

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

SEWER REPLACEMENT, CASTLE STREET, FRAMLINGHAM (SMR ref. FML 049)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2008/130
(OASIS Ref. suffolkc1-40018)

Summary

Framlingham: Castle Street (TM 2863 6355; FML 049). A watching brief was carried out at the above site during a sewer replacement.

Alluvial deposits were observed at a depth of 0.85–2.40m below the road surface. These are assumed to be within the medieval ditch of Framlingham Castle. They are sealed by approximately 0.70m of modern make-up for the road surface.

HER information

Planning application no:	N/A
Site code:	FML 046
Date of fieldwork:	14 March 2008
Grid Reference:	TM 2863 6355
Funding body:	N/A

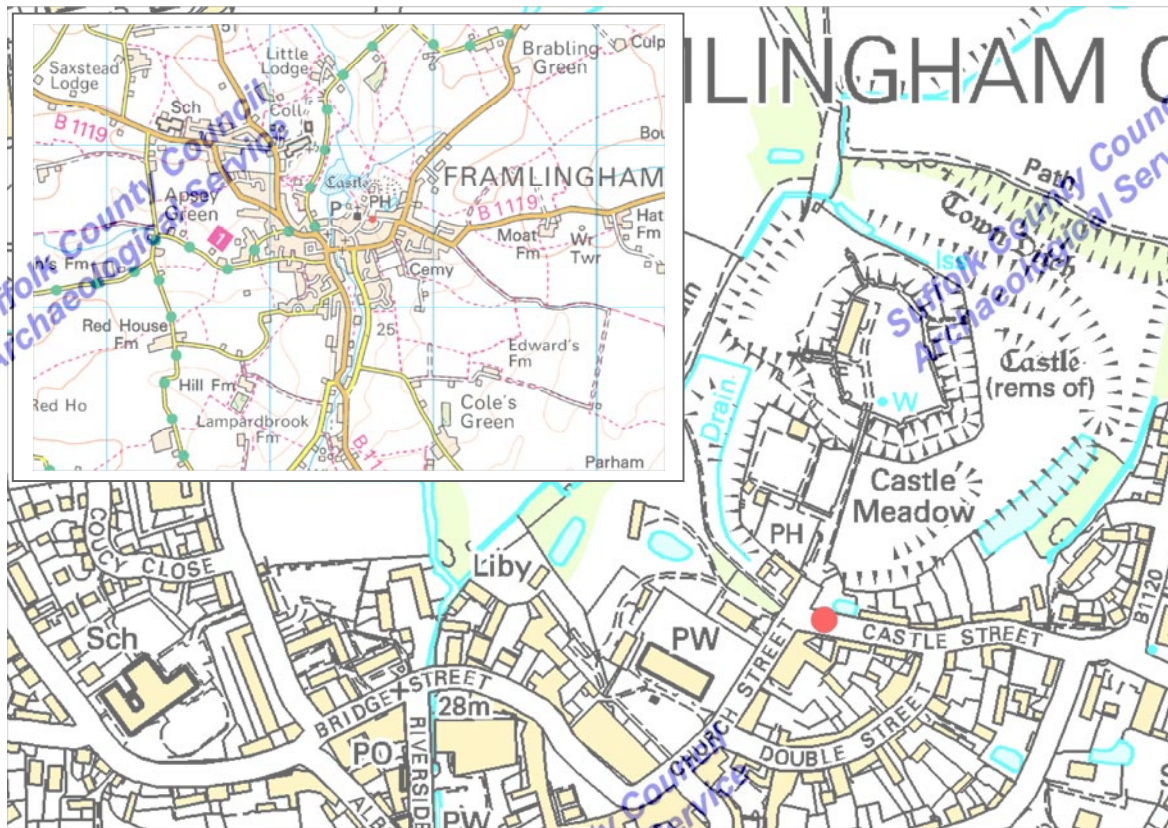


Figure 1. Location maps

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Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was conducted at Castle Street, Framlingham (Fig 1) during the replacement of a sewer.

Castle Street is located south of Framlingham Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The street lies just outside the remains of the medieval ditch that surrounded the outer bailey of the castle and is not included within the scheduled area. Much of the south-eastern part of the castle ditch has been backfilled and today it is represented at this point only by a pond on the north side of Castle Street.

Methodology

John Ette of English Heritage contacted Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (Field Team) on 14 March 2008 to report that a trench was being excavated in Castle Street. The writer visited the site on the same day to discover that Essex and Suffolk Water were carrying out emergency work to replace a collapsed sewer. Approximately 41m of new pipe was being laid, between 10 Castle Street and a manhole at the junction of Castle Street and Church Street. The trench for the new pipe was being dug using a wheeled JCB mechanical excavator, working from east to west. The trench was 1.0m wide and, where observed, 2.40m deep. It was on the same alignment as its predecessor and the excavated material consisted mostly of the backfill of the earlier sewer trench.

Approximately 23m of new pipe had been laid already and the trench backfilled with gravel. At the time of the site visit only 3.0m of trench was open, at the junction of 2 and 4 Castle Street. A visual inspection confirmed that archaeological deposits were exposed in the sides of the trench. There was limited opportunity for detailed recording because of raw sewage in the base of the trench and the presence of sheet piles at intervals along the sides of the trench. Part of the vertical section on the south side of the trench was trowelled clean in order to clarify the sequence of modern and archaeological deposits.

A digital photographic record was made, consisting of five 3008 x 2000 pixel JPG images. Written descriptions and measurements of the observed deposits were recorded in a field notebook, and all salient information has been reproduced in this report.

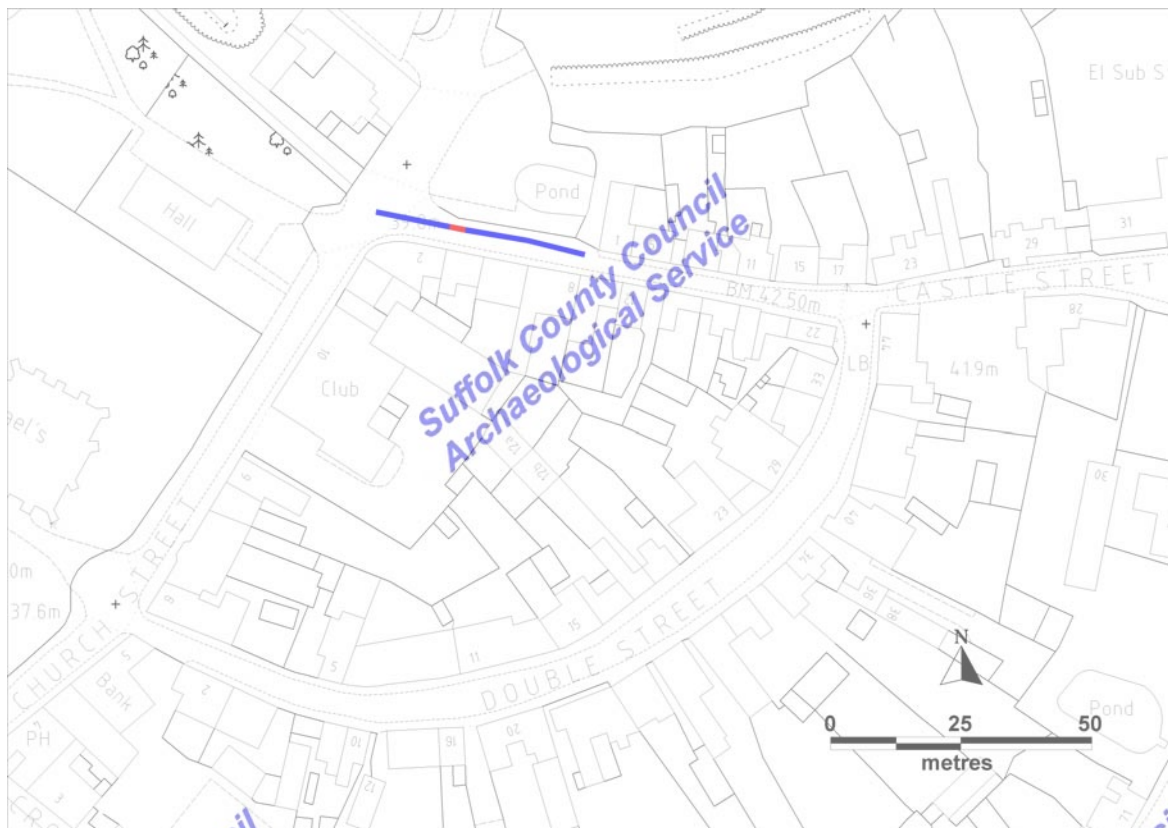


Figure 2. Map showing the approximate location of the new sewer (blue) and the part of the sewer trench that was observed (red)

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Results

The results of the watching brief are presented in the table below:

Depth below GL	Description
0 – 0.15m	Concrete road surface
0.15 – 0.85m	Gravel make-up for road surface
0.85 – 2.40m	Discrete deposits of light grey or yellowish brown (iron stained) clay/silt and mid reddish brown silty sand, with some thick lenses of dark brown 'peaty' soil. They contain moderate pebbles and small fragments of chalk, and occasional small-medium fragments of leather and animal bone.



Figure 3. General view of the sewer trench, looking southeast

Discussion and Conclusions

It seems likely that the fine-grained sediments described above represent a sequence of alluvial deposits within the medieval ditch of Framlingham Castle. They do not suggest deliberate infilling of the ditch, although deposits of this nature might have existed at a higher level and been removed when the modern road was constructed. The 'peaty' deposits are probably layers of decayed vegetation.

The observations suggest that the west end of Castle Street overlies the southern edge of the castle ditch. This seems likely, given the cartographic and topographical evidence. It is not known when this stretch of the castle ditch was

backfilled, but a tithe map of 1842 shows buildings on the north side of Castle Street that clearly overlie the ditch.

The new sewer is on the same alignment as its predecessor and consequently the recent excavation has had little impact on the archaeological resource. It is unfortunate however that no opportunity was allowed to observe the rest of the trench since it might have been possible to define the southern extent of the medieval ditch.

Kieron Heard
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31 March 2008

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