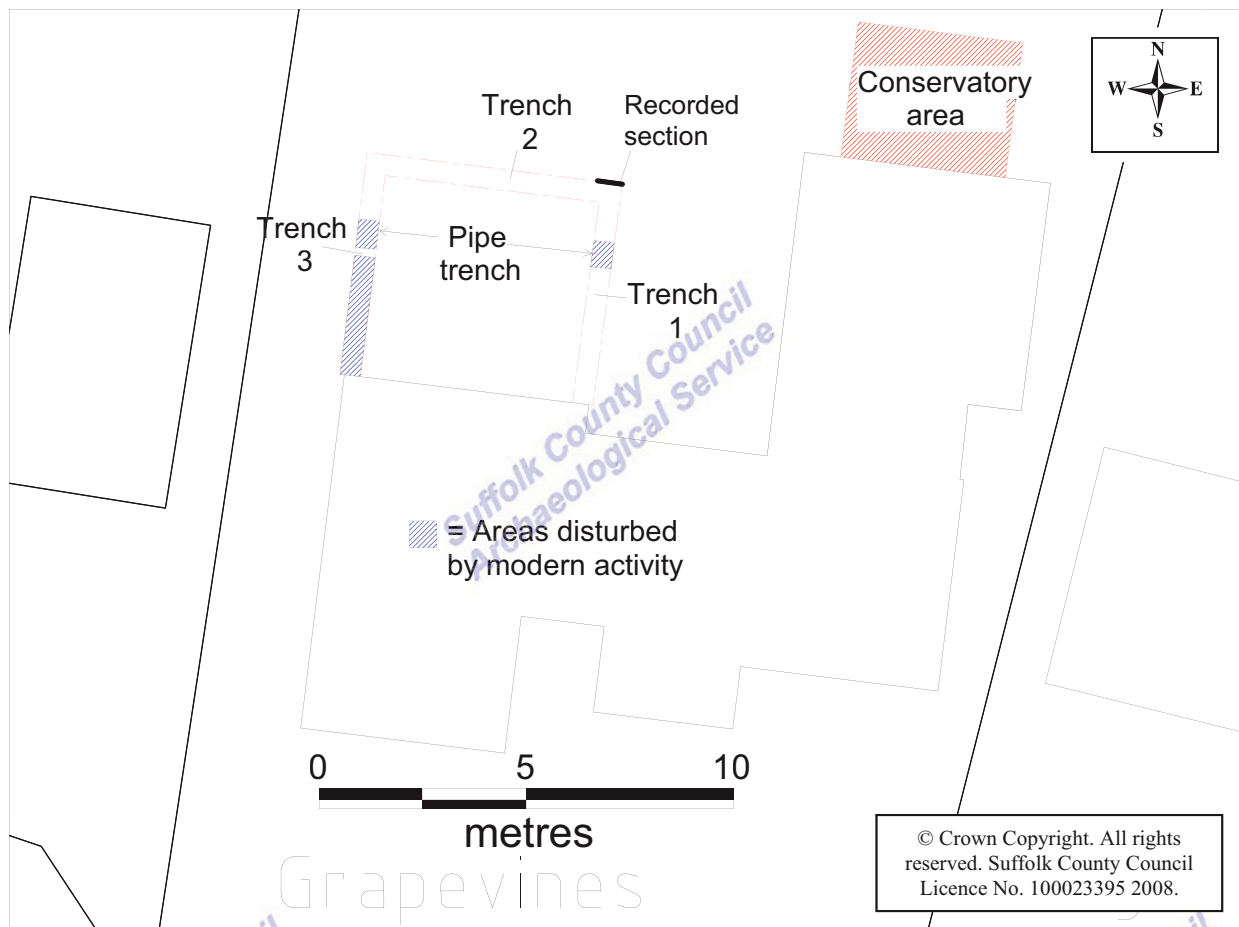


Figure 3. The trench layout

The finds

Richenda Goffin

A single fragment of Late Post-medieval pottery earthenware was an unstratified find dating to the 18th-20th century.

Results

A relatively uniform soil profile ran through all three of the trenches monitored, with modern disturbance to a depth of c.0.9m, visible in places as marked on Figure 3. In Trench 2 the topsoil

had been truncated to a depth of 0.1m by a patio. Below this was a topsoil, which was c.0.34m deep, under which was c.0.54m of mid brown slightly silty clay with occasional stone inclusions over the natural subsoil of yellow clay with frequent chalk nodules (Fig. 4).

The topsoil and layer of brown silty clay both showed signs of root disturbance and none of the uniformity often associated with plough disturbance. The close proximity of the site to the road would also suggest that ploughing and other heavy agriculture were unlikely to have occurred in the area. This suggests that the brown silty clay was actually evidence of a developed soil, possibly as a result of an orchard garden or other trees having been grown in the area for a sustained period.

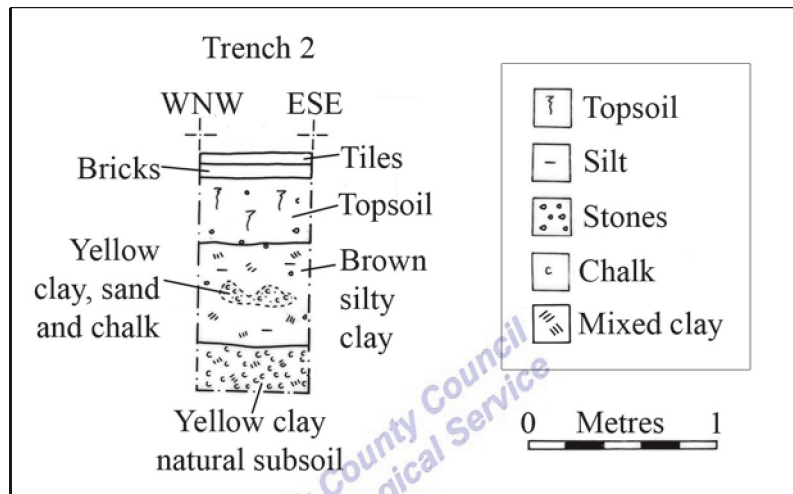


Figure 4. Soil profile

Discussion

No archaeological deposits were seen within the trenches monitored, which showed relatively thick topsoil and developed soil layers throughout. These combined with the scarcity of finds suggests little archaeological activity in the area, however the limited visibility afforded by such trenches and the filling of the conservatory trenches prior to monitoring limit the strength of this conclusion.

Appendix 1 – Brief and Specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development

GRAPEVINES, MELBOURNE BRIDGE, WITHERSFIELD

Although this document covers the work of the archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that its requirements may affect the work of a building contractor and may have financial implications (e.g. see paragraphs 2.3); there may also be Health & Safety responsibilities (e.g. paragraph 1.4).

1. Background

1.1 Planning permission to develop on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application SE/07/1767). The available evidence indicates archaeological monitoring of development, with provision for a record of any archaeology as it occurs, will be an adequate programme of work.

1.2 This development involves the erection of an extension and relocation of a conservatory - however, the new conservatory location was formerly railway embankment and so deposits in this area are probably already damaged. It lies at TL 6580 4669 on the north side of a valley between 75 and 80m OD. A Roman cemetery was identified c.75m to the south-west (WTH 001) and prehistoric and Roman activity has been recorded higher up the valley side (WTH 004, WTH 011). Various post medieval brick pits occur along the valley, including just east of the development.

The principal objective of the monitoring will be to establish whether there are Roman period deposits, particularly cremation or inhumation burials on this area.

It is intended that, subject to archaeological conditions, this monitoring should not be an extended or complex exercise. Provided building excavations are properly timetabled, and accurate notice given, it should be possible to complete monitoring in one visit with the whole process of monitoring and report writing being achieved in one working day.

1.3 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in “Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England” Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.

1.4 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination.

1.5 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857

2. **Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.

2.2 The main objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for earlier occupation of the site.

2.3 Opportunity must be given to the contracted archaeologist to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be the excavation of building footing or ground-beam trenches and service trenches.

Trenches and the upcast soil are to be observed by an archaeologist after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Unimpeded access at the rate of one and a half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin.

2.4 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service.

2.5 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site.

2.6 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.

2.7 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

2.8 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.

2.9 Opportunity must 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.

- 2.10 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 2.14 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 2.15 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Judith Plouviez

Date: 18 December 2007

Reference: /Grapevines, Melbourne Bridge

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.

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