

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

LAND TO THE REAR OF LARCH HOUSE, HECKFIELD GREEN, HOXNE

HER Ref. HXN 043; OASIS ref. suffolkc1-46107

SCCAS Report No. 2008/235

Summary: An archaeological evaluation was undertaken during July 2008 to investigate the potential for buried archaeology within an area earmarked for a single dwelling and double garage on land to the rear of Larch House, Heckfield Green, Hoxne (NGR ref. TM 2428 7195). Two linear trenches were machine excavated to the depth of the undisturbed natural subsoil within which no archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were identified. The natural subsoil, which comprised pale yellow clay, lay at a depth of c. 0.4m beneath the topsoil. The main bulk of the medieval Heckfield Green was situated to the west but a linear pond which runs along the eastern side of the site is probably marking the edge of the green as it funnels down Denham Road. This would place the site within the green which could explain the lack of any occupation evidence. This evaluation is recorded on the County HER under the reference HXN 043. The evaluation was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service who were commissioned and funded by the site owner and developer, Mr Croaker.

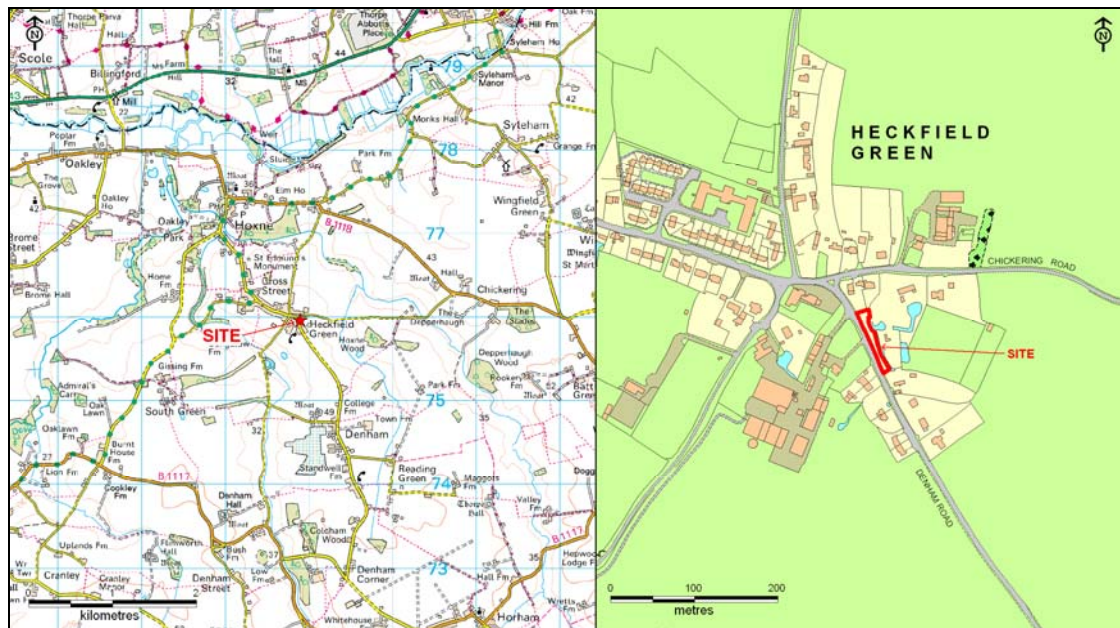


Figure 1: Location Plan

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1. Introduction

An application (0384/07) to build a single dwelling with associated double garage on a plot of land to the rear of Larch House, Heckfield Green, Hoxne was approved. The site lies in an area of archaeological importance as recorded on the County Historic Environment Record. It is situated on the edge of a medieval green with a high potential for medieval occupation deposits to exist within the development area. A

series of ponds immediately to the east are probably medieval fishponds which may also form part of a moated site.

The dwelling and garage will be constructed on a piled foundation with a reinforced beam which will entail topsoil stripping and the excavation of trenches for the ground beam and services. These works pose a significant threat to any buried archaeological deposits that may be present and consequently a condition was placed upon the application requiring an agreed programme of archaeological works be put in place prior to commencement of any groundwork.

In order to establish the full archaeological implications of the site the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team requested an archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching of the site be undertaken. This will form the first stage of a programme of archaeological works with the results being used to assess the need for any further work. To detail the work required a Brief and Specification has been produced by Dr Jess Tipper of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (See Appendix).

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned and funded by the site's owner and developer, Mr Croaker, and was undertaken by the Field Projects Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service on the 25th July 2008. The archive is lodged with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at its Bury St. Edmunds office under the Historic Environment Record reference, HXN 043. A summary of this project has also been entered onto OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the reference suffolkc1-46107. The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 1887 7596 (see figure 1 for a location plan).

2. Methodology

Two trial trenches were machine excavated down to the level of the natural subsoil (or the top of any significant archaeological deposits had they been encountered) using the back hoe of a wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were positioned with the building footprints in accordance with an approved plan.

The machining of the trenches was closely observed throughout in order to identify archaeological features and deposits and to recover any artefacts that may be revealed. Excavation continued until the undisturbed natural subsoil was encountered, the exposed surface of which was then examined for cut features or deposits. Had any features/deposits been noted they would have been sampled through hand excavation in order to determine their depth and shape and to recover datable artefacts.

Following excavation the nature of the overburden was recorded, the trench locations were plotted and their depths were noted. Upon completion of the fieldwork the trenches were backfilled. A brief photographic record of the work undertaken was also compiled.

3. Results

Two trenches totalling *c.* 23m in length were excavated across the footprints of the house and garage. See figure 2 for a plan of their locations. The results from both trenches were similar with a stratigraphy comprising 0.4m of rich dark topsoil overlying a stiff pale yellow clay which was interpreted as the natural subsoil. The interface between the topsoil and the subsoil was slightly blurred indicating that it was unlikely the surface of the subsoil had been significantly truncated in recent history.

The surface of the subsoil was examined for cut features but nothing of note was identified. A large disturbance was noted in Trench 2 but this was related to the recent removal of a large tree stump. The machining was closely observed throughout in order to maximise the recovery finds but no artefacts were noted in any of the trenches and no finds, other than occasional fragments of 20th century debris, were recovered from the spoil.

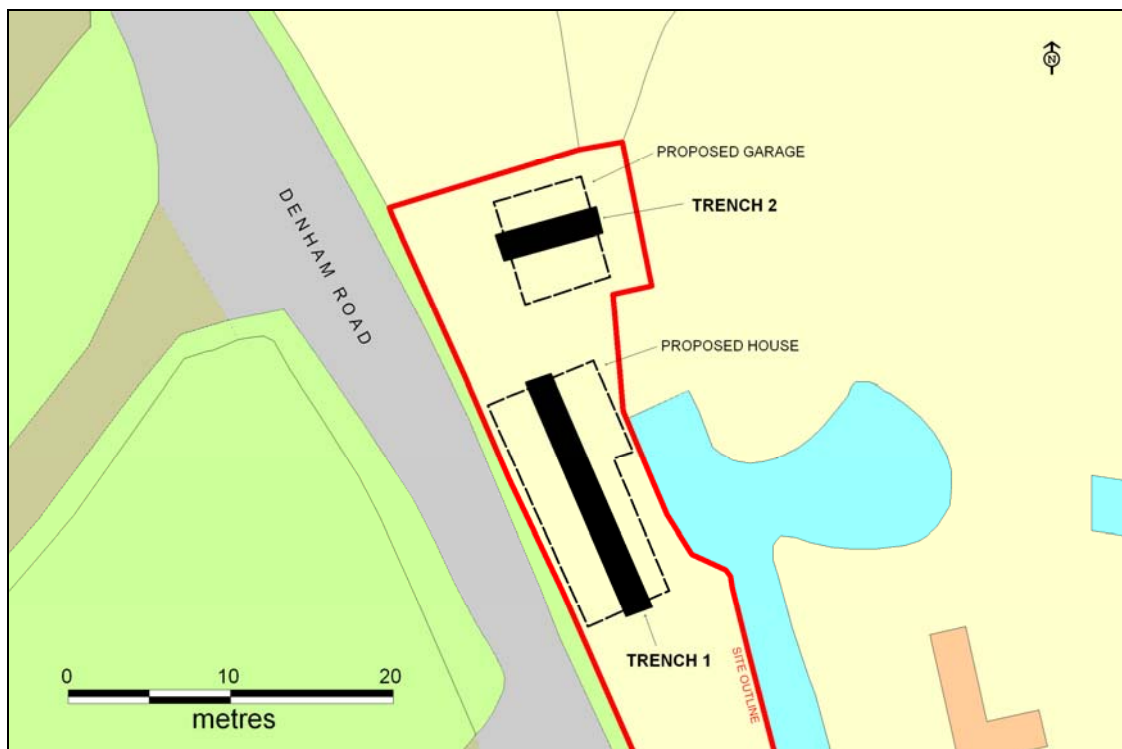


Figure 2: Trench Plan

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5. Discussion

No evidence was recovered from any of the trenches that could suggest the presence of archaeological deposits or features within the development area. The Heckfield Green is marked on Hodkinson's map, published 1783. On the map it can be seen that the green funnels into the adjoining roads (see figure 3). The ditch/pond running along the eastern edge of the site is probably marking the eastern edge of the green as it funnels down Denham Road. This suggests that the site itself is within the green and as part of dedicated open space it is unlikely to have been occupied by dwellings. The complete lack of any evidence for occupation within the evaluation trenches could be seen as further confirmation of the site's location within the green.

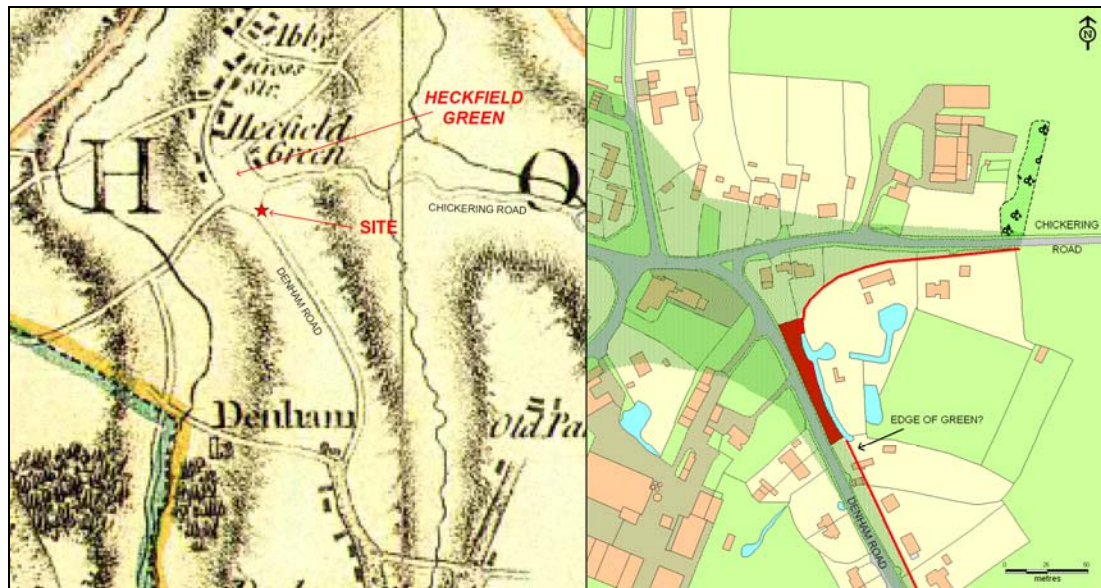


Figure 3: Hodskinson's map of 1783 (left - no scale) and current OS mapping (right) showing possible extent of green

6. Recommendations for Future Work

Based on the results of the evaluation it would seem unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits are under threat from the proposed development and consequently no further work is recommended.

M. Sommers
Suffolk County Council, Field Projects Team

28th July 2008

Plates



Plate I: Trench 1



Plate II: view of soil profile in Trench 1

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

APPENDIX

Brief and Specification for Trenched Evaluation LARCH HOUSE, HECKFIELD GREEN, HOXNE, SUFFOLK

The commissioning body should be aware that it may have Health & Safety responsibilities.

1. The nature of the development and archaeological requirements

1.1 Planning permission for the erection of a new dwelling and detached double garage, with associated access, at Larch House, Heckfield Green, Hoxne, Suffolk IP21 5AA (TM 1888 7597), has been granted by Mid Suffolk District Council conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (0384/07). **(Please contact the developer for an accurate plan of the development).**

1.2 The proposed application area measures c. 0.11 ha., on the eastern side of Denham Road. It is situated on chalky till (seasonally wet deep loam to clay) at c. 46.00m AOD. 1.3 The application lies in an area of archaeological importance, recorded in the County Historic Environment Record, on the edge of the medieval green. There is high potential for medieval occupation deposits at this location.

1.4 The dwelling and garage will be constructed using piled foundations (150mm diameter and at 3.00m intervals) with a reinforced beam. Aspects of the proposed works, including topsoil stripping, cutting of the trenches for the reinforced beam and service trenches, will cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposit that exists.

1.5 A linear trenched evaluation is required of the development area, before any groundworks take place. The results of this evaluation will enable the archaeological resource, both in quality and extent, to be accurately quantified, informing both development methodologies and mitigation measures. Decisions on the need for, and scope of, any further work should there be any archaeological finds of significance will be based upon the results of the evaluation and will be the subject of an additional brief.

1.5 All arrangements for the field evaluation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.

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

1.7 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory. The WSI will provide the basis for measurable standards and will be used to satisfy the requirements of the planning condition.

1.8 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. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of SCC (SCCAS/CT) before execution.

1.9 The responsibility for identifying any constraints on field-work, e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c., ecological considerations rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such constraints or imply that the target area is freely available.

1.10 Any changes to the specifications that the project archaeologist may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated directly to SCCAS/CT and the client for approval.

2. Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation

2.1 Establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area, with particular regard to any which are of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ* [at the discretion of the developer].

2.2 Identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.

2.3 Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.

2.4 Establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence.

2.5 Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of cost.

2.6 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), all stages will follow a process of assessment and justification before

proceeding to the next phase of the project. Field evaluation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential. Any further excavation required as mitigation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential, analysis and final report preparation may follow. Each stage will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design; this document covers only the evaluation stage.

2.7 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT (address as above) five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored.

2.8 If the approved evaluation design is not carried through in its entirety (particularly in the instance of trenching being incomplete) the evaluation report may be rejected. Alternatively the presence of an archaeological deposit may be presumed, and untested areas included on this basis when defining the final mitigation strategy.

2.9 An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

3. Specification: Field Evaluation

3.1 Two linear trial trenches are to be excavated: across the footprint of the new dwelling (which measures c. 15.00 x 6.00m in area), 15.00m long, aligned NNW to SSE. Across the footprint of the garage (which measures c. 6.50 x 6.00m in area), 6.00m long, aligned NNW to SSE. Trenches are to be a minimum of 1.80m wide unless special circumstances can be demonstrated.

3.2 If excavation is mechanised a toothless 'ditching bucket' at least 1.20m wide must be used. A scale plan showing the proposed locations of the trial trenches should be included in the WSI and the detailed trench design must be approved by SCCAS/CT before field work begins.

3.3 The topsoil may be mechanically removed using an appropriate machine with a back-acting arm and fitted with a toothless bucket, down to the interface layer between topsoil and subsoil or other visible archaeological surface. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. The topsoil should be examined for archaeological material.

3.4 The top of the first archaeological deposit may be cleared by machine, but must then be cleaned off by hand. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.

3.5 In all evaluation excavation there is a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation; that significant archaeological features, e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or post-holes, should be preserved intact even if fills are sampled. For guidance: For linear features, 1.00m wide slots (min.) should be excavated across their width; For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills should be sampled (in some instances 100% may be requested).

3.8 There must be sufficient excavation to give clear evidence for the period, depth and nature of any archaeological deposit. The depth and nature of colluvial or other masking deposits must be established across the site.

3.9 Archaeological contexts should, where possible, be sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains. Best practice should allow for sampling of interpretable and datable archaeological deposits and provision should be made for this. The contractor shall show what provision has been made for environmental assessment of the site and must provide details of the sampling strategies for retrieving artefacts, biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J. Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser for Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.

3.10 Any natural subsoil surface revealed should be hand cleaned and examined for archaeological deposits and artefacts. Sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed may be necessary in order to gauge their date and character.

3.11 Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.

3.12 All finds will be collected and processed (unless variations in this principle are agreed SCCAS/CT during the course of the evaluation).

3.13 Human remains must be left *in situ* except in those cases where damage or desecration are to be expected, or in the event that analysis of the remains is shown to be a requirement of satisfactory evaluation of the site. However, the excavator should be aware of, and comply with, the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.

3.14 Plans of any archaeological features on the site are to be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.

3.15 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies and/or high resolution digital images.

3.16 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposit to be kept separate during excavation to allow sequential backfilling of excavations.

3.17 Trenches should not be backfilled without the approval of SCCAS/CT.

4. General Management

4.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by SCCAS/CT. The archaeological contractor will give not less than five days written notice of the commencement of the work so that arrangements for monitoring the project can be made.

4.2 The composition of the archaeology contractor staff must be detailed and agreed by this office, including any subcontractors/specialists. For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this evaluation there must also be a statement of their responsibilities or a CV for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites and publication record. Ceramic specialists, in particular, must have relevant experience from this region, including knowledge of local ceramic sequences.

4.3 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfill the Brief.

4.4 A detailed risk assessment must be provided for this particular site.

4.5 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.

4.6 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised 2001) should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

5. Report Requirements

5.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (particularly Appendix 3.1 and Appendix 4.1).

5.2 The report should reflect the aims of the WSI.

5.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.

5.4 An opinion as to the necessity for further evaluation and its scope may be given. No further site work should be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established.

5.5 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.

5.6 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence, including an assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from palaeosols and cut features. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).

5.7 The results of the surveys should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the County Historic Environment Record (HER).

5.8 A copy of the Specification should be included as an appendix to the report. 5.9 The project manager must consult the County HER Officer (Dr Colin Pendleton) to obtain an HER number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.

5.10 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*.

5.11 The project manager should consult the SCC Archive Guidelines 2008 and also the County HER Officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.

5.12 The WSI should state proposals for the deposition of the digital archive relating to this project with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and allowance should be made for costs incurred to ensure the proper deposition (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>).

5.13 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the finds with the County HER or a museum in Suffolk which satisfies Museum and Galleries Commission requirements, as an indissoluble part of the full site archive. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate. If the County HER is the repository for finds there will be a charge made for storage, and it is presumed that this will also be true for storage of the archive in a museum.

5.14 The site archive is to be deposited with the County HER within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.

5.15 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project (whether it be evaluation or excavation) a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report, or submitted to SCCAS/CT, by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.

5.16 County HER sheets must be completed, as per the County HER manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.

5.17 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County HER. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.

5.18 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.

5.19 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the County HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

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Date: 7 July 2008 Reference: / LarchHouse-Hoxne2008

This brief and specification remains valid for six 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.