

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

## 5 HONEY HILL, BURY ST EDMUNDS BSE 308

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF GROUNDWORKS

Planning Application No. SE/07/1791

NGR: TL8574 6395

OASIS Ref. Suffolk1-47606

Funded by: Mr R. Springham

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### Summary

*The recording of a footing running across the garden of No.5 Honey Hill exposed the remains of at least two building extensions. The latest comprised a mortar and rubble foundation for sill beams that is dated from the late 18th century, over an earlier floor of clay. At least two pits predating the clay floor were identified but not excavated.*

### Introduction

The conversion of 5 Honey Hill from a public building to a private house (planning application SE/07/1791) was subject to an archaeological monitoring condition set out in a Brief and Specification issued by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). 5 Honey Hill was a well built property, substantial elements of which date from the late medieval period. It occupies land that falls between the suggested site of an Anglo-Saxon market at St Mary's Square and the South gate of the Abbey onto which it faced. The site lies at 37mOD

### Methodology

The main potential for archaeological evidence was in the yard at the back of the site. Proposals for this area included the construction of a conservatory. This required a footing trench to be excavated east-west across the width of the plot. Other work included the hand digging of existing drains, general refurbishment and the removal of topsoil. Several short visits were made to the site and the conservatory footing trench section was hand cleaned and a 1:20 drawing of the section recorded (figs.1-2). Digital images were also made.

### Results

Approximately 0.4m of topsoil in the yard area was removed by machine before building work commenced. No archaeological features were exposed. Drain runs were hand excavated on similar alignments to existing runs and no archaeological layers were disturbed. The footing for the conservatory was excavated partly by hand and partly by mini-digger to a depth of 0.7m and was 0.3m wide (1.1m below the pre-existing ground surface). There were no datable finds. The section was hand cleaned and drawn (Fig.2).

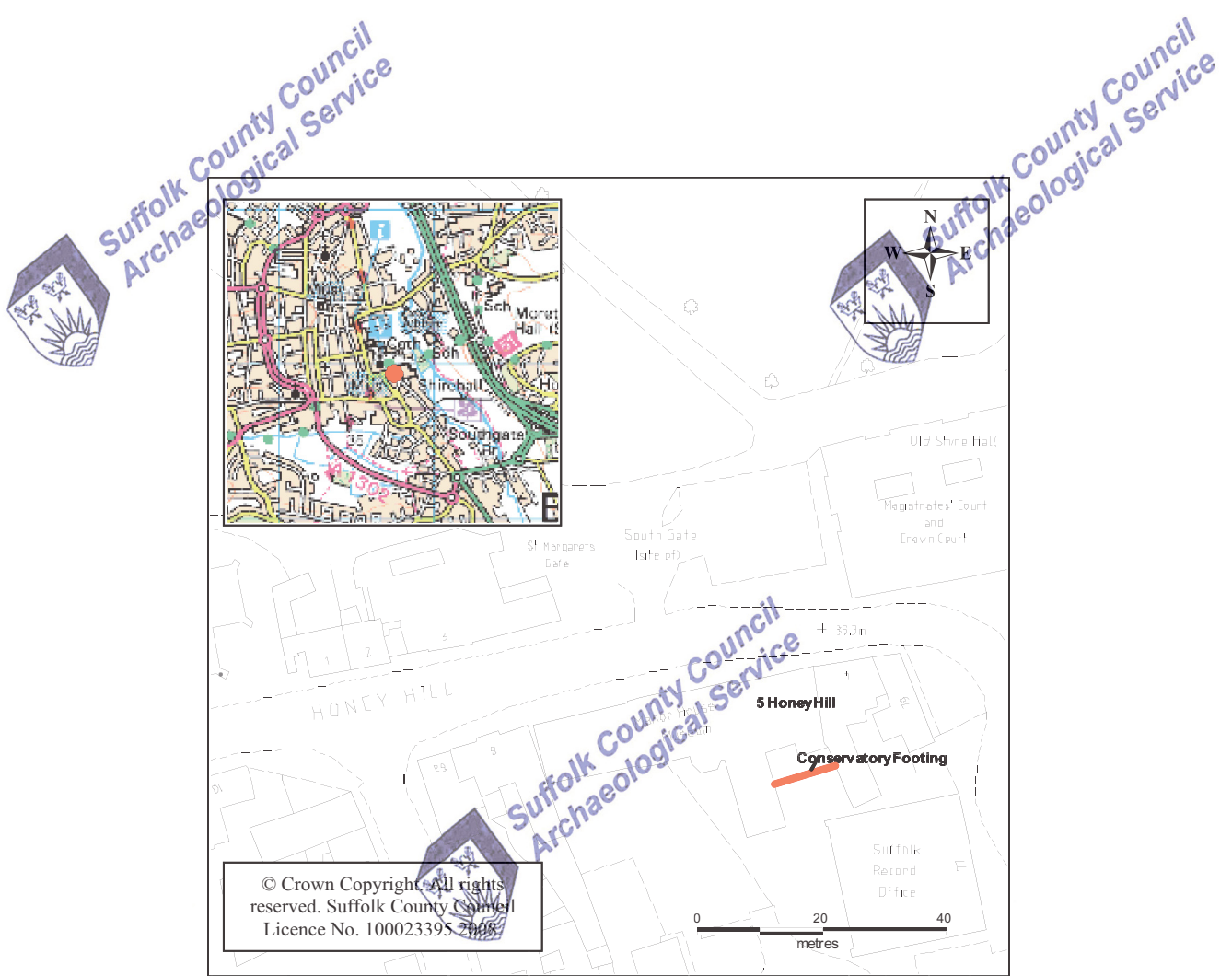


Figure 1. Site location plan

## Section 1

(Fig. 2)

The trench was contained between a garden wall to the east and the foundations of the Manor House to the west. Described from the east the section comprised a brown loam 0007 that overlay a darker loam 0005, which contained oyster shells (despite hand cleaning no pottery could be identified). This deposit was in a deeper cut that could be identified where the natural subsoil of orange silt and sand was exposed. Although only one edge was visible it is likely to be a pit. Cut into the top of the pit was a wall foundation built of flint and orange mortar with occasional bricks 0002. A brick fragment was measured and was 2.5 inches wide suggesting that it was late 18th century or later. A similar foundation 4m to the west indicates the width of a building or probably a gable end extension to the standing building fronting onto the street. This extension probably replaced an earlier building which was identified by clay floor 0003 (confirmation that the clay represents a building floor could only have been provided by examining it in plan; the interpretation is therefore offered as the most likely explanation for its appearance and position within the narrow trench. The clay was slightly wider than the foundation at c. 4.4m, it was also aligned further to the west so that there is a gap between the clay and the foundation to the east, but the foundation cut the clay to the west thus establishing the sequence. Below the upper layer of clay was a burnt clay surface 0004 with a further deeper layer of clay concentrated towards the eastern end that is also labelled 0003. This layer continues below the base of the trench and is evidence of a feature that was not investigated. The centre of the clay area was cut away by a modern pit. A further modern disturbance associated with services to the standing building extended for 3m. At the west end of the trench a brown loam

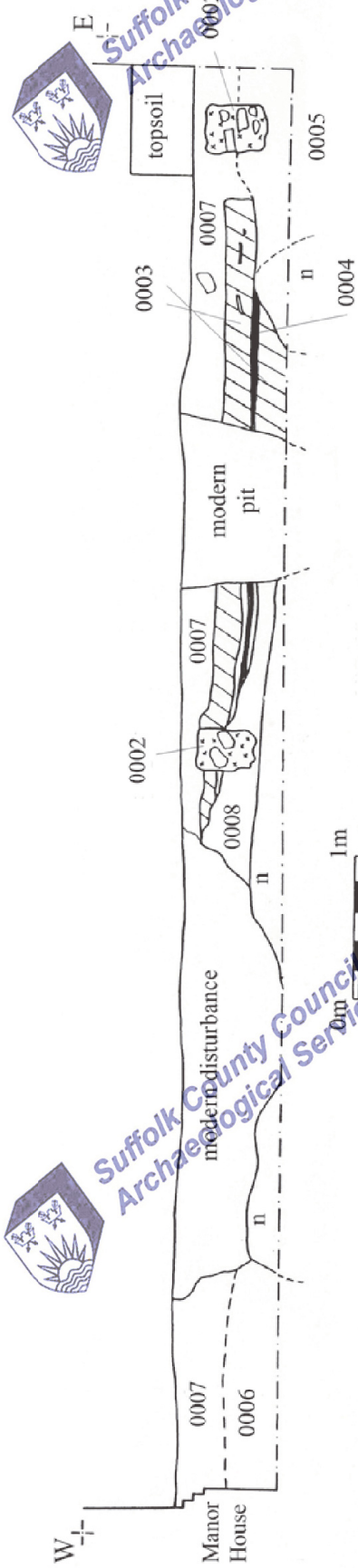


Figure 2. Section 1 Conservatory footing

soil 0007 overlay a darker loam 0006 which was contained within a cut into the natural subsoil below the trench. This is interpreted as a probable pit fill. Both these layers were cut by the foundations to The Manor House at the western side of the property.

## Finds

No finds were recovered from the site. Oyster shells were noted in fill 0006 but not collected. Surfaces were hand cleaned although the trench was not excavated under direct archaeological supervision. The builders had collected several bottle and bone fragments during the excavation.

## General discussion

The most significant finds from the monitoring were the remains of at least two building phases represented by clay floors 0003 and 0004 and flint and mortar foundations 0002. No evidence of walling was recovered from either phase; the straight edge on the eastern side of clay 0003 may indicate where it was contained by a ground beam. Wall plates probably rested on foundations 0002 which protected them from rising damp but no floor survives. The street pattern of Bury St Edmunds has changed little since the 12th century with Honey Hill, formerly known as 'Scolehallstrete', in the same place (Statham 88). Foundations 0002 almost certainly indicate an extension to the extant building. The clay floored extension is poorly dated and could have been from an earlier building but is just as likely to have come from an early phase of the standing building. This deposit may represent several phases of activity; the clay was in places more than 0.4m deep and the likelihood is that further features are represented. Pits 0005 and 0006 remain undated but the former is likely to be medieval given its stratigraphic position beneath the building extensions.

Context	Identifier	Description
0001	Unstratified finds	
0002	Wall foundation	Wall foundations recorded in section. Built of orange mortar with mixed flints including brick fragments up to 2.5 inches wide.
0003	Clay deposit	Solid yellow clay with natural chalk inclusions. Context applies to at least two layers. Separated by burnt surface 0004. Lower clay may be infill and levelling of earlier feature?
0004	Burnt surface	Surface of burnt clay sandwiched between 0003.
0005	Pit cut and Fill	Layer of dark brown loam continuing below foundation 0003. Suggested to be fill of unexcavated pit predating structural remains
0006	Pit cut and fill	Layer of dark brown loam. Cut by Manor House foundations and cut into natural. Suggest medieval pit but no finds recovered.
0007	Layer	Brown loam cut by modern disturbances but overlying all other deposits. Suggest post-medieval.
0008	Layer	Brown loam sealed beneath 0002 and 0003.

Table 1 Context List

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## Bibliography

Statham. M., 1988, *The Book of Bury St Edmunds*.