

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Gulling Green Barn, Brockley, BKY 022

NGR: TL 8276 5640

Oasis Ref. Suffolkc1-52907

Funded by: Mr G Baber

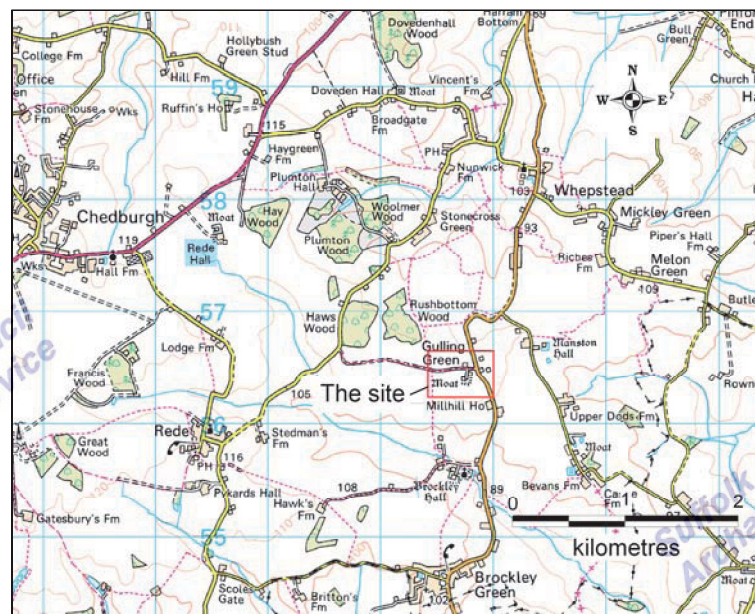
SCCAS Report no. 2008/273

Summary

An evaluation was carried out to establish the existence and location of a possible infilled moat ditch at Gulling Green Barns, Brockley. Trial trenches revealed that the existing moat was never a complete, discrete circuit but extended from a field boundary to create an enclosure. The field and moat ditches had been cleaned out in the recent past, leaving no archaeological evidence.

Introduction

An investigation was carried out at Gulling Green, Brockley in order to determine if the moat ditches which currently enclose a group of barns on three sides were once linked to form a complete circuit. The owner wishes to re-establish any moat ditches in order to enclose the site. The aim of the evaluation was to record the position and profile of any existing moat features in order that they could be faithfully re-excavated, determine when the moat had been infilled and the state of archaeological preservation. This information would then be used to develop a strategy to mitigate for any archaeological remains that would be lost in the proposed re-excavation. The investigation was part of the condition on the consent of planning application SE/08/0842 and 0843 to redevelop the barn for residential use. The work was commissioned by Mr R. Carpenter of Modece Architects on behalf of Mr G. Baber. The fieldwork was carried out by members of Suffolk Archaeological Service Field Team in accordance with an outline brief from Will Fletcher from the County's Conservation Team.



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Figure 1. Site location plan

Gulling Green Barns, Brockley lies at TL 8276 5640 on the south edge of a medieval green. The former farm's land spread between the manors of Brockley and the neighbouring manor of Whepstead. The site is on a high plain above the 110m contour and the surface geology is clay. The barns are enclosed on the south and east sides by ditches and the north side by a short

length of ditch and a pond (Fig. 2). The 1837 tithe map records the ditches and pond in much the same way as they exist today but no ditches are shown on an earlier map of 1739 (Fig. 6). The ditches are constantly wet, and a natural spring rises in the north west corner of the enclosure. The barns were built in the 18th century but many of the timbers used in their construction have been recovered from both earlier farm buildings and a well constructed high-status house dating from the early part of the 16th century.

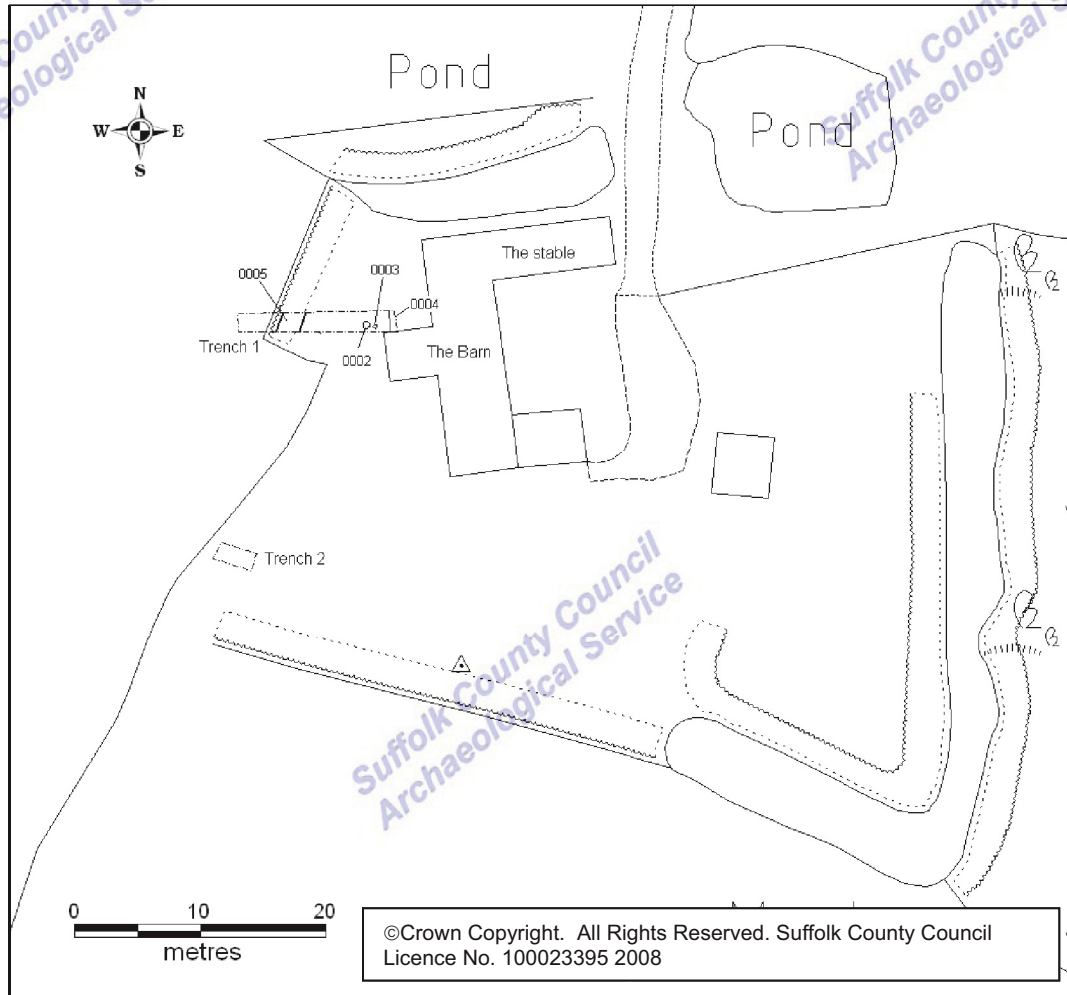


Figure 2. Site plan



Figure 3. Moat ditch to the north of the barns (left) and west boundary ditch

Methodology and Results

A machine fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket excavated a 12.5m long trench on the west side of the enclosure. This extended from close to the west side of the barn to a point west of the field boundary (Fig.2). The machine, working under the supervision of an archaeologist, removed topsoil exposing the surface of the geological clay and re-excavated the field ditch, closely following the original ditch profile. All levels on the sections are comparative levels taken against a ground level at the south west corner of the barn.

The trench was extended into the neighbouring field (but remained within Mr. Baber's property) to explore the possibility that the line of the ditch may have changed. The short length of ditch to north of the barn certainly projects beyond the line of the field ditch and it was presumed that an original moat ditch might parallel the one on the east side of the enclosure. This was further tested by a second trench 3m long at the south west corner of the enclosure (Fig. 2).

The evaluation shows however that there is no separate and distinct moat ditch and the enclosure on the west side has only ever been completed by the existing field boundary. The field boundary ditch is 2.2m wide and 1.1m deep. It is filled with a single homogenous brown clay silt, probably the accumulation of soil washed off the field (Figs. 4 and 5). It is also noteworthy that the ground level of the putative moat platform appears lower than the surrounding fields and this is confirmed by the sample section.

Trench 2 was excavated straight onto clean geological clay at 0.3m and was not recorded beyond being located.



Figure 4. Ditch section

In the sample on the moat island the subsoil lay beneath 350mm of recently worked topsoil. Two small postholes, 0002 and 0003 were recorded cutting the subsoil. The postholes were 150mm and 220mm deep and filled with ground water during excavation. Posthole 0002 was packed with grey clay and the post position visible on the south side of the hole. A fragment of post-medieval brick was recovered from the packing material. A thin layer of crushed chalk, 0005, was also recorded and the northern extent of this aligned with the position of the postholes. Beneath the chalk was shallow linear feature, 0004, and this was filled with a brown, silty clay which produced a fragment of post-medieval brick. Until recently a porch-like structure was attached to the west side of the barn and it seems likely that these features were associated with this element of the barn.

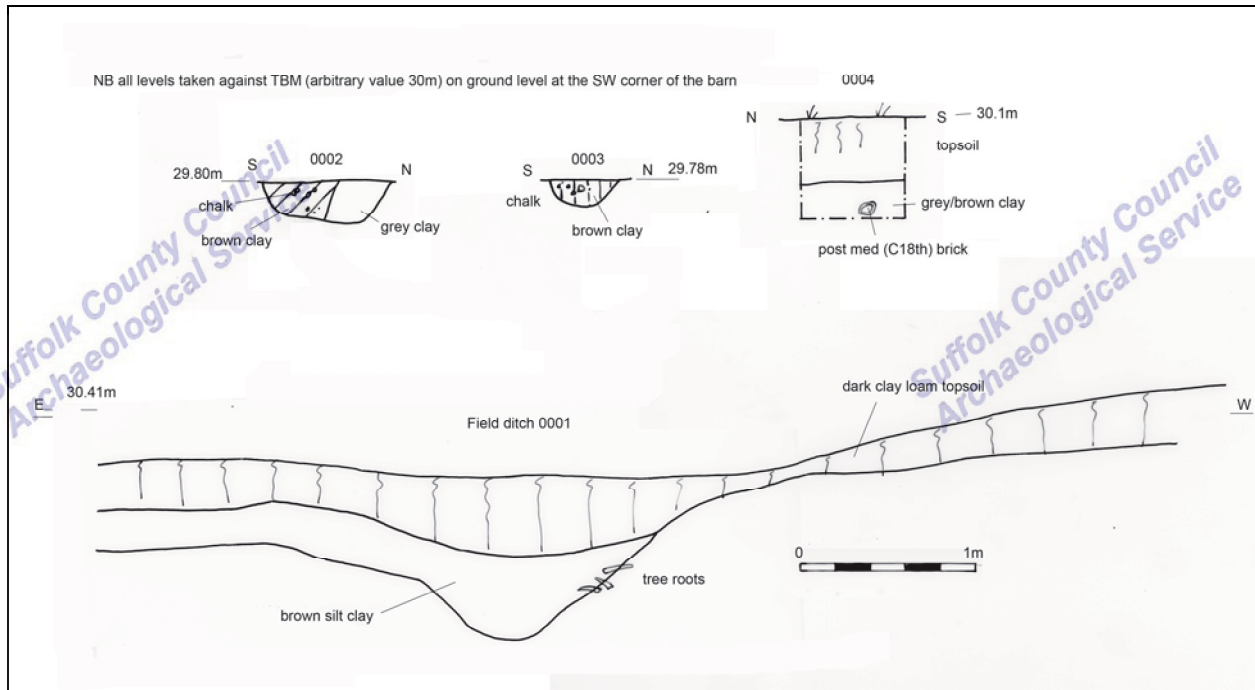


Figure 5. Drawn sections

Discussion and Conclusion

The evaluation demonstrates that there is no archaeological evidence for a western moat ditch. This suggests that the ditches on the south and east sides of the site were never part of a discrete circuit, but laid out in conjunction with the field boundary and north pond to create the present enclosure. On the earliest map the green is referred to as Gurny's Green (Fig.6) and whilst the map shows a moat surrounding the parsonage and ponds on the green, no water is recorded in association with the site under investigation (marked as the property in Mr Nunn's occupation). The later tithe (1837) and Ordnance Survey maps (1880 and 1804) depict the ditches and ponds around the barn pretty much as they are today. Whilst the green no doubt has its origins in the early medieval period and there is a likelihood of tenements along its margins, there is no strong evidence to date the ditches this early. It is possible that the construction of the barns during the 18th century and the creation of the ditches are broadly contemporary.

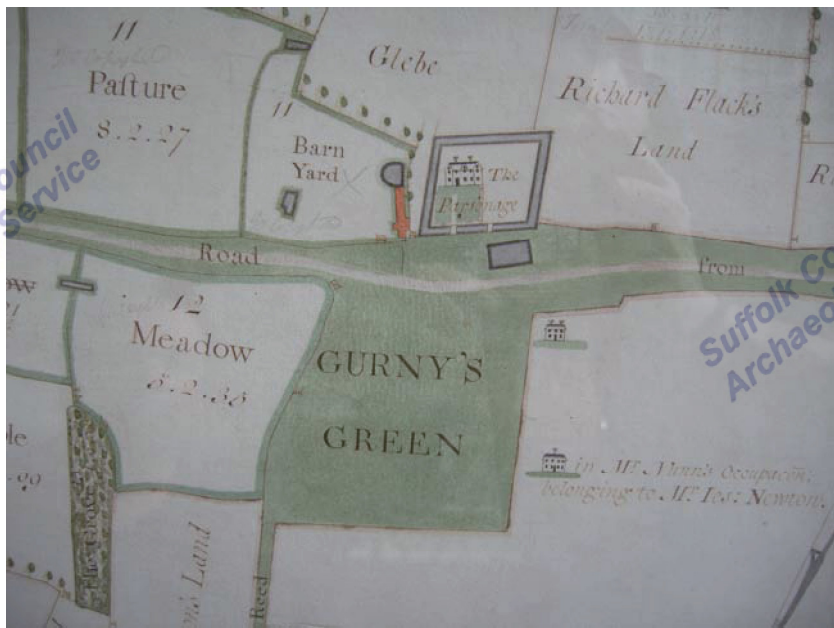
The machine during the evaluation was operated by David Banham whose boyhood home was the adjacent cottage and was a onetime employee of the farm. He has been responsible for cleaning the moat and it is unlikely that any datable deposits remain within the ditches. The soil profile on the moat island has been reworked and there was evidence of ground disturbance and the burial of waste material as part of the continuous and recent use of the site as a working farm. However the evidence of the post holes and chalk spread, although post-medieval in date and thought to relate to the former ground plan of the existing barn, demonstrate that even shallow cut features survive on the platform. There is therefore the potential for possible medieval features associated with the moat's original occupation to survive.

It is recommended that whilst no further archaeological input is required during the proposed excavation to establish a west side to the moat, any work on the platform that requires the ground to be broken should be subject to further archaeological conditions.

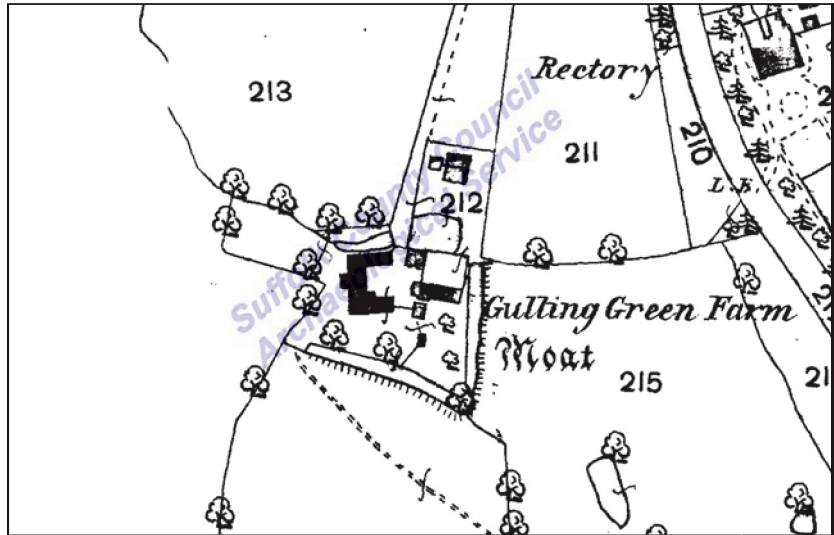
David Gill
December 2008

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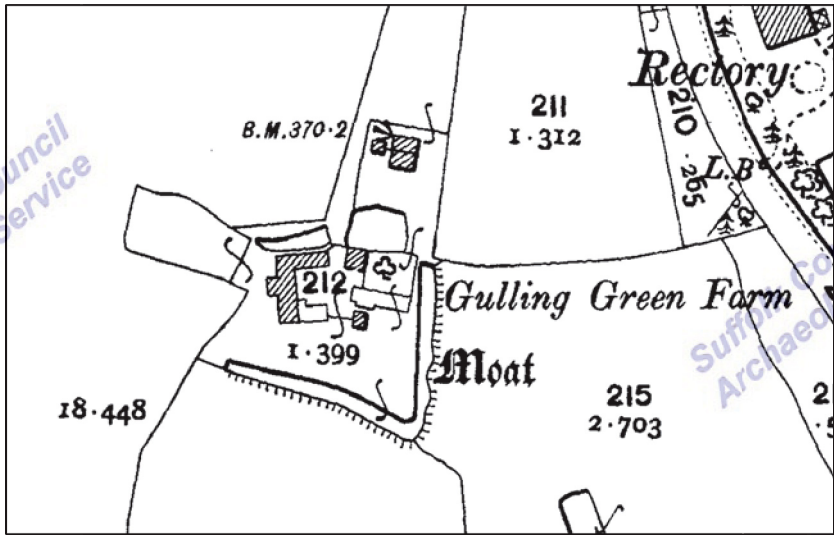
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Estate map 1739 (The site is marked as being in Mr Nunn's occupation)



1st Edition Ordnance Survey c.1880



2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1900

Figure 6. Historic maps