

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

82-104 Out Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds BSE 325

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2008
(Planning app. SE/07/1881)



Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service



Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service



Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service



Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service



Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

A. Tester
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

© September 2008

Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX



Contents

List of Figures
List of Contributors
Acknowledgements
Summary
HER information

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Results
4. The Finds
5. General Discussion
6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Appendix 1: Brief and Specification

List of Figures

1. Site location plan, approximate area of development marked
2. Trench details indicating sections and where the silt has accumulated
3. Trench 2 from the south
4. Sections
5. Trench 2 from the north
6. Trench 2 section 4 (ditch 0002)
7. Trench 7 section 3 south end

List of Contributors

All Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service unless otherwise stated.

Andrew Tester Senior Project Officer

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Havebury Housing partnership. The work was monitored by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team). The evaluation was carried out by Andrew Tester, Nick Taylor and Andrew Beverton from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. Digital site plans were produced by Andrew Beverton.

Summary

No features of archaeological interest were uncovered during an evaluation on land to the rear of 82-104 Westgate Street. Below the topsoil diagonal plough marks were observed cutting the top of weathered chalk and gravel and it is suggested that a deeper accumulation of soil toward the base of the slope is the result of soil creep accelerated by arable farming.

HER information

Planning application no.	SE/07/1881
Date of fieldwork:	18th September 2008
Grid Reference:	TL 8488 6366
Funding body:	Havebury Housing Partnership
Oasis reference	Suffolk1-48762

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of the construction of flats on land between 82-104 Out Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. The work was carried out to a Brief and Specification by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team) and was funded by Havebury Housing Partnership. The proposed development lies at TL 8488 6366 and varies between 35m OD and 40m OD (Fig. 1). It is on the north side of the A143 and c.360m from the former Westgate of the medieval town. Several factors suggested the site may be of some interest: topographically its location on the south facing slope overlooking the valley of the river Lymet has the potential for prehistoric and later settlement, there is also historical evidence for an aquifer or leet supplying water from Chevington to the medieval Abbey of St Edmund that may have crossed the site.

At the time of carrying out the work demolition of standing properties and the removal of trees had not occurred, however there was sufficient space in which to locate the trenches to cover the rear of the properties although the standing house plots and front gardens were inaccessible.

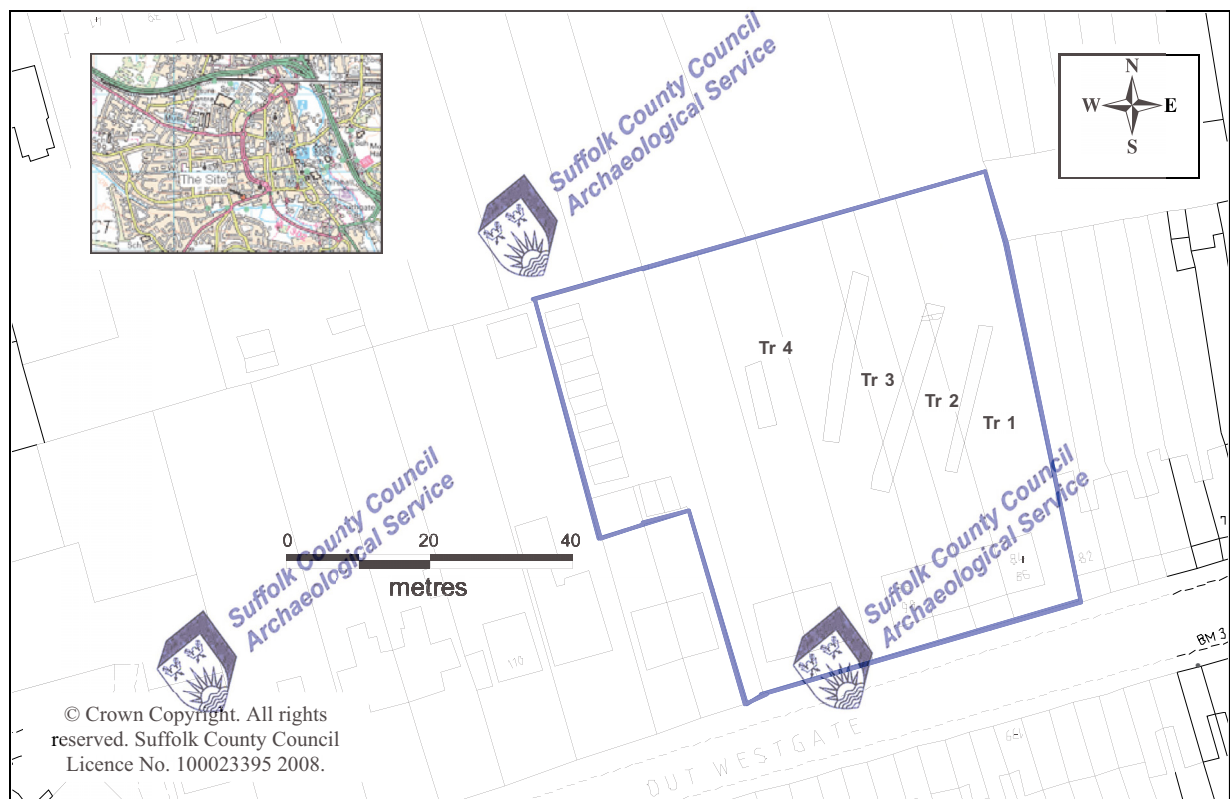


Figure 1. Site location plan, approximate area of development marked

2. Methodology

A pattern of 3 trenches was excavated diagonally across the slope on land that was formerly allotments towards the rear of the site. A single trench was also dug aligned north-south in the garden of number 100 Out Westgate (Fig. 1). The trenches were excavated using a JCB type excavator fitted with a 1.6m-ditching bucket and varied between 1.6 and 2.8m in width (Fig. 2). A total length of 88m was examined which is slightly less than 5% of the development area. The site was located using a GPS and sample trench profiles were recorded at a scale of 1:20 from the ends of each trench. Context numbers were issued starting at 0001, which is reserved for unstratified finds. Digital colour photographs were taken during the fieldwork, and are included in the archive. Inked copies of section drawings have been made. An OASIS form has been completed for the project (reference no. suffolk1-48762) and a digital copy of the report submitted for inclusion on the Archaeology Data Service database (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>). The site archive is kept in the main store of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service at Bury St Edmunds under HER No. BSE 325.

3. Results

The Trench plan appears in Figures 1 and 2. The sections are marked on Figure 2.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 21.5m in length and varied between 0.4m at the north end and 1.1m at the south end in depth, which is recorded in Sections 1 and 2 (Fig. 4). The section comprised dark brown topsoil with a red/brown soil beneath. The lower fill is much deeper at the south end where soil had accumulated towards the base of the slope. The natural consisted of weathered chalk with patches of gravel scarred by plough marks. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 2 (Figs. 3

Trench 2 was 27m in length and varied between 0.5m at the north end and 1.4m at the south end, which is recorded in sections 3 and 4. The sections show topsoil over lighter brown subsoil that varied in depth either end of the trench. Section 4 also includes a section across the only feature 0002 that is a shallow ditch cut into the subsoil. Finds suggest this feature is probably 19th century in date and it is on a parallel alignment with the street and rear property boundary (Fig. 1). This trench is illustrated with digital images that are representative of the site as a whole. Plough marks are particularly visible in Figure 5.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 24.5m in length. Sections 5 and 6 record a depth of c. 0.6 of topsoil and subsoil, the southern end of the trench did not reach the base of the slope where the subsoil thickened. No features were located or finds recovered.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 9.2m in length and aligned north – south. The recorded section was 0.7m deep comprising topsoil and pale brown soil. There were no features, or finds recovered.

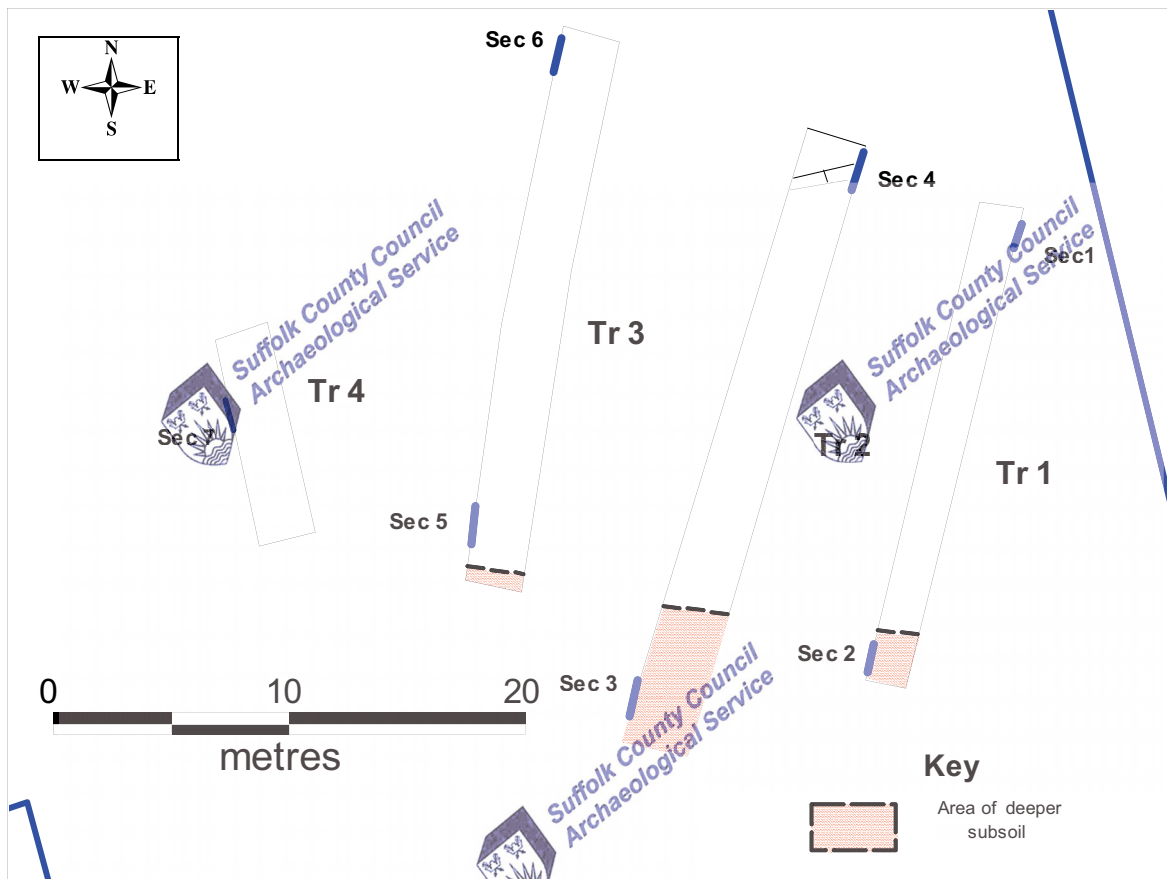


Figure 2. Trench details indicating sections and where the silt has accumulated



Figure 3. Trench 2 from the south

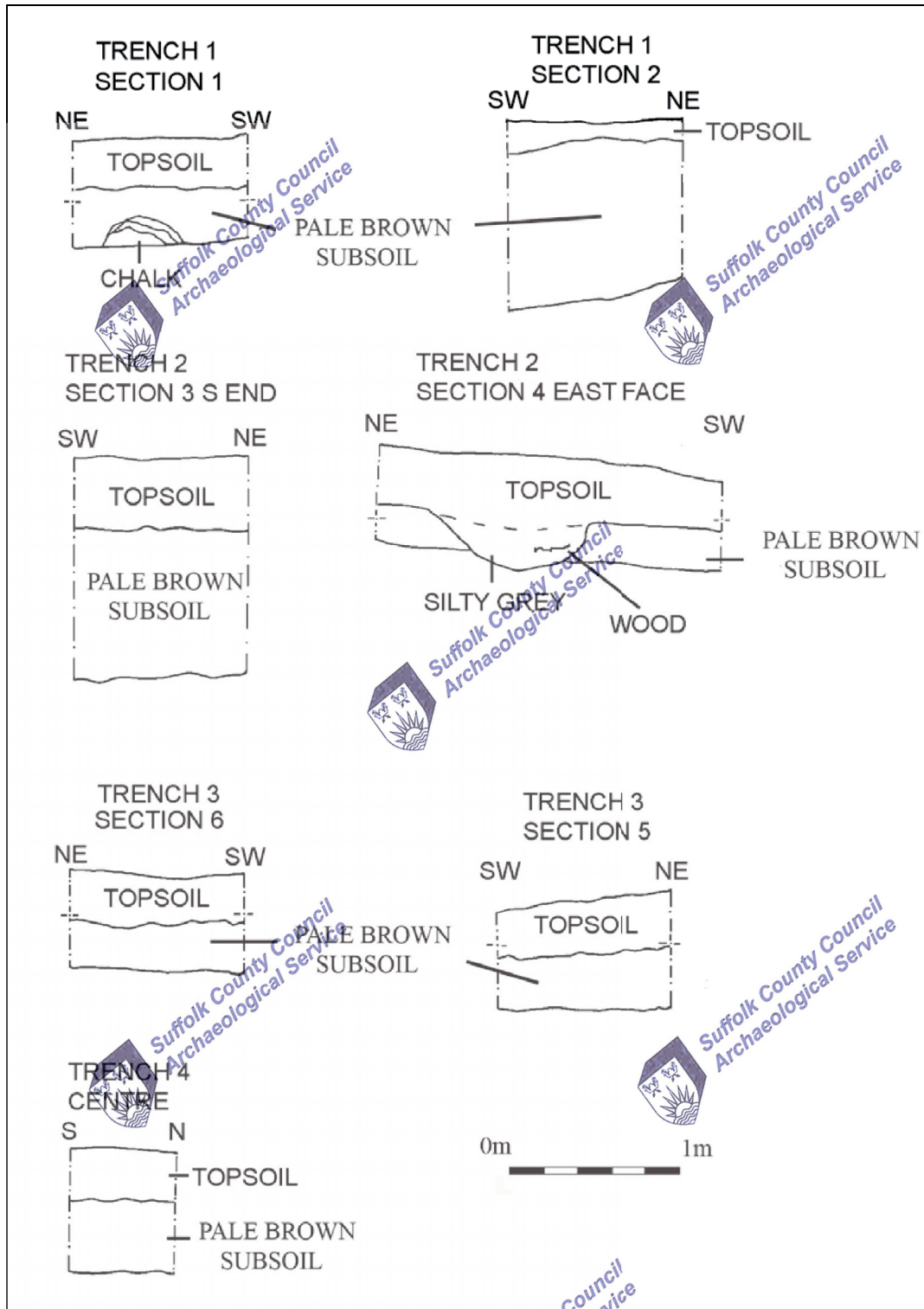


Figure 4. Sections



Figure 5. Trench 2 from the north

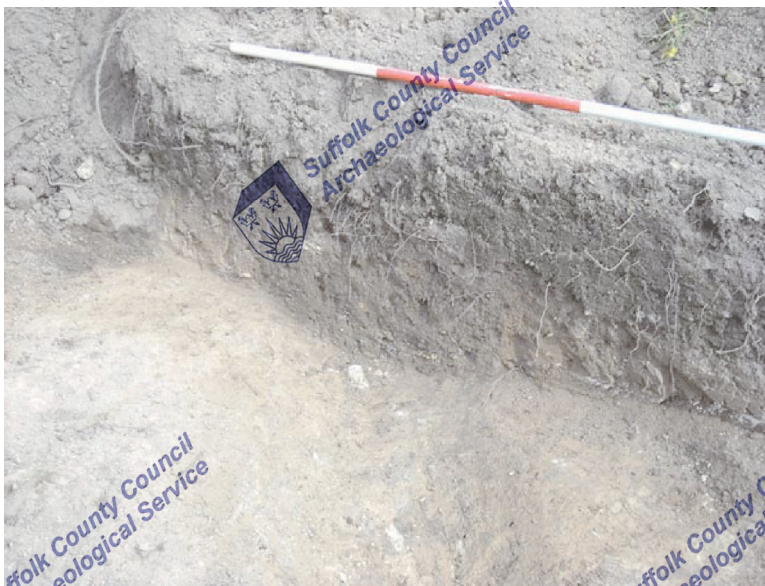


Figure 6. Trench 2 section 4 (ditch 0002)



Figure 7. Trench 2, section 3 south end

5. General Discussion

The evaluation trenching was restricted by the standing buildings at the front of the site and by the protected trees and debris from demolition particularly at the north end of the site. Allowing for these restrictions it is felt that the trenches probably reflect the character of the subsoil on the rising ground behind the properties fronting onto Out Westgate. All the trenches contained dark topsoil that was almost directly above the natural geology, which comprised chalk with some patches of gravel, over the majority of their length. The diagonal striations across the chalk are probably evidence of ploughing before the town encroached upon the site. The slope of the subsoil drops away quite sharply at the north end of the site but this has been ameliorated by the accumulation of hillwash that has moved down the slope; a process likely to have been accelerated by ploughing and made evident by the lack of subsoil further up the slope. Test engineering holes have shown a deep deposit of soil above the natural chalk and gravel towards the street front (Phil Stebbings pers. com.) which may be further evidence of soil accumulating at the base of the slope. The recorded ditch may predate the existing properties but has no great antiquity.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence from the evaluation reveals that the rising land behind the street frontage has been eroded, probably due to arable farming on a marked slope and no features or finds of significance were recovered. The accumulation of silt at the south end of Trench 2 is probably an indicator of ground conditions to the south along the line of the road. Given the evidence it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required.

Andrew Tester
September 2008

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors when a planning application is registered. 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.



Outline Brief and Specification

The planning background is covered by PPG16. This brief can only cover the first stage of the programme of archaeological work required by the planning condition, that is the evaluation by trial trenching which will identify and quantify any archaeology present on the site.

The second stage, with a separate brief, will address any mitigation against damage by development to any archaeological levels identified by the evaluation; this may include archaeological excavation of any significant archaeological deposit prior to development, or monitoring of the contractor's work as it takes place.

1. A planning condition of the PPG16, para30 type is attached to the consents for this development. "No development shall take place within the area indicated [the whole site] until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority."

2. The area has not been the subject of any detailed archaeological survey or excavation and as a consequence there are no known archaeological sites. However, the area is considered to have archaeological potential based on the predicted route near the top [north] edge of the site of a known but unlocated aqueduct connecting the Abbey with a water source at Horringer; if present this is likely to be in the form of a buried pipe or lined water duct. The lower part of the site is close to the valley bottom of the River Linner and has potential for early settlement.

3. Undertake trial trenching using 2m wide machine-dug trenches which cover approximately 5% by area of the development area. The trench design to be approved by this office.

4. Employ the usual excavation and recording standards required by SCC Archaeological Service.

5. Create an archive of all records and finds to the usual SCC standard.

6. Provide an evaluation report, including an archive report of results, to the usual SCC standards.

I am content for this outline brief to be used provided a contractor fully familiar with SCC standards is used.

Bob Carr

Senior Archaeologist, Conservation Team
Suffolk County Archaeological Service
01284 352441